

# MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

## Approved MINUTES

Transit Productivity Committee - TPC

April 13, 2022

Audio-video Teleconference

### PRESENT:

MCOG Board Members: Dan Gerde, Jim O. Brown  
MTA Board Members: Jim Tarbell, Maureen Mulheren  
Senior Centers Rep.: Richard Baker, Willits Seniors, Jill Rexrode, Redwood Coast Seniors (Alt.)  
Staff & Others: Nephele Barrett, Janet Orth, and Jody Lowblad, MCOG  
Jacob King and Dawn White, MTA

### ABSENT:

None

1. **Call to Order.** Chair Gjerde called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Participants on the call were identified.

2. **Public Expression.** None.

### 3. **Review and Recommendation on MTA's Analysis and Prioritization of 2022/23 Unmet Transit Needs.**

Janet reviewed the annual process, the recommended action, and MCOG's adopted definitions. Included in the agenda packet was MTA's analysis of the list of all testimony compiled by MCOG from the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC), Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) and the February public hearing. The report was ranked by five categories: *High Priority* (4), *Medium Priority* (5), *Low Priority* (7), and *Already Exists* (3), for a total of 19 needs. Jacob then reviewed each need on the list, with group discussion.

- "High Priority–Consider for FY 2022/23" – #M-7, M-10, M-11 and S-4 all were to restore COVID-related service cuts, brought on by factors such as physical distancing requirements, driver shortages, and lack of ridership. #S-4 was the SSTAC's catch-all for restoring these service routes, "as feasible." #M-10, Ukiah to North Coast, would be the CC Rider route that includes a trip to Santa Rosa. These are the needs most requested by the public.
- "Medium Priority–Consider for FY 2022/23" – Four of these are inter-related and part of MCOG's mobility solutions feasibility study: #S-1, Service for Mendocino College students from Covelo to and from Ukiah campus; #M-3, Addition of transit service to Potter Valley; #M-4, Micro transit services for the communities of Brooktrails, Potter Valley, Hopland, Covelo and Laytonville; and #M-8, Service to Covelo and Laytonville. #M-9, Transit Center, is an important project but requires study and will not be feasible within the next fiscal year. These are next most often requested needs.
- "Low Priority–Consider for FY 2022/23" – Six of these, #S-2, #M-1, #M-2, #M-5, #M12 and #P-1, are legitimate service needs, but not feasible in the coming year. #S-5, Wednesday service for Ukiah Senior Center transportation, is a specialized service and eligible for a FTA Section 5310 program grant, however the center decided not to apply due to a shortage of staff to lead the effort.
- "Already Exists" – #S-3 and #M-6, Service to The Woods retirement community in Little River, has been on the list for many years and service will start next week. #P-2, Locate safe, convenient off-highway bus stops near amenities in downtown Gualala, duplicates existing stop at Sundstrom Mall and other stops where safe and legal.

Questions and discussion included:

- Will MTA's budget include resumption of the High Priority services? Yes, MTA's budget development treated each service route as though it would be running, so when drivers are available, they can start up again. (Nephele, Jacob)
- Are the High Priority needs "reasonable to meet" or not qualified as unmet needs, only temporarily suspended? Pros and cons of each approach. This year's situation is unusual. (Group)
- Is it fair to say that the Medium and Low Priority needs are not reasonable to meet, by definition, and only the High Priority are reasonable to meet? Yes, although the High Priority resumption of services would not be on the list from MTA's point of view. (Richard, Jacob)

