

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

APPROVED MINUTES

Monday, November 4, 2024

Round Valley Library Commons, 23925 Howard St., Covelo

ADDITIONAL MEDIA:

[Mendocino County Video](http://www.mendocinocog.org) or find
[YouTube link at http://www.mendocinocog.org under Meetings](http://www.mendocinocog.org)

The Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) meets as the Board of Directors of:
Mendocino Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) and
Mendocino County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE)

1. Call to Order and Roll Call. The meeting was called to order at 11:15 a.m. on the bus at Caltrans' Cherry Creek Rest Area en route to the meeting. Present were Directors John Haschak, Michael Carter, Greta Kanne, Josefina Duenas, Dan Gjerde and Tatiana Ahlstrand (Caltrans/PAC). Directors Bernie Norvell and Jeff Hansen were absent. Chair Gjerde presided over the meeting. Caltrans improvements on SR-162 were observed along the way.

Tour Guest Presenters: Howard Dashiell, Director, Mendocino County Department of Transportation; Matthew McKeon, P.E., Resident Engineer, Ghirardelli Associates; Brian Hurt, Wylatti Construction; Patricia Rabano, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Round Valley Indian Tribes; and Julia Peterson, Caltrans District 1, Clean California project manager.

Staff present: Nephele Barrett, Executive Director; Janet Orth, Deputy Director & CFO; James Sookne, Program Manager; and Jody Lowblad, Administrative Assistant.

2. Convene as RTPA

3. Recess as RTPA – Serve Lunch – Reconvene as Policy Advisory Committee for Working Lunch.

The lunch recess started at 12:20 p.m., and the meeting was reconvened at 12:58 p.m. Chair Gjerde made welcoming remarks thanking the Library, appreciating MCOG's return to regular tours of the countywide region following the pandemic, and noting the significant new transportation projects in Round Valley. Vice Chair Haschak made remarks as Third District Supervisor about the numerous transportation investments, including Caltrans' work on SR-162 on the way here with \$118 million of rehabilitation and improvements to the roadway. He also noted \$17.4 million to Round Valley for high-speed internet service, and additional funding for fiber-optic cable. Clean California grants have made upgrades to downtown Covelo involving the community. The tour today will cover the multi-purpose trail, which will greatly reduce fatalities and injuries. Finally County of Mendocino will replace a historic bridge in the valley with a new, modern one. He appreciated everyone attending today.

4 - 7. Consent Calendar. Upon motion by Haschak, second by Carter, and carried unanimously on voice vote (*roll call not required for in-person voting*): IT IS ORDERED that consent items are approved.

4. Approval of October 7, 2024 Minutes – as written

5. Approval of October 15, 2024 Executive Committee Minutes – as written

6. Executive Committee Recommendations of October 15, 2024:

- a. Amendment of Administrative & Fiscal Services Contract with Dow & Associates to Add Rural REN North (Regional Energy Network) Program Budgets and to Allow for Future Extensions as Defined in Request for Proposals – *October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2029 and up to five years of extensions*
 - b. Amendment of Planning Services Contract with Davey-Bates Consulting to Allow for Future Extensions as Defined in Request for Proposals – *October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2029 and up to five years of extensions*
- 7. Award of Triennial Performance Auditor Engagement for MCOG and Mendocino Transit Authority Audits, Fiscal Years 2021/22 through 2023/24 – Moore & Associates, Valencia, CA**

8. Public Expression.

Steve Henderson, a.k.a. Gizmo, commented on the value of public transit for emergency evacuation purposes and the possibility of available public funding as such. He suggested upgrades to transit stops and the idea of a satellite transit mall in Covelo for connections to other points around the valley and trips to Ukiah.

Pat Sobrero of Covelo, a retired teacher, expressed concern for elders crossing the street on foot downtown at certain locations such as Howard and Main Streets, and hazards due to flooding events. She noted the recent traffic calming projects, thanked everyone for coming today and commended Director Gjerde for his years of public service.

[Anonymous] mentioned a conversation with Mendocino County DOT Director Dashiell about the new downtown traffic calming improvements, which have taken locals a while to become accustomed to, although traffic speeds have slowed noticeably. There is still a need for calming on Howard Street from center of town to points east and the elementary school. He recognized the time it takes to implement, and will continue talking about this.

Chair Gjerde responded that MCOG does planning studies. Ms. Barrett described funding for safety projects and that Director Dashiell is working on transportation safety policies.

9. Approval and Presentation of Proclamation Honoring Outgoing Chair Dan Gjerde. This was Director Gjerde's final meeting before retiring from the Board of Supervisors, after nearly 22 years on MCOG's Board of Directors. Ms. Barrett made brief remarks about his accomplishments in office, then read aloud the proclamation prepared by staff, met with applause. Chair Gjerde then recognized past long-term MCOG Executive Director Phil Dow in the audience, and expressed his gratitude that the MCOG team was able to do so many things for this county with results over time. Plans have more often than not resulted in projects being built. He spoke to the effectiveness of community support and thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve. Cake was served to all.

Upon motion by Kanne, second by Carter, and carried unanimously on voice vote: IT IS ORDERED that the proclamation honoring Chair Dan Gjerde is approved.

10. Discussion of Round Valley/Covelo Area Tour, Transportation Plans & Projects, Related Matters. Ms. Barrett noted the printed handout for the tour, mentioning several projects on the list. She asked Caltrans representatives present to comment.

Director Ahlstrand, Caltrans District 1, noted additional printed material from Caltrans distributed in the room, "State Route 162 Caltrans Projects – Projects in Construction."

Ms. Barrett introduced Ms. Julia Peterson as leader of the Clean California grant-funded projects in town, commending her and the Caltrans team for planning and delivering construction in an unusually short time. The local community was consulted and design changes made as a result.

Also Clean California Dump Days were very popular and successful here and around the county. (More applause.)

Ms. Peterson thanked everyone for working with Caltrans “at the speed of Clean California.” The project went from a thought to reality very quickly.

The Chair invited public comment:

Steve Henderson, a.k.a. Gizmo, asked whether any road signage was planned for the scenic overlook, suggesting improving visibility of the turn-off. Director Ahlstrand did not know, though duly noted the comment. Director Haschak added that fresh ideas like this are welcome.

Ms. Barrett highlighted a few of the tour projects, particularly the Class 1 multi-use trail, initiated by past Executive Director Dow as the only project that MCOG, as a planning agency, has actually built, starting in 2010 with a Caltrans Environmental Justice grant, followed by grants from California’s Active Transportation Program (ATP) and other state funding, for a total cost of approximately \$8.5 million. (More details provided in the handout.) She outlined the progression from planning through design, right-of-way and construction. The foot bridge remains to be completed next construction season. Benefits have already resulted to this high-risk area. Details are posted on MCOG’s web site. Concluding the tour will be the County’s new bridge planned at Hill Road in south-east Round Valley. In good news, a Safe Routes to School project at various locations on Howard, Airport and Foothill Boulevard is short-listed for ATP grant funds, to be approved at an upcoming California Transportation Commission (CTC) business meeting.

Director Kanne commended MCOG for bringing CTC commissioners and their staff to Mendocino County in Fort Bragg last April, which likely will have had an effect on those decisions.

Phil Dow remarked on the importance of getting decision makers in Sacramento out into the rural areas to see for themselves what “rural” means.

Director Haschak credited Mr. Dow for working on the trail project for many years, followed by many community members supporting it. He brought his family to cycle the trail on Earth Day. It has been in use for other local events and will be used more in future.

No action was taken.

11. Recess as Policy Advisory Committee – Reconvene as RTPA – Ratify Action of Policy Advisory Committee. Upon motion by Carter, second by Haschak, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (*5 Ayes – Haschak, Carter, Kanne, Duenas and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that the actions taken by the Policy Advisory Committee are ratified by the MCOG Board of Directors.

12. Reports - Information

- a. Caltrans District 1 – Projects Update and Information. Director Ahlstrand stated there were no reports other than those already mentioned.
- b. Mendocino Transit Authority. Executive Director Jacob King had no report. Ms. Barrett thanked Mr. King and MTA for providing the tour’s transportation today.
- c. Great Redwood Trail Agency. Director Haschak reported concerns in the community about the trail. GRTA’s Executive Director and he has set up a meeting with Round Valley Indian Tribes’ administration and president for later this month. Next Board meeting is December 5.
- d. MCOG Staff - Summary of Meetings. Ms. Barrett referred to the written report.
- e. MCOG Administration Staff

- i. *Executive Committee Recommendation of October 15, 2024 – Options to Recover FY 2022/23 Ineligible Local Transportation Funds from Mendocino Transit Authority and Reallocate – for December action.* CFO Orth gave a brief update, noting staff has been meeting with MTA and consultants to develop several options, two of which were brought to the Executive Committee, who recommended one preferred option for Board action in December. Details were available in the committee minutes approved today.
 - ii. *Miscellaneous.* None.
- f. MCOG Planning Staff.
- i. *Work Element 3 – 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) & Active Transportation Plan (ATP).* Ms. Barrett reported that staff has been conducting a survey with interactive map available, and encouraged all to respond. Materials were available in the room and online.
 - ii. *Miscellaneous.* None.
- g. MCOG Directors. Director Kanne reported a City of Willits new construction sidewalk project entirely funded by Pacific Gas & Electric, connecting south Willits neighborhoods from the senior center to the Haehl Creek housing development, and eventually connecting with Willits' segment of the Great Redwood Trail. This will increase ability to walk and cycle through the area.
- h. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) Delegates. Director Haschak reported the next meeting will be in person November 15 in Sacramento.

13. Tour of Local Transportation Projects. The group embarked on the walking tour at 1:36 p.m., then boarded the MTA bus, including the following itinerary (more fully described in the handout):

- Clean California grant-funded downtown Covelo improvements
- Walking a portion of the Covelo SR-162 Multi-Purpose Trail, south to north
- MTA bus trip to view extent of the Trail environs and County of Mendocino Department of Transportation (MCDOT) plans and projects
- MCDOT's bridge replacement project on Hill Road.

14. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Submitted: NEPHELE BARRETT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Janet Orth, Deputy Director & CFO