

SPARE THE AIR BLUE SKIES PLEDGE

LET'S KEEP OUR SKIES BLUE

The clear skies and clean air we have experienced since the Bay Area was ordered to shelter in place on March 16 are due, in part, to the dramatic reduction in vehicle traffic on our roads. Transportation is the #1 source of air pollution in the region and taking cars off the road significantly improves the quality of our air.

We have the potential to carry these emissions reductions forward in the coming months by giving employees the option to telework moving forward. As businesses create plans to safely reopen their doors and continue operations once the Bay Area and California shelter-in-place orders are eased or lifted, let us not lose sight of the benefits that reducing traffic can bring. Teleworking can be part of the solution to keeping our skies blue.

As we prepare for a "new normal," companies can rethink how they conduct business and consider alternatives such as teleworking to mutually benefit the business, its employees and the community moving forward.

Telework benefits us all by improving the air quality, but it also carries with it the following advantages:

- Reduces traffic congestion
- Eases the commute burdens and costs on employees
- Saves money through optimum utilization of commercial real estate and parking facilities
- Improves employee recruitment and retention
- Enhances the employee's work-life balance
- Maintains ability to effectively continue business as a part of a disaster recovery or emergency plan

By signing this pledge, business leaders assert a commitment to include a formalized teleworking policy as a component of their company's re-entry plans to improve air quality and quality of life for all Bay Area residents.

Name (first/last)

Title

Company

City

Signature

Date



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

Draft Documents for Consideration

A. Draft Referral

- A. Approve direction to staff to develop an analysis and recommendations relating to reducing single occupancy vehicle trips by _____ employees, including expanding remote work of employees post-COVID-19.
- B. Approve direction to staff to report to the _____ on ____ 2020 relating to which departments have been the most successful with remote work practices, and a work plan 1) to analyze and expand remote work for employees, and 2) to develop revisions to policy guidelines to track and monitor the benefits, measures of success, and costs of remote work.
- C. Approve direction to staff to consult with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), Bay Area Regional Collaborative (BARC), other government entities, (such as the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), Caltrain, SamTRANS, the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC), the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA), the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), the Napa Valley Transportation Authority (NVTA), Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA), City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo (CCAG), local Bicycle Coalitions), and other interested stakeholders and report back to the _____ an analysis of policy options available to the _____ that would decrease single occupancy vehicle trips and would increase options, incentives and abilities to use public transit or other alternative modes of transit.
- D. Approve direction to staff to collaborate with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) on their Clean Air Remote Work Challenge for large employers with 50 or more employees, as defined by the BAAQMD Commuter Benefits Program, to help improve the Bay Area's air quality.
- E. Approve direction to staff to collaborate with and support as appropriate efforts by MTC, Caltrain, ABAG, BARC, other government entities, local Bicycle Coalition, the labor community, regional business organizations (such as the Bay Area Council, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Joint Venture Silicon Valley, the East Bay Economic Development Alliance, Innovation Tri-Valley Leadership Group, and other interested stakeholders to expand remote work options and to help transition public and private employees who are unable to work remotely to return to their respective workplaces with the support of public transportation.

B. Draft Resolution

WHEREAS, climate change and air pollution, caused by the emission of carbon dioxide (CO₂), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and fine particulates from automobiles with combustion engines, represents a profound threat to the Bay Area's air quality, public health, environment, and economy;

WHEREAS, NO_x is a noxious gas that has been linked to respiratory problems and other health conditions and also reacts with other chemicals in the atmosphere to form fine particulate pollution, and fine particulate matter;

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates the average gasoline passenger vehicle emits .89 of a pound of CO₂ per mile;

WHEREAS, about 1 in 12 workers in the Bay Area are super commuters and drive more than 90 minutes each way to and from work;

WHEREAS, the average Bay Area household spends \$13,350 a year on transportation;

WHEREAS, the California Highway Patrol reported 197,146 fatal and injury traffic crashes statewide in 2017;

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders issued to protect the public from the spread of COVID-19 necessitated a shift in how Bay Area employers operate, and many employees quickly made the adjustment to remote work;

