

**Steering Committee Meeting Notes**

**Friday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013 10:00 am – 11:30 am**

The Community Foundation of Mendocino County  
204 S. Oak Street, Ukiah, CA 95482 (707) 468-9882

**Dial In # (605) 477-2100 Participant access code: 565491#**

**1. Call to Order: 10:00 am**

- a. Attendees: Bob Perkowsky, Carol Brodsky, Greg Jirak, Jim Moorehead, Jacob Turner, John Goldsmith, Mike Nicholls, Ray Gifford, Jr., Steve Turner, Trish Steel
- b. Call-in: None
- c. Changes to agenda: We will make the MCOG grant our priority for discussion.

**2. Golden Bear Broadband**

- a. The Mendocino/Sonoma County meeting to discuss permitting issues related to the Route 1 Corridor Project was changed to February 8<sup>th</sup>.
- b. The upload of the 450 page GGB application to the California Advanced Services Fund was completed January 18<sup>th</sup>

**3. Planning Commission Update**

- a. Ray Gifford Jr (Ukiah Wireless) and Jacob Turner (Ring Nebula) attended a recent Planning Commission meeting, and provided a brief update.
- b. The proposed zoning changes and wireless guidelines were not on the agenda and therefore couldn't be discussed, but the commission promised to have another meeting in a month to discuss them.
- c. During public comment time, Tony Shaw (Employers Council) and Gary Gochberg (Crown Castle) both spoke.
- d. They (Jacob and Ray) had the sense that the commission is open to finding a way to deal with the small providers siting needs.

**4. Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG)/Mendocino County Office of Education (MCOE) transportation planning grant – Steve Turner**

- a. See notes from the meeting of January 18<sup>th</sup> for some background information about this grant.
- b. Steve from MCOE attended the meeting to discuss the collaboration of MCOE with the Alliance in applying for a MCOG planning grant. The grant that Steve thinks holds potential is the Environmental Justice & Community-Based Transportation Planning Grant.
- c. MCOE has an interest in bigger community development of broadband infrastructure, as they are trying to develop educational opportunities for kids in rural schools. While a school may have broadband access, it often doesn't go beyond the school borders, and blended learning requires broadband access for students outside the school campus including at home.

- d. There are steps just to get the application submitted: For this grant, MCOG has to be the applicant to the state (Caltrans), and so they want a concept statement that they can bring to Caltrans staff to explore the potential eligibility of our proposal.
- e. If Caltrans is open to this statement, then we would have until mid-February to develop the format that MCOG would then take to the MCOG's Board of Directors. These elected officials would then decide whether the project is worth MCOG's time to develop.
- f. The draft concept statement that Steve wrote is as follows: *"Current broadband coverage maps of Mendocino County grossly overstate access to true broadband level internet connectivity. The proposed project would engage the Broadband Alliance of Mendocino County and Mendocino County Office of Education in collaboration with school and college districts, county public safety and health agencies, tribes, and the business community in conducting a thorough survey of broadband access and affordability in Mendocino County. The accurate maps generated from the data would identify areas deserving of private and public investment in broadband infrastructure and increase our eligibility for grant funding. Development of universal high speed broadband access in Mendocino county will greatly increase access to educational options for our schools, students and their families; reduce the wear and tear on our highway infrastructure, stimulate economic development, improve public safety communications and reduce environmental damage by reducing vehicle miles traveled."*
- g. Steve said that one of the first things we need to do is to define specific products we would produce, such as economic data or accurate maps that would have value to the state. If we can produce data, then we can refute the inaccurate state maps (if not in general, at least on a project application basis).
- h. The second big focus of the grant is on community involvement. Successful projects have used this money in conducting outreach meetings, and that could be of value to this group in terms of raising public consciousness.
- i. Steve asked the group if they thought this was the right concept to push forward, and something that would be supported by our activities further down the road. He also asked what other components for community involvement we could add to make it more valuable.
- j. There was a discussion about the mapping problem; Jim feels that we really need to come to grips with this issue. He posited that some staffer at CPUC could look at the maps and summarily dismiss a submitted application because the maps and underlying data incorrectly show the project area is served.
- k. If we come up with a statistically valid way to get accurate mapping data, it would be useful to have, even if GGB is not funded.
- l. This is a 3-year project: the first year is getting the grant, and then we would have two years to complete the project with an absolute deadline at the end.
- m. Regarding the community involvement aspect, the Alliance is currently working on a Broadband Access Inventory, going to all the anchor institutions, identifying their physical location and their broadband access. This year we will reach out to the commercial interests of the county, such as the wineries and businesses where people are working out of their homes.

