

Solano Napa Commuter Information Year-End Report – FY 2010-2011

What is the SNCI Program?

The Solano Transportation Authority (STA)'s Solano Napa Commuter Information (SNCI) program offers free services and information for alternative transportation in Solano and Napa counties and surrounding regions. Information and services for carpool, vanpool, bus, ferry, rail, bicycling, and more are delivered to the general public and through employers. Through the provision of these services and programs SNCI assists the STA to "promote the maintenance and improvement of a healthy natural environment, with special emphasis on air quality and climate change issues." The focus of the SNCI program is to encourage the use of non-drive alone travel modes to maximize roadway efficiencies, improve air quality, present mobility options and help address climate change goals.

The STA Board of Directors approved the FY 2010-2011 Work Program for the SNCI Program in September 2010. The Work Program included nine major elements: Customer Service, Employer Program, Vanpool Program, Incentives, Emergency Ride Home, SNCI Awareness Campaign (Solano Commute Challenge), Bike to Work Campaign, General Marketing, and Partnerships.

In 2010-2011, the SNCI program was funded by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), Yolo Solano Air Quality Management District (YSAQMD), and Eastern Solano Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) funds for the purpose of managing countywide and regional rideshare programs in Napa and Solano counties and providing air quality improvements through trip reduction.

SNCI 2010-11 Funding

Funding Source	Amount
MTC	\$240,000
BAAQMD	\$205,000
YSAQMD	\$12,000
ECMAQ	\$145,000

2010-11 marked the final year of a six-year contract with MTC. In June 2011, a one-year extension of that contract secured funding for FY 2011-12.

General Public Services and Outreach

Customer Service

SNCI provides a high level of customer service via internet, telephone, and community events. During 2010-11, staff responded to an estimated 2900 information calls, providing ridematching services, local and regional transit trip planning, and Baylink Ferry and Capitol Corridor schedules. SNCI uses the Bay Area's Regional Ridematch System and has a customized interface featuring SNCI's logo and information. Over 1,114 carpool/vanpool matchlists were processed; 814 were for newly interested commuters and 300 were updates. There has been a significant increase in internet transit trip planning requests with 225 requests during the year.

Service requests per year

	Info Calls	Matchlists	Internet Requests
2010-11	2,890	1,114	225
2009-10	2,781	725	<i>Did not track</i>
2008-09	3,473	1,050	<i>Did not track</i>

Thousands of materials were distributed in response to phone calls, through numerous displays, at events, and through other means. Nearly 48,000 pieces of transit and transportation alternative information were distributed. SNCI staff supplies 129 display racks throughout Napa and Solano counties at employer sites, public libraries, senior and community centers and other locations.

Materials Distributed

30,271	Public Transit Schedules
7,638	Commuter Guides
5,618	Solano Express brochures
4,200	Solano Yolo BikeLinks Maps

Events

SNCI staffed 46 events in Napa and Solano counties, providing in-person ridematching and transit-trip planning services. These events included:

- Farmers Markets
- Health Fairs
- Benefit Fairs
- Employer Events
- Earth Day Events
- Community Events

Marketing

SNCI launched its revised, user-friendly website, www.commuterinfo.net, in March 2011. Helpful links from pages that determine your commute options, direct you to ridematching, explain vanpooling and transit, and inform employers allow users to find useful information. This information is kept up-to-date to increase value.

SNCI regularly places advertisements in local newspapers and on local radio stations as part of regional rideshare campaigns and throughout the year to increase general program awareness. Other advertising avenues are also used, such as city and county Visitors Guides.

Employer Programs

Employers

The SNCI Programs works with employers in Solano and Napa counties to help them improve their employees' commutes and reduce the number of drive alone commute trips. A database of nearly 500 employers in the two counties is maintained and kept current. This database is used to promote SNCI services and programs through periodic mailings and e-mails.

Employers receive a range of employer services. Presentations detailing the benefits of alternative commute programs have been made to 30 employers. Nineteen (19) employer events were staffed.

