# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors 105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407 Santa Barbara, CA 93101 (805) 568-2240 Agenda Number:

**Prepared on:** 7/26/06

**Department Name:** Human Resources

**Department No.:** 064 **Agenda Date:** 8/8/06

**Placement:** Administrative

Estimate Time: 20 minutes on 8/15/06

**Continued Item:** YES **If Yes, date from:** 1/17/06

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Susan Paul, Assistant CEO/HR Director

**Human Resources Department** 

**STAFF** Theresa Duer, Deputy HR Director

**CONTACT:** 568-2822

**SUBJECT:** 101 Traffic Reduction Initiative

# **Recommendations:**

That the Board of Supervisors set a 20 minute hearing on Tuesday, August 15, 2006 to consider the following recommendations:

- 1. Approve the plan to aid in the reduction of congestion on Highway 101 during peak travel periods without adverse impact on service levels, productivity, or operational costs through implementation of an Alternative Work Schedule/Telework Plan (AWS/T) for County employees.
- 2. Direct the CEO and department heads to identify positions suitable for AWS/T, work toward implementation, and periodically report on impacts.
- 3. Direct the Assistant CEO/HR Director to meet with the employee organizations regarding participation in a Commuter Choice Tax Benefit Program and authorize the Auditor Controller to enter into an agreement with the appropriate vendor to administer the program.
- 4. The Auditor-Controller and Assistant CEO/HR Director recommend authorizing funding for the County's contribution of approximately \$100,000 to encourage employee participation in the Commuter Choice Tax Benefit Program and approximately \$10,000 to administer the program.
- 5. Direct staff to implement a comprehensive communication campaign.

# **Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:**

The recommendation(s) are primarily aligned with actions required by business necessity and our organizational values regarding our workforce.

# **Executive Summary and Discussion:**

In 2007, Caltrans will embark on a series of improvements to Highway 101 between Milpas and Hot Springs Road. These improvements will be constructed in phases over a five-year period. Although it is anticipated that these improvements will have some positive affect on relieving traffic congestion after they are completed, it is also to be expected that there will be a negative impact on traffic congestion during the construction period.

In October 2005, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) adopted the "101 in Motion Improvement Package" in an effort to address current and future congestion in southern Santa Barbara County. The final package included three improvements which are specifically addressed in this Board item:

- Encouraging telecommuting and flex work/flex time
- Providing van pool/car pool/trip reduction incentives
- Proactively working to reduce peak period traffic through aggressive demand management and rideshare programs.

In addition, the Santa Barbara Region Chamber of Commerce has convened an informal group comprised of representatives from SBCAG, the County, the City of Santa Barbara, and other public and private employers for the purpose of discussing congestion reduction strategies. In the collaborative effort to address an issue of considerable regional concern, it has become apparent that the County has an opportunity to serve as an example and demonstrate leadership in considering and implementing strategies that will assist in relieving traffic during the construction period.

On January 17, 2006, your Board considered an item regarding Highway 101 Operation Improvement/Transportation Demand Strategies. At that time, staff was directed to return with a more fully developed plan which would:

- 1. Reduce congestion on Highway 101; and
- 2. Reduce commute time through AWS/T when feasible.

Since receiving your Board's direction, staff has completed an analysis of a November 2005 SBCAG Traffic Solutions survey of County employees' commuting habits and County employee residence/work location data, developed profiles based on this data, reviewed current mass transit schedules and participated in information sharing meetings with SBCAG Flex Work Task Force and the County's Alternative Transportation Manager and met with the Executive Director of the Santa Barbara Region Chamber of Commerce to share ideas as to how to approach this challenge.

