

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Approved MINUTES

Transit Productivity Committee - TPC

May 2, 2019

Dow & Associates Conference Room, Ukiah

PRESENT:

MCOG Board Members: Mike Carter
MTA Board Members: Jim Mastin
Senior Centers Rep.: Diana Clarke, Ukiah Senior Center
Staff: Janet Orth, Nephele Barrett and Marta Ford, MCOG
Carla Meyer, MTA
Marilyn DeFrange, Ukiah Senior Center

ABSENT:

Jim O. Brown, MCOG
Jim Tarbell, MTA

1. Call to Order. MCOG Director Carter called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. Director Brown was excused by prior arrangement. Self-introductions were made.

2. Public Expression. None.

3. Review and Recommendation on MCOG Transit Performance Standards. Janet introduced the issue, with reference to her written staff report. The standards were last revised in 2014, when the Cost per Vehicle Service Hour was set to a “CPI Adjusted Rolling Average” that is updated annually. Since then, State Senate Bill 508 was signed into law, effective July 1, 2016. Staff recommended revising MCOG’s existing Farebox standard of 15 percent, and 12 percent for senior center contracts, to ten percent (10%), consistent with the new state law. This recommendation follows last year’s TPC advice that “MCOG consider reducing its farebox standard to ten percent over the next few years and revisit the issue this time next year with another year or two of performance data.” At that time (May 2018), the higher standard was considered counterproductive to maintaining ridership. Discussion included:

- What is farebox ratio? What would be the benefit of keeping it at the higher level? Carla gave background and noted that nationally, ridership is dropping, so it is more difficult to meet fare targets. No one supported the higher farebox standards.
- As seniors’ health care costs rise, they spend more of their social security income, so have less available for transportation costs. (Diana)
- How would the change affect the senior centers’ contracts with MTA? (Diana) A discussion of senior center issues was started and deferred to Agenda #7.

After discussion, MCOG’s staff recommendation was approved as follows.

Recommendation:

Upon motion by Carter, seconded by Clarke, and carried unanimously (3 Ayes; 0 Noes; 2 Absent), the TPC recommended that 1) MCOG update MCOG’s Farebox transit performance standard to ten percent, consistent with SB 508 and 2) apply the new standard to the 2018-2019 (next year’s) performance review.

4. Annual Review of MTA Performance Reports Against MCOG Standards. Janet reviewed her written staff report with initial review of performance using the adopted “CPI Adjusted Rolling Average” with both one-year and three-year results. The data was still a year behind schedule for review.

Service Type	2017/18	3-Year Average
Dial-A-Ride (DAR) improved Cost/Hour, declined in Passengers/Hr., Farebox	1 of 4	1 of 4
Short Distance Bus Routes met just Cost/Hour, no significant changes	1 of 4	1 of 4
Long Distance Routes improved Passengers/Hr., Cost/Pass. for current year	4 of 4	4 of 4
Senior Centers declined in Farebox, met all other standards	3 of 4	3 of 4

Discussion included:

- What are Long Distance Bus Routes? MTA’s footnote lists “60 Coaster, 65/66 CC Rider, 75 Gualala/Ukiah, 95 Point Arena/Santa Rosa.” Review of these routes. (All)
- Why is Route 20 Willits/Ukiah called Short Distance? This route includes local Willits service as well as to-from Ukiah. Many school children used to ride to Ukiah, no longer the case. Perhaps school districts can explain. Would results change if #20 were moved to Long Distance? Data should be reported accurately, even if it brings down ridership totals for local services. Consensus to move Route 20 to Long Distance Routes; assuming this can be done internally without Board approval, agreed to start in July 2019. (Carla, Jim, Nephele, Janet, group)
- Farebox dropped significantly for Seniors in the most recent year of review. Passengers per Hour remains level. The Centers give out some free fares. How was Passengers/Hour established by MCOG? Can it be changed to Passengers per Trip? No, established in Transportation Development Act (TDA), also in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 program rules. Discussion of how to address Senior Centers farebox drop-off. How are free fares reported—does it reduce Farebox numbers? No, does not increase cost. Appears to be in Winter when seniors are not going out as much. Continue to watch. (Janet, Nephele, Diana, Carla, group)
- MCOG and MTA are currently undergoing triennial performance audits, with compliance reviews; the independent auditor consultant is an excellent resource for issues like this. Can MCOG reduce the standard for passengers/ridership? Staff will research how established and consult with the performance auditor, then report back to TPC. (Janet, Nephele)
- Under the previous (long-time) General Manager, MTA made a conscious effort to move able riders from Dial-a-Ride (DAR) to fixed route service, so DAR performance is not ideal. Agreement that DAR is not expected to perform well. Also this strategy did not improve fixed route performance. Discussion of DAR serving general public or only disabled riders (paratransit); some operators have eliminated the public service, MTA has not yet. More people are using rideshare services such as Uber and Lyft. (Jim, Janet, Nephele, group)