WHEREAS, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District estimated that the COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders resulted in a decrease of an estimated 70% of Bay Area vehicle miles traveled in the first three months, which resulted in estimated reductions in total emissions of 15% for fine particulates, 30% for NO_x and 20% for CO₂;

WHEREAS, the Commuter Benefits Program is mandatory for all employers in the Bay Area with 50 or more full-time employees, per Senate Bill 1128, and remote work qualifies to meet the program requirements;

WHEREAS, the option to work from home or another off-site location is critical to reducing single occupancy vehicle trips;

WHEREAS, there will be employees post COVID-19 who will not be able to work remotely, but could use public transportation if applicable options are available;

WHEREAS, the increase of the use of public transportation reduces the number of single occupant vehicle trips;

WHEREAS, people are more inclined to use public transportation if it is faster than driving in a single occupancy vehicle and cities and counties can increase the speed of public transportation through land use decisions;

WHEREAS, the increase in bike lanes and other land use decisions, such as the inclusion of complete streets, increases safety and the perception of safety thereby increasing the number of people who will use bicycles to meet their transportation needs;

WHEREAS, the increase in bicycle and pedestrian travel has been shown to provide population-level health benefits and reduced health care costs;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the _____ that the _____ strongly supports the goal of reducing single occupancy vehicle trips in the Bay Area, and supports the implementation of policies that will increase options, incentives and abilities for employees to use public transit and other alternative modes of transit.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the _____ that the _____ hereby gives direction to staff to develop an analysis and recommendations related to increasing the number of employees who are able to work remotely.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the _____ that the _____ also hereby gives direction to staff to use transportation demand management measures that encourage and incentivize the reduction of single occupancy vehicles.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the _____ that the _____ also hereby direct staff to develop an analysis and recommendations related to increasing the success of public transit through land use policies that reduce the need for single occupancy vehicles.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the _____ that the _____ also strongly supports increased public funding for public transit in order to compensate for reduction in fare box revenue due to employees working remotely and to ensure that public transportation is available for those who cannot afford private transportation and those who prefer public transportation.



DATE: June 30, 2020

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: City Manager's Office

TITLE: **Resolution to Support Expanded Telecommuting**

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution to Support Expanded Telecommuting and Other Measures to Reduce Single-Occupancy Vehicle Trips, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 1 to the Council report).

BACKGROUND

Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Mountain View, comprising 65 percent of communitywide emissions in 2018. Nearly 87 percent of transportation emissions are from passenger vehicles, making this the single largest contributor to climate change in Mountain View. In addition, emissions from on-road transportation include pollutants that adversely affect the health of residents and increase the risk of premature death. The Union of Concerned Scientists estimates that pollution created by on-road transportation in California leads to 3,100 premature deaths per year. Seniors, children, and people with underlying health problems are the most vulnerable to the pollution created by on-road transportation. These risks are not experienced equally across the region; the pollution burden from transportation and its associated health impacts disproportionately affect low-income and minority communities in the Bay Area and throughout California.

Reducing single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips is critical to addressing climate change and reducing air pollution and can also lower transportation costs for households. Increasing the use of telecommuting and providing safe, affordable, and convenient alternatives to vehicle travel for those who cannot telecommute provides economic and health benefits for Mountain View and the entire Bay Area region.

The City has developed a number of programs and policies to reduce SOV trips by both City employees and employees and residents in the community at large. In April 2017, the City created a Pilot Telecommuting Program to authorize eligible City employees to

work remotely up to one work day per week with manager approval. Commuter benefits are also available to City employees. Further, the City has a robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program for new developments as well as other land use policies, infrastructure, and programs to reduce SOV trips and support alternative modes of transportation. More information about existing programs and policies is provided in the Analysis section below.

The City has achieved success in reducing emissions from its own employee commuting by 39 percent between 2015 and 2018 through initiatives such as flexible work week schedules, transit and bicycle stipends, and telecommuting. However, communitywide passenger vehicle traffic only decreased 15 percent in this same time period, indicating the need for more widespread adoption of measures to reduce SOV trips.

