WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE OUR SAN MATEO COUNTY COMMUTE
A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We are pleased to present Commute.org’s annual report for FY 2019. Recognized as one of the nation’s leading regional transportation demand management (TDM) agencies, Commute.org has been providing alternative transportation solutions to San Mateo County employers, residents and program partners since 2000. This report summarizes the agency’s achievements over the past year and highlights the future challenges that the agency is working to solve.

The San Francisco Bay Area continues to lead the country in economic growth and San Mateo County has been at the center of that expansion. As the economic activity along the Highway 101 “corridor” has surged, so too has the number of people using our highways, streets, and public transit systems. As a result, San Mateo County commuters and residents are experiencing unprecedented congestion on highways and local streets.

In November 2018, San Mateo County voters approved Measure W, a half-cent sales tax, which will provide additional resources to improve transit and relieve traffic congestion. One of the core principles included in Measure W is the incentivizing of transit, bicycle, pedestrian, carpooling and other shared-ride options over driving alone. That principle is at the heart of what we at Commute.org do every day. We will be eligible to apply for Measure W funds starting in 2020 and when combined with our existing funding will enable us to expand our programs, reach more commuters, and drive more employers to engage with us.

Fortunately, there are many great organizations working on transportation-related projects in San Mateo County. With Caltrain electrification and the Managed Lanes project on Highway 101 moving forward and other initiatives like SamTrans’ Express Bus service providing meaningful congestion-reducing projects, Commute.org has an increasingly important role to play in educating and encouraging commuters to not drive alone.

We want to thank our funders, partners, volunteers, and staff. With your continued involvement and support we look forward to another year of serving San Mateo County.

Sincerely,

Cliff Lentz
Board Chairman

John Ford
Executive Director
Commute.org is San Mateo County's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) agency. Structured as a joint powers authority (JPA), Commute.org is governed by its 18 members—17 cities and towns as well as the County of San Mateo.

TDM is the use of strategies to inform and encourage travelers to make better choices in order to maximize the efficiency of a transportation system leading to improved mobility, reduced congestion, and lower vehicle emissions. The strategies deployed by TDM agencies like Commute.org include the use of planning, programs, policy, marketing, communications, incentives, pricing, and technology to shift travel modes, routes used, departure times, and number of trips.

Commute.org's TDM programs focus on reducing single occupancy vehicle travel in San Mateo County, particularly during peak commute hours.

In addition to the Board of Directors, the agency has two standing committees: Supervisory and Finance. Together, these governing bodies provide guidance and oversight to Commute.org's team of TDM professionals.

The agency is organized into four functional teams: Employer Programs, Commuter Programs, Shuttle Program, and Administration; however, staff operates in a cross-functional style with members of each team collaborating on projects to maximize the effectiveness of the agency. Commute.org staff come from diverse backgrounds with experience in transportation, sustainability, technology, and government which adds to the effectiveness of the agency. As a public agency that tries to lead by example, Commute.org was proud that in FY 2019 it earned Green Business certification, received a Best Workplaces for Commuters designation, and hosted a Climate Corps AmeriCorps fellow for a 10 month sustainability fellowship.
WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS TO DEVELOP AND SUPPORT COMMUTE PROGRAMS

Working directly with employers allows the agency to reach commuters through the employer-employee relationship and support the increasing number of employers in the county who have active TDM initiatives.

EMPLOYER OUTREACH
Commute.org's core work involves providing employers with the information and tools they need to adopt and sustain employee participation in commute alternatives. In FY 2019, agency staff worked closely with over 400 employers in San Mateo County (representing over 100,000 employees) and provided TDM program information to another 4,000 employers.

EMPLOYER SUPPORT SERVICES
Commute.org works with employers of all sizes and types including private companies, non-profits, schools, and government agencies. The Employer Programs Team provides no-cost consulting, support, and commute survey services for employer transportation coordinators, facilities managers and human resource teams. If you work in San Mateo County, then there is a good chance that you have seen a Commute.org representative at your employer’s benefits fair or rideshare event.

REGIONAL PROGRAMS
The Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program is a California regulation requiring employers with 50 or more employees in the nine-county region of the Bay Area to register and provide commute benefits to their employees. Commute.org provides support for San Mateo County employers that are subject to the regulation. Agency staff help employers get registered and remain compliant. Commute.org aims to have San Mateo County be the county with the highest compliance rate in the Bay Area.

BICYCLE SAFETY EDUCATION AND PARKING
Commute.org offers free bicycle safety workshops led by certified bicycle safety instructors to provide commuters who bicycle to or from work with essential information, including rules of the road for cyclists, tips on buying a bicycle, and bicycle maintenance. The agency also provides subsidies for employers, businesses, and municipalities to install bicycle racks and fixit stations. In FY 2019, Commute.org sponsored seven workshops.
INSPIRING COMMUTERS TO USE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

Educating commuters about their transportation options and then inspiring and incentivizing them to use alternative modes is the objective of this program area.

DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUTERS
The Commute.org web site is designed to help commuters find smarter ways to commute to, from and through San Mateo County. In FY 2019, the site averaged over 22,000 monthly visitors, which represents a 19 percent increase over the prior year. Additionally, Commute.org’s Commuter Club has over 18,000 participants who receive tips via electronic newsletters on how to improve their commutes and ways to participate in programs that reward non-solo driving.

STAR (SUPPORT, TRACK AND REWARD) PLATFORM
STAR is Commute.org’s web-based commuter management and rewards platform. At the end of FY 2019, there were over 12,000 commuters with STAR accounts. Commuters have logged over 700,000 trips on the platform since it was launched in 2016. The Commuter Programs team continues to develop innovative direct-to-commuter programs that engage commuters and encourage non-drive alone commutes.

GUARANTEED RIDE HOME
Commute.org provides commute insurance to over 400,000 commuters who work or attend college in San Mateo County. In the event of an illness, emergency or other qualifying event, STAR platform participants are eligible to receive reimbursement for their Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH). The GRH program, which formally launched in 2018, supports the use of alternative forms of commuting other than driving alone by giving commuters peace of mind, knowing they have a way to get home easily in case of an unexpected situation. The program grew in popularity in FY 2019 and the agency will ramp up promotion of the program in the coming year.

CARPOOL 2.0 REWARDS PROGRAM
Commute.org partnered with City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG) in FY 2019 on a new carpool rewards program. Building on the success of an earlier carpool incentive program, the agencies launched Carpool 2.0 with the goal of promoting carpooling as well as participation in the full suite of programs offered on the STAR platform.

Commuters who logged their carpool trips using the STAR Commute Tracker app or by connecting a Scoop or Waze Carpool account to their STAR account earned over 3,700 e-gift card rewards in FY 2019. As of June 2019, over two million miles of carpool trips had been logged by carpoolers who live and/or work in San Mateo County. Based on the success of the program, the agencies are planning to continue with an aggressive carpool incentive program in 2020 to further develop carpooling as a viable alternative to driving solo in San Mateo County.

VANPOOL INCENTIVE PROGRAM
A vanpool typically consists of seven to 15 people commuting to and from home to work; often with two or three participants sharing the driving. While vanpools are difficult to get started, once they become established and maintained, they become a critical part of the commute ecosystem for commuters and employers.

Commute.org’s Vanpool Incentive Program rewards new vanpool participants by providing one-time subsidies to help them offset the costs of their vanpools. During FY 2019, Commute.org rewarded 53 new vanpool participants with over $10,000 in subsidies.

TRY TRANSIT INCENTIVE PROGRAM
The ever-popular Try Transit program encourages commuters to give public transit a try as an alternative to driving alone. Commute.org provides applicants with free tickets from transit agencies that serve San Mateo County, including Caltrain, SamTrans, and San Francisco Bay Ferry. Of the 429 people who received transit tickets in FY 2019, 86 percent indicated that they would continue using transit at least twice each week.
PROVIDING FIRST/LAST MILE SHUTTLE SERVICES

Supporting commuters that rely on public transportation by providing frequent, reliable and cost-effective shuttle service is the objective of this program area.

EMPLOYER-BASED SHUTTLE PROGRAM

Commute.org manages 20 shuttle routes that provide first/last mile transportation between transit stations and worksites. Additionally, the shuttles serve residents who live near shuttle routes and help connect them to public transit in the county.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE FUNDING

The shuttle program is funded through a combination of grants from agencies that include the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, C/CAG, San Mateo County Transportation Authority, SamTrans, and funds from 68 private employers, property managers, and sponsoring cities.

RESULTS ORIENTED SERVICE

In FY 2019, Commute.org’s shuttle program was negatively impacted by the contracted vendor’s persistent driver shortage. The driver issue impacted many public and private transit providers in the Bay Area. By the end of the fiscal year, the problem was abating, but the impact on ridership due to inconsistent service on certain routes may prove to be more enduring. Despite those challenges, Commute.org shuttles provided 590,500 passenger trips representing only a 0.9 percent decrease from the prior year.

PARTNERING FOR BETTER TRANSPORTATION

San Mateo County is fortunate to have an amazing group of private, public and non-profit organizations who understand that inaction is not an option when it comes to improving transportation and traffic congestion. Being able to partner with these dedicated professionals on a broad array of transportation planning and programming efforts is critical to the success of the agency. Agency staff serve on numerous boards, committees, and advisory panels at the local, regional, and national level.

SPECIAL CAMPAIGNS AND EVENTS

ANNUAL COMMUTER CAMPAIGN

2019 was the 11th consecutive year that Commute.org sponsored the San Mateo County Commuter Challenge. The two-month long challenge encourages people to use alternative methods to commute, such as bicycling, walking, carpooling, vanpooling, teleworking, shuttles, and public transit. This year’s challenge highlighted the benefits that “super commuters” have on our environment. Participants were ranked by the CO₂ reductions their green commutes generated during the challenge. Participants were able to track their personal commute impact, including calories burned, money saved, and CO₂ reduction.

