

511 Contra Costa Update to TRANSPAC for February 2010

511 Contra Costa Website

The website was redesigned and launched in January 2009 and is state of the art. In the past year 511 Contra Costa has taken advantage of various open source platforms that allow for low-cost information dissemination to the public. Examples include: Google Maps for the Contra Costa Cities Map, Bike Locker locator map, Bay Area Transit locator maps, Contra Costa Park and Ride Lot locator map, *Where is My BART* real-time arrival map, and a Senior Transit Services locator map. Google Docs is being used to capture data from on-line forms. In addition, the website has utilized the latest social networking tools to help spread the word on transportation-related alerts, news, and promotions.

Website Visit Stats

Monthly visits doubled from January 09 – December 09 from 1,216 to 2,565

- Percentage of new visits per month is 73% which means we are constantly attracting new visitors.
- The average number of web page views per visitor is 3.
- Overall highest traffic occurred during the months of August 09 – November 09. In August the SchoolPool promotion accounted for approximately 10% of total page views and 13% of total visits for the year.
- In August 09 the SchoolPool promotion increased the number of monthly web page visits to the Schools web page by 700% (compared to the previous month).
- In November the Transit Incentive web page drew 8% of total web page views for the year and the Bike Maps web page drew approximately 6% of the total web page views.

How Does the Public Find the 511contracosta.org Website?

30% of the traffic for the year came from referral sites. The referrals are promising because they attract a significant number of visits, have a high percentage of new visits, and have approximately 2-3 pages per visit.

The Top 25 Referring Websites Are:

zipsurvey.com
bicycling.511.org
rideshare.511.org
bishopranch.com
ow.ly – a Twitter-related source
511.org
twitter.com
mdusd.k12.ca.us – MDUSD
dvc.edu – Diablo Valley College
ci.pleasant-hill.ca.us – Pleasant Hill
ci.danville.ca.us – Danville
google.com
contracostatimes.com

images.google.com
cityofmartinez.org – Martinez
ccta.net – CCTA
blinktaginc.com – internal use
ci.san-ramon.ca.us – San Ramon
coulombtech.com – Coulomb
mail.google.com
sanramon.ca.gov – San Ramon
walnut-creek.org – Walnut Creek
co.contra-costa.ca.us – CCC
nctr.usf.edu – Natl Center for
Transit Research at USF
losmedanos.edu – LMC

511 Contra Costa Update continued

Search Engine Key Words

An upward trend in visits coming from key word searches is due in part from the high ranks on search engines that are driving traffic to the website. The most meaningful keyword search other than "511 Contra Costa" was "school pool.org" resulting in a 70% increase of new visitors to the website. Many of the top searches included "511 Contra Costa" which may indicate an increase in brand equity.

Search Engine Key Phrases

The most popular key phrase was "BART strike update" driving 605 visits with an average of 1.86 page views per visit and 95% of them were new visitors. The second highest key phrase was "Spare the Air Contra Costa" which drove 340 visits with approximately 2 page views per visit.

iSmog App: Over 500 people have downloaded the iSmog application.

Electric Charging Stations: 511 Contra Costa is working with the cities of Martinez, Pittsburg, Hercules and the County to install electric plug-in vehicle charging stations resulting in an expanded network of charging stations for the public to use along the I-680 and Hwy 4 corridors.

511 Contra Costa is the coordinator for Bike to Work Day, May 13, 2010. Thus far staff has received commitments from most of the past year's energizer station hosts to participate again this year. 511 Contra Costa is developing an evening event that will be held on Bike-to-Work Day to encourage families and children to explore their local communities via bicycle or foot.

WestCAT Lynx Buy-One Get-One Free Promotion. 511 Contra Costa, through the Countywide Transit Incentive element worked with WestCAT staff to develop a special Buy-One Get-One Free bus pass promotion to increase ridership on the Lynx Express Commuter Bus that operates along the I-80 corridor from Hercules to downtown San Francisco. The program began January 4th and thus far 150 new Lynx passengers have taken advantage of the Buy-One Get-One offer. The express bus operates every 15 minutes from 5 AM to 10 AM and from 3:30 PM-8:30P M (30-minute headways in the non-peak). In December the route carried a total of 10,707 passengers.

