Chapter 8

Demand Management: Innovative Incentives for Taking the Path Less Traveled

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2050 Regional Transportation Plan

Transportation Demand Management Overview

Our transportation system in the San Diego region faces many challenges. In the past, steady population growth; the dispersion of homes, jobs, schools and services; increased interregional commuting; and the expanded movement of goods all have led to mounting congestion on our roadways. These trends challenged our ability to keep pace with growing travel demands and to operate a reliable transportation system. Capital improvements can take many years and significant resources to implement, but managing the demand for various forms of transportation, also known as Transportation Demand Management (TDM), can provide flexible and cost-effective solutions. Typical TDM programs include ridesharing initiatives such as carpooling, vanpooling, and buspooling; promoting alternative work schedules and teleworking; and promoting bicycling, walking, and the use of public transit. These programs reduce the overall number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT), making more efficient use of our existing roadways and maximizing the movement of people and goods.

This chapter describes our region’s effort to implement TDM programs that optimize our investment in the transportation network, and provide our region with viable travel alternatives. Since TDM measures are most effective when coordinated with public education and outreach strategies, this plan combines complementary TDM programs with strategies for motivating and reinforcing sustainable travel behavior.

The 2050 RTP is developed around five primary components: a Sustainable Communities Strategy, Social Equity and Environmental Justice, Systems Development, Systems Management, and Demand Management. Each component has a unique yet interdependent role in creating a sustainable transportation system that improves mobility, reduces greenhouse gases, and increases travel choices for everyone in the San Diego region through 2050.

iCommute – The Regional TDM Program

In 1995, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) began operating a regional TDM program when it assumed management of “Commuter Computer,” the California Department of Transportation’s (Caltrans) regional rideshare program. This operation was transformed into the “RideLink” service for the region. In 2009, SANDAG re-branded RideLink as “iCommute” to modernize the program, expand and upgrade services, and reach new audiences. iCommute is now the TDM program for the San Diego region. The goal of the iCommute program is to manage and reduce traffic congestion during peak times, as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental pollutants that result from commuters driving to work alone each day.

The iCommute program pulls together proven trip-reduction strategies from the past, and it adds state-of-the-art Internet tools that provide access to convenient transportation choices that reduce auto dependency, vehicle energy consumption, and polluting emissions.

With an innovative Web site (www.iCommuteSD.com) as its central hub for outreach to commuters and employers, iCommute makes it easy to access, evaluate, and compare transportation choices. The “Commute Cost Calculator” provides commuters with the actual cost of their current commute and the potential savings from choosing alternative forms of transportation. “RideMatcher,” a tool within
the Web site, helps commuters securely find a vanpool, carpool, or bicycle partner. The “TripTracker” tool allows commuters to log their commute trips on an interactive calendar that calculates the financial and environmental costs of their daily commute patterns. The online program also simplifies the administration of regional TDM programs by measuring participation in and demand for TDM programs, and by quantifying the program's benefits at the regional level.

TDM Strategy – Outreach, Education, and Incentives

In the early 1990s, TDM regulations in the San Diego region required employer trip reduction plans. These regulations, including the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District Regulation XIII and the City of San Diego’s TDM Ordinance, were enacted when the federal government designated the region’s air quality as “severe.” To reduce emissions from motor vehicles, the regulations required employers with more than 100 employees, the source of significant peak period traffic, to implement trip reduction plans for their work sites. In 1995, the federal government re-classified the region’s air quality designation from “severe” to “serious,” and the TDM regulations were rescinded. Since the mid-1990s, participation by area employers and commuters in TDM efforts has been voluntary.

In a voluntary environment, commuters base their travel choices on a desire to save time and money, reduce stress, improve the environment, and other considerations. Employers participate in TDM programs that are easy to implement and make business sense by helping to attract and retain employees and reduce costs. The iCommute TDM strategy seeks to address these personal and business motivations by promoting and educating the public on their transportation choices, and by providing incentives to change travel behavior.

Outreach and Education

Employer Outreach and Services – iCommute’s partnership with employers has proven to be the most effective method for promoting alternative travel choices among the region’s commuters. This is partly because TDM programs can be tailored to the transportation needs of employees at their specific place of work. iCommute’s initial outreach and education efforts have focused on the region’s largest employers.

As of July 2011, iCommute has partnered with 159 employers to develop customized commute programs that meet employer and employee needs.

