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MCOG Secures $904,000 for Covelo Transportation Project

At its meeting Wednesday, the California Transportation Commission awarded grant funds under the new Active Transportation Program. Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) received a grant of $847,000 for the State Route 162 Corridor Multi-Purpose Trail to improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles in downtown Covelo. This will fund environmental and design work to prepare for construction, and also a non-infrastructure component of education and training in bicycle and pedestrian safety. MCOG will contribute another $57,000, for total funding of $904,000. Project partners with MCOG include Round Valley Indian Tribes, Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency, and the school district.

 "This will be a great safety improvement for Round Valley," said Supervisor John Pinches, Third District. "The grant is all people can talk about up there--the locals think it's great. And it's nice to get these federal transportation dollars here in our rural county."

The project is a result of several years of MCOG sponsored community planning, documented in the Covelo/Round Valley Non-Motorized Needs Assessment & Engineered Feasibility Study report completed in January. In Covelo, the state highway serves as Main Street, with no developed shoulders and with drainage ditches close to the pavement edge. The purpose of the project is to reduce the potential for conflicts between bicyclists, pedestrians and vehicles within the SR 162 corridor north of the downtown core and increase mobility options in the community. The Round Valley Tribes' Commerce Center, Tribal Performance

Grounds, Tribal Health Center, Tribal Administrative Center, and outlying residential areas generate pedestrian and bicycle traffic in the corridor with destinations to central Covelo and public schools to the southwest.

Phase I of the project consists of two primary elements. A multi-purpose Class I (separated) trail will be designed from the Howard Street junction at State Route 162 to Biggar Lane. This will provide a non-motorized link between the Tribal Health Center and residences easterly on Biggar Lane, the Tribal Commerce Center, Tribal Performance Grounds, and central Covelo. This element is within the State Route 162 corridor and will be built within state right-of-way and upon an easement dedicated by the Round Valley Tribes for public access. In the second element, a multi-purpose Class I trail will extend westward, perpendicular to the SR 162 corridor trail along the south boundary of the Tribes' commerce center to Henderson Lane. This trail will provide access to Covelo public schools and residential areas of northwest Covelo.

MCOG's application scored highly among statewide proposals in this first cycle of the new competitive ATP program, which combines several previous transportation programs with new ones, from state and federal funds. Two other Mendocino County proposals won grants awards. City of Fort Bragg received $259,000 to complete the Chestnut Street Multi-Use Facility (total project $1,051,000). Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency received $871,000 for safety and education projects in four local communities.

MCOG formed as a joint powers agreement in 1972, as mandated by state law, to disburse state and federal funds for transportation, to provide regional planning, and to serve as a regional forum. MCOG is overseen by a board consisting of two county supervisors, a countywide public appointee, and one council member from each of the four incorporated cities. For more information, call the MCOG office at 463-1859 or consult the agency's web site at www.mendocinocog.org.

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