

AGENDA: June 19, 2008

TO: Transportation Policy Workshop (TPW)

FROM: Tegan Speiser, Sr. Transportation Planner
Nathan Luedtke, Transportation Planning Technician

RE: Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) Funding and Annual Evaluations for Ongoing Projects

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Accept the attached evaluations for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funded projects of Ecology Action ([Attachment 1](#)), the Pajaro Valley Transportation Management Association ([Attachment 2](#)), and the Commute Solutions Rideshare Program ([Attachment 3](#)) for FY07-08; and
 2. Approve the release and use of CMAQ Phase-Out funds for FY08-09 for Ecology Action (\$60,000), the Pajaro Valley Transportation Management Association (\$60,000), and the Commute Solutions Rideshare Program (\$200,000).
-

BACKGROUND

Since 2003, the Commission has required annual evaluations of Transportation Demand Management Programs funded by the Commission prior to the release of funds for the upcoming year. As part of its *Regional Transportation Improvement Program* (RTIP) amendment process in April 2007, the Commission further stipulated that funding for the Commute Solutions Rideshare Program and the second year of funding (FY08-09) for the Transportation Management Associations was contingent on the results of the countywide Transportation Demand Management analysis.

DISCUSSION

Three programs were approved to receive Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) Phase-Out funds through the RTIP process for FY07-08 and FY08-09: the Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Association (now operating under Ecology Action); the Pajaro Valley Transportation Management Association and the Commute Solutions Rideshare Program.

This report provides evaluations of program activities of these organizations during the 10 month period from August 2007 when CMAQ funds were released through May 2007. It also reviews recommendations and findings contained in the TDM analysis that was approved by the Commission this past spring.

TDM Analysis

The analysis and report of Transportation Demand Management activities in Santa Cruz County entitled, *Transportation Demand Management in Santa Cruz County: An Assessment* was conducted during 2007 and was accepted by the Commission at its March 20, 2008 meeting. A key reason for conducting the assessment and analysis of Transportation Demand Management programs and activities in Santa Cruz County during 2007 was to help inform the Commission in its TDM efforts and funding decisions. The report found that while there are dozens of successful TDM programs currently in place, these programs are delivered by a small handful of organizations. Chief among them are the three CMAQ-funded organizations Ecology Action, the Pajaro Valley TMA, and Commute Solutions. The report found that the three CMAQ funded organizations discussed in this staff report all provide valuable TDM services to the local community in Santa Cruz County and are working to develop new initiatives to address the unmet needs and service gaps identified in the TDM report.

Discussions that began as part of the report development process have already resulted in a closer collaboration and coordination of efforts among the three CMAQ-funded programs covered in this report. This closer working relationship addresses two of the recommendations approved by the Commission as part of the TDM analysis: "1) Maximize impacts and efficiencies and avoid potential duplication by...working together to redefine core goals, focus and constituencies; and 2) Form an alliance of local TDM providers to...pool resources to achieve economies of scale by...working together to deliver a joint TDM program." This more effective collaboration was recently evidenced in the process of developing the grant proposals that were submitted to the Air District earlier this month.

While significant successes for all three programs were outlined in the analysis, one of the recommendations approved by the Commission is to continue to require realistic, clear and ongoing performance measures for all TDM programs funded by the Commission. All of the programs discussed in today's report are in the process of strengthening their evaluation tools and methods as a result of recommendations from the TDM analysis.

Program Evaluations

The evaluations provided with this staff report ([Attachments 1-3](#)) follow the Commission's approved methods for program evaluation based upon these criteria: goals, tasks, outcomes and measures of program success. They evaluate each program's key activities and accomplishments over the past 9-10 months. Funds for this round of CMAQ funding became available in August 2007.

Evaluation Highlights

Ecology Action (formerly Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Association)

Ecology Action's (EA) CMAQ program during FY07-08 focused on launching the Go Green campaign, a sustainable transportation promotional and service effort aimed at helping Cabrillo College students switch to using transportation alternatives. In addition, EA continued to provide a number of outreach programs to its member employers. Highlights from the evaluation of EA programs funded under CMAQ in FY07-08 ([Attachment 1](#)) include:

- Focused outreach at Cabrillo College through Go Green program: 3,000 informational brochures distributed, 347 pledge forms collected and 360 students surveyed. Follow-up survey indicates 51% changed their travel behavior.
- Transportation Membership Services currently has 16 member employers covering 7,000 employees. 10 members are private businesses or nonprofits and 6 are public agencies.
- Staffed information tables at 10 employer worksites and public events.
- Sold 20 discounted bus passes
- Continued to offer Zero-Interest Bike Loan. 10 bike loan applications received and 4 Bike Loan checks delivered.
- Displayed informational materials on sustainable, alternative modes of transportation, designed to make biking, walking, riding the bus, carpooling, vanpooling, and telecommuting more accessible, convenient, and attractive.
- Provided Emergency Ride Home service to member employees. 60 ERH applications received and 16 emergency rides provided.