SBCAG models (101 In Motion Survey, 2000) indicate that peak travel periods are between 7:15-8:30 a.m. and 4:15-5:45 p.m. and avoiding these periods can significantly reduce commute time and traffic congestion. Additionally, the November 2005, SBCAG Traffic Solutions survey showed the following regarding commuter patterns of the County's workforce:

- 1. 44% percent of County employees work a fixed 8-hour day
- 2. 35% percent work a 9/80 schedule (work 80 hours over 9 days); 14% would like a 9/80 schedule
- 3. 2% work a 4/10 schedule (work 80 hours over 8 days); 21% would like a 4/10 schedule

- 4. 9% have a flexible work schedule (covering core business hours)
- 5. 30% like their current work schedule and do not want to change it
- 6. 14% use public transportation or vanpools
- 7. Less than 3% regularly telecommute (work from a remote site); 41% believe that they could do so without negatively impacting department operations or services.

Based on the results of the SBCAG November 2005 survey and County payroll data, staff estimates that a total of 730 employees who work in Santa Barbara and live Lompoc to the north or live Ventura to the south (thus excluding those who live and work in Santa Barbara), would be willing or are already working a schedule other than 8-5. Of the 730 employees, 437 already work an AWS/T This means that approximately 293 employees would be willing to change from a fixed 8-hour day to an AWS/T. Assuming that departments could accommodate AWS/T for those employees and that start/stop work times are not during the peak travel periods, the County could potentially reduce Highway 101 congestion significantly, and permanently.

# AWS/T include:

- Regular telecommuting for jobs that do not always require presence in the department. (The County has a fully developed Telecommuting Policy (Attachment A) but as indicated above, it is underutilized.)
- Compressed work week or pay period Typically 9/80 and 4/10 but could also include other shifts
- Flexible work schedule vary start and/or departure time but work a certain number of hours per pay period to cover "core" business hours.

For the County, the goal of an AWS/T would be to set a schedule that avoids the peak traffic periods between 7:15-8:30 a.m. and 4:15-5:45 p.m.

An AWS/T is not appropriate for all positions, even if an employee is willing to work an AWS/TP. AWS/T would not be appropriate if the department found that there would be an adverse impact to the County for the following reasons:

- Reduction in productivity; or
- Diminished level of services furnished to the public; or
- Increase in cost of department operations.

However, staff's recommendation is that with guidance from the CEO/Human Resources, department heads:

- Identify all positions that can be assigned an AWS/T that avoids peak travel periods without adverse impact on the service level provided to the public or productivity, or increased operational costs;
- Encourage eligible employees to consider AWS/T;
- Report on and reassess the program on an annual basis.

Other SBCAG surveys (2005) of local private, university, and public organizations indicate that the majority (74%) of citizens drive alone to work and would not change their method of commuting. While this is discouraging, staff also recommends that the County encourage employees to take public transportation or vanpool by instituting the Commuter Choice Tax Benefit. The Internal Revenue Service allows employers and/or employees to pay up to \$105 per month, tax-free, for transit fares or vanpool fees in the form of an

employer paid pre-tax cash benefit or an employee paid pre-tax expenditure. To encourage participation, (currently estimated at 14%) staff recommends that the County offer (subject to meet and confer with the employee organizations) employees who use public transportation/vanpool \$10/month. Implementation of this benefit may result in fewer cars on Highway 101 if more employees take advantage of the benefit.

Finally, staff recommends implementation of a comprehensive communication campaign to inform employees and managers of the benefits of AWS/T, Commuter Choice Tax Benefits, and other TDM incentives already in place (carpool parking spaces, vacation time). That campaign will include marketing the fact that the benefits of AWS/T are not limited to traffic reduction and that the other major benefits to the County are:

- Improved coverage and customer service
- Enhanced employee satisfaction; better balance between work/life
- Increased productivity
- Reduction in work/life and commute-related turnover
- Increase in applicants interested in County's flexible work schedule
- Improved employee relations.

If the Board approves these recommendations, staff will work with departments to assess the suitability of AWS/T in each department (using tools such as those in Attachment B), work with the Auditor-Controller to implement the Commuter Choice Tax Benefit for the County, develop tracking and reporting systems, and produce marketing materials and market the benefits of AWS/T.

# **Mandates and Service Levels:**

The Board is under no mandate to provide AWS/T or Commuter Choice Tax Benefit.

