



Bay Area

Commuter Benefits Program

Program Overview For Policy Advisory Council

March 12, 2014

Christine Maley-Grubl

Project Manager, MTC



Background & Overview

- Program based on Senate Bill 1339 (enacted in 2012)
- Authorizes MTC & Air District to jointly adopt a regional commuter benefits ordinance
- Modeled on local ordinances in several Bay Area cities
- Program must be approved by MTC Commission and Air District Board in order to take effect
- Pilot program: 2014-2016
- Report to Legislature due by July 2016



Purpose/Objectives

- Reduce motor vehicle trips to worksites
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Improve air quality
- Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases
- Take advantage of federal commuter tax benefits that provide tax savings to employers & employees
- Expand the number of employers that make commuter benefits available to their employees





Applicability

- Employers with 50+ full-time employees in the Bay Area:
 - ✓ Private business
 - ✓ Public Agency
 - ✓ Non-profit organizations
- Employee count based on all Bay Area worksites combined
 - ✓ Including branch locations with less than 50 employees
- Applies to approximately 11,000 employers



Four Commuter Benefit Options

- Option 1: Pre-tax payroll deduction for transit or vanpool
- Option 2: Direct subsidy for transit or vanpool
- Option 3: Employer-provided transportation
- Option 4: Alternative commuter benefit





Program Requirements

- Select one of the four options
- Designate a commuter benefits coordinator
- Register with MTC/Air District via 511.org
- Notify employees & make benefit available
- Provide information needed for Program evaluation





Commuter Benefit Program Elements

- New Air District Rule (Regulation 14, Rule 1) to serve as foundation for Program
- Guidelines to explain Program options & requirements
- Employer assistance via MTC's 511 Regional Rideshare Program
- Web-based registration system & employer database

Objective

- Make it easy for employers to comply
- Minimize administrative requirements



Key Roles & Responsibilities

Air District:

- Develop rule & guidelines to complement the rule
- Compliance verification/enforcement

MTC:

- Develop registration process & employer database
- Employer assistance via 511 Regional Rideshare Program



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT



Bay Area
Commuter Benefits Program



Public Outreach

- Engaged wide range of stakeholders: employers, congestion management agencies, transportation management agencies, transit agencies, etc.
- Issued draft rule & workshop report in late August
- Public workshops in all nine Bay Area counties in October 2013 for input on draft Program
- Revised program elements as appropriate to respond to public comments





Input Received

- Keep it simple
- Desire for assistance to understand the options & the potential tax benefits
- Interest in Option 4 (alternative commuter benefit) among employers not well served by transit
- Some employers do not support a mandatory approach





Preparing for Implementation

Air District and MTC staff in conjunction with 511 Regional Rideshare Program are working closely to:

- Provide employer assistance by developing **511** webpage, Employer Guide and other materials
- Develop Phone Help Line for employers - Call **511**
- Develop web-based registration process
- Coordinate with stakeholders:
 - ✓ Local cities with commuter benefit ordinances
 - ✓ Transportation Management Associations
 - ✓ Congestion Management Agencies
 - ✓ Local Employer Outreach Programs-Delegated Counties



Program Landing Page on 511





511.ORG TRANSIT TRAFFIC RIDESHARE BICYCLING PARKING

MY 511 Login | Register  

511 Home Get Around Go Green Call 511 About 511 Mobile & Apps Developer Resources Enhanced Planner **BETA**

Employer Resources



Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program

Find a better way to work!

Commuter benefits encourage employees to take transit, vanpool, carpool, bicycle and walk rather than drive alone to work.

Bay Area employers with 50 or more employees are now required to register for the Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program. Through this program, employers must offer their employees [one of four Commuter Benefit options](#) in order to comply with CA Senate Bill 1339, signed into law in October 2012.

This Program Supports Employers Through:

- Potential payroll tax savings
- Enhanced employee recruitment
- Improved employee retention
- Reduced employee health costs
- Reduced employee stress

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

For Employers of 50 or More Employees

▶▶▶

Employers, Already Registered?

Username

Password

LOG IN

[Trouble Logging In?](#)

PROGRAM NEWS AND HIGHLIGHTS



How do Commuter Tax Benefits Work?

- Originates from IRS Revenue Code, Section 132(f) [Publication 15b](#)
- Provides tax free transportation fringe

HELPFUL RESOURCES

FAQs ▶

Employer Guide ▶



Process & Timeline

- Notice of Public Hearing Issued January 21 (30-day public comment period thru Feb. 21)
 - ✓ Proposed Rule (Regulation 14, Rule 1)
 - ✓ Staff Report
 - ✓ Socio-economic analysis
 - ✓ CEQA doc (Initial Study/Negative Declaration)
- MTC Planning Committee – March 14
- Air District Board Hearing – March 19
- MTC Commission – March 26
- Program Implementation – Early April 2014
- Employers choose option/implement program by Sept 30, 2014





Positive Outcomes for Employers and Employees

- Employers save +/- 8% on payroll taxes
- Employees can save 40% + on their (after tax) commuter costs on transit/vanpool fares
- Enhance employee benefits





Program Overview for Policy Advisory Council

Christine Maley-Grubl

Project Manager, MTC

P: 510/817-5927 E: cmaley@mtc.ca.gov