- n. Another possible product of this grant could be to find solutions to bridge the digital divide – making access affordable, and people having computers/tablets/etc at their end to connect to. That’s the economic disadvantage of broadband, and if we identify that problem it may be useful for grant applications or federal subsidies for connections. We could also include in the data what people have to pay for their broadband access.
- o. Steve asked if the time involved (three years) was a problem for us, and it seemed the general feeling was that it was not a problem, as things like this just take a while. Also Greg pointed out that broadband deployment is an on-going process, as we will always need to keep up with faster speeds and technology.
- p. If **MCOG** staff gets the ok to work with us, an implementation plan on the ground work that would have to be done to get the survey info together would be needed. Steve suggested that since the MCOE’s career technical education program funds positions of computer technicians at some of the smaller schools, they are MCOE’s employees and we could reach students and families through them. **The grant would be** paying people for their time to conduct the surveys and conduct outreach meetings. We could also find other partners with the Tribes and Sheriff’s offices if we have the money to pay for their time and efforts.
- q. The grant requires a 7.5% cash match, and 2.5% in-kind match. We could ask MCOG Executive Director Phil Dow if there are any transportation funds that can be used as a match. The source of the cash matching portion needs to be identified in the April application when it is submitted to Caltrans.
- r. Jim wondered if the CASF planning grant that the Alliance has can be used as leverage and as a match for this grant, as it dovetails in with what we are doing already and it would be helping to fund an ongoing successful project (Greg). It would be taking the products that we are producing for our CASF grant, and taking them to the next level.
- s. Steve noted that there **was** a Caltrans focus towards telecommuting being a viable option to land transportation. **About** twenty years ago Caltrans spent money to develop telecommuting sites. Also **MCOE** received grant money from the Air District to install video conferencing equipment, which then reduced road trips for meetings
- t. Not too long ago Greg did an economic analysis of the impact the collapse of the internet provider Esplanade had on the south coast, and the study estimated an additional 400,000 miles on our county roads in addition to the extra costs (reduced income) for workers having to commute. We can pretty easily show the impact broadband has on our transportation corridors.
- u. Public safety would also be a powerful partner for us, in that the importance of having connectivity for our transportation corridors is obvious. Connectivity for our transportation corridors also appeals to commercial interests, and it’s important for their drivers to be able to have contact with their dispatch.
- v. Mike said that in Sonoma County, within the same school district, they have two high schools where one has broadband, and the other is underserved with 2 T1 lines, so it creates a real problem. Kids cannot get the same quality education as the resources available are unequal, and kids are transferring.

- w. Bob told the group about an IBM programmer he met in Mendocino who comes up here from Sacramento four times a year, and would like to move here but can't because he can't get the type of broadband access he would need for his work.
- x. In the schools, there is a big move to transition from heavy books to tablets, which can be updated easily. There is also a special education component to having broadband access, as there is technology that can help with specific disabilities (such as limited sight, etc.)
- y. We have had limited luck with reaching out to the tribes, although we've made good contact with three so far: Hopland, Manchester, and Pinoleville.
- z. We would like to get more outreach from the northern part of the county; no one from that area comes to our meetings or is involved in the Alliance (except Trish).
- aa. Next steps for this grant: (i, ii, and iii order changed)
  - i. If we like this draft concept paragraph Steve provided, give it to the MCOG staff for them to show to Caltrans. If the MCOG staff wants more information from us, they will ask.
  - ii. Steve will talk to Phil Dow (ED MGOC), as getting it past Caltrans is the first step.
  - iii. Get Caltrans preliminary approval.
  - iv. **In the next two** to three weeks, by February 13<sup>th</sup>, put some energy into developing our concept to take to the MCOG Board for their March 4th board meeting. This won't be the full application, but enough for them to know that we've thought this through.
  - v. Once MCOG supports the application, it would be developed and submitted to Caltrans by April 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Alliance could support the application with some endorsement letters.
  - vi. The state will pass their budget in July, and by September/**November** we should know which projects they will fund.
  - vii. If funded, we would have a kickoff meeting in February 2014.

**5. Vision Mendocino 2030 – no discussion**

- a. Potential Alliance Involvement
- b. Mandate for conduit placement in road projects

**6. Planning for 2013**

- a. This will be the subject of a special upcoming Executive Committee planning meeting

**7. Community Foundation Challenge Grant – no discussion**

**8. Opportunities - no discussion**

- a. Projects
  - i. Route 1 Corridor Project
  - ii. Rancho Navarro
  - iii. Willowbrook/Sherwood Road

**9. Committee Reports – no reports**

**10. Meeting Adjourned at 11:20**

**Next meetings: February 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>**