



DATE: November 5, 2021  
TO: Solano Express Intercity Transit Consortium  
FROM: Katelyn Costa, Program Coordinator II  
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RE: Commuter/Employer Programs Q1 Report Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22

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**Background:**

Since 1990, Solano Mobility has worked to support the transportation needs and services of all Solano County residents, employers, older adults, and people with disabilities. The Solano Mobility Employer Program now the Commuter Program of the Solano Transportation Authority serves to connect commuters to existing benefits to induce sustainable mode shift. Solano Mobility administers all commuter benefits programs directly to residents and employees in the county. Staff connects with businesses, homeowner associations, and community clubs as platforms to advertise these commuter benefits.

COVID-19 has severely impacted mobility across the region. In the post-Covid world staff is focused on retention of previous sustainable modes users, supporting them in a shift to alternative modes that feels safer to them in order to keep the number of single occupancy vehicles down. Flexibility is key in this moment. Staff is keeping in touch with our community regularly through email and social media, making sure travelers know Solano Mobility is still here as a resource. Progress to different forms of engagement will follow in subsequent months and years as Covid conditions stabilize and safety in shared transportation modes can be ensured.

In light of COVID-19, STA's Solano Mobility Program is committed to working with each employer of the Solano business community to develop tailored commute goals that make sense to each employer given the current landscape. The Program has been and will continue to promote working from home, off-peak hours travel and of course, safe alternative mode travel as most transition back to the workplace.

Solano Mobility's approach is moving to accommodate changes in commuter trends and continue to find the Solano community the right ride. A long term goal for STA's Solano Mobility Program is to expand longterm teleworking propensity and the regional public transportation use average on ferry, rail, express bus and ridesharing once Covid challenges have subsided.

**Discussion:**

In previous years, staff had been laying the groundwork for exponential program growth with the expansion with the Ride Amigos platform, development of an employer toolkit and partnership with Solano Economic Development Corporation (EDC). During Covid, doing outreach was more important than ever. Leveraging social media, staff was able to preserve progress and increase awareness and participation. While physical community outings dropped to zero, Solano Mobility staff significantly expanded the social media reach, with over 9,000 people seeing Solano Mobility content just this quarter alone. Attachment A contains a quarter one comparison between FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22.

### *Ride Amigos Online Platform*

STA's various programs (i.e. Emergency Ride Home, Bucks for Bikes, Vanpools, etc) are housed in the RideAmigos platform where anyone can choose from a menu of options with sign-up interface. There are now 3,130 users on the platform, 775 of which are active users. Active usership grew 10% in the first quarter of the new fiscal year. Moving forward, Solano Mobility staff will be leveraging RideAmigos platforms across multiple counties to streamline outreach across the SR 37, I-80, and I-680 corridors. The SR-37 Congestion Management project with the 4 North Bay County Transportation Authorities will focus on connecting the RideAmigos platform backend to create a seamless commuter benefits experience across origin and destination counties. Users will be able to earn applicable rewards, sign up for programs, and find ridesharing matches through one unified interface along the entire SR 37 Corridor. Come the operational period of the project, January 2022, staff plans to see a marked increase in active usership on the platform.

### *First/Last Mile Program*

The First/Last Mile Program provides 80% subsidized Lyft rides (with a maximum of \$25/per ride) to and from 12 Transit hubs (Amtrak stations, Solano Express fixed stops, key unserved locations) across Solano County. The goal of this program is to encourage transit use through first-last mile connections to/from the Transit hubs to decrease single occupancy vehicle usage, specifically among commuters that travel to/from our county. This program also serves to increase mobility to and from locations not served by transit. There are currently 382 people signed up for the First/Last Mile program, a 25% sign up increase just in the first quarter.

