

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Executive Committee

Approved MINUTES

July 10, 2023

Primary Location

MCOG / Dow & Associates Offices
525 S. Main St., Suite B, Ukiah

Teleconference Locations

County Administration Center, Conference Room A, 501 Low Gap Rd., Ukiah
City Hall Conference Room, 416 N. Franklin St., Fort Bragg

General Public Teleconference by Zoom

PRESENT: Committee Members: Chair Dan Gjerde, Vice Chair John Haschak, Director Bernie Norvell
MCOG Staff: Nephele Barrett, Lisa Davey-Bates, Janet Orth

ABSENT: None

1. **Call to Order** at 10:04 a.m. with all present, Chair Gjerde presiding.

2. **Public Expression** – There was no public input on off-agenda items.

3. **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Recommendations of June 21, 2023: 2024 Regional/State Transportation Improvement Program (R/STIP) Policies & Priorities.** Executive Director Barrett summarized her written staff report and reviewed the TAC’s revised project rating criteria, as directed by the Council at the April meeting. Every two years, as lawfully authorized, Regional Transportation Planning Agencies develop and adopt Regional Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIPs) for programming to be included by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) in its five-year State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Staff and the TAC will be working on this in the coming fall season, for adoption at the December board meeting. The CTC’s 2024 STIP funding target for Mendocino County is estimated at \$8 million. MCOG’s policy was last updated in 2011 for the 2012 STIP, and a new resolution is needed to reflect changes since then. The State’s priorities have shifted away from capacity increasing projects and toward a multi-modal approach.

The proposed project rating criteria are (in no priority or weighted order): 1) Urgency, 2) Leverage of funds, 3) Air quality/environmental benefit, 4) Traffic volume/usage, 5) Regional benefit, 6) Safety benefit, and 7) System condition/preservation/completion. Each criterion was assigned a point value and queries for reviewers’ consideration in scoring. – *refer to agenda packet materials*

Questions and discussion included:

- How does public transit score points under system preservation? By investing in the transit system, e.g. a new route could be considered “completion” of system. How could this be compared to road Pavement Condition Index (PCI)? This may be somewhat subjective, for the applicant to describe (besides objective PCI data) how the project would preserve condition or complete a system. For transit, look at standards such as useful life depending on size and type of vehicle. (Dan, Nephele)
- For bicycle and pedestrian (non-motorized) mode, the case to be made might be more subjective; as with most of the categories, in how the applicant explains their proposal. Scoring is done by all TAC members, resulting in a balanced review. (Dan, Nephele)
- Return to discussion comparing busses to road condition. Suggestion to add language that would instruct reviewers to consider condition of specific roads/facilities or vehicle as well as entire network? Agreed. Additional ideas for ways to score under transit versus system discussed. (Dan, Nephele)
- Vehicles are the primary type of transit projects that qualify for STIP funds; there are other sources of funding for transit. CTC has not yet provided a target for Public Transportation Account (PTA) funds in STIP, and there is not much capacity in STIP for transit in general, so not an ideal funding source for transit projects. More language could be added to rating criteria. (Nephele)

- Set text revisions today or bring to the next board meeting? Staff to work on and present to full Board. (Nephele, Dan)

Chair Gjerde invited public input. Dave Shpak stated his appreciation for the text added to support bicycle and pedestrian and transit modes, and revisions made to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and state of good repair. These align well with the State's shift in funding policy and practice to more rehabilitation, multimodal transportation, and environmental performance. However, the adjustments to rating points suggested today do not complement those changes in state policy, with its increasing emphasis away from capacity increasing and toward repair and maintenance, VMT reduction, Complete Streets and behavioral changes. His comments also were made in the TAC meeting. To make Mendocino County more competitive in funding allocations, he listed suggested project rating criteria points. He appreciated the opportunity and care invested in this process.

Further committee discussion included:

- General agreement with Dave's comments. Regional Benefit would not necessarily focus on traffic issues or capacity increases; what is staff's interpretation? (Dan)
- Analysis of TAC's recommended scoring: take in context of all criteria; prioritize facilities with the most use; apply traffic volume metric where available, noting bike & ped mode data is not always available though some projects could score well that relieve traffic. This funding source is flexible and other grant sources heavily emphasize factors such as non-motorized benefit and VMT reduction, though those projects can still do well since points are added here to Regional Benefit for new issues such as access to housing. (Nephele)
- The most recent R/STIP policy Resolution M2011-10 was shared on screen and reviewed. Discussion of suggested revisions to policy resolution: some whereas/resolved text is no longer relevant, so several changes are called for in new policy and revised criteria. (Nephele, group)
- Discussion: Agreement with TAC's revisions. (Dan). Wants to understand Dave's suggestions. (John) TAC believes there are various ways to score points under several criteria; explained TAC's rationale. (Nephele)

Recommendation:

Upon motion by Haschak, seconded by Norvell, and carried on roll call vote (*3 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Absent*), the Executive Committee recommended that the Council approve 1) the resolution "Establishing General Policies for the Commitment of Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) Shares for the 2024 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)" as amended and proposed by staff, and 2) the revised Regional Improvement Program Project Rating Criteria as recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee.