#### **Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Staff estimates an annual cost of \$10,000 to administer the Commuter Choice Tax Benefit and \$100,000 to cover the County's contribution (assuming 20% participation).

Attachment A:

**Telecommuting Policy** 

Attachment B:

Alternative Work Schedule/Telework Evaluation/Assessment Criteria Employee Alternative Work Schedule/Telework Agreement Form

CC: County Executive Officer
Auditor-Controller

# COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA TELECOMMUTING POLICY

# **Policy**

Telecommuting is the practice of working at home or at an alternative work site for some portion of an employee's work hours. The County of Santa Barbara considers this option, when appropriately undertaken, to be of value to both the County and the individual employee.

#### **Principles**

Telecommuting is a cooperative venture between the Department and employee based on the needs of the Department and the past and present performance of the employee. Telecommuting is neither a right nor an entitlement, but a tool to allow flexibility in work options.

By reducing peak traffic congestion, this program can improve air quality and reduce the parking demand; improve employment opportunities for those with restricted mobility or disabilities, and provide alternative work sites in case of disaster.

Terms and conditions of employment with the County of Santa Barbara remain the same regardless of work site. Jobs with clearly defined tasks and work products are most suitable for this program as performance is measured by output.

A telecommuting agreement is a voluntary, joint decision between Department and employee and may be terminated by either the Department or the employee.

Equipment and materials provided by the County to be used at home remain the property of the County.

#### Goals

- To retain highly motivated employees;
- To assist in traffic reduction and the improvement of air quality;
- To promote the efficient use of resources;
- To increase the effective use of individual work time;

#### Selection Criteria

Four selection criteria should be considered when assessing the feasibility of telecommuting in a particular work group: the characteristics of the job, the individual, the supervisor, and the proposed remote work site.

#### **Job Characteristics**

- Communication requirements which can be met by telephone, voice mail or electronic mail at a minimum cost to the County, rather than face to face communication.
- An individual presently working alone with information such as writing, reading, planning, computer programming, word processing and data entry.
- Work products with identifiable time frames and measurable work activities with clearly defined tasks.
- Tasks that require concentration and/or blocks of time when the employee works independently.
- Minimal special equipment requirements.

# **Employee Characteristics**

The best telecommuters are strong performers with a high knowledge of job requirements and who are self-disciplined, highly motivated, and comfortable working alone.

- High job knowledge and proven high productivity.
- Self-discipline, self-direction and motivation.
- Above average skills in planning, organizing, managing time, and meeting objectives.
- Ability to maintain regular work relationships and close communication with supervisor and co-workers.
- A desire to make telecommuting work.

# **Supervisor Characteristics**

The role of the supervisor is a third criterion essential to the success of a telecommuting arrangement. Certain traits have been found to be helpful:

- Good management skills, flexibility in management style, ability to manage by results rather than by the clock.
- Above average organization and planning skills.
- A provider of regular feedback to employees; mutual trust and respect with the telecommuter; a facilitator of open communication.
- Establishment and communication of clear objectives and performance criteria.
- An open, positive attitude toward telecommuting.

#### Remote Site Related Criteria

- Adequate office space with appropriate lighting.
- Such computer equipment and software, required by and arranged with the Department.
- Telephone service to the remote site with effective answering machine or voice mail.
- Security issues agreed upon and resolved.
- Minimal interruptions.