As of May 2011, iCommute has partnered with 157 employers to develop customized commute programs that meet employer and employee needs.
To further assist employers, iCommute developed a comprehensive Commuter Benefit Program Starter Kit that outlines a simple, three-step process to help employers identify their commute needs, design a custom program, and roll it out to their employees. The kit includes sample policies, forms, tax deduction information, commuter program descriptions, and examples of best practices from other companies and agencies. It also includes advice and sample material for how to market a commuter program to employees. iCommute staff also works one-on-one with employers to provide the technical assistance they may need, such as surveying for employee travel preferences, mapping employee commute routes, and developing a customized plan that makes business sense.

Moving forward, iCommute’s employer outreach program will continue to be a focal point of communications as the most effective way to reach large numbers of commuters. Marketing efforts will focus on increasing the scope of and participation in commuter benefits programs within mid- to large-size employers that already offer such programs. Additional effort will be placed on establishing new programs in companies that do not already have commuter benefits in place. This will be accomplished through a variety of marketing mechanisms, including:

- more self-service options such as Web-based forums and tutorials
- more incentives for employers and employees
- new and improved events and promotions

Public Outreach – Marketing and outreach are key strategies for the implementation of the SANDAG TDM program. Research shows that access to information will provide commuters with viable choices and guide travel behavior. The iCommute Web site is the primary portal for communicating information on transportation choices and raising awareness about the financial, environmental, and health benefits of TDM programs. The iCommute Web site provides commuters with the information, tools, and resources they need to try an alternative mode of transportation. One year after launching the iCommute Web site, more than 10,000 commuters use the online system to improve their commuting choices.

iCommute seeks to increase awareness about alternative transportation choices through events and promotions such as Bike to Work Day, Rideshare Week, and “Dump the Pump.”

Direct outreach to community groups, schools, agencies, and neighborhood organizations also is a key strategy for reaching the region’s commuters. Fostering partnerships with organizations and agencies to co-market transportation alternatives leverages marketing resources and augments outreach efforts. Moving forward, building and strengthening relationships with partners and sponsors will be a key strategy for reaching new and larger audiences.

Successful marketing and outreach requires a continuous dialogue with commuters to determine changing public preferences and respond with appropriate programs and services. iCommute will achieve this through ongoing surveys of users and potential users.
of alternative transportation choices. This information will be used to develop targeted marketing campaigns that deliver appealing messages that inform commuters about improved programs and services.

**Agency Outreach** – There are many ways that local governments can educate the public and encourage alternatives to driving alone in their communities. Through the SANDAG Energy Roadmap Program, iCommute is partnering with local governments to provide free assistance and tools for assessing, designing, and implementing TDM programs at the employer level and community level. By implementing TDM programs, local governments can reduce energy consumption, help their employees save money and time, decrease traffic congestion, and reduce their community’s overall carbon footprint. iCommute encourages establishing TDM programs at the local government level under three categories:

- **Commuter policies and benefit programs:** iCommute works with local governments in the same way it works with other employers to assess and develop customized commuter benefit programs for their employees.

- **TDM in the development review process:** The inclusion of TDM measures in the development review process offers creative, affordable, and effective ways to reduce motor vehicle trips and their associated impacts. iCommute will work with local governments to develop policies that require or encourage the inclusion of TDM measures in new developments to reduce the environmental impacts of vehicular traffic generated by those projects. Moving forward, iCommute will develop a best practices guide for local jurisdictions that want to make TDM a formal part of their development review process. These linkages also will be included in the update of the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

- **TDM in the community:** iCommute provides local governments with the tools they need to educate the public and encourage alternatives to driving alone in their communities, including:
  - Providing information on commuting resources and commute alternatives, to be shared with the public through their Web sites, newsletters, and at public venues
  - Soliciting their participation in annual events and campaigns, such as Bike to Work Day, “Dump the Pump,” and Rideshare Week
  - Partnering with local governments to evaluate public programs, such as car sharing and bike sharing that encourage making alternative transportation choices

Financial Incentives

Providing people with financial incentives to try alternatives to driving alone is a tried and proven strategy. Currently, iCommute offers a vanpool program subsidy of $400 per month per vanpool as well as the Guaranteed Ride Home program.
important factor in the commuter’s decision to choose an alternative form of transportation. Expanding eligibility for the GRH program may prove to have a positive benefit/cost ratio, and this will be explored in the future.

To increase participation in TDM programs, more aggressive financial incentives for all alternative modes of transportation will be needed. iCommute will continue to develop and pilot varying levels and types of incentives for employers and commuters who are not currently covered by other incentive programs. For example, iCommute plans to launch a carpool incentive program that provides a subsidy for new carpools. iCommute also is exploring partnerships with businesses to provide discounts and incentives to commuters who take alternative modes of transportation and log their sustainable commute trips in the iCommute system.