On March 16, 2020, the County of Santa Clara issued an initial public health shelter-in-place (SIP) order in response to the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This order required nonessential businesses to cease most operations, except for those activities that could be performed by employees working from home. This order was issued in coordination with six other public health officers in the region and has been modified and extended through the current time. As a result, the City and many other employers in Mountain View significantly increased the number of employees telecommuting. This has had a range of benefits, as discussed below.

In an effort to extend these benefits when the economy begins to more fully reopen throughout and beyond the COVID-19 recovery phases, the Mayor has been participating in the Commute Free Tomorrow working group convened by the County of Santa Clara. This group includes other local mayors, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), the Valley Transportation Authority, and other stakeholders and encourages continued telecommuting and promoting the use of public transit and other alternative modes of transportation to achieve sustained reductions in SOV travel.

ANALYSIS

County Shelter-in-Place Order

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a sudden shift in transportation patterns in the Bay Area. In response to public health advice, many employers in Mountain View had already taken measures to allow the majority of their employees to work remotely prior to the County's public health order restricting business operations. The County's initial SIP order required any ongoing work at nonessential businesses not defined as

“Minimum Basic Operations” to be performed by employees working from their place of residence as possible. As a result, some businesses temporarily ceased operations, and others rapidly transitioned their employees to remote work. Many large employers in the Bay Area have announced they will allow their employees to work remotely through at least the end of 2020 and, in some cases, permanently.

BAAQMD estimates that the SIP order has led to a 50 percent to 85 percent reduction in vehicle traffic in the Bay Area. This dramatic shift in transportation patterns has reduced both air pollution and GHG emissions. BAAQMD estimates that carbon dioxide emissions are down 20 percent to 30 percent, fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) pollution is down 15 percent to 25 percent, and oxides of nitrogen emissions are down 30 percent to 45 percent. Expanding the long-term use of telecommuting can help maintain some of these benefits while supporting businesses as they reopen. Additionally, since many employees cannot work remotely, it is important to support safe, affordable, and convenient transportation options to ensure those commuters have alternatives to driving.

Telecommuting Programs for City Employees

As noted above, the City established a Pilot Telecommuting Program in 2017, which has allowed eligible full-time employees to telecommute up to one work day per week with manager approval. In adopting this program, the City noted that telecommuting may achieve increased productivity and effective use of staff work time, promote efficient use of resources, enhance employee engagement, and assist in reducing traffic and air quality hazards. Employees who telecommute one day a week can reduce the GHG emissions from their commute by up to 20 percent. Additionally, the City maintains a comprehensive Commuter Benefits program that includes stipends for public transit and bicycle commuting. These programs have contributed to the City’s success in reducing employee commute emissions.

In response to the County’s SIP order, the City took action to temporarily allow as many employees as possible to work remotely, resulting in an increase from approximately 35 employees telecommuting on a regular basis to up to approximately 400 employees telecommuting all or some of the time. These actions include: developing a streamlined process for establishing new or expanding existing telecommuting agreements that set performance objectives and clarify safe work-at-home procedures; extending the existing technology reimbursement benefit and pursuing other strategies to address hardware, software, and system needs to support remote work; developing new service delivery models for working with customers, providing services, and performing job functions online; and developing new processes for internal communication and collaboration. While the City’s transition to telecommuting has

been successful in maintaining operations to a large degree, there have been challenges associated with full-time remote work. Reliance on technology and a lack of physical proximity can make team building, real-time problem solving, informal status check-ins, and social connections more difficult. In response, the City has developed guidelines to help support continued performance and morale in the supervision of a distributed workforce and anticipates some use of staggered/alternating schedules for a blend of remote and on-site work.

While there are many essential services and City functions that must be performed on-site, the current expectation is that telecommuting will be maximized to the fullest extent possible through the end of August. The reopening of City facilities to the public and the return of City employees to work on-site will depend on County orders regarding allowed activities, required safety protocols, and the City's readiness to provide broader access to City facilities and services in a manner that protects the health and safety of City employees and the public. During the next several months, staff will assess the benefits and challenges associated with telecommuting and adjust the Telecommuting Program to encourage continued use of remote work as more normal City operations resume.

