



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Public Works and Parks

DATE: August 30, 2012

TO: Members, Board of Supervisors
via the County Manager

FROM: James C. Porter, Director of Public Works and Parks

SUBJECT: Commute Alternatives Program

At the June 18, 2012 budget hearing, your Board requested that the Department of Public Works and Parks report back on the Commute Alternatives Program to determine whether the funds are being spent efficiently; identify marketing techniques used to advertise the program to employees; as well as possible alternative uses, including bicycle and pedestrian funding. This report provides the requested information.

Background

In 1988 voters approved Measure A, San Mateo County's Half Cent transportation sales tax, which provides funding to meet transportation infrastructure, transportation system safety, and traffic congestion management needs of the County. Annually, 22.5% of the total Measure A revenue is allocated to the 20 cities and the County to:

- Maintain sidewalks
- Maintain roadways
- Promote or operate alternate modes of transportation, which may include funding shuttles, sponsoring carpools, bicycling, and pedestrian programs
- Develop and implement traffic operations and safety projects, including signal coordination, bike/pedestrian safety projects, eliminating hazardous conditions or acquiring right-of-way.

The County's allocation averages \$1.8 million annually and is used, or will be used, to fund:

- Bike lockers and racks (\$5,000 in FY2011-12)
- Fitzgerald Marine Reserve Parking Lot Improvement Project (\$200,000 in FY2012-13)

- San Mateo County-Circle Star-Caltrain shuttle (Approximately \$39,000 in FY2013-14)
- Street Resurfacing projects to reduce vehicle and bicycle traffic congestion and improve safety (Approximately \$630,000 in FY2013-14)
- Commute Alternatives Program (Approximately \$1.2 million annually and ongoing)
- Assessment from City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG) to support congestion management and transportation planning services (Approximately \$126,000 annually and ongoing)
- Crossing Guard Program (Redwood City School District, San Mateo/Foster City School District, Las Lomas School District, and the Jefferson School District) (Approximately \$120,000 annually and ongoing)

The Commute Alternatives Program (CAP) was established in December 1991 to comply with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's Regulation 13, Rule 1. Rule 1 required all companies in the Bay Area, that employ 100 or more workers, to implement measures to reduce the number of employees who commute in single occupant vehicles. In 1992, your Board approved the initial transit subsidy of \$20 per month to help meet that mandate and provide an incentive to employees to use public transit, or other means besides single occupant vehicles when traveling to and from work. CAP estimates that 4,480 metric tons of CO₂ emissions are eliminated each year due to county employees who participate in the program. This effort, along with your Board's adoption of the Cool Counties Declaration in 2007, and implementation of the Energy Efficiency Climate Action Plan enable to County to meet its commitment to reduce traffic and air pollution, and conserve energy.

Funding

The CAP has been highly successful, growing from approximately 300 participants in the first year of operation to 1,451 employees today. Currently, the Commute Alternative program utilizes approximately \$1.2 million in Measure A funding to administer the program and provide \$20 per month to 347 employees who carpool, bike, walk to work; and up to \$75 per month to 1104 employees who take mass transit or participate in a vanpool. In January 2010, CAP migrated to an online transit ticket order fulfillment provider as the transit agencies throughout the Bay Area discontinued paper passes and transferred to the Clipper card system. The Clipper card is an all-in-one transit card that holds multiple passes, ride books or tickets which are specific to the transit system being used.

In addition to managing the commute alternative subsidy program, the program also manages carpool parking and employee shuttles, shuttle grant requests, program marketing, and liaise with external agencies to participate in regional transportation congestion management solutions, such as Peninsula Congestion Relief Alliance, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, C/CAG, and various transit agencies.

Marketing

The program spends approximately \$20,000 per year to advertise the program by sponsoring promotional events, workshops, and surveys. Some examples are:

- Bike to Work Day
- Great Race for Clean Air events
- Peninsula Congestion Relief Alliance events
- Caltrain campaign events
- San Mateo County Employee Benefits Fair
- Community Focus Commute Solutions Workshop
- Bicycle Safety Workshops
- Employee commute surveys

Furthermore, the CAP's program manager attends the new employee orientation event to make all new employees aware of the program; distributes program and event information through printed materials, email, and the program's website; facilitates departmental efforts to utilize CAP to address worksite parking challenges; and conducts employee satisfaction surveys. The program receives high ratings from employees participating in the program and has received several awards:

- National Standard of Excellence for Employee Provided Commuter Benefits
 - U.S. Office of Transportation and Air Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Best Workplaces for Commuters
 - San Mateo County Economic Development Association
- Business Environmental Award
 - Actera's Business Environmental Network

Alternative Uses

Although the Measure A funding is restricted, the Department of Public Works and Parks has received requests to fund various projects or initiatives in the County, including traffic signal installations, pavement resurfacing and maintenance, sidewalk improvements, utility undergrounding, intersection improvements including signal improvements for bicycles and pedestrians, bike lane and street re-striping, bicycle sharing programs, and public/employee shuttles. For example, the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve Parking Lot Improvement Project is scheduled for completion in FY 2012-13. In FY2013-14, the Department will fund various street resurfacing projects throughout the County and a portion of the San Mateo County-Circle Star-Caltrain shuttle.

cc: John L. Maltbie, County Manager
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