Services for Employers

- Presentations/Consultations
- Events
- ERH Program
- Vanpool Support
- Bike to Work Campaign
- Solano Commute Challenge
- Display Rack
- Commuter Tax Benefits Info
- Density Maps
- Transportation Surveys
- Relocation Assistance

SNCI provided relocation assistance to State Compensation Insurance Fund (State Fund) during the Spring and Summer of 2011. State Fund reduced the size of their San Francisco office and began relocating over 700 employees from San Francisco to their Vacaville and Pleasanton campuses. In addition to transferring from San Francisco, State Fund also moved staff from Vacaville to Pleasanton. The actual relocation is taking place in phases beginning in July and continuing through September. After several consultations with the State Fund relocation team, SNCI staff designed and administered an on-line Transportation Survey to determine what commute modes employees would consider. Over 450 State Fund employees completed the survey. Staff worked with local transit agencies, Fairfield and Suisun Transit (FAST) and Vacaville City Coach, to discuss transit coordination plans. Vacaville City Coach considered the needs of State Fund as well as other employers who are in that business park section of Vacaville when route changes were made. SNCI staffed two events where relocating employees were invited to find out their commute options to their new work locations. 75 employees who were transferring from Vacaville to Pleasanton attended the Vacaville event and 450 who were going to Vacaville from San Francisco attended a similar event in San Francisco. At these events, information about transit options, carpools and vanpools was provided. Employees interested in vanpooling were introduced to the SNCI vanpool coordinator who began to work with them to start vanpools. This assistance made it possible for one new vanpool to be on the road for the first relocation phase with between 6 to 10 additional new vanpools anticipated to form in FY 2011-12.

Travis Air Force Base is the largest employer in Solano County with 14,000 employees. For several years it was difficult to find the appropriate contact person to discuss SNCI's services, who would disseminate the information to all their employees. Only a few Travis AFB employees knew about SNCI's services and took advantage of the promotions and incentives available to them. Eight (8) vanpools had been formed several years ago, but there was potential for more. Federal employees who take transit or ride in vanpools are eligible for a Commuter Incentive of up to \$230 each month. This is the implementation of the Federal Commuter Tax Benefit Program. As result of meeting with Col. James Vechery at the Solano Economic Development Council (Solano EDC) meeting in June, staff made a presentation and had discussion with a group from Travis AFB who expressed interest and willingness to implement the SNCI Program. This is anticipated to occur as part of the Solano Commute Challenge in FY 2011-12.

Solano Emergency Ride Home Program

The Solano Emergency Ride Home (ERH) Program was established by the STA Board in July 2005 and is designed to encourage the use of commute alternatives such as carpooling, vanpooling, public transit, walking or bicycling, by providing a free ride home to program participants in cases of emergency. By alleviating workers' concerns about their ability to return home in the event of unexpected circumstances, the ERH program can help maximize the use of alternative transportation in Solano and Napa counties. This past year, seven (7) new employers registered for the Solano's ERH program bringing the total of participating employers to 60 in Solano County and 22 in Napa County. A total of

250 employees are registered in the ERH program. During the year there were four (4) requests to use the ERH program.

Solano Commute Challenge

The Solano Commute Challenge is a targeted outreach campaign for Solano County employers to encourage employees to use transit, carpool, vanpool, bike, or walk to work at least 30 times from August to October. This employer outreach strategy incorporates strengthening partnerships with business organizations and the Solano Chambers of Commerce.

Forty-six (46) major employers totaling 620 employees participated in the fourth annual countywide Solano Commute Challenge during FY 2010-11. 350 participants met the goal and earned the title “Commute Champion.” Solano County became the Most Outstanding Workplace for the third year in a row. State Fund, Genentech, AAA Northern California, Nevada & Utah (NCNU), and California Vegetables Specialties (CVS) earned the title Commute Champion Workplace.

Solano Commute Challenge Commute Champion Workplaces

Company Name	City	Total Registrants	Commute Champs	Commute Contenders
Solano County	Countywide	101	53	16
State Fund	Vacaville	59	43	8
Genentech	Vacaville	61	33	6
AAA NCNU	Fairfield	38	28	5
CVS	Rio Vista	29	27	1

Recognition events were conducted at each of the Commute Champion Workplaces. Supervisor Sperring, Mayor Augustine, Mayor Price and Mayor Vick attended events in their cities where they joined with their local chamber of commerce to recognize the Commute Champions at each work location.