# **Management Guidelines**

- 1. Telecommuting is voluntary and may be terminated by employee, supervisor or department head at any time. Non-selection or revocation of the privilege of participating is at the discretion of the appointed authority or his/her designee. Telecommuting arrangements shall not be terminated for arbitrary or capricious reasons.
- 2. Telecommuters and their supervisors remain obligated to comply with all County of Santa Barbara rules, regulations, policies, procedures, MOU provisions and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The violation of any of the above or the misuse of County time or any County-provided equipment may result in preclusion from telecommuting and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- 3. Telecommuting occurs on a part-time or periodic basis which is agreed upon with the telecommuter's Department. Requests to work overtime and use of leave balances (i.e. sick, vacation, compensatory time, administrative leave, or other types of leave) must be preapproved by the telecommuter's supervisor in the same manner as when working in the regular office.
- 4. The duties, obligations and responsibilities of a telecommuter are not changed by telecommuting. The employee's salary, retirement, benefits and insurance coverage do not change as a result of telecommuting.
- 5. Telecommuters will be as accessible as their on-site counterparts during their agreed upon regular business hours, regardless of work location. Arrangements for flexible work schedules are subject to supervisor's approval. Telecommuters and their supervisors must agree on how the telecommuter can ensure accessibility to departmental staff, and the expected response time for returning phone calls. The telecommuter will provide a home telephone number to his/her supervisor, as well as to other essential departmental staff.
- 6. The telecommuters' home address and telephone number will remain confidential and will not be released to the public or any other unauthorized persons.
- 7. Telecommuters who work at home will have a designated work space agreed to by the County and maintained by the telecommuter. Telecommuters will be responsible for the ergonomics of their remote offices as well as maintaining a safe condition free from hazards. With at least 24 hours advanced notice, an official representative of the County may make on-site visitation to the designated work area to ensure that safe working conditions exist.
- 8. Telecommuting is not a substitute for dependent care. If a person (child, spouse, elder, or other person(s) is relying on the employee for physical or emotional care, then the employee is likely to be unable to fully and effectively devote his or her time to work assignments. The telecommuter must ensure that dependent care is provided for in a way approved by the department that allows the telecommuter to successfully fulfill his or her job responsibilities.
- 9. Telecommuters will work at the designated location during the hours agreed upon. Employee will not work elsewhere unless prior approval is obtained from the Department.
- 10. Telecommuters agree not to engage in employment activities other than those approved by their Department nor in activities other than County assignments during telecommuting hours.
- 11. Telecommuters will take all precautions necessary to secure privileged information and prevent unauthorized access to any County of Santa Barbara system.

- 12. Telecommuters may need equipment such as a computer, modem, printer, FAX or telephone line, as well as ergonomic workstations, chairs, etc. The Department Head at his/her discretion, may provide Employees with such equipment/furnishings and/or may pay for telecommunications expenses. If the County agrees to provide the equipment/furniture at the County's expense, then such equipment/furniture will remain the property of the County of Santa Barbara.
- 13. Telecommuter's tax implications related to the home work space are the responsibility of the employee. Telecommuters are advised to discuss any issues with their tax advisor.
- 14. The County's worker's compensation liability for job-related accidents will continue to exist during the employee's telecommuting work hours. Any work related injury should be immediately reported to the telecommuter's supervisor.
- 15. The telecommuter remains liable for injuries to third persons and members of the employee's family on the employee's premises. The County of Santa Barbara is not liable for damage to the employee's real property.
- 16. Telecommuting expenses not specifically covered in this policy will be dealt with on a caseby-case basis between employee and Department.
- 17. Telecommuters and their department will jointly sign a Telecommuting Agreement that can be terminated at any time by either the department or the employee. Telecommuters and supervisors should identify specific goals, completion dates and measurements for success. Both the telecommuter and the supervisor have the responsibility of ensuring that the identified tasks are completed in the same quality manner and with the same timeliness commensurate to the work done in the office.
- 18. Each telecommuting arrangement should be mutually agreed upon by the department and the employee.
- 19. The department may, at any time, change any or all of the conditions under which employees are permitted to telecommute.

# Timekeeping, Reporting, and Liability

All County of Santa Barbara policies regarding attendance and hours worked also apply to telecommuting employees.

The telecommuter and his/her supervisor should agree upon a work schedule. Unless a different work schedule is designated, telecommuters are assumed to be available from 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday.

Telecommuters generally spend the entire telecommuting day at the same remote work location. Only travel specifically authorized by the telecommuter's supervisor will be considered business travel eligible for reimbursement. Establishing a remote work location in the telecommuter's home does not make the telecommuter's regular commute to his/her primary employment location a business trip.