- Review of high-level cost estimates for meeting the High Priority needs to restore services: #M-7 (Route 60) at \$92K, #M-10 (CC Rider) at \$270K, and #M-11 (Route 5) at \$108K. (Janet, Jacob)
- Would MTA meet the entire list if drivers were available? No, balance of list would be considered service expansion. Two general categories are 1) micro-transit, currently under study in several local communities and 2) traditional transit. (Jim, Jacob)
- MCOG's current-year Planning program includes a grant-funded feasibility study of Mobility Solutions in remote inland communities of Mendocino County, which is to identify projects appropriate for each locale, such as micro transit, for later funding cycles. (Nephele)
- SSTAC's other recommendation (also #M-9 from the public) is to develop a new transit center; while not meeting the definition of a service need, it would connect various transportation services, and a study will be funded in MCOG's 2022/23 Planning program. (Nephele)
- What is the outlook for driver recruitment? This is a nationwide problem and a major topic of CALACT's Spring Conference. MTA has trained recruits, who immediately took their licenses and left the county; MTA has since put in new safeguards, and could use 10-12 more drivers. (Jim, Jacob)
- Various options were considered for the High Priority items, in light of all resources being available except drivers. (Group)
- Discussion of #S-5 (Low Priority) for seniors' specialized services. Ukiah Senior Center is recruiting for an executive director and could not take advantage of grant opportunities this cycle. Meanwhile, MTA has some service available, though not door-through-door. (Jacob, Richard, Nephele)

#### **Recommendations:**

Upon motion by Baker, seconded by Brown, and carried unanimously by roll call vote (5 Ayes – Gjerde, Brown, Tarbell, Mulheren, Baker; 0 Noes; 0 Absent), the TPC recommended a finding that “there are unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet” for Fiscal Year 2022/23, as identified on the FY 2022/23 list:

- #M-7 Resumption of Route 60
- #M-10 Resume services linking inland to the coast – Ukiah to North Coast in the morning and back again, in the afternoon
- #M-11 Resume pre-pandemic service to coastal communities
- #S-4 Resumption of temporary service cuts related to pandemic and staffing shortages, as feasible

**4. Review and Recommendation on Fiscal Year 2022/23 Transit Claim.** Janet reviewed her written report, noting sales tax revenues to the Local Transportation Fund have been coming in much higher than expected, with the County Auditor's estimate at \$5.1 million and an audited FY 2020/21 budget surplus of \$754,417 available in FY 2022/23. The Executive Committee recommended holding back more reserves than usual, at 15% of the County Auditor's estimate, or \$771,000, which would be available for MTA as specified in policy. \$437,150 of LTF would be released for allocations. State Transit Assistance (STA) from fuel taxes also is recovering from the pandemic downturn, with over \$1.1 million available due to audited fund balance along with revised and new estimates. So there is evident growth in revenues, although expected to level off to about one percent in the coming year, with inflation on the rise, so care is advised.

A copy of MTA's claim was included in the agenda packet. MTA claimed the full Balance Available for Transit, showing an increase of \$1,102,476 over the previous year. The senior centers are expected to receive the same percentage LTF increase as MTA's for their contracted transportation program. Assuming the recommended Unmet Transit Needs finding is made by MCOG's Board, MTA would revise its LTF claim to show a separate amount for those. This year MTA has claimed an amount specifically for Transit Planning to pay for their needed five-year plan.

Discussion and questions included:

- This is good news for transit. What are next steps or recommended action? Identify unmet needs in the claim per TPC's action. (Jim, Janet)
- How best to estimate cost of unmet needs and how would MCOG verify expenditure? Estimate on the low side. MCOG has discretionary authority over enforcement since these are local funds. (Nephele, Janet)

- This will be the first budget with revised formula for senior centers as adopted by MCOG Board; amounts are estimated depending on insurance costs off the top. Ukiah and Redwood Coast will lose 6 to 7%, while the others will receive an increase. (Nephele, Dawn)
- There is a large increase in STA funds; the County’s budget model would use a carryover surplus amount for one-time expenditures. Would MTA have such a one-time use for that portion? No, currently that does not appear feasible, as fuel costs have doubled (\$650,000 for the coming year), maintenance is up 25%, and retention of workforce is essential. In that case. (Dan, Jacob)
- Discussion of LTF reserves. MCOG can save TDA funds, while MTA cannot. Annual audit tests of eligibility cause unexpended funds to be returned. In that case, the funds carry forward to be released in a following budget year, giving time to understand some of these cost spikes. Brief conversation on economic planning ahead. (Group)