Locational Emphasis – TDM programs and incentives are promoted throughout the region. However, due to limited resources, more intensive outreach efforts will be targeted toward locations with the most potential for impact. These are:

- Major employment centers
- Urban areas
- Major corridors with High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) or Managed Lanes
- Corridors impacted by highway construction
- Areas around public transit stations

### Regional Vanpool Program

This program provides long-distance commuters with a cost-effective alternative to driving alone. Figure 8.1 illustrates the growth of the vanpool program since the 1990s. SANDAG contracts with vanpool vendors to provide the vehicles, maintenance, and insurance, and it currently provides a $400 monthly subsidy per eligible van to reduce the vehicle lease costs. As of May 2011, the vanpool program accounts for:

- 749 vanpools
- 5,885 daily passengers
- 56-mile average, one-way distance
- 575,232 average vehicle miles reduced each day

Looking to the future, iCommute will encourage the continued growth of the vanpool program by examining the feasibility of a tiered, monthly subsidy that provides a larger incentive to vanpools with higher vehicle occupancy rates. Additionally, iCommute will support the Regional Energy Strategy and the Climate Action Strategy by introducing clean fuel and electric vehicles into the regional vanpool fleet, as the necessary infrastructure is available to enable this transition.

### Carpool Program

iCommute maintains an online database of commuters who are interested in joining a carpool. RideMatcher is a convenient online tool to securely form carpools or vanpools 24/7.

Currently, RideMatcher works best to coordinate regularly scheduled carpools. However, in the future iCommute intends to enhance this technology to promote
ridesharing during major regional events, and
instant ridematching on an occasional basis.

To increase the number of carpools and
measure VMT reduction attributable to
carpooling, iCommute plans to launch a
regional carpool incentive program – as
recommended in the 2009 Ridelink Carpool
Incentive Study. This new program will result
in an estimated 5,300 new carpools per year,
which would put carpooling on a level playing
field with the regional vanpool program. New
carpoolers who enroll in the iCommute on-
line system would be eligible to receive
incentives. Based on the best practices and
outcomes from similar programs nationwide,
it is expected that after carpooling for three
months with the incentive, commuters will be
more likely to continue carpooling once the
incentive expires. A pilot program is
anticipated in Fiscal Year 2012.

Buspool Program

In 2010, SANDAG, the Metropolitan Transit
System (MTS), and the Navy collaborated to
implement a pilot buspool service (Murph
Express) that provides Premium Express Bus
service from the Murphy Canyon military
housing cluster to Naval Base San Diego. The
Navy is one of the San Diego region’s largest
employers, with about 34,000 naval
personnel and civilians who commute within
the county to naval facilities. Therefore, the
goal of the buspool program is to provide
quick and convenient access to military bases,
reducing congestion on our region’s
transportation system, and improving the
quality of life for military personnel and the
public in general. The operation of the
buspool service is funded through the
military’s Transportation Incentive Program,
but SANDAG markets the program and
provides technical planning support for the
program’s expansion. If the pilot project is
successful, SANDAG, in cooperation with
MTS, will work with the military to expand
buspool services to other military housing
clusters and facilities. The military may
consider options to mandate a certain level of
participation in the program as part of their
overall TDM strategy. iCommute also will seek
similar opportunities and partnerships with
other large employers in the region.
School Services

iCommute offers SchoolPool, a free, convenient, and secure online carpool, walk, and bikepool matching system for parents who want to share the job of getting their children to and from school. SchoolPool reduces traffic congestion in and around school zones, creating a safer environment for students. The SchoolPool program is open to students in all public and private elementary, middle, and high schools within San Diego County. Figure 8.2 shows the schools in the San Diego Region. Since transitioning to an online SchoolPool program in 2009, 36 schools with nearly 400 parents have enrolled in the service.

As part of SchoolPool, iCommute will offer a Walking School Bus and Bike Buddy program that supports regional public health initiatives and the Safe Routes to School strategy by promoting active transportation choices for children (see Chapter 6). iCommute offers parents and schools the online tools to form safe, supervised opportunities for children to walk or bike to school. To promote these services, iCommute plans to hold annual Walk and Bike to School Day events in conjunction with International Walk to School Day starting in 2011. Ongoing education and partnerships with school-based groups such as parent associations will continue to support this effort.