#### Overtime

It is expected that employees may sometimes be required to work beyond the customary 40 hours per week to ensure successful completion of job responsibilities. This applies to telecommuters as well as on-site employees. For all employees who are not exempt under FLSA and who are entitled to pay or compensatory overtime, overtime work must be pre-authorized by the supervisor.

# **Performance Guidelines**

A major concern for some will be the supervising and performance evaluation of off-site employees. When it comes to evaluating off-site employees work, primary criteria should be:

- Quality of work.
- Timely completion of projects.
- Maintenance of close communication.

# **Measuring Job Performance**

A successful performance evaluation process requires that supervisors and employees jointly set clear performance objects, including:

- Identifying the specific tasks and work objectives to be accomplished during a performance cycle.
- Establishing how to measure the objectives.
- Prioritizing work by identifying those results most crucial and those that can be deferred.
- Analyzing how objectives support work goals.

#### Security

Data and information used by telecommuters must be treated with the same caution and respect that confidential material is given in the office. The Telecommuter should be particularly aware of the following areas regarding security:

- 1. Any and all papers with confidential information must be treated accordingly.
- 2. Any confidential data stored on a computer at the employee's home must be protected as appropriate.
- 3. If the employee will be transferring data from a PC located at home to one located at the office, the employee must be aware of the potential to spread computer viruses from home to the office.
- 4. If the employee uses a computer at home to remotely access a computer or computer system at the office, the employee must be aware of the risks associated with the transfer of or access to confidential data.
- 5. It is incumbent upon the employee to protect any passwords or secure access devices associated with the County's computer system.

# ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULE/TELEWORK (AWS/T) EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

<u>Goal</u>: Reduce the number of employees commuting on Highway 101 between 7:15 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. and between 4:15 p.m. and 5:45 p.m. without adverse impact on service levels, productivity, or operational costs.

To reduce congestion on Highway 101 during peak travel periods, consider utilizing alternative work schedules, including:

- Modified or extended office hours
- Telework
- Compressed work week, e.g. 4/10 hour days/week
- Flexible scheduling
- Mixed model (partial day or periodic telework)

Modified/extended office hours may be feasible when:

- A unit/department doesn't need all employees to be present at all times but does need full coverage during core business hours;
- The client is better served with office hours before 8 a.m. and after 5 p.m.

Telework may be feasible when:

- Work requires thinking and writing, telephone-intensive tasks, or computer-oriented tasks;
- Not all employees need to be present on the job at all times.

Compressed work week and flexible scheduling may be feasible for:

- Work that does not require serving customers during set hours;
- Work that does not have regular, daily deadlines;
- Not all employees need to be present on the job at all times.

Mixed model (e.g., telework one day or half a day a week and flex schedule two days a week) may be feasible for:

 Work associated with a specific project that requires period of time without interruption or requires a mix of field and report writing.

# **Evaluation/Assessment Process:**

- 1. Evaluate the core business functions of the unit/department to determine:
  - Whether part or all of each employee's work could be successfully completed at a remote work site:
  - The number of employees required at each work location during business hours.
- 2. Identify those positions or aspects of positions appropriate or not appropriate for alternative work program.
- 3. Consider each position and determine whether there is potential to create alternative work opportunity.
- 4. Determine employee suitability for alternative work program:
  - High job knowledge and proven high productivity; overall satisfactory or better performance
  - Self-discipline, self-direction and motivation;
  - Above average skills in planning, organizing, managing time, and meeting objectives;
  - Ability to maintain regular work relationships and close communication with supervisor and co-workers.
- 5. Determine supervisor's suitability to manage employees on alternative work program:
  - Good management skills, flexibility in management style, ability to manage by results rather than by the clock;
  - Above average organization and planning skills;
  - A provider of regular feedback to employees; mutual trust and respect with the employee; a facilitator of open communication;
  - Establishment and communication of clear objectives and performance criteria;
  - An open, positive attitude toward flex work.
- 6. For those functions that could be accomplished using alternative work program, determine what is required to support the program:
  - IT support to set up and support for remote users
  - Computer, high-speed Internet
  - Collaboration program for telework (telephone quality audio, real-time video, presence detection, white boarding, secure file sharing/storing)
  - Training for supervisors on performance management.