**Recommendation:**

Upon motion by Brown, seconded by Mulheren, and carried unanimously by roll call vote (5 Ayes – Gjerde, Brown, Tarbell, Mulheren, Baker; 0 Noes; 0 Absent), the TPC recommended that MCOG identify Local Transportation Funds for reasonable-to-meet Unmet Transit Needs in MTA’s FY 2022/23 allocation.

Local Transportation Fund (LTF)		
MTA Operations	pending	
Unmet Transit Needs	pending	
Senior Center Operations	729,019	
Transit Planning	200,000	
Total LTF		4,657,106
State Transit Assistance Fund (STA)		
MTA Operations	1,167,375	
MTA & Seniors Capital	0	
Transit Capital Reserve	0	
Total STA		1,167,375
Capital Reserve Fund (CRF)		
MTA Capital, Current Year	0	
Senior Capital, Current Year	0	
Long-Term Capital Reserve	701,179	
Total CRF		701,179
<b>Total Recommended FY 2022/23 Transit Allocation</b>		<b>6,525,660</b>

**5. Review and Recommendation on MCOG Standards.** Janet’s written staff report recapped where this issue left off, with no action the past two years. Passengers per Hour is the remaining standard due for adjustment. Staff recommended an adjustment to Passengers per Hour for Short Distance Bus Routes [*note error in staff report recommendation naming Long Distance Routes*] for the near term and to revisit after a new five-year transit plan is released. An adjustment for Dial-a-Ride could also be considered.

Discussion included:

- A preview of the performance reports. (Agenda #6)
- The performance auditor has provided useful advice in the past, some of which has been implemented, such as a three-year average method for Cost per Hour. (Nephele)
- Historical context and how to establish targets that are both aspirational and achievable. (Group)
- The next five-year Short Range Transit Development Plan will be very helpful for a strategy. (Janet)

**A motion was made** by Richard, seconded by Dan, to reset the Passengers per Hour standard for Short Distance Bus Routes to 6.0, according to the three-year average from the performance report.

**Discussion on the motion:** Nephele found performance results from a previous report: 2017/18 at 9.5; 2016/17 at 8.6, and 2015/16 at 12.9 Passengers per Hour for the same service type. Dan noted historical data at 73% and 78% of the standard for different service types and suggested amending the motion to adjust Passengers per Hour to a similar level, rather than basing on performance in abnormal years. It was clarified that the next reset should be after a new transit plan is available. The motion makers concurred.

**Recommendation:**

Upon motion by Baker, seconded by Gjerde, and carried unanimously by roll call vote (5 Ayes – Gjerde, Brown, Tarbell, Mulheren, Baker; 0 Noes; 0 Absent), the TPC recommended that MCOG adjust the Passengers per Hour standard to 73 percent of the existing adopted standard for three service types, and to revisit the standards after the next Short Range Transit Development Plan is completed:

Passengers per Hour	Existing	Adjusted
Short Distance Bus Routes	14.0	10.2
Senior Centers	3.0	2.2
Dial-A-Ride	4.5	3.3

**6. Annual Review of MTA Performance Reports Against MCOG Standards.** Janet presented findings of her analysis, as documented in the written staff report. In summary, the three-year average compared with last year’s review changed only slightly. The one difference is that Long Distance Routes did not meet the optional Cost per Passenger, with costs rising noticeably, but still reached the three-of-three target. Short Distance Routes would meet three-of-three if the Passengers per Hour standard were not set artificially high. Staff’s takeaway was that—after a second tough year—all met the goal of at least two out of three standards, so once again congratulations are in order.