Pajaro Valley Transportation Management Association

The Pajaro Valley Transportation Management Association (PVTMA) provides south county residents with alternative transportation support services, as well as information, education, and advocacy with regard to improving traffic congestion and air quality through the reduction of single-occupancy vehicle trips. Unlike the Ecology Action's Transportation Services Membership, the PVTMA is not a member-based organization. Highlights from the evaluation of PVTMA programs funded under CMAQ in FY07-08 (Attachment 2) include:

- Distributed 400 bus passes to promote Just Hop On the Bus Gus, a program to increase Santa Cruz Metro transit ridership
- Collected almost 400 Commuter Club pledges from single occupancy vehicle commuters to try alternative modes of transportation through information and incentives over a period of one year.
- Printed new brochures for the Emergency Ride Home, a program to increase the use of alternative transportation by offering a secured ride home in case of emergency.
- Launched Vamonos Amigos, a bilingual educational program (online and in print) educating South County commuters about alternative transportation services. Vamonosamigos.org has received 15,000 hits

Commute Solutions Rideshare Program

RTC's Commute Solutions Program (CS) provides a suite of services that promote more efficient use of the local transportation network and serves as a clearinghouse for Transportation Demand Management programs throughout the county. Services are free to all people residing or working in Santa Cruz County as well as to businesses and public agencies. Commute Solutions provides commuters with personalized trip planning services along any route to, from or within Santa Cruz County and acts as a bridge linking up commuters in Santa Cruz, Monterey and Santa Clara Counties. Through a regional database, carpool matching services are offered as are bus rider information, vanpool formation services and referrals to other local transportation program partners. During FY07-08, Commute Solutions staff concentrated on completing the analysis of local Transportation Demand Management programs which was accepted by the Commission in March 2008.

Highlights from the evaluation of CS programs funded under CMAQ in FY07-08 (Attachment 3) include:

- 14 recommendations regarding TDM were approved by the Commission in March 2008 as part of the TDM analysis prepared by Commute Solutions staff
- 691 carpool matchlists provided to 393 active commuters in the ridematching database with 141 people placed in carpools
- Maintained and promoted 6 Park and Ride facilities
- Distributed over 6,000 printed brochures with information about the true costs of driving, benefits of bicycling and local bike routes, and Santa Cruz Metro Transit services
- Had 50,700 unique website visits to www.commutesolutions.org

Recommendation for Release of FY08-09 CMAQ Funding

In light of the fact that both the TDM analysis and the attached program evaluations show positive results in their activities of the past year, staff recommends release of CMAQ funding for FY08-09 to the ongoing programs outlined in this report operated by Ecology Action, the Pajaro Valley Transportation Management Association and Commute Solutions. All organizations offer Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures and as their evaluations show, yearly growth to promote the use of transportation alternatives. Staff recommends that the Commission release funds in the amount of \$60,000 to Ecology Action and \$60,000 to the PVTMA. Staff also recommends the release CMAQ funding in the amount of \$200,000 for Commute Solutions as the central clearinghouse for alternative transportation promotion in Santa Cruz County.

SUMMARY

At the Commission's request, an analysis of Transportation Demand Management programs in Santa Cruz County was completed and recommendations approved by the Commission in March 2008. In addition, evaluations for the ongoing CMAQ programs during FY07-08 have been prepared (Attachments 1-3). Both the TDM analysis and the program evaluations find that programs funded under the CMAQ program, Ecology Action, the Pajaro Valley Transportation Management Association and Commute Solutions, continue to demonstrate value to the Santa Cruz community. Staff recommends release of CMAQ Phase-Out funding to these ongoing programs for FY08-09.

Attachments

1. Ecology Action evaluation
2. Pajaro Valley Transportation Management Association evaluation
3. Commute Solutions evaluation
4. Recommendations from RTC's Report "Transportation Demand Management in Santa Cruz County: An Assessment", March 2008