



## Case Study: City of San Rafael OVERVIEW OF A **COMMUTE PROGRAM**

### A Successful Program

The program works as well as it does because of the creativity and energy of the employees who agreed to join the commute committee to make it happen.

*“The Ministry of Alternative Commute provides the energy and enthusiasm to promote the program and be good champions of it. It is generally viewed as a bottom-up program, not a top-down program and we’ve worked hard on that.*

*Creative marketing of the incentives and raffles keeps people interested and laughing. We’ve chosen to feature employees and share their commute stories which has been great. We also try to pick inventive raffle prizes that relate to either alternative transportation or healthy living.”*



### Background

In 2006, the San Rafael City Council adopted a resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and thereby commit the City to taking action for climate protection. By initiating the Climate Change Action Plan process in spring 2008, the City Council asked that a plan be drafted to include actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in municipal operations. Subsequently, the City began its efforts to identify and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 2012, a City-employee committee was convened to evaluate the need for an incentive program aimed at reducing single-occupancy commutes by municipal employees.

### 511 Employer Services

In April 2012, A pilot employee commute program was launched based on discussions with 511 and other Cities in the region.

### Pilot Program

In January 2013, the employee committee (now dubbed “Ministry of Alternative Commute”) launched a pilot program to all employees with a variety of incentives geared towards all alternative commute modes. The committee then met periodically throughout the year to develop program related activities.

For the 2013 calendar year, the program spent \$2,623 of the \$10,000 allocated budget on the variety of incentives.

The pilot program represented 10% of the workforce. Based on commute trips tracked by employees in the 511 database, 511 estimated a total reduction of 38,702 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub> and a cumulative savings of \$12,064. (Not all employees tracked their trips, so this number may be under-represented.)

### Approved Recommendations

A key component to the pilot’s success is due to the employee committee members that spearheaded the effort that allowed the program to move forward. In January 2014, the committee conducted a new survey of employees in order to help evaluate the pilot program. Based on input from the survey as well as conversations with employees and management throughout the year, the committee prepared recommendations for the commute program. The recommendations were approved and the program has been made permanent for all employees.

Approved program elements include income tax savings, quarterly raffles for all program participants, carpool parking spaces and the 511 Ridematch Service. While the some of the vanpool incentives were discontinued due to lack of interest, City staff continues to direct employees to other vanpool resources, such as those available through 511 and the Transportation Authority of Marin. Customized incentives that proved most popular with employees were also incorporated in the permanent program:

- \$75 gas card annual incentive to all employees who carpool or vanpool an average of at least two days per week.
- \$75 Clipper Card available annually to all employees who use transit an average of at least two days per week.

- \$75 gift card to a local bike shop available annually to all employees who ride their bike to work an average of at least two days per week.
- \$75 gift card to a local shoe store available annually to all employees who walk to work an average of at least two days per week.
- \$100 electric vehicle stipend

Going forward the committee is investigating an “add-on” incentive to the Transportation Authority of Marin’s (TAM) Emergency Ride Home program for employees who live outside of Marin County as many City of San Rafael employees live beyond the distance covered by TAM’s program.

### Significant Results

Commute mitigation efforts by the employees, and the City of San Rafael’s \$3,252 investment have already had a significant impact. Reports of the efforts employees recorded in their 511 Trip Diaries show the impact the first 22 months of their use of clean commute modes:

- 68,891 vehicle miles reduced is equivalent to the annual green house gases from:
  - o 6.5 passenger vehicles
  - o 73,010 miles/year driven by an average passenger vehicle
  - o 11 tons of waste sent to the landfill
- 30.664 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduced is equivalent to:
  - o 3,450 gallons of gasoline consumed
  - o 32,937 lbs of coal burned
  - o 802 incandescent lamps switched to CFLs
  - o 71.3 barrels of oil consumed
  - o Carbon sequestered by 786 tree seedlings grown for 10 years
- \$21,073.76\* fuel and maintenance cost savings (based on latest EPA estimates of fuel consumption and an estimated gas price of \$3.75 per gallon)



#### 511 OFFERS FREE SERVICES AND TOOLS FOR EMPLOYERS

Want to help your employees find more efficient and economical ways to get to work? 511 offers a variety of services and tools to help you assemble a successful Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program at your worksite. This service is provided at no cost to your organization by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Services include:

#### ONLINE RIDEMATCHING

With just a few clicks on 511.org, the RideMatch Service instantly matches your employees with other people making a similar commute.

#### VANPOOL FORMATION AND SUPPORT

Vanpooling may be an option at your worksite, and we can help you set up vanpools from start to finish.

#### COMMUTE INCENTIVES

Employees who use commute alternatives to driving alone can benefit from a variety of incentives, including commuter tax breaks, free bridge tolls, carpool lanes and other financial incentives.

#### WORK SITE EVENTS

511’s representatives will participate in select events to promote carpooling and vanpooling at your worksite.