Telework and Alternative Work Schedules

Telework is a transportation alternative that allows employees to work at home, at a nearby satellite facility, or from a “virtual office.” Teleworking replaces travel to and from work with telecommunications technologies. The goal of telework is to bring work to employees rather than bringing employees to work, thereby relieving peak-period congestion. In the San Diego region, about one-third of workforce jobs, or 519,000 jobs, are compatible with telework. However, less than 5 percent of the workforce currently participates in a formal telework program. Studies show that teleworking can improve a company’s bottom line with increased productivity, reduced overhead, improved retention, and recruitment, but many companies are reluctant to implement a telework policy. In our region’s efforts to identify cost-effective strategies for reducing peak period congestion and the associated greenhouse gas emissions, telework rises to the top. However, telework is a solution that currently lacks a dedicated program. To promote it, iCommute proposes to launch a regionwide telework program that includes incentives and technical assistance to support employers with developing telework policies and programs.

Like the teleworker who avoids the peak period commute by working from home, the employee who participates in a flex schedule or compressed workweek avoids commuting during peak periods. Employees with flexible schedules arrive and/or leave work before or after rush hours. Compressed work weeks, like the “9/80” work schedule, help eliminate one day of home-to-work commuting every two weeks. These alternative schedules are simple yet powerful tools that employers can use to help reduce travel demand while providing employees with flexibility. iCommute will continue to provide employers...
with the resources they need, such as sample policies, best practices, and technical support to implement and manage alternative work schedules.

**Bicycle Encouragement Programs**

These programs support the regional bicycle network and promote bicycle commuting by providing services such as the Regional Bicycle Locker program, Bike to Work Day, and the regional bike map. Currently, iCommute manages more than 800 bike lockers at more than 60 transit centers and park and ride lots throughout San Diego County (Figure 8.3). iCommute is now upgrading to “on-demand” bike lockers to simplify reserving lockers and provide additional storage capacity. On-demand bike lockers allow bicycle commuters to use any locker at a given site on a first-come, first-served basis. These state-of-the-art lockers, which use key cards, give multiple users the opportunity to use the same locker, enable the user to reserve lockers using online tools, and provide administrators with information about utilization and demand. The benefits of on-demand lockers include reduced program administration costs, reduced inappropriate use of lockers, and increased utilization.

iCommute intends to launch more programs that encourage bicycling to support the Regional Bicycle Plan (see Chapter 6). These programs will provide the incentives, recognition, and services that make bicycling a viable choice for commuting. This will include the introduction of bike stations in areas with a high demand for bike lockers. Bike stations provide secure, indoor bicycle parking and amenities. Bike stations have the capacity to accommodate more bikes, requiring less space than traditional bike lockers.

iCommute also is planning bike sharing programs. Bike sharing gives people on-demand access to a fleet of public rental bicycles at designated locations. When used in combination with transit, a shared bike program is an affordable option that can reduce the travel time between home, transit stops, and the office. Bike sharing also encourages the use of public transit by providing commuters with a convenient transportation option for making local trips during the workday.

**Multimodal Solutions**

Decreasing reliance on conventional auto travel requires seamless transitions between transportation choices.

**First- and Last-Mile Solutions**

One of the barriers that commuters face when considering public transit is the first- and-last mile of the commute between their homes, transit stops, and work or school. It’s essential to provide uncomplicated and safe routes to transit, in order to develop a multimodal transportation network. First- and last-mile solutions include enhanced bike
and pedestrian infrastructure around transit stations, services such as carsharing and bike sharing, and short-distance vanpools and shuttles. To increase transit as a viable option for commuting, iCommute will analyze the first- and last-mile barriers to transit along major commute corridors, and identify unique solutions that make transit accessible and viable in specific communities, as part of the SANDAG Safe Routes to Transit program.

**Systems Integration**
Integrating the Compass Card program with the iCommute online system and TDM programs will promote the transition between modes of transportation and streamline the administration of the TDM program. iCommute will incorporate Compass Card as the universal access and fare card for TDM programs such as bike lockers and stations, carshare, and bikeshare.

This effort will assist in expanding bike-to-work promotions and events during the month of May. These include bike safety education, bike commuting training, and special events. The planned expansion of “Walking School Bus” and “Bike Buddies” programs will complement the Safe Routes to School initiative, and introduce the benefits of active commuting to children. Additionally, the iCommute Web site will be upgraded to add new tools to encourage active commuting. Among them will be an Active Commute Calculator that measures and tracks the personalized health benefits of an active commute choice.

