



MENDOCINO  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

367 North State Street~Ukiah~California~95482  
www.mendocinocog.org

PHILLIP J. DOW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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August 13, 2018

**To:** MCOG Board of Directors  
**From:** Janet Orth, Deputy Director / CFO  
**Subject:** Information Packet of August 20, 2018 Meeting - No Action Required

\* \* \* \* \*

The following items are attached.

1. MCOG Support for Senate Bill 1029 – Letters to State Senator Mike McGuire dated May 8 and June 8, 2018 expressing the Council's support for the Great Redwood Trail Act and requesting an amendment to increase local representation on the two proposed governing boards.
2. Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) – Meeting minutes of May 31, 2018.
3. "A Vague Advantage: How do Councils of Governments fit into the regional picture?"  
– Article on the role of COGs by Rick Bishop, Executive Director, WRCOG, dated July 29, 2018.



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June 8, 2018

Information # 1  
MCOG Meeting  
8/20/2018

The Honorable Mike McGuire  
State Senator, District 2  
State Capitol, Room 5061  
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

RE: SB 1029 (Great Redwood Trail Act) - Support

Dear Senator McGuire,

At their meeting of June 4, 2018, the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) received an update on recent amendments to Senate Bill 1029, from Jason Liles of your staff. We appreciate Mr. Liles' informational update, and are pleased to advise you of the MCOG Board's unanimous support for this legislation.

During consideration of this item, the Board discussed the need for an adequate funding plan in order for the new agency (Great Redwood Trail Agency) to be successful. Based on Mr. Liles' update, it is our understanding that funding details are still being negotiated, and a funding package will be developed separate from the policy issues addressed by this legislation. Our support for the legislation takes into account the realization that the legislation cannot realistically go forward without adequate funding.

As mentioned in our May 8, 2018 letter, as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Mendocino County, MCOG is very interested in ensuring that both the new "Great Redwood Trail Agency, and the to-be-expanded Sonoma-Marín Area Rapid Transit District (SMART) Board of Directors include appropriate local representation. To that end, the Board reiterated its support for the specific amendments in the May 8, 2018 letter regarding local representation on these two agencies. Specifically, MCOG would like to see the Great Redwood Trail Agency board membership include one member each from the MCOG board and the Humboldt County Association of Governments board, as well as one additional member jointly appointed by MCOG and HCAOG. The membership of the SMART Board of Directors should include two additional members appointed by the Cities of Ukiah and Willits.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide local input to this important legislation for Mendocino and neighboring counties. We look forward to its successful implementation.

Thank you, and please feel to contact me with any questions.

The Honorable Mike McGuire  
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Sincerely,



Nephele Barrett  
Executive Director

cc: Marcella Clem, Humboldt County Association of Governments  
Sage Sangiacomo, City Manager, City of Ukiah  
Stephanie Garrabrant-Sierra, City Manager, City of Willits  
Carmel Angelo, CEO, County of Mendocino



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May 8, 2018

The Honorable Mike McGuire  
State Senator, District 2  
State Capitol, Room 5061  
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

RE: SB 1029 – Great Redwood Trail Act

Dear Senator McGuire:

At our meeting of May 7, 2018, the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) considered Senate Bill 1029, and requested some amendments, as explained below.

As the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Mendocino County, MCOG has closely followed the progress of the North Coast Railroad Authority and activities along the rail line in Mendocino County. As a joint powers agency with members from the County and all four cities, MCOG has broad representation of all geographical areas of Mendocino County, and is interested in being represented on the new “Great Redwood Trail Agency” to be created under this proposed legislation.

MCOG would also like to see local representation of the cities along the rail corridor, on the to-be-expanded Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit District (SMART) Board of Directors.

The following specific amendments were requested by the MCOG Board of Directors:

Chapter 14, Section 5882:

- The Mendocino Council of Governments shall appoint one board member.
- The Humboldt County Association of Governments shall appoint one board member.
- The Mendocino Council of Governments and the Humboldt County Association of Governments shall jointly appoint one member.

SEC. 9, Section 105020:

- (i) [New #] Two members, one appointed by the City of Ukiah and one appointed by the City of Willits.

Also, we are requesting clarification of the exact location of the proposed divide between SMART and the new trail. In the bill amended April 30, 2018, that point is identified variously

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as: “in the City of Willits”; “mile post 142.5 in the City of Willits”; and “mile post 142.5 in Willits.” The mile post location appears to be two or three miles north of the City limits.

We look forward to your consideration of these requested amendments. This proposed legislation will be placed on the June 4, 2018 MCOG agenda for consideration of endorsement, and the Board may provide additional comments at that time.

Thank you, and please feel to contact me or my staff with any questions.

Sincerely,



Phillip J. Dow  
Executive Director

le/jmo

cc: Taylor Morrison, District Representative, Sen. McGuire  
Marcella Clem, Executive Director, Humboldt County Association of Governments  
Sage Sangiacomo, City Manager, City of Ukiah  
Stephanie Garrabrant-Sierra, City Manager, City of Willits

## SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

### Minutes

Wednesday, May 31, 2018, 10:00 a.m.

Mendocino County Administration Center, Conference Room C, 501 Low Gap Road, Ukiah

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Carla Meyer, MTA  
Jacob King, MTA  
Marilyn DeFrange, Ukiah Senior Center  
Diana Clark, Ukiah Senior Center (Alternate)  
Richard Baker, Willits Senior Center  
*(Note: Two positions are currently vacant.)*

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Dena Eddings (for Teresa Newton), Area Agency on Aging  
Charles Bush, Redwood Coast Seniors  
Arlene Peterson, Action Network  
Sheila Keys, Regional Center  
Doris Sloan, Consolidated Tribal Health

#### **STAFF & OTHERS PRESENT**

Nephele Barrett, MCOG Planning Staff  
Janet Orth, MCOG Administrative Staff  
Marta Ford, MCOG Administrative Staff

#### **1. Call to Order & Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.

#### **2. Public Expression**

There was no discussion under this item.

#### **3. Minutes**

The minutes from the November meeting were included in the packet for information and reference. Due to the length of time between meetings, members had already provided comments and corrections, and the minutes had been finalized.

#### **4. Report/Discussion of FY 18/19 Unmet Transit Needs Recommendation**

Janet Orth reviewed the materials in the packet and explained that this was an opportunity to provide final comment prior to the MCOG action on the Unmet Transit Needs scheduled for the June 4, 2018, meeting. The group reviewed the definitions of Unmet Transit Need and Reasonable to Meet.

Janet explained the results of MTA's analysis of the list of potential Unmet Transit Needs and the Transit Productivity Committee's recommendation. The TPC's recommendation that there are unmet needs that are reasonable to meet is contingent on review of MTA's existing routes, the senior center funding formula, and increased revenues through FTA 5311 program.

The group discussed the senior center funding formula and its origin. A need to revisit the formula has been identified, because it is no longer appropriate. Marilyn DeFrange explained that the MTA Board developed the formula in conjunction with Joe Curren, the former director of the Redwood Coast Senior Center Janet noted that MTA chairman Jim Mastin and a former Willits city manager had been involved, but no one had a record of the process. Marilyn explained that costs have increased because of the need to raise salaries due to minimum wage changes, however, funding has not kept up. The senior centers are struggling to recruit employees. There is a hope that new retail facilities in the Ukiah area will also help provide additional revenue from sales tax, although the legalization of marijuana may result in a decline in local disposable income.

The group discussed the individual items identified by the TPC as unmet needs that are reasonable to meet. Carla Meyer reviewed MTA's analysis. MTA is already providing rides for travel trainers assisting seniors on the South Coast. Fixed route service is available for seniors and disabled adults on weekends and evenings in the Ukiah area. A committee of MTA drivers will be conducting a review of all existing routes which will address many needs, including downtown Ukiah service and Willits pool and High School access. One additional trip to Point Arena will likely increase ridership.

The need for Wednesday service in Ukiah may be addressed by revising the funding formula for senior centers. Carla explained that an ad hoc committee should be formed with MTA board members and senior center representatives to revise the formula.

Brooktrails and Potter Valley service both fall into the medium priority category for MTA. Although there are potential riders in Brooktrails, there are likely not enough to make it feasible given the geographic spread of the areas. Potter Valley service for Mendocino County AIDS/Viral Hepatitis Network (MCAVHN) has not been successful in the past, but it will be considered through route review.

Carla reviewed the low priority items. Diana Clarke expressed concern with using the term "low priority" because it does not reflect need. It may give members of the public the wrong impression. MTA's categorization was based largely on their ability to meet the need.

The group agreed with MTA's identification of items that did not qualify as unmet needs.

Diana explained the Ukiah Senior Center's plan for initiating a non-emergency medical volunteer transportation service to out-of-county locations using senior center owned vans. The center regularly receives request for this type of transportation, and other services are not providing these trips in the Ukiah area. They've received initial funding for the program from community donors, although they were not granted funding from the Community Foundation. Carla suggested contacting the Tribes for contributions. The center hopes to begin this new service in July.

Because the Ukiah Senior Center is starting their non-emergency medical service, the group determined to add item #1-S from the list of Unmet Transit Needs to the recommendation of items

that are reasonable to meet. The USC service may also meet the need of providing service to seniors and disabled adults in isolated and inaccessible areas that buses cannot reach (#3-S). The group decided that this item should also be added to the list of unmet needs that are reasonable to meet.

Richard Baker made a motion to concur with the TPC's recommendation of unmet needs that are reasonable to meet with conditions, with the addition of item #1-S and #3-S (final recommended list shown below). The motion was seconded by Carla, and approved unanimously.

- #6-M Design of more shuttle routes *in Ukiah* that remove parking downtown as well as increase housing, with smaller buses that people would ride (clarified to add Ukiah)
- #7-M Addition of one-day round-trip from Ukiah to Point Arena
- #12-M Service to Willits pool and High School
- #1-PH Ukiah fixed route and DAR service starting a half hour earlier in the mornings for transportation to jobs (UVAH clients)
- #4-S Wheelchair accessible door-through-door assisted services for seniors and disabled adults on Wednesdays in the Ukiah area
- #1-S Non-emergency medical transportation for out of the service areas/hours for seniors and disabled adults
- #3-S Service for isolated *and inaccessible* seniors and disabled adults (clarified to add inaccessible)

Janet explained that in the fall, the group can review progress on the items that were in the recommendation. MTA hopes to initiate the process of revising the senior center funding formula prior to the next Unmet Needs Process.

## **5. Miscellaneous/Information**

The group discussed the next FTA Section 5310 grant cycle and the current 5311 cycle. MTA will be increasing their amount requested under the 5311 program.

Richard announced that the Willits Senior Center will be conducting a "drive through dinner" fundraiser.

Jacob announced that he was graduating from Leadership Mendocino and that MTA promoted him to Operations Manager. He gave an update on the status of MTA's response to the computer hacking last January.

## **6. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nephele Barrett, Program Manager





## **A Vague Advantage: How do Councils of Governments fit into the regional picture?**

*Posted by: Rick Bishop, Executive Director, WRCOG on Sunday, July 29, 2018*

I recently came across this former City of Riverside Mayor Ron Loveridge quote from his address to the National League of Cities during his tenure as that organization's President:

*"Cities and towns cannot solve, by themselves, major economic, social, and political problems. We are not walled places. We compete and succeed in a regional, national, and global market place. Many of our problems require us to cross boundaries."*

It's a practical and compelling observation. Issues running the gamut from transportation to air quality to economy cross local jurisdictional boundary lines, and individual approaches for addressing them aren't always ideal.

Due to their multi-jurisdictional composition and geographic coverage, Councils of Governments (COGs) are well-positioned to provide cost-effective regional approaches to issues impacting individual localities. As the saying goes, "There is strength in numbers;" bringing multiple agencies together in a single forum to discuss issues and develop solutions has its advantages.

Because of the way COGs are designed through their joint powers agreements and/or bylaws, they can be flexible and adaptive to issues and needs identified by their members. WRCOG's JPA is particularly vague when it comes to specific assignments, responsibilities or requirements, most likely a purposeful move by its founders to allow for flexibility in addressing unknown future issues.

This vagueness is what separates COGs from other regional agencies, especially single purpose entities. COGs task members to ask themselves *what they want to achieve rather than what they have to do*. They provide a forum where members can work together to respond to challenges that are not unique to a particular jurisdiction and do not neatly fit into the purview of local jurisdictions or single-purpose entities.

The diversity of programs undertaken by COGs reflects this. For example, WRCOG's Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) Program responds to the basic premise that traffic impacts resulting from significant new growth, can be better addressed at a scale that is larger than the local jurisdictional level. WRCOG's voluntary PACE programs, which provide financing for energy and water conservation improvements to homes and businesses, have resulted in thousands of properties becoming more efficient, making a dent in reducing

greenhouse gas emissions without the need for more state-imposed regulation. The new Regional Streetlight Program, which is helping jurisdictions acquire nearly 50,000 streetlights for the purpose of retrofitting them with LED lamps, will result in an estimated savings to municipalities of more than \$60 million over 20-years. And efforts to establish a Community Choice Aggregation Program will allow for local jurisdictions to purchase energy for constituents at lower costs. Streetlights, roads, energy. Three issues that are not unique to any particular place. Three issues that can benefit from larger-scale attention.

These are interesting times for local agencies, where policies and mandates change frequently, can come without requisite funding, and can conflict with and challenge local goals and objectives. Add to that the rapid growth occurring in virtually every jurisdiction in Western Riverside County and it becomes readily apparent that working together can, in many instances, be better than going it alone. No one said it would be easy accommodating the next million people who will make Riverside County “home” in the same manner as we have the last million. But Councils of Governments, with their purposeful vagueness, are uniquely qualified to help local officials identify, study, and solve big issues that are important to improving the region’s future quality of life.

How can COGs succeed? These factors are critical:

1. Elected official leadership that understand the benefits: It starts at the top. Any organization needs direction and leadership from those who believe in the mission and are committed to working together and have a mindset that understands the benefits of regional approaches to certain issues.
2. Find niches that serve member agency needs: COGs need to seek to implement projects that 1) are not peculiar or distinctive to individual communities, 2) are not already being done, and 3) bring a beneficial return on investment (cost effectiveness) to members. One of the biggest criticisms of COGs is that they duplicate work already under way.
3. Keep focused and stay true to the mission: The interface between a COG and local jurisdictions can get murky if the COG loses focus on issues that are multi-jurisdictional.
4. Bring your ideas; be the sounding board for the exploration of regional governmental issues: This is a critical advantage for a COG that does not readily exist with local entities and/or regional special districts. Bring your ideas.
5. Take a few risks: This is a tough one, especially for government, where public perceptions are already negative and can exacerbate aversion to risk. Charles Kettering once said, “99 percent of success is built on failure.” Calculated risks need to be on the table for consideration.
6. Embrace ambiguity: Initially awkward, the vagueness of the COG make-up is a distinct advantage. COG members are not constrained with what they can or cannot do. It all comes down to this: What do they want to accomplish?

*Although written for Riverside County, the message applies to COGs across the state and nation. Thanks for sharing, Rick!*