Local commuter opts for two-wheeled transportation from Clayton to Lafayette



Photo courtesy of 511 Contra Costa

CLAYTON RESIDENT STEVE BIGGS has been biking to his office in Lafayette since May.

While the snow in early December forced Clayton resident Steve Biggs into his car for a day, there's hardly a weekday that passes when he isn't navigating the area's extensive network of bike trails and back roads to get to his job in downtown Lafayette.

Biggs started making the 34-mile round trip commute during May's annual Bike to Work Day, which he had heard about through the news. The event is organized locally by 511 Contra Costa, a county agency that encourages individuals to use commute alternatives.

"It's so much more relaxing to ride than to sit in traffic, and

I feel refreshed when I arrive at the office," Biggs says.

Biggs is a recreational bicyclist who used to do some racing in his college days. This is the first job he's had where it's made sense to ride his bike three to four days a week. While drenching rain may force him into his car, neither drizzle nor cold can keep Biggs off the saddle.

"In California, we're fortunate to have weather that's conducive to biking most of the year," notes Corinne Dutra-Roberts, who runs 511 Contra Costa's commute assistance programs. "The well-maintained bike trails also add

to the convenience and safety of bicycling."

Biking extends Biggs' commute by 20 minutes to half an hour, but he doesn't need to spend additional time and money at the gym. Plus, he estimates saving about \$100 per month on commute costs.

For many people, the biggest hurdle to biking to work is the logistics of getting started. Before Bike to Work Day, Biggs wasn't sure what route he would take or how he would shower and change into work clothes. "You just have to do it a few times, and then you figure it out," he advises.

Biggs mapped out his 17-

mile, one-way route with Google Maps. He typed in his origin and destination and chose the "walking" route, which includes biking and walking trails. He also uses the East Bay Bicycle Coalition's comprehensive bike trail map that he picked up at 511 Contra Costa's energizer station on Bike to Work Day.

His commute takes about an hour and involves riding along three of the area's main bike trails – the Canal, Iron Horse and Lafayette Moraga trails. He carries his work necessities in a messenger bag slung over his shoulder and keeps work clothes and shoes at the office, so he can shower and change.

His bike has reflectors and bright lights for riding in the dark. Biggs retrofitted his bike with puncture-resistant tires and switched to more casual mountain-biking shoes that can clip onto the pedals, but that he can also use for walking.

If a rainstorm blows in during the day, he calls his wife for a ride home. However, 511 Contra Costa also has given him vouchers for a cab ride home as part of the Guaranteed Ride Home program.

As Bike to Work Day 2010 comes this May, Biggs will be wiser and more confident. "I try to keep it fun," he says. "As long as I enjoy doing it, I'll keep doing it."

For more information about biking to work and other commute assistance programs, visit 511contracosta.org or contact Dutra-Roberts at Corinne@511contracosta.org. Read Biggs' biking blog at 511contracosta.org/commuting-to-work-is-recreation-for-clayton-cyclist.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Pleasant Hill, California - December 22, 2009 - 511 Contra Costa awarded a National Safe Routes to School Grant.

The National Center for Safe Routes to School announced today that 511 Contra Costa was one of 25 national applicants to receive a \$1,000 mini-grant for spring 2010. 511 Contra Costa will be participating with Dallas Ranch Middle School Leadership Group in Antioch to encourage students to walk and bicycle safely to school.

