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COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

October 18, 2016

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ASSISTANT COUNTY
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Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

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SUBJECT: Adopt the RideGreen pilot, encouraging employee use of alternate forms of transportation.

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Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION: The County Administrator's Office, in collaboration with the Human Resources Department, recommends your approval of the pilot RideGreen program incenting employees to use alternate forms of transportation to get to work.

SUMMARY:

Over the course of the last 6 months, the RideGreen team, consisting of team members from Human Resources, County Administrator, Public Works, Community Development and Finance, has developed and negotiated with our labor partners a comprehensive commute alternatives program (RideGreen). The goals of the RideGreen Program are to:

- Shift over 500 employees away from driving alone, reducing 342 metric tons of greenhouse gas (GHG) annually;
- Promote employee wellness, encouraging employees to walk or bike to work locations from home or from a transit location;
- Encourage and support carpooling; and
- Promote Transit ridership.

The RideGreen program is initially recommended as a one-year pilot so that the County can effectively evaluate whether these stated goals are being achieved.

BACKGROUND:

In 2001, your Board adopted the County’s first green commute program. The Employee Commute Alternatives Program (ECAP), as it was named, offered at-cost fuel, carpool parking, discounted bus tickets, and bike tune-up certificates. In 2007, the ECAP was amended and most commute benefits were replaced with a \$4 daily stipend for employees using commute alternatives. In 2012, with the economic downturn, the commute program was suspended.

In 2015, your Board approved the Updated Climate Action Plan (CAP). One of the primary 2020 goals listed in the Plan is the reduction of GHG emissions from County operations including commute emissions. The proposed RideGreen pilot is an implementing measure to the CAP with a target of shifting 531 employees away from single occupancy vehicles. The County has conducted transportation research and with the arrival of the SMART train, we are optimistic that RideGreen will help to move employees away from single occupancy vehicles towards alternate forms of transportation.

If the goals of the RideGreen program are not met, this program will be re-evaluated to determine how we might better reach these goals. The program will be evaluated every year.

Elements of the RideGreen Program

An employee may only participate in one of the incentive programs (bike, carpool, or transit) at a time.

1. Incentive Programs:

- a. Carpool Incentive:** During past commute programs, the County has successfully increased the number of employees who carpool on a regular basis. By definition, a carpool is when at least one County of Marin employee and another County of Marin or non-county of Marin employee travel together between home and work. With this new incentive, each employee who carpools at least 10 days per month will receive a \$20 per month taxable cash incentive. Participating employees will track carpooling days through the 511.org website. For ease of administration, payments will be made to eligible employees twice a year.
- b. Bicycle Incentive Program:** Under a pre-tax program, the County will contribute \$10 per month towards an eligible employee’s allowable bike expenses. The employee will seek reimbursement for these expenses from the County. An employee must ride to work a minimum of 8 days per month to be eligible for this incentive.

- c. Transit Match Incentive Program:** For any mass transit system, the County will provide a 100% match each month for every dollar the employee contributes up to \$40.00. The County contribution will be made directly into the employee's pre-tax transit account. The pre-tax transit account may be used to purchase parking during the employee commute, mass transit tickets or an Eco Pass on transit providers.
- 2. SMART Eco Pass:** The Eco Pass is a SMART discount plan offered by SMART to large employers. During this first pilot year, the County and SMART have reached a tentative agreement that County employees will receive a 44% discount on the purchase of a quarterly Eco Pass ticket, which allows unlimited use of SMART during the quarter.
- 3. Shuttle Loop:** Many employees working in locations around the County have indicated that they are more likely to take SMART if shuttle service is available from the SMART station to their work location. With a limited budget and some uncertainty about the success of a shuttle, during the pilot year we will provide a limited shuttle to Marin County work locations close to the Civic Center, including Marin Commons and 120 N. Redwood. Efforts are underway to finalize the details of the shuttle service.

Marketing

The success of the RideGreen program is in-part dependent upon the County's ability to inform employees about commuting alternatives. We are taking the following steps to inform employees about these new programs. 1) A SMART train was open and available for touring during the recent Heart Walk on Friday, September 30; 2) Additional commute information, including how to purchase a Clipper Card and how to find possible carpool matches, will be available at the Benefits Fair being held during the beginning of November; 3) Detailed communications are being drafted for employees for distribution throughout the County; 4) Presentations have been scheduled in conjunction with department staff meetings in order to ensure direct employee engagement; and 5) We are committed to branding this initiative to increase employee awareness and engagement. CDA recently assigned an employee to manage RideGreen communications and to monitor the program over the next year.



FISCAL IMPACT: Your Board allocated \$500,000 in the FY 2016-17 Proposed Budget. This allocation will cover the costs of the proposed program.

REVIEWED BY:

- County Administrator
- Department of Finance
- County Counsel
- Human Resources

Please let me know if you have questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

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