Vanpool Program

Vanpool formation and support are the cornerstones of the vanpool program. SNCI works with individuals and employers to illustrate the significant benefits of vanpooling and encourage vanpool formation. Staff changes during FY 2010-11 impacted the number of vans formed. However, the training and orientation of staff has laid the groundwork for a more successful FY 2011-12. Fifteen (15) new vanpools traveling to, through, or from Solano, Napa, Yolo or Sacramento counties were formed last year, with 7 vanpools coming to employers in Solano County. Vanpool support and assistance are integral to keeping vanpools on the road. SNCI is presently responsible for providing the support for 232 vans. These 232 vanpools average 2,552 van riders; 5,104 trips per day; 1,224,960 trips annually. Staff performed 203 van assists which include processing Motor Vehicle Reports, issuing Sworn Statement Cards, processing medical reimbursements and FasTrak requests, distributing van signs, researching information for vanpools and other assistance as needed.

Vanpool Counts

	Vanpools formed	VPs Formed To/From/ Through	Vanpools Supported
FY 2010-2011	7	15	232
FY 2009-2010	11	32	221
FY 2008-2009	8	26	170

Vanpool Incentives

The Vanpool Incentive Program is designed to support the formation of new vanpools and to keep active pools on the road. SNCI currently provides 3 incentives for vanpools, the New Driver Incentive, the Vanpool Start-up Incentive, and the Back-up Driver Incentive. During the fiscal year, 15 drivers received the new driver incentive; 10 vans received the vanpool start-up incentive; and 13 commuters received the back-up driver incentive.

Distribution of Vanpool Incentives

	New Driver Incentive	Vanpool Start-up Incentive	Back-up Driver Incentive
FY 2010-2011	15	10	13
FY 2009-2010	16	10	14
FY 2008-2009	n/a	7	17

Bicycle Program

SNCI encourages the use of bicycling as a commute alternative by distributing the Solano Yolo BikeLinks maps, coordinating the annual region-wide Bike to Work Week activities in Solano and Napa counties, and providing a bicycle incentive.

Bike to Work Week

Bike to Work Week is held each year in May. This region-wide event is designed to persuade drive-alone commuters to try bicycling to work, at least one day a week. On the 17th Annual Bike to Work Day, over 1,100 Solano and Napa residents rode their bicycle on May 12, 2011. SNCI supported 26 strategically placed Energizer Stations throughout Solano and Napa counties handing out water, energy bars, and messenger/tote bags stuffed with bike-related information.

A Bike to Work Week campaign packet was distributed to over 300 employers in the two counties to encourage employee participation. Local print and radio advertising was used to promote the campaign.

Two “contests” with winners from each county – the Bicycle Commuter of the Year and the Team Bike Challenge – were held. Jamie Simmons of Solano County and Jim Wilson of Napa County received the 2011 Bike Commuter of the Year Awards. Both were employees of Anheuser-Busch in Fairfield. The county winners of the Team Bike Challenge were the Vaca 5 (Solano County) and the Chevrolegs (Napa County).

Bicycle Incentive

Solano County residents and employees are offered an incentive to cover 60% of the cost of a new bicycle, up to \$100, for commuting to work. This program is designed to encourage commuters who work within biking distance from home to bicycle as an alternative commute mode. During the fiscal year 7 individuals received the bicycle incentive.

FY 2011-2012

Here are some of the exciting endeavors SNCI has planned for FY 2011-12:

- Assisting the City of Benicia implement their Climate Action Plan as part of a pilot for STA’s Climate Action Plan Strategy
- Conduct 5th Annual Solano Commute Challenge
- Conduct First Napa Commute Challenge
- Napa Bike Incentive

- Partnership with Safe Routes to School Program and County Public Health to improve mobility needs at schools
- Partnership with 3 Solano college campuses and three primary transit operators to improve mobility and access to students and faculty
- Coordination with SolTrans, new transit JPA, to provide rideshare assistance as part of their first Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP)