



DATE: June 22, 2017

TO: Transportation Authority of Marin Board of Commissioners

FROM: Dianne Steinhauser, Executive Director
Derek McGill, Planning Manager
Scott McDonald, Senior Transportation Planner

SUBJECT: Commute Alternatives Program Update (Action), Agenda Item No. 10

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend the TAM Board receive update of the current fiscal year Commute Alternatives Program and adopt next year’s program of activities.

The TAM Finance & Policy Executive Committee received this report on June 12th and unanimously approved the staff recommendation.

BACKGROUND:

TAM’s Commute Alternatives Program is a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program for Marin County. TDM refers to a variety of strategies to manage travel demand on our roadways; either through the promotion of higher occupancy modes like transit and carpooling, or by shifting travel behaviors through promotion of telework and flexible commute times. TDM is an essential component of TAM’s strategy to manage traffic congestion, increase safety and mobility, promote high quality transportation options and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

In the mid-2000’s TAM formed a partnership with MTC’s regional 511 services to cost-effectively encourage transit, vanpooling, carpooling, bicycling and walking as alternatives to driving alone. The partnership was mainly carried out through MTC’s 511 team, with TAM providing funding (and seeking grants) to develop incentives for commuters to use alternative modes. MTC 511 staff provided:

- Outreach services, marketing TAM and 511.org programs and incentives
- Vanpool Formation services, matched with TAM’s financial Incentive
- Ridesharing Promotion and rideshare databases

In 2016, MTC staff announced that these services would no longer be provided, due to budget cuts and private sector innovation and apps entering the market. Up until this point, TAM’s Commute Alternatives program has been structured around this 511 program, offering additional incentives and programs to supplement the regional 511 program for Marin’s local needs. As of 2016, MTC is no longer actively promoting TAM’s incentives or other programs.

With the passage of the Measure B \$10 Vehicle Registration Fee (VRF), TAM's Commute Alternative Program received local funds to carry out a local program, following the previous strategy of supporting Regional 511 services. This local fund has been used to leverage grants, including ridesharing pilot programs like the Avego/Carma Pilot and supporting carshare expansion in Marin, like the recent support for 2 additional carshare locations in San Rafael. The Commute Alternative Program has developed a core program of:

- Marin Emergency Ride Home Program
- Vanpool Incentive Program
- Employer/Employee Outreach Services

In addition to these core program elements, TAM has worked on strategic opportunities supporting the Commute Alternatives program including:

- Go Time Marin Commuter Tool Kit
- TAM/511 Marin Telework Initiative
- Carma/Avego Pilot Program to test dynamic carpooling
- Carshare Expansion in Marin
- Bikeshare Feasibility Study and Grant Application
- Carpool promotion and other strategic partnerships

FY2016/17 Recap and Major Activities

With regional support eliminated in a number of key areas to support the Commute Alternatives Program, and SMART offering a new mobility option, TAM took a number of steps in 2016 and 2017, including:

- a comprehensive review of TDM programs providing by public agencies,
- the development of a TDM ad-hoc committee,
- expanded the ERH program to serve SMART riders,
- implementation of a carshare pod in Downtown San Rafael to support SMART,
- formed a staff working group for TDM consisting of San Rafael and County of Marin staff,
- Met with a number of technology providers including Scoop, Maven and other app-based technologies,
- Develop a bikeshare Grant application with SCTA,
- and development of a Lyft Pilot Program to test demand at SMART stations.

In addition to these major activities, TAM has been reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of our TDM programs with the staff working group for TDM, including the emergency ride home and vanpool incentive programs, to explore ways to consolidate portions of these contracts and create an effective outreach program for the general public and for employers/employees.

TAM's TDM Program Highlights for Fiscal Year 2017-2018

With MTC's 511 program no longer providing direct outreach support, TAM is proposing to re-organize the Commute Alternatives Program to address changing program needs, while maintaining the core elements including the Emergency Ride Home Program, Vanpool Incentives, and outreach support services.

Consolidated Program Development & Outreach Services

TAM proposes to modify outreach support service to take an active role in promotion of the Commute Alternatives program elements. TAM staff will work with contractors to develop a "branded" program for consistent messaging, e.g. "MarinCommute" or "Green Commute" Program, to promote commute

alternatives to the public and to employers and employees in Marin. This program will market existing programs like the vanpool incentive and emergency ride home program, along with alternative fuel promotions and local transit options.

TAM will develop marketing tools, including a website or website pages to support this program, and will develop public facing campaigns on social media and through electronic channels to support this new program. These campaigns may take the format of newsletters or encouragement programs.

TAM will also develop regular scheduled outreach efforts on a periodic and or seasonal basis, including efforts similar to ride to work week, or commuter of the month programs. The use of incentive programs will be considered to encourage and excite commuters, and previously developed tools like our telework initiative and TDM toolkit will be updated to assist in promotional activities.

For employers, TAM will work with contractors to determine the best outreach strategy with local employers, including the development of quarterly employer meetings, or using existing groups to facilitate discussions.

This consolidated campaign will focus on marketing the range of programs that exist within the county, including the multiple options to access SMART, and emerging technologies to promote carpooling, carsharing and ride share services that operate in the county.

Emergency Ride Home (ERH) Program

The Marin Emergency Ride Home Program, branded online as “MarinERH.org” currently, is a program TAM launched in 2012 to offer guaranteed taxi rides home to commuters who use alternatives to driving alone to get to work but might need to get home quickly in the event of an emergency. The main goal of the program is to relieve anxiety over perceived (or real) needs to have a car available at work if unforeseen circumstances require employees to leave work immediately or occasionally work later than expected.

TAM staff plans to determine the best method of contracting for this program, and is considering consolidating website components of this program into TAM’s website update, and merging outreach components into the larger outreach effort update to increase public awareness of the program. TAM staff is also considering streamlining the approval process for employers, including removing pre-approval requirements.

Vanpool Incentive Program

TAM currently offers a \$3600 Vanpool Incentive, and currently has 30 registered vanpools operating to or from Marin with an additional 13 vans which pickup at least 3 passengers in Marin but without a Marin origin or destination in Marin.

TAM staff is not recommending any structural changes to this incentive program starting in fiscal year 2017-2018, however as referred to above, ongoing promotion of the incentive is no longer provided by 511 (which previously included multiple successful events at San Quentin and other with employers to form vanpools) so staff plans to include outreach and marketing of this effort in the larger outreach update effort.

Strategic Programs

TAM is currently in process of a number of strategic efforts for the Commute Alternatives Program, including carshare expansion in Marin, and more sites are anticipated to be launched within the next fiscal year. TAM is also currently developing a bikeshare program application in which funding will be determined by MTC later this year. TAM staff is also working on the Lyft Pilot Program and will continue to report on that effort during this fiscal year. Depending on contractor discussions, a number of new smaller incentive and marketing efforts will be developed and promoted for this year.

FISCAL CONSIDERATION:

No fiscal impact at this time. This implementation is consistent with the budget adopted by the TAM Board on June 1, 2017. Staff will come back to the TAM Board if successfully awarded grants to expand program elements such as TAM's Bike Share Grant Application to discuss potential matching funds at that time.

Attachments:

N/A