Thanks to the amazing effort of San Mateo County commuters, the 2019 Commuter Challenge surpassed all the prior year’s challenges, with 2,735 participants.

The 2019 Commuter Challenge resulted in:

- 101,373 alternative mode commutes logged
- Nearly 2 million non-SOV miles logged
- 439 tons of CO₂ emissions reduced
- 5.3 million calories burned by cyclists and walkers

Join the 2019 Commuter Challenge!
LOOKING FORWARD TO 2020

Commute.org has adopted a challenging work plan for the upcoming year. In addition to ongoing programs, the agency identifies several “key initiatives” to focus on during the fiscal year. Key initiatives for the upcoming year include:

**STAR PLATFORM EXPANSION**

The agency will continue with the deployment and promotion of the STAR Platform as the online tool that Commute.org uses to promote, track, and incentivize alternative commuting behavior. This fiscal year the Commuter Programs team will focus on migrating the remaining legacy programs into the platform. Specifically, the Vanpool and Try Transit programs will be transitioned from a legacy software platform to STAR.

**DATABASE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT 2020**

The agency has an existing database of approximately 5,500 employers. The data resides in a CRM database and has been compiled, updated and maintained for many years and used as the primary client data source. The Employer Programs team uses the CRM tool to record interactions with employers and track program participation. Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date database is critical to the success of the Employer Programs; therefore, one of this year’s Key Initiatives aims to validate our existing data and identify new employers that should be included in the database.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING**

In FY 2020, Commute.org’s board of directors and staff will embark on a year-long strategic planning effort that will result in a new Strategic Plan that will be adopted by the end of 2020. Much has changed in San Mateo County since the plan was last updated in 2015 and this planning effort will set the course for the agency over the next five years. Not only will board and staff be involved, but employers, funders, partners, and industry experts will be involved in this critical project.

**BIKE TO WORK DAY**

Commute.org is the coordinating agency for Bike to Work Day in San Mateo County, which takes place every year in May. In 2019, more than 13,000 bicycle riders were counted as they passed by the 58 energizer stations in San Mateo County. A very special group of volunteers from local employers, cities, and bicycle advocacy groups staff the energizer stations.

**BIKE COMMUTER OF THE YEAR**

As part of Bike to Work Day in 2019, Avana Andrade was selected as this year’s San Mateo County Bike Commuter of the Year. Avana’s commitment to bike commuting, even during the cold and wet winter months, and advocacy for cycling as an alternative to driving made her a deserving winner of this year’s award.
### Funders and Partners

- **Bay Area Air Quality Management District**
- **Transportation Authority of San Mateo County**
- **C/CAG**

### Board of Directors (as of June 30, 2019)

- **Clifford Lentz (Chair)**
  City of Brisbane
- **Emily Beach (Vice Chair)**
  City of Burlingame
- **Michael Lempres**
  Town of Atherton
- **Davina Hurt**
  City of Belmont
- **Rae Gonzalez**
  Town of Colma
- **Pamela Digiovanni**
  City of Daly City
- **Carlos Romero**
  City of East Palo Alto
- **Richa Awasthi**
  City of Foster City
- **Robert Brownstone**
  City of Half Moon Bay
- **Shawn Christianson**
  Town of Hillsborough
- **Reuben Holober**
  City of Millbrae
- **Mike O’Neill**
  City of Pacifica
- **Giselle Hale**
  City of Redwood City
- **Rico Medina**
  City of San Bruno
- **Sara Mcdowell**
  City of San Carlos
- **Rick Bonilla**
  City of San Mateo
- **Richard Garbarino**
  City of South San Francisco
- **David Canepa**
  County of San Mateo

### Supervisory Committee (as of June 30, 2019)

- **John Hoang (Chair)**
  C/CAG
- **Christian Hammack**
  City of Redwood City
- **Shirley Chan (Vice Chair)**
  City of Daly City
- **Kathy Kleinbaum**
  City of San Mateo
- **Maria Saguigasag-Sid**
  City of Brisbane
- **Christy Weger**
  SamTrans
- **Rick Bonilla (Chair)**
  City of San Mateo
- **Dante Hall**
  City of Foster City
- **Mark Olbert**
  City of San Carlos
- **John Hoang**
  C/CAG
- **Richard Garbarino**
  City of South San Francisco

### Finance Committee (as of June 30, 2019)

- **Rick Bonilla (Chair)**
  City of San Mateo
- **Dante Hall**
  City of Foster City
- **Mark Olbert**
  City of San Carlos
- **John Hoang**
  C/CAG
- **Richard Garbarino**
  City of South San Francisco

### FY 2019 Funding

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<td>Congestion Relief Funding: C/CAG</td>
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<td>Shuttle Funding: SMCTA</td>
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<td>Shuttle Funding: Consortium Members</td>
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<td>Carpool Incentive Program: (C/CAG)</td>
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<td>Measure A Funds: SMCTA</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous &amp; Interest</td>
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- **Commute.org**: 400 Oyster Point Boulevard, Suite 409 South San Francisco, CA 94080
  Telephone: (650) 588-8170 • [www.commute.org](http://www.commute.org)