WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE OUR SAN MATEO COUNTY COMMUTE

ANNUAL REPORT | FY2017

Commute.org
A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We are pleased to present Commute.org’s annual report for FY 2017. Recognized as one of the nation’s leading regional transportation demand management (TDM) agencies, Commute.org has been providing alternative transportation solutions in San Mateo County since 2000. This report summarizes the agency’s achievements over the past year and highlights the programming that is critical to the agency’s future success.

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 are experiencing longer commutes, extended peak hour traffic, and crowded roadways.

The problem is greater than one project can solve, which is why multiple agencies are working on solutions. Several important developments took place this past year including Caltrain securing its funding for their electrification project and C/CAG and the San Mateo County Transportation Authority kicking off the San Mateo County Highway 101 Managed Lanes project. This coming year voters in the region will be asked to weigh in on Regional Measure 3 (RM3), a plan to finance $4.45 billion in highway and transit improvements through an increase in bridge tolls. San Mateo County residents may also be asked to vote on local transportation funding measures that would provide additional support for public transit in the county.

These initiatives are longer-term, infrastructure-oriented solutions that will provide commuters and residents much needed relief throughout the corridor. In the meantime, Commute.org is focusing on programs that can have an immediate impact. Our structure gives us the freedom to continuously evolve and to experiment with innovative programs and technology. We encourage you to actively participate in our programs and rethink your commute, because together we can make a difference.

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,

Jeff Gee      John Ford
Board Chair     Executive Director
WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE OUR SAN MATEO COUNTY COMMUTE

Commute.org is San Mateo County’s Transportation Demand Management agency. Structured as a Joint Powers Authority, Commute.org is governed by its 18 members – 17 cities and towns as well as the County of San Mateo.

Transportation Demand Management, or TDM, is a program of information, encouragement and incentives to help people find and use transportation options other than driving alone. The goal of traditional and technology-based TDM programming is to spread out demand for transportation across all available modes including walking, biking, transit and ridesharing.

Successful TDM programs can mitigate a wide range of undesirable externalities associated with driving, including congestion, poor air quality, less livable communities and GHG emissions.

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 areas: Employer Outreach, Commuter Programs, Shuttle Program, and Administration; however, the organization operates in a cross-functional style with members of each team collaborating on projects to maximize the effectiveness of the agency. The employees, with an average service length exceeding nine years, are committed to achieving the agency’s goals and objectives.
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 needed to adopt and sustain employee participation in commute alternatives. In FY 2017, agency staff worked closely with over 400 employers in San Mateo County (representing over 100,000 employees) and provided program information to another 4,700 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 Outreach Team provides no-cost consulting, support and survey services for employer transportation coordinators, facilities managers, and property managers.

REGIONAL PROGRAMS
The Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program is a regulation requiring employers with 50 or more employees in the nine-county region of the Bay Area to register and provide some form of commute benefit to their employees. Commute.org provides support for the San Mateo County employers that are subject to the regulation. Since its enactment in 2014, the program has resulted in thousands of employees gaining access to pre-tax commuter benefits.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
The Emergency Ride Home (ERH) Program is one of Commute.org’s public/private partnerships that supports commuters who use alternative modes by providing a taxi ride home in the event of an emergency. More than 60 San Mateo County employers with a total of 50,000 employees participate in the program. The ERH program allows commuters to feel comfortable taking public transit or another alternative commute mode to work, knowing that they will have a ride home in case of an emergency.

Working directly with employers allows Commute.org to leverage those relationships to reach a large percentage of San Mateo County commuters.
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 website is designed to help commuters find smarter ways to commute in San Mateo County. The site attracts an average of 15,000 visitors each month, many of whom use the mobile version for the latest information on shuttles and other commuter support programs. Additionally, Commute.org’s Commuter Club now has over 14,000 participants who receive tips to improve their commutes and opportunities to participate in programs and promotions that reward non-solo driving.

STAR (SUPPORT, TRACK AND REWARD) PLATFORM

STAR is Commute.org’s web-based commuter management platform powered by RideAmigos. The STAR platform allows commuters to track their commute trips, find rideshare partners, plan commute trips, view their personal commute statistics and participate in incentive programs.

VANPOOL AND CARPOOL INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The Carpool Incentive Program encourages commuters to try carpooling. In FY 2017, a total of 163 people participated in the program and received an incentive to encourage them to continue carpooling. In a survey of those who received incentives, 92 percent indicated that they plan to continue carpooling an average of four days per week. During the fiscal year, Commute.org also rewarded 86 new vanpool participants by providing cash subsidies to help them offset the costs of their vanpools.

TRY TRANSIT INCENTIVE PROGRAM

One of Commute.org’s most popular programs, Try Transit, encourages commuters to try public transit as an alternative to driving alone. Commute.org provides applicants with free transit tickets from transit agencies that serve San Mateo County, including Caltrain, SamTrans, BART, and San Francisco Bay Ferry. Of the 577 people who received transit tickets in FY 2017, 78 percent indicated that they would continue using transit.

BICYCLE SAFETY EDUCATION AND PARKING

Commute.org offers free bicycle safety workshops led by a certified bicycle safety instructor provide employers and residents 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. In FY 2017, Commute.org subsidized 164 bicycle racks and two bicycle repair stations.

YOUR COMMUTE COUNTS!