511 Contra Costa has developed a number of tools to help schools in Contra Costa County implement Safe Routes to School programs. They include:

- ❖ **Walk and Roll 2 School** - A week-long promotion for elementary and middle school students that reinforces the benefits of walking and bicycling to school.
- ❖ **Bike Safety** - Bicycle rodeos that teach bicycle safety and basic mechanics to students.
- ❖ **Going Green Activity Wheel** - Includes fun and challenging activities to introduce carbon reduction strategies to children and families.
- ❖ **Children's Cartoon Booklet** - Engaging educational booklet that encourages carbon-reducing automobile use.
- ❖ **Bike and Skateboard Racks** - No-cost bicycle and skateboard racks available at schools and other public locations
- ❖ **School Transit Program** - Free bus tickets for students to take the public bus to and from school.
- ❖ **SchoolPool** - Web-based program that matches parents who are interested in carpooling their children to school.

511 Contra Costa has been providing programs to improve student health, safety and air quality around schools for years in Contra Costa County. Because of these programs, thousands of students now walk, bike and take the bus to get to school.

511 Contra Costa fulfills some of the Growth Management Program goals which are required of local jurisdictions, by reducing vehicle miles traveled through programs such as Safe Routes to School.

For more information about these and other 511 Contra Costa programs contact Matt Wood: mwood@511contracosta.org or 925-969-1083



The County Connection

2477 Arnold Industrial Way Concord, CA 94520-5326 (925) 676-7500 www.cccta.org

4 January 2010

Mr. Lee Taubeneck
Deputy District Director
Cal Trans District 4
Transportation Planning and Local Assistance
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Dear Mr. Taubeneck,

CCCTA is seeking authorization from the State Department of Transportation to charge weekday parking fees at the planned Pacheco Transit Hub located on Caltrans property along Blum Road in Pacheco (North Central Contra Costa County), near the intersection of SR 4 and Highway 680.

As you may be aware, CCCTA in partnership with the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, has been working on the design and construction of this expanded and improved facility since 2002. The intent of the facility is to accommodate both park and ride vehicles through expansion of the existing park and ride lot, and provide a convenient staging and transfer location for express bus service in the I-680/SR 4 corridors. In 2008, Caltrans signed off on the PSR/PR for this project, CCCTA and Caltrans executed a Co Op Agreement, and the final round of review and permitting is now underway. CCCTA has amassed enough funding to construct the facility from Regional Measure 2 (Bridge Toll) funds, PTMISEA bond funds, and local sales tax funds (Measure C).

However, the expected source of funding for the operation and maintenance of the new facility has yet to be fully identified, and as the project proponent, the CCCTA Board of Directors will not authorize construction until this last piece of the puzzle is in place.

It is estimated that approximately \$30,000 per year will be needed to provide power and water to the site, maintain the landscaping, and provide clean up and maintenance of the grounds and bus hub facility shelters, signage, lighting, bike racks, and loading areas.

Through a cooperative effort, the three subregional planning bodies whose residents stand to benefit from this facility have agreed to contribute initial maintenance funding for at last three years up to \$25,000 combined. All three have instructed CCCTA to investigate other funding sources for these costs as soon as possible.

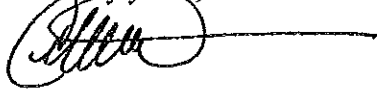
If CCCTA were allowed to charge \$1 per weekday for parking, and if it is assumed that at least 75% of the 144 parking places at the facility were filled with either carpool vehicles or express bus rider vehicles, at least \$25,000 could be generated in a year to

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assist in covering maintenance costs. If permission is granted from Caltrans to allow these fees to be charged, CCCTA will begin to investigate the most efficient way to collect and manage the funds collected when the facility opens, hopefully by the end of 2010.

Please let me know if I can assist you with any additional information that might help you make a decision about our request. I can be reached at (925) 680-2045, or via email at dahlgren@cccta.org. Hamid Fathollahi at District 4 is the current project manager with whom I have been working on this project.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Celinda', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Celinda Dahlgren
Director of Administration

cc: Wingate Lew, Caltrans District 4
Jean Finney, Office of Transit & Community Planning, Caltrans District 4