Recommendation:

No formal recommendation. Consensus of participants to take the following interim steps:

- Move Route 20 Willits/Ukiah performance reporting to Long Distance Bus Routes category. (MTA staff)
- Continue to watch Farebox Ratio performance of Senior Centers. (TPC)
- Research options for Passengers per Hour standard. (MCOG staff)

– *Annual Transit Performance Reviews (one year and three years) are attached*

5. Review and Recommendation on MTA’s Analysis and Prioritization of 2019/20 Unmet Transit Needs.

Janet explained the process and expressed appreciation for MTA’s Route Committee report, provided in follow-up to last year’s Unmet Transit Needs finding. Carla reported the committee was delayed by some staff turnover and now meeting more often. Pending MTA’s analysis of the 2019/20 list, this agenda item was continued to the next meeting.

6. Review and Recommendation on Fiscal Year 2019/20 Transit Claim. Carla handed out a revised annual claim and apologized for an error, so that the senior centers will receive the same Local Transportation Fund (LTF) increase as MTA does, as is customary. She also reported that MTA employee Dawn White was promoted to Mobility Manager.

Janet reviewed her written staff report, noting estimated revenues are up by an unprecedented rate. LTF is up from sales taxes, including prior-year excess, resulting in a 12.5% increase available for MTA. State Transit Assistance (STA) is up from Senate Bill 1, the Road Repair & Accountability Act of 2017, tripled since 2017. Nephele explained how SB 1 is bringing funds to Mendocino County through several programs. Janet reviewed MTA’s claim for Operations and explained the new SB 508 law, which relaxed STA qualifying criteria.

Carla reported how MTA is meeting its retirement liability with other funds than LTF and STA. She noted grants for the new Ukiah transit center, a high priority for her, which she believes will increase ridership. Location is still under review. MTA is applying for a grant to fund six electric cutaway buses.

Questions and discussion included:

- No funds were claimed for Unmet Transit Needs; would that come from Operations funds? Yes. (Mike, Carla)
- Will seniors use some of the funding increase for needs on the list? Ukiah Senior Center is looking at whether to do that and/or increase driver salaries. (Mike, Diana)
- Comments on mobility management and FTA 5310 opportunities. (Carla)
- Sometimes MCOG’s Unmet Needs finding is made contingent on other factors than funds. (Nephele)
- If new services are started, they should be sustainable. (Marilyn)
- MTA may need to revise its Capital Reserve claim during the fiscal year, depending on potential outside grants requiring local match funds. (Carla, group)

After discussion, MCOG’s staff recommendation was revised as follows, reflecting the revised claim.

Recommendation:

Upon motion by Carter, seconded by Clarke, and carried unanimously (3 Ayes; 0 Noes; 2 Absent), the TPC recommended that MCOG:

- 1) Allocate full funding of MTA’s current-year claims for FY 2019/20 Local Transportation Funds, and
- 2) Allocate Long-Term Capital from the Reserve fund balance if MTA’s five-year capital program can identify projects for this funding source.

Local Transportation Fund (LTF)		
MTA Operations	2,993,124	
Unmet Transit Needs	0	
Senior Center Operations	555,499	
Transit Capital Reserve	0	
Total LTF		3,548,623
State Transit Assistance Fund (STA)		
MTA Operations	946,179	
MTA & Seniors Capital	0	
Transit Capital Reserve	0	
Total STA		946,179
Capital Reserve Fund (CRF)		
MTA Capital, Current Year	0	
Senior Capital, Current Year	0	
Long-Term Capital Reserve	674,846	
Total CRF		674,846
Total Recommended FY 2019/20 Transit Allocation		5,169,648

7. Consideration of Updates to Senior Centers TDA Funding Formula. Nephele introduced the item and produced a historic MTA staff report (c. 1996/97) documenting the agreement that MTA and senior centers would share in annual LTF revenue increases equally, and how the base formula was established (copies distributed). Discussion included:

- When the contracts were designed 20 or so years ago (with Jim Mastin and Gordon Logan), the formula was set. It is difficult now for the centers, which used to have more state funding. The level of transportation services of each center has changed over time. (Jim, Carla, Diana)
- Auditors have mentioned this agreement to fund senior centers transportation programs is unusual; mostly transit operators provide the services themselves. Under this agreement, it was assumed the centers could do it more cheaply, (Carla, Janet)
- Suggestion to form a work group to analyze, start fresh with a new basis of performance. The centers have extensive data available. Diana volunteered to bring her experience and aptitude to the task. (Diana, Jim, Carla)
- MTA’s most recent reimbursement claim annual report shows that subsidy versus operating costs varied widely among the five centers, from 35% to 84%. (Janet)

- Discussion of history with Indian Senior Center and Long Valley Health Center, from the old document, recalling they had dropped out of the program due to reporting requirements. Recently there were FTA 5310 grant awards to tribal agencies. Also they have other sources of funds. (Mike, Janet, Nephele)
- Opportunities for FTA 5310 grants, with a new Call for Projects in July. Discussion of specific vehicle needs for seniors programs, such as four-wheel drive vans with wheelchair lift, and whether these could be procured through the state's resources or qualify under 5310. Staff agreed to research. (Carla, Nephele, Mike)
- Next steps include 1) request advice from the performance auditor (MCOG staff), 2) find out whether the Cities are able to help subsidize the centers (Diana), 3) look at 5310 operating grants (Carla).
- Carla and Diana volunteered to meet prior to the next TPC meeting to research a revised funding formula for the senior centers as a starting point for further discussion.

After discussion, MCOG's staff recommendation was approved as follows.

Recommendation:

Upon motion by Carter, seconded by Brown, and carried unanimously (*3 Ayes; 0 Noes; 2 Absent*), the TPC recommended that MCOG acknowledge the need to revise the long-standing formula for the senior centers' transportation programs from allocations of the Local Transportation Fund, and continue this item to the next TPC meeting.

8. Miscellaneous / Members' Concerns/ Announcements. None.

9. Adjournment. It was agreed to meet again after May 14; Janet will issue a poll for available dates. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Submitted by Janet Orth, Deputy Director / CFO

Mendocino Council of Governments

Annual Transit Performance Review

March 1, 2017 - February 28, 2018

MCOG Standards	Passengers per Hour	Farebox Ratio	Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour	Cost per Passenger
<i>When comparing to performance:</i>				
	Higher # is better	Higher # is better	Lower # is better	Lower # is better
Dial-A-Ride				
Spring 2017	4.1	14.7%	\$90.83	\$22.15
Summer 2017	4.1	13.9%	\$95.11	\$23.20
Fall 2017	2.5	12.8%	\$72.68	\$29.07
Winter 2017/18	3.0	12.7%	\$76.92	\$25.64
Annual Average	3.4	13.5%	\$83.89	\$25.02
Standard	4.5	15.0%	NA	NA
CPI Adjusted Rolling Average	NA	NA	\$91.70	\$20.38
Result	not met	not met	✓	not met
Short Distance Bus Routes				
Spring 2017	10.2	13.1%	\$83.53	\$8.19
Summer 2017	9.1	12.3%	\$81.64	\$8.97
Fall 2017	9.9	12.8%	\$86.77	\$8.76
Winter 2017/18	8.6	11.1%	\$84.08	\$9.78
Annual Average	9.5	12.3%	\$84.01	\$8.93
Standard	14.0	15%	NA	NA
CPI Adjusted Rolling Average	NA	NA	\$85.19	\$6.09
Result	not met	not met	✓	not met
Long Distance Routes				
Spring 2017	3.0	14.4%	\$81.07	\$29.76
Summer 2017	3.0	16.8%	\$83.38	\$27.79
Fall 2017	3.3	15.2%	\$93.64	\$28.38
Winter 2017/18	3.0	13.7%	\$89.32	\$29.77
Annual Average	3.1	15.0%	\$86.85	\$28.93
Standard	3.2	15%	NA	NA
CPI Adjusted Rolling Average	NA	NA	\$92.18	\$28.80
Result	w-i margin of error	✓	✓	w-i margin of error
Senior Centers				
Spring 2017	3.3	7.6%	\$47.13	\$14.28
Summer 2017	3.3	7.2%	\$47.52	\$14.40
Fall 2017	3.2	7.1%	\$49.21	\$15.38
Winter 2017/18	3.2	6.3%	\$53.04	\$16.58
Annual Average	3.3	7.1%	\$49.23	\$15.16
Standard	3.0	12.0%	NA	NA
CPI Adjusted Rolling Average	NA	NA	\$50.83	\$16.94
Result	✓	not met	✓	✓

NOTES:

"CPI Adjusted Rolling Average" uses the Consumer Price Index (CPI) Annual Average, All Urban Consumers, California, percent change from corresponding calendar year to year, added to each of the past three years and averaged.