Current Communitywide Measures

The City has required TDM measures for new development projects. These measures include telecommuting as one of many options for projects to reduce vehicle trips. Planning Division staff works with project applicants on proposed TDM measures and oversees compliance with approved project-related trip caps.

The City also implements other measures to reduce SOV trips and support walking, bicycling, and public transit use, including:

- An approach to land use planning that promotes complete neighborhoods and supports mixed-use, transit-oriented development;
- Incorporating parking demand management strategies such as reduced parking ratios, maximum parking requirements, and unbundled parking in the North Bayshore and East Whisman Precise Plans;
- Conducting semiannual trip counts of SOV trips into North Bayshore to assess the effectiveness of existing TDM measures;
- Conducting a congestion pricing feasibility study in conjunction with the North Bayshore Circulation Study;

- Working with the Mountain View Transportation Management Association to improve shuttle services from the Downtown Transit Center to current employment centers and future residential areas;
- Supporting the Mountain View Community Shuttle;
- Improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure throughout the City, including planned protected bikeways along El Camino Real, Shoreline Boulevard, and Charleston Road;
- Developing programs such as Safe Routes to School and Vision Zero that improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists; and
- Encouraging use of active transportation through events such as Bike to Work Day and the Silicon Valley Bike Summit.

These measures are critical to create safe, affordable, and convenient transportation options for employees and residents who cannot telecommute.

Regional Collaboration

Due to the regional SIP orders from public health officials, many cities are in the process of revising their internal telecommuting policies and examining ways to support broader use of remote work in the community. Currently, Mountain View is collaborating with regional partners, including Santa Clara County, BAAQMD, and Joint Venture Silicon Valley, to share best practices and explore options to increase the use of telecommuting as the SIP orders are eased or lifted.

As part of their current “Spare the Air” campaign, BAAQMD is developing a program to encourage broader use of remote work and support employers in safely reopening and resuming operations. This program, which BAAQMD hopes to launch by July 2020, will include a pledge committing employers to adopt a policy that extends remote work options by at least 25 percent as a component of their organization’s reopening plan. A draft version of this “Spare the Air Cut the Commute Pledge” is included as Attachment 2. The City can utilize its existing business connections, including the Mountain View Resiliency Roundtable, the City’s Economic Development outreach and programs, and the Chamber of Commerce, to promote this pledge and support expanded telecommuting among Mountain View businesses.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no direct fiscal impact from adopting the resolution. The City may choose to develop additional measures to support telecommuting in the future that may have associated costs, which can be considered by the City Council at the time such measures are presented for approval.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Propose modifications to the proposed resolution.
2. Do not adopt the proposed resolution.
3. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING

Agenda posting and e-mails sent to community members who signed up to receive updates about the Mountain View Sustainability Program.

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EB-SA/6/CAM
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200353

- Attachments:
1. Resolution to Support Expanded Telecommuting and Other Measures to Reduce Single-Occupancy Vehicle Trips
 2. BAAQMD Spare the Air Cut the Commute Pledge

CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW
RESOLUTION NO.
SERIES 2020

A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT EXPANDED TELECOMMUTING AND
OTHER MEASURES TO REDUCE SINGLE-OCCUPANCY VEHICLE TRIPS

WHEREAS, climate change and air pollution, caused by the emission of carbon dioxide (CO₂), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), and fine particulate matter from automobiles with combustion engines, represents a profound threat to the Bay Area's air quality, public health, environment, and economy; and

WHEREAS, NO_x pollutants are noxious gases that have been linked to respiratory problems and other health conditions and also react with other chemicals in the atmosphere to form fine particulate pollution and fine particulate matter; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates the average gasoline passenger vehicle emits 0.89 pound of CO₂ per mile; and

WHEREAS, emissions from passenger vehicles comprised 56 percent of Mountain View's communitywide greenhouse gas inventory, and emissions from employee commuting comprised 15 percent of the City government operations greenhouse gas inventory in 2018; and

WHEREAS, about one in 12 workers in the Bay Area are super-commuters and drive more than 90 minutes each way to and from work; and

WHEREAS, the average Bay Area household spends \$13,350 a year on transportation; and

