SUBJECT: Curb Your Commute

MEETING DATE: January 17, 2008

AGENDA ITEM: 13

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive report regarding the upcoming Curb Your Commute Highway 101 Milpas to Hot Springs traffic mitigation program.

STAFF CONTACT: Kent Epperson

SUMMARY:

As part of the Highway 101 Milpas to Hot Springs Operational Improvements project scheduled to begin in the summer of 2008, Traffic Solutions has begun preparations for Curb Your Commute, a traffic mitigation effort that will help offset some of the traffic impacts that will result from the four year construction project. The program is a package of traffic mitigation strategies that will result in decreased peak period commuting and increased carpooling, vanpooling and telecommuting. Curb Your Commute will be publicly launched to employers on February 28, 2008 at a formal breakfast event coordinated with the Santa Barbara Regional Chamber of Commerce. Curb Your Commute includes public events such as, Shift Your Trip, a two-week flexible schedule promotion scheduled for May 2008, and the Commute Challenge, a three-month long, all-modes employer-based competition scheduled for the Fall of 2008 and 2009. Several ongoing promotions will also be offered, such as Trip Rewards, a commuter benefits incentive program, Premium Vanpool Service, offering spacious vanpools equipped with WiFi service, FlexWork Consulting to assist employers in implementing flexible schedules and telecommuting programs, and a WiFi on Buses program where wireless internet will be provided on VISTA Coastal Express buses. Curb Your Commute is funded with Measure D funds and is a required element of the 101 Milpas to Hot Springs Traffic Management Plan.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of Curb Your Commute is to reduce traffic on Highway 101 and to assist commuters and employers with commute options during the four years of construction work on the 101 Milpas to Hot Springs project. The strategies developed are designed to leverage employer-based solutions that result in long term travel behavior change, as well as to increase overall awareness of the benefits of shifting your commute to the off-peak period, and of telecommuting, carpooling, vanpooling and using transit. Curb Your Commute will also serve to improve public perception of the 101 Milpas to Hot Springs project by raising public awareness.
of the construction project and empowering commuters to modify their commute to minimize the negative impacts during construction. The key to the success of Curb Your Commute rests on building strong partnerships with public and private employers, organizations and local leaders with close coordination between SBCAG, Caltrans, and the City of Santa Barbara. Strategies for Curb Your Commute include consolidation of alternative transportation information and services through Traffic Solutions Online, several public events and ongoing promotions, and a public awareness campaign. To insure success, staff will evaluate the program after the first year and make the necessary changes to Curb Your Commute to maximize its effectiveness. The following strategies make up the Curb Your Commute campaign.

CONSOLIDATION OF INFORMATION AND SERVICES:

In order to facilitate increases in ridesharing in the south 101 corridor, Traffic Solutions must consolidate the multitude of services and resources into a simple and convenient set of options for commuters, providing a one-stop-shop for commuter information. Traffic Solutions Online is the newly launched web-based commuter service that will manage and administer all the Curb Your Commute services. Offered free to both commuters and employers, Traffic Solutions Online will also measure traffic mitigation impacts, reductions in single occupant vehicle trips, air quality benefits and will compile valuable information for employers.

EVENTS:

Curb Your Commute Employer Launch Breakfast (February 28, 2008): A formal breakfast event coordinated by the Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce, 1st District Supervisor Salud Carbajal and Santa Barbara Mayor Marty Blum; CEOs and human resource managers will be encouraged to pledge to participate in the Curb Your Commute program.

Shift Your Trip (May 2008): A two week long voluntary effort to shift commuting to off-peak hours, tailored after the Flex In the City event in Houston. Traffic counts will be taken before, during and after the two week period to measure its effectiveness in reducing traffic during the peak periods.

The Commute Challenge (August-October 2008 and 2009): A three-month, all transportation modes employer-based team competition focused on reducing peak period commute trips on the south 101 corridor. Traffic Solutions will apply the successes of the Team Bike Challenge, emphasizing employer competition and recognition.

ONGOING PROMOTIONS:

Employer Trip Rewards Incentive (begins March 2008): The incentive program is designed to stimulate new employer-based commuter cash incentive programs. Employers with no commuter cash incentive program that begin to offer at least a dollar a day cash incentive to employees using alternative transportation will be eligible for matching incentives up to one hundred dollars in value per south 101 commuter.

Premium Vanpool Program: Up to five vanpools equipped with spacious reclining seats, individual lighting and free wireless internet service will be available for commuters traveling the south 101 corridor. The wireless internet will enable commuters to work while they commute or reclaim the time normally wasted commuting. Commuters will be offered two free months of vanpooling and will be given a one hundred dollar New Rider Rebate on the third month if they join the vanpool. WiFi on the Premium Vanpools will be partially sponsored by major employers or private sponsors.

FlexWork Consulting: Assist private employers in implementing telecommuting and flexible work schedule programs. Employers with high percentages of south 101 commuters will be
targeted for these services. FlexWork consulting will be coordinated with the Shift Your Trip event in order to stimulate additional interest in FlexWork. A FlexWork Fundamentals workshop will be held at the Goleta Chamber of Commerce office on January 30, 2008 and will recruit potential Goleta employers for the FlexWork program.

WiFi on Buses (March 2008): Provide free internet access on VISTA Coastal Express buses in order to attract additional riders and also to market the “Work While You Commute” concept to employers. Traffic Solutions hopes to secure private and public sponsors for the WiFi on Buses program to offset the cost of the service.

INCENTIVES:

Curb Your Commute Membership Axxess Card: SBCAG Traffic Solutions has entered into an agreement with Santa Barbara Axxess to produce a co-branded Axxess card to be used as a primary prize incentive for all of the Curb Your Commute promotions. Santa Barbara Axxess is a discount card offering two-for-one meals and services and ongoing discounts at over 450 merchants in the South Coast. This partnership benefits Traffic Solutions by utilizing an existing, well recognized discount card at one-third the cost to Traffic Solutions. The partnership also provides an excellent opportunity to partner with area businesses, by tapping into the strong relationships between Axxess and its participating businesses. The membership card will not only offer all of the great two-for-one and ongoing discounts provided by Axxess but will also offer special discounts at businesses near the construction zone in Downtown Santa Barbara, along Milpas Street and Montecito, encouraging commuters to delay their peak period trip and patronize these businesses (e.g. 20% off restaurants and retailers from 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM). The partnership with Santa Barbara Axxess will also enable Traffic Solutions to produce co-branded gift certificates at a discounted price.

GENERAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN:

An important component of Curb Your Commute will be a comprehensive public awareness campaign that highlights the benefits of not driving alone during peak periods in the highway 101 corridor during and after construction. Initially, the awareness campaign will capitalize on the initial impact of construction to motivate changes in their commute behavior. These messages will be followed by information about the benefits of various Curb Your Commute options and promotions. The awareness campaign will utilize both traditional advertising such as TV, radio and print as well as more grass roots marketing techniques such as email, YouTube and individualized marketing at events.

COMMITTEE REVIEW: Curb Your Commute Steering Committee and Advisory Group

ATTACHMENTS: Curb Your Commute brochure to be handed out at the Board meeting.