**511 Advanced Traveler Information Services (511)**
While the iCommute program provides commuters with their travel choices, 511 is the region’s central hub for travel information and services. 511 provides commuters with real-time information on travel conditions so they can make informed decisions on what time to travel and what mode or route to take. The SANDAG Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) program manages this service. Features planned for the service include personalized communications such as e-mails and texts specific to a user’s commute, help with planning trips across different modes of transportation, and integrating communications with mobile devices.
Figure 8.2
Schools in the San Diego Region
October 2011

K-12 Schools
Opportunities and New Directions

Corridor Approach

One way that TDM measures can complement Systems Development and Systems Management is by supporting the region’s corridor approach to transportation planning and implementing projects. Each regional corridor is confronted with unique transportation challenges, depending on the types of facilities available, adjacent land uses, and the surrounding environment. Therefore, a one-size-fits-all TDM strategy for the entire region will not provide optimal results.

Construction Mitigation

Another very tangible way that TDM measures support Systems Development is by applying TDM programs and services as mitigation for major highway construction projects. While temporary in nature, construction-related TDM measures are designed to provide solo commuters with options for avoiding construction-related traffic congestion. Concern over construction-related delays can be a key motivator for commuters to switch their mode or time of travel. Once commuters take action and choose a commute alternative, they may be more likely to continue using an alternative mode after the construction is complete.

With significant roadway improvements anticipated along several regional corridors, iCommute will form partnerships with Caltrans, local jurisdictions, transit agencies, and employers to develop project-specific TDM solutions to improve traffic congestion caused by construction. The model for this collaboration was developed by Caltrans and the City of San Diego in conjunction with the “Survive the Drive” campaign developed for the I-5/I-805 merge widening project completed in 2007. Since then, iCommute has worked with employers along the I-15 corridor to provide commuting solutions during construction of the I-15 Express Lanes. TDM efforts to relieve congestion during highway construction projects include increased funding, marketing of alternative commute options, developing performance measurements during the construction period, and outreach to employers situated near highway construction projects.

Funding and Performance Monitoring

TDM measures are relatively low-cost solutions that can be implemented more quickly than major capital projects, and they provide short-term results that help meet regional goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The TDM plan includes more than $700 million (in 2010 dollars) budgeted over 40 years to fund programs and strategies described in this chapter. They directly support the other RTP strategies.

Quantitative and qualitative performance measures are used to monitor and report on the effectiveness of each element of the regional TDM program. The number of trips and vehicle miles of travel avoided in the region due to the SANDAG iCommute program, as well as the associated environmental and monetary savings, are measured on a monthly basis and reported each quarter. Qualitative performance measures will be captured through annual customer surveys.
The following actions support the plan’s Demand Management Chapter recommendations:

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<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Expand outreach, education, and marketing to employers, commuters, schools, and agencies.</td>
<td>SANDAG, employers, schools, and member agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Develop a formal incentive program for commuters to track eligible trips in iCommute.</td>
<td>SANDAG</td>
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<td>3. Develop a tiered vanpool subsidy that will increase participation in the Regional Vanpool Program by 70% by 2020.</td>
<td>SANDAG</td>
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<td>4. Implement a regional carpool incentive program that will encourage the start of 5,300 new carpools annually.</td>
<td>SANDAG, employers, member agencies</td>
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<td>5. Expand buspool services to additional military housing clusters and facilities.</td>
<td>SANDAG, regional military, MTS, NCTD</td>
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<td>6. Increase the number of parents and schools participating in SchoolPool services through outreach and incentives.</td>
<td>SANDAG, schools, parent organizations</td>
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<td>7. Launch a regional telework program that provides incentives and technical assistance to support employers with developing formal telework policies and programs.</td>
<td>SANDAG, employers</td>
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<td>8. Study and implement bike encouragement programs and services that make bicycling a viable commute choice.</td>
<td>SANDAG</td>
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<td>9. Study and implement multimodal solutions that integrate the transportation system and make alternatives to driving alone competitive and reliable.</td>
<td>SANDAG, MTS, NCTD, member agencies</td>
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<td>10. Expand education and outreach activities that encourage active commuting.</td>
<td>SANDAG, member agencies</td>
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<td>11. Enhance 511 services to include personalized traveler information and services.</td>
<td>SANDAG</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Collaborate with partner agencies to develop customized TDM solutions for regional corridors.</td>
<td>SANDAG, Caltrans, MTS, NCTD, member agencies</td>
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