### *SolTrans Lyft Programs*

The SolTrans Lyft program provides rides within the Benicia city limits, as well as to select fixed-route, transfer points in Vallejo, allowing for quick connections to school campuses, medical services, social services and retail centers. The Benicia Dial-A-Ride Replacement program gives older adults, people with disabilities, and Veterans additional ways to travel around the City. This program was recently expanded to all Benicia residents. Usage of this program has decreased in the first quarter compared to this time last year, see Attachment B.

### *Suisun City Lyft Programs (Coming Soon)*

Suisun City has recently terminated their contract with Fairfield and Suisun Transit (FAST) to provide fixed route service in Suisun due to poor usage and route penetration. In the coming months, FAST will be removing their Routes 5 and 6 bus from Suisun City. During this transition away from FAST services, STA's Solano Mobility program is stepping in to offer a transitional program. Planning for this transitional service has taken place over quarter one. Implementation of the program will happen during quarter two and amendments to the program will come through the Suisun City Community Based Transportation Plan (CBTP) process held over the next 4-6 months.

### *Bucks for Bikes Program*

The Bucks for Bikes program was created to help encourage Solano County residents to bike to work for all or a portion of their commute. Once approved, they can receive up to 60% of the cost of a new bike and helmet at a \$300 maximum reimbursement for this program. Riders will be encouraged to log their trips on the Solano Commutes platform for additional incentives. See Attachment C for details on participation.

### *Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Program*

The objective of the Guarantee Ride Home (GRH) Program is to support Solano County employees who commute with a free ride if an unexpected emergency arises. Program participants may use taxi, Uber, Lyft or rental car in cases of emergency. In order to participate in the program, residents must live within 100 miles of their Solano County employer and can use the program no more than three times per calendar month and a total of six times in a calendar year. In the next quarter as part of Solano Mobility's efforts to increase equity and accessibility, staff recommends incorporating free Lyft codes for those that are not able to afford the reimbursement option.

### *Vanpool Program*

In January of 2021, in an effort to increase Vanpool usage, STA entered in to an agreement with Enterprise Rideshare to play a more active role in the steps and process for signing up new Vanpools. Solano Mobility will provide a \$200 incentive directly to Enterprise. This incentive will be paired with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's \$350 subsidy for a total of \$550 subsidy to help offset the cost of new vans. This strategy seemed to be successful as first quarter of fiscal year 2021/22 staff was able to recruit 8 new vanpools.

### *Solano Express 2 for 1 Incentive*

To encourage new ridership on the Solano Express bus lines, the Solano Transportation Authority is offering through its Solano Mobility Program Call Center a 2 for 1 incentive. Beginning October 4th, anyone working or living in Solano County is eligible to purchase 1 monthly or daily pass, and receive a 2nd pass for free. As of November 1, 2021, seven incentive monthly passes had been redeemed.

### **Fiscal Impact:**

Solano Mobility Commuter/Employer Programs are funded using Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program funds, Transportation Fund for Clean Air (TFCA) funds through the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) and Clean Air Funds through the Yolo Solano Air Quality Management District (YSAQMD).

### **Recommendation:**

Informational.

### Attachments:

- A. Overview of Commute Statistics
- B. Benicia's Dial a Ride Lyft and Taxi Replacements
- C. Buck for Bike Incentive Program

**Overview of Commute Statistics**

	<b>FY 2020-21 Q1</b>	<b>FY 2021-22 Q1</b>
Employers Engaged	78	78
Community Outings	0	0
Social Media Reach	2,800	9,179
Program Participation		
First/ Last Mile Shuttle	230	382
Amtrak/Lyft Pilot	4	4
Bucks for Bikes	0	2
Guaranteed Ride Home	0	1
Vanpool	0	8

**Attachment B**

	<b>FY 2020-21 Q1</b>	<b>FY 2021-22 Q1</b>
Benicia Dial-A-Ride Replacement (Lyft)	99	19
Benicia Dial-A-Ride Replacement (Taxi)	106	Not Available

Buck for Bike Program	2020-2021	2021-2022
	Q1	Q1
All Applications Received	0	2
All Incentives Paid	0	2