Service Type	2021	3-Yr Average
Dial-A-Ride (DAR) maintained the same 3-yr average	1 of 4	2 of 4
Short Distance Bus Routes maintained the same 3-yr average	1 of 4	2 of 4
Long Distance Routes dropped by 1 (Pass/Hr) in 2021, dropped by 1 in (Pass/Hr) in 3-year average	1 of 4	3 of 4
Senior Centers data is incomplete and reported as available	1 of 4	2 of 4

Discussion included:

- Senior centers Farebox numbers appear artificially high due to differences in revenue types included. In general, costs are high and ridership is low for all service types. (Janet)
- What are reasons for several spikes in Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour during 2021? Some costs, such as annual insurance premiums and bulk fuel purchases, or unusual/periodic expenses can skew results for a quarterly reporting period. (Janet, Jacob, Dawn)
- Ridership was up in Spring 2021, as pandemic conditions started to ease and people were out more. (Nephele, Jacob)
- Senior centers were providing just essential services during 2021. The same was true for MTA until July 2021. (Richard, Jacob)
- Senior centers are still requiring masks on buses. A new health order today extended masking on all public transportation from April 18 to May 3. (Jill, Richard, Jacob)
- In good news, Golden Gate Bridge District is now losing less than \$1 million per week on its transit services. (Jacob)

**Recommendation:**

Upon motion by Brown, seconded by Baker, and carried unanimously by roll call vote (5 Ayes – Gjerde, Brown, Tarbell, Mulheren, Baker; 0 Noes; 0 Absent), the TPC advised that the performance review was made with no action taken, and recommended annual reviews and reports going forward.

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

**7. Miscellaneous / Members’ Concerns / Announcements.** None.

**8. Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

# Mendocino Council of Governments

## Annual Transit Performance Review

January 1 - December 31, 2021

<b>MCOG Standards</b>	<b>Passengers per Hour</b>	<b>Farebox Ratio</b>	<b>Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour</b>	<b>Cost per Passenger</b>
<i>When comparing to performance:</i>	Higher # is better	Higher # is better	Lower # is better	Lower # is better
<b>Dial-A-Ride</b>				
Jan, Feb, Mar 2021	2.6	12%	\$118.55	\$45.60
Apr, May, June 2021	7.6	31%	\$377.05	\$49.61
July, Aug, Sept 2021	3.2	15%	\$112.65	\$35.20
Oct, Nov, Dec 2021	2.0	11%	\$86.47	\$43.24
Annual Average	3.9	17.3%	\$173.68	\$43.41
Standard	<b>4.5</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	NA	NA
<b>CPI Adjusted Rolling Average</b>	NA	NA	<b>\$116.41</b>	<b>\$25.87</b>
Result	not met	✓	not met	not met
<b>Short Distance Bus Routes *</b>				
Jan, Feb, Mar 2021	3.8	15%	\$226.09	\$59.50
Apr, May, June 2021	3.8	10%	\$239.43	\$63.01
July, Aug, Sept 2021	4.1	16%	\$169.00	\$41.22
Oct, Nov, Dec 2021	4.0	14%	\$199.79	\$49.95
Annual Average	3.9	13.8%	\$208.58	\$53.42
Standard	<b>14.0</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	NA	NA
<b>CPI Adjusted Rolling Average</b>	NA	NA	<b>\$144.10</b>	<b>\$10.29</b>
Result	not met	✓	not met	not met
<b>Long Distance Routes **</b>				
Jan, Feb, Mar 2021	1.6	12%	\$188.11	\$117.57
Apr, May, June 2021	3.3	8%	\$367.84	\$111.47
July, Aug, Sept 2021	2.4	11%	\$141.83	\$59.10
Oct, Nov, Dec 2021	2.5	9%	\$174.22	\$69.69
Annual Average	2.5	10.0%	\$218.00	\$89.45
Standard	<b>3.2</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	NA	NA
<b>CPI Adjusted Rolling Average</b>	NA	NA	<b>\$169.20</b>	<b>\$52.88</b>
Result	not met	✓	not met	not met
<b>Senior Centers</b>				
Jan, Feb, Mar 2021	2.1	14%	\$85.11	\$40.92
Apr, May, June 2021	2.0	22%	\$90.84	\$45.42
July, Aug, Sept 2021	1.9	23%	\$95.54	\$51.64
Oct, Nov, Dec 2021	2.0	22%	\$133.64	\$65.72
Annual Average	2.0	20.4%	\$101.28	\$50.93
Standard	<b>3.0</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	NA	NA
<b>CPI Adjusted Rolling Average</b>	NA	NA	<b>\$79.88</b>	<b>\$26.63</b>
Result	not met	✓	not met	not met