Check-mark symbol indicates the standard was met.

Cost per Passenger is the result of Cost per Hour divided by Passengers per Hour (may differ slightly from MTA report).

Round-off errors may occur between MTA's report and this summary, or differences based on number of decimal places entered.

Inland and Coast routes were changed by TPC recommendation to "Short Distance" and "Long Distance" respectively.

Flex Routes were deleted from this table.

Mendocino Council of Governments Annual Transit Performance Review

3 Years: March 1, 2015 - February 28, 2018

MCOG Standards	Passengers per Hour	Farebox Ratio	Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour	Cost per Passenger	Cost/Hr Annual CPI adj.
<i>When comparing to performance:</i>	Higher # is better	Higher # is better	Lower # is better	Lower # is better	
Dial-A-Ride					
Mar. 1, 2015 - Feb. 29, 2016	3.9	13.9%	\$97.46	\$24.99	\$98.89 1.47%
Mar. 1, 2016 - Feb. 28, 2017	4.4	14.7%	\$87.25	\$20.20	\$89.22 2.26%
Mar. 1, 2017 - Feb. 28, 2018	3.4	13.5%	\$83.89	\$25.02	\$86.99 3.69%
3-Year Average	3.9	14.0%	\$89.53	\$23.40	\$91.70 2.47%
Standard	4.5	15.0%	NA	NA	
CPI Adjusted Rolling Average	NA	NA	\$91.70	\$20.38	Cost/Hr divided by Pass/Hr
Result	not met	not met	✓	not met	
Short Distance Bus Routes					
Mar. 1, 2015 - Feb. 29, 2016	12.9	16.4%	\$80.15	\$6.22	\$81.32
Mar. 1, 2016 - Feb. 28, 2017	8.6	12.4%	\$85.22	\$10.03	\$87.14
Mar. 1, 2017 - Feb. 28, 2018	9.5	12.3%	\$84.01	\$8.93	\$87.11
3-Year Average	10.3	13.7%	\$83.13	\$8.39	\$85.19
Standard	14.0	15%	NA	NA	
CPI Adjusted Rolling Average	NA	NA	\$85.19	\$6.09	
Result	not met	not met	✓	not met	
Long Distance Routes					
Mar. 1, 2015 - Feb. 29, 2016	3.6	19.2%	\$85.99	\$23.92	\$87.25
Mar. 1, 2016 - Feb. 28, 2017	3.6	13.6%	\$97.03	\$27.70	\$99.22
Mar. 1, 2017 - Feb. 28, 2018	3.1	15.0%	\$86.85	\$28.93	\$90.05
3-Year Average	3.4	15.9%	\$89.96	\$26.85	\$92.18
Standard	3.2	15%	NA	NA	
CPI Adjusted Rolling Average	NA	NA	\$92.18	\$28.80	
Result	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Senior Centers					
Mar. 1, 2015 - Feb. 29, 2016	3.0	12.6%	\$49.25	\$16.71	\$49.97
Mar. 1, 2016 - Feb. 28, 2017	3.3	11.1%	\$50.34	\$15.53	\$51.47
Mar. 1, 2017 - Feb. 28, 2018	3.3	7.1%	\$49.23	\$15.16	\$51.05
3-Year Average	3.2	11.8%	\$49.61	\$15.80	\$50.83
Standard	3.0	12.0%	NA	NA	
CPI Adjusted Rolling Average	NA	NA	\$50.83	\$16.94	
Result	✓	not met	✓	✓	

NOTES:

"CPI Adjusted Rolling Average" uses the Consumer Price Index (CPI) Annual Average, All Urban Consumers, California, percent change from corresponding calendar year to year, added to each of the past three years and averaged.

Check-mark symbol indicates the standard was met.

Cost per Passenger is the result of Cost per Hour divided by Passengers per Hour (may differ slightly from MTA report).

Round-off errors may occur between MTA's report and this summary, or differences based on number of decimal places entered.

Inland and Coast routes were changed by TPC recommendation to "Short Distance" and "Long Distance" respectively.

Flex Routes were deleted from this table.