WHEREAS, the California Highway Patrol reported 197,146 fatal and injury traffic crashes Statewide in 2017; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders issued beginning in March 2020 to protect the public from the spread of the virus necessitated a shift in how Bay Area employers operate, and many employees quickly made the adjustment to work remotely; and

WHEREAS, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District estimated that the COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders resulted in a decrease of an estimated 70 percent of Bay Area vehicle miles traveled, which resulted in estimated reductions in total

emissions of 15 percent to 25 percent for fine particulate matter, 30 percent to 45 percent for NO_x, and 20 percent to 30 percent for CO₂; and

WHEREAS, a Commuter Benefits Program is mandatory for all employers in the Bay Area with 50 or more full-time employees, per Senate Bill 1128, and remote work qualifies to meet the program requirements; and

WHEREAS, the City of Mountain View has a comprehensive Commuter Benefits Program for City employees that includes stipends for commuting via public transit or bicycle; and

WHEREAS, the option to work from home or another off-site location is critical to reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips; and

WHEREAS, the City of Mountain View established a telecommuting pilot program for City employees in Fiscal Year 2016-17, implemented a temporary emergency telecommuting program to increase the number of City employees working remotely in response to the COVID-19 crisis from 33 to approximately 400 as of June 2020, and will be revising the telecommuting program to encourage continued use of remote work as more normal City operations resume; and

WHEREAS, the City of Mountain View has required Transportation Demand Management conditions of approval for new development in many areas of the City, including telecommuting and other programs to reduce commute trips; and

WHEREAS, the City of Mountain View has adopted an approach to land use planning that promotes complete neighborhoods and supports mixed-use, transit-oriented development; and

WHEREAS, the City of Mountain View has incorporated other methods to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips into key policy documents and through the entitlement process, including project-related trip caps, reduced parking ratios, and subsidized transit passes for employees and residents; and

WHEREAS, some people are not able to work remotely, both during the shelter-in-place order and post-COVID-19, and require safe, affordable, and sustainable transportation options; and

WHEREAS, increased use of public transit reduces the number of single-occupancy vehicle trips; and

WHEREAS, people are more inclined to use public transit if it is faster than driving in a vehicle, and cities and counties can increase the speed of public transit through land use decisions; and

WHEREAS, the City of Mountain View has implemented measures to improve access to public transit, including coordination with the Transportation Management Association to improve shuttle services from the Downtown Transit Center to new and future development, inclusion of transit subsidies as part of Transportation Demand Management programs, and improvements to the Mountain View Downtown Transit Center; and

WHEREAS, the increase in bicycle lanes and other land use decisions, such as the inclusion of complete streets, increases safety and the perception of safety, thereby increasing the number of people who will use bicycles to meet their transportation needs; and

WHEREAS, the increase in bicycle and pedestrian travel has been shown to provide population-level health benefits and reduced health-care costs; and

WHEREAS, the City of Mountain View, through programs such as Safe Routes to School and Bike to Work Day, encourages community members and City employees to bicycle and walk as much as possible; and

WHEREAS, the City of Mountain View has incorporated numerous improvements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure into key policy documents and the Capital Improvement Program to support development of a low-stress, active transportation network;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Mountain View that the City supports the goal of reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips in the Bay Area and supports the implementation of policies that will increase options, incentives, and abilities for people to use public transit and active transportation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City hereby gives direction to staff to continue its analysis of and adjustments to the City's telecommuting program to sustain a significant level of participation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City reaffirms its commitment to transportation demand management measures that encourage and incentivize the reduction of single-occupancy vehicles and that staff will continue to work closely with project applicants on reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips through said measures, including an emphasis on those that support telecommuting; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City shall collaborate with and support as appropriate efforts by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, other government entities, the labor community, regional business organizations, and other interested stakeholders to increase the use of telecommuting among all employers and expand public transit and active transportation alternatives for those employees who are unable to work remotely; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City reaffirms its commitment to increasing the success of public transit and active transportation through land use policies, infrastructure, and programs that reduce the need for single-occupancy vehicles; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City strongly supports increased public funding for public transit in order to compensate for reductions in fare box revenue due to people working remotely and to ensure that public transportation is available for those who cannot afford private transportation and those who prefer public transportation.

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