September 18, 2018

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

SUBJECT: Continue the RideGreen program, which encourages employee use of alternate forms of transportation

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION:
1. The County Administrator’s Office, in collaboration with Human Resources and the Community Development Agency, recommends the continuation and expansion of the RideGreen program, incentivizing employees to use alternate forms of transportation to get to work.

SUMMARY:
Your Board adopted the RideGreen program in October 2016. Since that time, the County implemented a very successful commute alternatives program and the departments of Human Resources, Public Works, Finance, Community Development Agency, and the County Administrator continue to work together to ensure an effective program.

The initial goals of the RideGreen program were to:
- Shift over 239 employees away from driving alone, reducing 342 metric tons of greenhouse gas 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.

We currently have shifted over 200 employees away from driving alone. 14 employees are receiving a bike-rider incentive, 133 employees receive a monthly transit subsidy, and 61 employees receive a carpool incentive. This shift away from single occupancy vehicles equates to a greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) reduction of almost 300 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent each year. Additionally, our most recent employee commute survey showed a decrease in the number of respondents that drove alone for their commute. 75 percent of respondents in the 2012 employee commute survey said that they drove alone during their commute while only 59 percent of the respondents in the May 2018 survey said they drove alone.
We have continued to evaluate the success of the program. This fall we are making changes to the program to increase utilization and increase the efficiency of each dollar allocated.

1. **Discontinue the Shuttle Loop.** While the Civic Center SMART station shuttle was intended to help employees not working at the Civic Center get to their outlying work locations, in the end, many of the riders were Civic Center bound. After a full year of evaluation, we know this is not the best use of resources. September 12 was the final day of service under the one-year contract approved by your Board.

2. **Replacing the Shuttle with a Contract with Marin Transit’s CONNECT service.** Instead of a continuously running shuttle that was underutilized, we are entering into an agreement with Marin Transit for our employees to have access to their new Connect service. Employees who work away from the Civic Center, but within the Smith Ranch Road/North San Pedro service area, can use the reservation only shuttle provided by Marin Transit to connect to the Civic Center SMART station. The County will pay for these shuttle rides for the first twelve months as we further evaluate the effectiveness of this new service.

3. **Increasing Subsidies.** During bargaining, it was clear that employees had an interest in equalizing the subsidies offered through the RideGreen program. As part of the modified program, effective July 1, 2018 we increased the carpool allowance to $40 per month and increased the bike incentive to $40 per month to match the existing transit incentive of $40 per month. Both carpool and bike riders will be required to track their trips/rides in 511.org. To be eligible for the incentives, all bike and carpool employees will need to complete 60 trips via their selected alternative modes in the six-month period. The rules around collecting a carpool subsidy will remain the same. However, the tax treatment of the bicycle subsidy has changed. Instead of a reimbursement, the bike subsidy is now considered a taxable cash incentive and will be paid every six months in the same way as the carpool incentive. Details on the rollout of the updated incentives are provided below.

4. **Discount Electric Vehicle Charging Rates for Employees.** Currently employees using County EV charging stations during the day pay $1.00 per hour, up to a maximum of $4.00, based on the rates established in Resolution 2013-75. Under this RideGreen discount, the RideGreen program will subsidize the charging rates so that with an employee identification number, employees will only pay $.50 per hour, effective Tuesday,
September 4. The RideGreen program will reimburse the EV charging program budget for these employee subsidies.

Direct Payment Incentives Rollout:
Since the effective date of the increased incentives programs, the rollout of the incentives will occur in two phases:

1. Bike Incentives
   a. Period 1 – May 2018 through October 2018 – The existing program requires bike participants to track their rides in 511.org and then request incentive vouchers through Connect your Care. Bike participants will continue to track their rides in 511.org. In November 2018, during the normal period reconciling time, staff will review 511.org records. If an employee recorded 32 bike trips (8 trips per month to match existing bike monthly requirements) between July 1 and October 31, they will be eligible for $160 for four months of the incentive. To minimize administrative burdens, participants will be able to retain any vouchers they may have requested to date.
   b. Period 2 and forward – November 2018 through April 2019 – Bike participants will track rides in 511.org. If participants track 60 or more rides in the six-month period by April 30, 2018, they will be eligible for a $240 incentive payment ($40 times six months). Incentives will not be prorated if minimum is not met.

2. Carpool Incentives
   a. Period 1 – May 2018 through October 2018 – Carpool participants that meet the 60-trip minimum for the six-month period (10 trips per month to match existing bike monthly requirements) will receive $10 per month for May and June and $40 per month for July through October for a total incentive payment of $180.
   b. Period 2 and forward – November 2018 through April 2019 – Carpool participants that meet the 60-trip minimum in the six-month period by April 30, 2018, will be eligible for a $240 incentive payment ($40 times six months). Incentives will not be prorated if minimum is not met.

The RideGreen program has been an effective tool in reducing the GHG emissions resulting from County employees driving alone. We are confident that these changes will help to grow the program, encouraging more employees to seek out commute alternatives.

FISCAL IMPACT:
Your Board allocated funding to this program in FY 2016-17 which will cover the changes identified above. No additional resources are needed. Increase revenues in Org Code 10015501, Object 463110
by up to $15,000 in the Public Works' budget to reflect the reduction in revenues used to pay for EV charger operations and maintenance.

REVIEWED BY:
[x] County Administrator
[x] Department of Finance
[ ] County Counsel
[x] Human Resources

Please let me know if you have questions or concerns,

Respectfully Submitted,

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cc: Dana Armanino, Principal Planner, CDA
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