



HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
Regional Transportation Planning Agency
Humboldt County Local Transportation Authority
Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies
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AGENDA ITEM 7a
HCAOG Board Meeting
February 16, 2023

DATE: January 9, 2023
TO: HCAOG Board of Directors
FROM: Beth Burks, Executive Director
SUBJECT: **Draft Fiscal Year 2023-24 Overall Work Program & Budget**

STAFF REPORT

Contents:

- Staff's Recommended Action
- Staff Summary
- Draft FY 2023-24 Overall Work Program & Budget

Staff's Recommended Action:

1. Introduce the item as an action item;
2. Allow staff to present the item;
3. Receive public comment;
4. Discuss item and consider making the motion:
"The PAC recommends that the HCAOG Board approve the Draft FY 2023-24 OWP & Budget and direct staff to forward to Caltrans for their review and comments."

Staff Summary:

Annually, each Regional Transportation Planning Agency in the state is required to develop and submit an Overall Work Program (OWP). The OWP & Budget outlines regional transportation planning activities to be accomplished between July 1 and June 30 of the State fiscal year with a focus on its transportation goals and objectives. The OWP is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of transportation planning and should include regionally significant activities.

The OWP is the primary management tool for HCAOG and contains a description of the activities to be undertaken in the coming fiscal year along with detailed budget information. A draft OWP is due to Caltrans by March 1 for review and comment before it is formally approved by the Board.

In addition to completing our annual responsibilities under the Transit Development Act (Work Elements 10 and 12), continuing with the Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) grant (Work Element 19), and the ongoing Service Authority for Freeways Emergency (SAFE, Work Element 1), major areas of focus for the upcoming fiscal year will be safety, grant writing, support and implementation, and increasing transit ridership.

Work Element 13 is Active Transportation and Safety. Transportation related deaths in our county remain alarmingly high, especially for pedestrians. The Go Slow Watch the Road campaign has had some success but there is more work to be done. We want to support Vision Zero planning and implementation, work closely with Caltrans for short term and long-term safety fixes on Broadway and continue to seek ways we can be useful in accomplishing safety improvements region wide.

Grant writing and support- With the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA or BIL) there is a funding infusion into infrastructure projects. We are actively seeking grant funding for a variety of projects. We have Work Element 7 which is devoted to research, collaboration and transit planning grant developments. Additionally, we have added grant writing as a subtask to various other work elements. In FY 22-23 we set aside \$50,000 to support member agencies in applying for grants. In FY 23-24 we are proposing to set aside approximately an additional \$29,000 for this purpose. These funds can be requested by jurisdiction that may need assistance preparing more technical aspects of a grant proposal, or as a local match. Member agencies would request access to these funds through the TAC and the HCAOG Board would ultimately approve their use.

Increasing transit ridership and supporting Humboldt Transit Authority- The draft FY 23-24 OWP & Budget includes Work Element 17 TIRCP (Transit and Intercity Rail Capitol Program). This work element which was recently added to the current FY 22-23 OWP, will continue through fiscal year 23-24 allowing HCAOG to partner with the Humboldt Transit Authority and provide support. Major roles for HCAOG include leading public participation and efforts to increase ridership.

An equity lens continues to drive our workflow. By focusing on pedestrian safety and supporting improved transit we continue to elevate the needs of the most vulnerable road users and bring convenience and opportunity to those dependent on transit.

Budget:

The Draft FY 2023-24 OWP has been prepared in compliance with Caltrans' most recent handbook for Regional Transportation Planning as necessary to receive federal and state transportation planning funds and has a total budget of \$1,973,000.

The Draft FY 2023-24 Budget includes funding for four full-time and one half-time employee necessary to implement the in-house projects projected. As part of our transition planning, there will be six months of overlap in FY 2023-24 between the Administrative Services Officer (who will be newly hired prior to the start of the 23-24 fiscal year) and the Fiscal Administrative Officer, Debbie Egger, who will be retiring in December.

Traditionally HCAOG has provided cost of living increases consistent with rates derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index. This year that would be a 6% increase. As an alternative to this increase the Executive Director is recommending a reduced work week for HCAOG employees, whereby full-time employment would be 34 hours per week.

There are several reasons behind this proposal.

- It saves HCAOG approximately \$30,000 annually (this is in comparison to approving the 6% cost of living increase)
- There is mounting evidence that reducing the work week is better for employees and employers.
 - Among the benefits cited are improvements to employee health, wellbeing, and job satisfaction.
 - It is a powerful recruitment and retention tool. Increasingly the workforce is looking for flexibility and more improved work-life balance. Recruitment is especially timely as we are currently recruiting for the key position of an Administrative Services Officer.
 - Remarkably, companies that have piloted or switched to a reduced work schedule have not experienced a decrease in productivity. For example, a large scale pilot found that 45% of companies participating reported the same level of productivity, while 34% reported a slight increase, and 15% reported significantly improved productivity. Only 5% reported less productivity.¹

The general philosophy of reducing working hours and the explanation for how productivity is not lost despite fewer hours logged at work, is that employees with additional time to tend to their own health and wellbeing show up to work more prepared and motivated to be productive.

This recommendation comes from reviewing HCAOG budget, commitments, and opportunities for operational improvements, analyzing the research related to reducing weekly work hours, consulting with staff, and a review of CalPERS requirements. Based on this review I believe with a high level of confidence we can continue to meet our commitments while at the same time demonstrating a commitment to creating an exceptional place to work.

If the reduced work schedule is approved by the Board changes to the Personnel policies would be needed. Some specifics of how the schedule would be implemented:

- No additional benefit on weeks with a holiday. Therefore, reduced work schedule would apply to 37 weeks of the year.
- If an employee has jury duty or took time off to assist with elections, they would not get additional time off those weeks.
- Working beyond 34 hours in a work week (up to 40 hours) would result in comp time, but at a straight pay rate, not overtime. (HCAOG does not support overtime)

The Board may choose to accept the recommended Draft FY 23-24 Overall Work Program as presented or direct staff to make changes prior to submitting to Caltrans for review.

¹ 4 Day Week mid-pilot results, <https://www.4dayweek.com/news-posts/uk-four-day-week-pilot-mid-results>.