Thanks For Making an Impact!
PROVIDING FIRST/LAST MILE SHUTTLE SERVICES

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

SHUTTLE PROGRAM OVERVIEW
The Commute.org shuttle program operates as a mini-transit agency with 20 routes serving cities throughout San Mateo County. The shuttles provide first/last mile transportation services during peak commute hours linking commuters and residents to transit stations throughout the county. The vast majority of shuttle passengers are employees who use the service between BART or Caltrain stations and their places of work in the county; however, the shuttles also provide “reverse commute” service to residents that use public transit to reach their jobs outside of San Mateo 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, City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG) and the San Mateo County Transportation Authority, and funds from over 60 private employers and sponsoring cities.

RESULTS ORIENTED SERVICE
In FY 2017, Commute.org provided 603,732 passenger trips. This represents a 2.1% decrease from the prior year’s record trip count, but a 36.5% increase over the past four years.

SPECIAL CAMPAIGNS AND EVENTS

ANNUAL COMMUTER CAMPAIGN
Each spring, Commute.org runs a campaign to encourage commuters and residents to “rethink” their commute. This year’s campaign, the 2017 Commuter Challenge, had 1,480 participants. Commuters used the STAR platform to log their alternative commute mode trips during April and May.

The 2017 Commuter Challenge resulted in:
- 53,377 single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips eliminated
- Over 1 million non-SOV miles logged
- 275 tons of CO₂ emissions reduced
- $285,945 in commute cost savings realized
- 4 million calories burned by cyclists and walkers

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 2017, more than 12,000 bicycle riders were counted by over one hundred volunteers from 48 energizer stations (another record) 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 2017, Kate Gibson was named San Mateo County’s Bike Commuter of the Year. Ms. Gibson rides her bike to the Redwood City Caltrain Station, takes Caltrain to Palo Alto, then rides to her office at Stanford University. Some days, she skips the train ride all together and rides from Redwood City to Stanford. Ms. Gibson, a very deserving winner of the award, is an inspiration to her colleagues and friends.
LOOKING FORWARD TO 2018

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. The tool, which has been used primarily as the engine for the annual Commuter Challenge, will be more fully used by commuters and employers in FY 2018. Employer support and participation is the key to the long-term success of the platform. The Employer Outreach team will continue to recruit employers to create their own “networks” on the platform and the Commuter Programs team will provide commuters access to the platform’s full suite of tools and rewards.

GUARANTEED RIDE HOME PROGRAM
Commute.org has had an Emergency Ride Home (ERH) program for more than a decade. The ERH program is employer-centric, which means that only those employees who work for participating employers are eligible to use the program. To expand the coverage of this important safeguard to more people, Commute.org decided to replace the ERH program with a new Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program. This initiative was started in FY 2016; however, due to the complexity of launching an employee-based replacement program, the project timeline extended into FY 2018.

The GRH program, launching in Q1 of FY 2018, will cover all employees who work within San Mateo County as well as students at participating colleges. Participants will be required to have an active account on the STAR platform and use an alternative to driving alone on the day of their emergency. The existing ERH program will remain in effect until the end of 2017.

TECHNOLOGY-BASED TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS
Commute.org has been leveraging technology to update its traditional TDM programs for several years. The agency is committed to working with partners who are developing and deploying technology that can lead to the reduction in single-occupancy vehicle trips in San Mateo County.

An overarching objective of these technology-based projects and partnerships will be to build upon the foundation that has been established with the STAR platform and other technology-based partnerships. Commuters need access to tools that will help them make alternative transportation their first and best choice. Commute.org makes that possible.
FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Elected officials representing each of the 18 JPA members

JEFF GEE
(Board Chair)
City of Redwood City

CLIFFORD LENTZ
(Board Vice Chair)
City of Brisbane

MICHAEL LEMPRES
Town of Atherton

DAVINA HURT
City of Belmont

EMILY BEACH
City of Burlingame

RAE GONZALEZ
Town of Colma

GLENN SYLVESTER
City of Daly City

CARLOS ROMERO
City of East Palo Alto

SAM HINDI
City of Foster City

ADAM EISEN
City of Half Moon Bay

SHAWN CHRISTIANSON
Town of Hillsborough

REUBEN HOLOBER
City of Millbrae

SUE DIGRE
City of Pacifica

JIM RUANE
City of San Bruno

MARK OLBERT
City of San Carlos

RICK BONILLA
City of San Mateo

DAVID CANEPA
San Mateo County

RICHARD GARBARINO
City of South San Francisco

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE
Staff members representing JPA and funding partners

JOHN HOANG
(Committee Chair)
C/CAG

CHRISTIAN HAMMACK
City of Redwood City

KATHY KLEINBAUM
City of San Mateo

JUSTIN LOVELL
City of South San Francisco

DANTE HALL
City of Foster City

SHIRLEY CHAN
(Committee Vice Chair)
City of Daly City

MARIA SAGUISAG-SID
City of Brisbane

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FY 2017 FUNDING

As of June 30, 2017

AB 434 Funds: BAAQMD (C/CAG) $525,000
Congestion Relief Funding: C/CAG $510,000
Shuttle Funding: SMCTA $1,534,975

Shuttle Funding: Consortium Members $845,161
Measure A Funds: SMCTA $445,000
Miscellaneous & Interest $3,558

Employer Outreach $593,606
Shuttle Operations $2,171,498
Shuttle Program Management $299,952

Commuter Outreach & Incentives $278,123
Public/Private Partnerships $40,188
Administration & Program Support $290,971

FY 2017 EXPENDITURES

59.1%
16.2%
7.6%
7.9%
8.2%
11.5%
39.7%
21.9%
13.2%
13.6%
0.1%