\* Includes 1 Willits Local, 5 Bragg About, 7 Jitney, 9 Ukiah Local

\*\* Includes 20 Willits/Ukiah, 60 Coaster, 65/66 CC Rider, 75 Gualala/Ukiah, 95 Point Arena/Santa Rosa

### 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 from number of decimal places entered.

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

MCOG Board adopted 10% Farebox Ration standard on June 3, 2019 as recommended by TPC.

Reporting of Farebox by certain Senior Centers is inconsistent with TDA, thereby affecting average performance for all.

# Mendocino Council of Governments Annual Transit Performance Review

3 Years: January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2021

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		
<b>Dial-A-Ride</b>						
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2019	3.3	23.8%	\$76.96	\$23.03	\$79.27	3.00%
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2020	2.8	15.0%	\$87.49	\$33.69	\$88.95	1.67%
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2021	3.9	17.3%	\$173.68	\$43.41	\$181.02	4.23%
3-Year Average	3.3	18.7%	\$112.71	\$33.38	\$116.41	2.97%
Standard	<b>4.5</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	NA	NA		
CPI Adjusted Rolling Average	NA	NA	<b>\$116.41</b>	<b>\$25.87</b>		
Result	not met	✓	✓	not met		Cost/Hr divided by Pass/Hr standard
<b>Short Distance Bus Routes</b>						
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2019	7.7	35.5%	\$101.38	\$13.19	\$104.42	
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2020	6.4	22.8%	\$108.68	\$19.48	\$110.49	
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2021	3.9	13.8%	\$208.58	\$53.42	\$217.39	
3-Year Average	6.0	24.0%	\$139.55	\$28.70	\$144.10	
Standard	<b>14.0</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	NA	NA		
CPI Adjusted Rolling Average	NA	NA	<b>\$144.10</b>	<b>\$10.29</b>		
Result	not met	✓	✓	not met		
<b>Long Distance Routes</b>						
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2019	4.7	21.8%	\$113.47	\$25.08	\$116.87	
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2020	4.2	15.5%	\$160.83	\$50.46	\$163.52	
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2021	2.5	10.0%	\$218.00	\$89.45	\$227.21	
3-Year Average	3.8	15.8%	\$164.10	\$55.00	\$169.20	
Standard	<b>3.2</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	NA	NA		
CPI Adjusted Rolling Average	NA	NA	<b>\$169.20</b>	<b>\$52.88</b>		
Result	✓	✓	✓	not met		
<b>Senior Centers</b>						
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2019	3.0	30.3%	\$67.94	\$22.56	\$69.98	
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2020	2.1	17.4%	\$63.05	\$32.32	\$64.10	
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2021	2.0	20.4%	\$101.28	\$50.93	\$105.56	
3-Year Average	2.4	22.7%	\$77.42	\$35.27	\$79.88	
Standard	<b>3.0</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	NA	NA		
CPI Adjusted Rolling Average	NA	NA	<b>\$79.88</b>	<b>\$26.63</b>		
Result	not met	✓	✓	not met		

**NOTES:**

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