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EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
MARCH 17, 2005

SUBJECT: REGIONAL COMMUTE SERVICES WEBSITE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file report on the CommuteSmart.info website which provides regional commute information for the Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside and Ventura County areas.

ISSUE

The Chair's office requested staff to provide an update on the CommuteSmart.info website. In January 2005, Metro, in cooperation with four other county transportation agencies launched a regional commute assistance website that provides multi-modal transportation information for employers and individuals. The website premiered in conjunction with the regional rideshare media campaign that was funded with a Mobile Source Emissions Reduction Review Committee (MSRC) air quality grant.

BACKGROUND

Rideshare Evaluation Study

Beginning FY03, staff implemented changes to Los Angeles County's rideshare activities in response to a Board-adopted motion by Directors Roberts and Molina that directed a rideshare evaluation study be conducted in FY02. The study contained several recommendations and in particular noted a lack of integration between the rideshare functions and other Metro services. The report also noted that regional marketing activities had declined and that there was indication that this decline was impacting commuter awareness of transportation service options.

In response to the issue of impacting commuter awareness, staff have been working with staff representing Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) to introduce new methods and update serviceable tools to enhance regional marketing efforts. CommuteSmart.info represents one of the new initiatives generated from this partnership. CommuteSmart.info was developed over a 4-month period and launched on January 24, 2005 to coincide with the first phase of the regional rideshare "Pick a Day Any Day" media campaign in order to leverage the two efforts. The cost of website development, approximately \$41,000, was funded

through existing funding resources and was shared by the five county transportation agencies based on population split.

CommuteSmart.info

CommuteSmart.info is now the banner under which the joint 5-county commute assistance efforts are promoted. CommuteSmart.info offers comprehensive information to the public and employers on the commute transportation system covering the five-county region. The website provides a centralized location for the public to access rideshare and commute information and leverages the use of various products and services that were previously developed by Metro, partnering agencies or the MSRC. Information is provided on traffic conditions, transit, carpooling, vanpooling, bicycling, telecommuting, park and ride lots, carpool lanes and employer assistance services. Interactive services available include personalized transit trip planning through the Metro trip planner, commute cost calculator and carpool/vanpool matching services through the new five-county rideshare database. As of early February, the website had received 1 million hits from 18,000 visitors. For those that do not have access to the internet, 1-800-COMMUTE continues to provide personal commuter assistance.

Another related regional project developed in cooperation by the five counties is the CommuteSmart News, an electronic monthly newsletter distributed to employers that provides updates on commute transportation services. In addition, each issue includes a page especially designed for distribution via e-mail or posting to employees. The newsletter issues are archived on CommuteSmart.info as a downloadable resource.

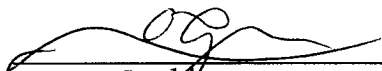
NEXT STEPS

Staff will monitor website performance, and work with the other county transportation agencies to continue to maintain and enhance the website product. CommuteSmart.info and 1-800-COMMUTE will continue to be promoted during the next two phases of the "Pick A Day Any Day" regional rideshare media campaign scheduled to run in Spring and Fall 2005.

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