COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 7/22/2025

File #: 25-854

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) to Establish Active Collaboration on the Partnering Assets and Authorities for Comprehensive Transit (PAACT) Planning Project

RECOMMENDATION(S):
That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Review, approve, and authorize the Director of Planning and Building to sign the attached MOU with HCAOG; and
2. Direct the Clerk of the Board to provide the Planning and Building Department with the notice of action.

STRATEGIC PLAN:
This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Safe & Healthy Communities
Strategic Plan Category: 1007 - Improve the transportation network to be multi-model, safe, sustainable and equitable

DISCUSSION:
The Board is being asked to authorize the Director of Planning and Building to sign the MOU (Attachment 1) with HCAOG which requires the county to provide a maximum of 100 hours of staff time to the PAACT planning project. HCAOG has been awarded a California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant in the amount of $479,500 to be used for the PAACT planning project. The county is a sub-applicant on the grant and will be awarded $10,000 to provide a representative from the county to serve as a partner on the Steering Working Group for the project, which will offset unfunded costs that would normally affect the General Fund when implementing the county's Strategic Plan. The county has pledged to provide a $1,500 local cash match in the form of staff time and will provide an additional $698 of staff time to cover the total estimated staff cost of $12,198.

Project Objectives:
Humboldt's transit service is impressive for such a rural, remote, low-density region, but there are persistent unmet needs for more span and frequency which cannot be met without more housing and mixed uses developed in in-fill areas. The project will build strong government-to-government partnerships, harnessing interagency leadership to reshape the region's transit system into a more connected, efficient, and more user-focused multi-modal network that attracts significantly more users in upcoming years. A transit network analysis will complement the short-term Transit Development Plan (December, 2023) by identifying long-term opportunities to coordinate or consolidate routes, services, and/or governance, and leverage additional funding sources to expand transit service and multimodal options.

The project will focus on building strong working relationships among HCAOG, Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA), other transit and mobility-service providers, Caltrans, local tribes, cities, and county agencies to plan transportation and land use together, taking into

account socio-economic and equity factors and funding mechanisms. The efforts from this study will serve as a guide for agencies with land-use authority to increase consideration, and coordination, of multi-modal access in land use goals, policy, codes, and discretionary permitting.

The project includes establishing one or more limited-term advisory groups; appointed participants will include people who are government staff and/or elected officials, transit managers and operators, regular transit riders, appointed residents and members of the public.

A government-based project steering group will build upon, and serve to strengthen, government-to-government relationships. The distinct purposes of the steering group are to: work directly with the project team and consultants to complete the comprehensive transit network analysis; tackle more difficult or costly network management decisions; recommend/promote transit-supportive land use policy directives; and achieve consensus on regional policy directives to effectively affect regional decisions.

Summary of the role of Partners in the Project-Steering Working Group:

- Actively participate in a multi-agency, project-advisory working group.
- Commit to a maximum of 100 staff hours over the course of the grant project (2 years).
- Attend working in-person meetings, some of which will be all-day (no more than 3).
- Share knowledge (project-related, transit-focused) with Project-Steering Working Group and project team staff (HCAOG, HTA, and consultant staff).
- Participate in discussions for setting values and priorities for regional transit network.
- Engage with, and help direct, project consultants for existing conditions assessment and regional transit operations assessment/analysis.
- Participate by directing, informing, and reviewing and commenting on project deliverables for the project tasks:
    - Task 1. Establish Advisory Group (Project Steering Working Group)
    - Task 2. Understanding the community's transit values and priorities
    - Task 3. Existing Conditions Report on community & regional characteristics
    - Task 4. Transit market analysis & regional operations assessment
    - Task 5. Land use-transit policy connections
    - Task 6. Stakeholder outreach, engagement & participation strategies

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Funding is provided by the Caltrans FY2024-25 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant: Strategic Partnerships - Transit Grant Program. The Strategic Partnerships grants fund transportation planning studies in collaboration with Caltrans to address the needs of the State Highway System. The grants are intended to help achieve Caltrans's mission and grant program objectives, and to strengthen government-to-government relationships.

Revenue line for funding receipt is anticipated to be 1100282-514060 (State-Small Grants).

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Expenditures (Fund, Budget Unit)	**FY25-26 Projected***	**FY26-27 Projected***
Budgeted Expenses*	$6,099.00	$6,099.00
Additional Appropriation Requested	-	-
Total Expenditures	$6,099.00	$6,099.00

**Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.*

Funding Sources (Fund, Budget Unit)	**FY25-26 Projected***	**FY26-27 Projected***
General Fund	$1,099.00	$1,099.00
State Funds	$5,000.00	$5,000.00
Fees/Other	-	-
Use of Fund Balance	-	-

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Contingencies	-	-
Total Funding Sources	$6,099.00	$6,099.00

**Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.*
***Humboldt County is a sub-applicant and will support the project with a Planning Manager position at a rate of $121.98/hour or as may be modified by the Board of Supervisors. The grant award is $10,000. The General Fund will contribute a $1,500 staff time cash match along with $698 of staff time to cover the total staff cost of $12,198. This will allow for the allocation of the maximum of 100 staff hours committed over the course of the grant project (2 years).*

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:
The total sub-applicant grant amount the County will receive is $10,000 for the period of 2025-26 through 2026-27. Activities related to the grant will be budgeted in 1100 Department - 282 Division. The grant budget includes $10,000 for staffing. There is a local staff time match in the amount of $1,500 and a contribution of $698 of staff time. Both provided from the General Fund budget unit 1100282. The grant award will offset unfunded costs that would normally affect the General Fund when implementing the county's Strategic Plan.

STAFFING IMPACT:
This action receives grant funds from Caltrans. Existing planned expenditure for staff will count towards the $1,500 match and the $698 contribution. Grant funds will pay for the annual salary and benefits of Long-Range Planning staff assigned to this project, who are currently paid from the General Fund. In addition, administrative support assigned to this Long Range Planning project will be covered at nearly 100%.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:
The project will include collaboration with a multitude of agencies including: HCAOG, HTA, Caltrans, Trinidad Rancheria, the Karuk Tribe, the Yurok Tribe, and the cities of Arcata, Trinidad, Fortuna, Blue Lake and Eureka.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:
The Board could choose not to secure these funds. This is not recommended as improvement to the transportation network to be multi-model, safe, sustainable and equitable is part of the County's Strategic Plan.

ATTACHMENTS:
1. MOU with HCAOG

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:
Meeting of: N/A
File No.: N/A