4. Discussion and Possible Action: Development of Request for Proposals for Comprehensive Staffing Services Commencing Fiscal Year 2024/25. Nephele introduced the issue (refer to written staff report), emphasizing that staff may present options but not recommendations, due to conflict of interest. The Request for Proposals (RFP) process may be conducted by any of the MCOG member agencies. Also, an informal offer was received from Regional Analysis and Planning Services (RAPS), a non-profit arm of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) to conduct an independent procurement for a fee. Another alternative is to directly hire staff rather than contract out. Those are the major options available.

Another consideration is staffing procurement for the RuralREN, approved by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) at end of June. Initially proposed to start with five years, the program is now down to four (minus 2023), resulting in less time for ramp-up with new staff in 2024. Options include: 1) standalone procurement or 2) amendment of existing staffing contracts, then add to next MCOG staffing procurement as part of overall work scope. These are factors to consider and direction is welcome. No action is required today. Discussion included:

- Last time County staff conducted procurement, but does not have capacity now. AMBAG might be a better fit. (Dan)
- Agrees with approach to secure outside help with an RFP, seems most efficient using RAPS. (John)
- Lake Area Planning Council (APC) also is discussing renewal of contracts with an RFP next year. They are in discussions with Maura Twomey and Dianne Eidam, the principals of RAPS/AMBAG. She has worked with them both over 25 years. Maura was a Caltrans auditor, so is very familiar with relevant issues. Lake APC is interested in working with these consultants on an RFP; she

spoke with them in March. General estimates from RAPS are to write a proposal for about \$2,200 and possibly conduct procurement for about \$6,600. (Lisa)

- Floated idea of Sonoma Clean Power providing one or more staff for RuralREN, or perhaps BayREN. (Dan)
- CPUC approved RuralREN including MCOG; BayREN previously turned down MCOG. Sonoma Clean Power is a Community Choice Aggregator (CCA), so there will be some coordination or overlap with them regardless. (Nephele)
- SCP provides rebates, basically matching funds. Described process of rebates through BayREN. There can be a strong relationship with marketing at Sonoma Clean Power. Lake County is likely to eventually join SCP. (Dan)
- In question is first eight months of a 2024 launch, during final year of staff contracts. With care as staff not to make a recommendation, MCOG could justify adding to existing work scope for a short period. (Nephele)
- Agrees with that approach. (Bernie)
- Next step would be to contact RAPS, gather more information, and receive direction on best way with minimum of existing staff working on this. Does the Executive Committee prefer to have another meeting or bring this to the full board, or perhaps appoint an ad hoc committee? (Nephele)
- Bring back to full board. (Bernie, Dan) We have the direction we need. (Nephele)

Recommendation:

No recommendation was made, pending more information to be reported to the full Council.

5. RuralREN (Regional Energy Network) Status Report. Nephele reported outcome of the CPUC meeting. The RuralREN Leadership Team is working on a press release to share with general public; she has seen drafts to be customized by each jurisdiction and can share with the Board for approval. Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) is administrator of the RuralREN. They will provide some services to Lake & Mendocino Counties initially, since MCOG and APC joined late and are starting as contractors to RCEA until a scheduled opportunity for full membership. Ramp-up starts in September for launch in January 2024, contingent on CPUC allowing some expenditures in 2023. If not allowed, work will be pushed out until January. MCOG signed a Memorandum of Understanding with RCEA indicating a new MOU will be developed, which will be brought to the MCOG Board for approval.

- At the recent California Climate & Energy Forum, there was excitement about the RuralREN from higher-ups such as federal representatives. (John, Janet)
- It is unique in that not all members are government agencies; some are Community Based Organizations. (Nephele)
- Discussion of what a REN can do or not in within a municipal utility such as Ukiah. (Group)
- Report from attendance at RuralREN working group meetings to date, noting the “Public Equity” public sector program. RCEA advised this would be a good place for MCOG and APC to start, since membership comprises local agencies and there are existing partnerships to build upon. Listed the other major program groups, which MCOG intends to offer eventually. (Janet, Lisa)
- Suggestion to enlist help from Sonoma Clean Power when working on education, marketing, outreach and events, since they have significant resources available, such as staff capacity and funding reserves. (Dan)

6. Reports / Information / Members’ Concerns. None.

7. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Submitted by Janet Orth, Deputy Director & CFO