- 7. Set expectations including:
  - Outcomes/results;
  - Quality of work;
  - Quantity of work;
  - Timely completion of projects;
  - Maintenance of close communication.
- 8. Document agreement/expectations using the Employee Alternative Work Schedule/Telework Agreement Form
  - Identify the specific tasks and work objectives to be accomplished during a performance cycle;
  - Establish how to measure the objectives;
  - Prioritize work by identifying those results most crucial and those that can be deferred;
  - Analyze how objectives support work goals.
- 9. Monitor performance
- 10. Evaluate effectiveness
  - Service level;
  - Productivity;
  - Operational costs.

# EMPLOYEE ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULE/TELEWORK (AWS/T) AGREEMENT FORM

(Supervisor/Manager: Please complete this form electronically and print for the required signatures)

EMPLOYEE NAME (Last, F	irst, M.I.)	EMAIL ADDRESS	AWS/T STAR DATE	Т	AWS/T END DATE or ☐ Indefinite
DEPARTMENT	DIVISI	ON	EMPLOYEE ID #	POSITI	ON/TITLE
TYPE OF AWS/T:					
Modified Hours	Work-So	chedule Day Off: [	]Mon □Tue □	Wed □	Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun
Compressed Workweek	Work-So	chedule Day Off: [	] Mon □ Tue □	Wed □	Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun
Flexible Schedule	Start time Finish time				
	Flex-Day	y(s):	e 🗌 Wed 🔲 Th	nu 🗌 Fr	i
Telework	Telewor	k Day(s): ☐ Mon ☐ Tu	e 🗌 Wed 🔲 T	hu 🗌 F	ri □ Sat □ Sun
Mixed Model	Work-So Sat □ S		Days on:   Mor	n □Tue	☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐
	Periodic	(Please Describe)			
Alternative Arrangement					
(Please Describe)					
Impact on Peak Travel Periods		ed # days/pay period that t n. – 8:30 a.m.?	nis arrangement w	vill avoid	peak commute periods of
	Estimate 4:15 p.m	ed # days/pay period that t n. – 5:45 p.m.?	nis arrangement w	vill avoid	peak commute periods of
ALTERNATIVE WORK		ee's Home  County Fac			
SITE:	Address	S:			
	City:			State:	Zip::
WORK TO BE COMPLETED WHILE ON AWS/T:					

METHODS FOR EVALUATING PERFORMANCE:	
SYSTEMS ACCESSED FROM REMOTE LOCATION	☐ Email portal - OR -
(pcAnywhere method requires a minimum of three weeks	☐ Direct access to my department PC <u>using pcAnywhere</u>
IT configuration)	Please Describe: Onsite PC PSID#:
OPERATING SYSTEM AT REMOTE LOCATION	☐ Windows 2000 ☐ Windows XP ☐ Other:
OFFICE SUITE AT REMOTE LOCATION	☐ Office XP ☐ Office 2003 ☐ Other:
COMPUTER SECURITY	Anti Virus SWFirewall Hardware/Software
METHODS OF	Phone: Is this a cell phone?
COMMUNICATION, TELEWORK MEETINGS:	Email address:
(When teleworking, the employee will be reachable through these methods)	Pager:
Is a weekly meeting required for participation?	Day:         < Make a Selection>           With:

EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES: (Please note who will supply and specific types)	Туре	Dept Supplied	Employee Supplied	Not Needed
	Computer; (specifiy laptop or desktop)			
	VPN/PCAnywhere (\$120/year minimum)			
	Software: List Software:			
	Printer			
	Modem			
	DSL/Cable/Other			
	Additional Phone Line			
	Portable/Home Storage Devices			
	Type: (e.g. Thumb Drive)			
	Desk			
	Lockable Filing Cabinet			
	Other Office Equipment			
	List Office Equipment.			
	Cell Phone			
	Voicemail			
	Printing Supplies			
	Other Office Supplies			
	List Office Supplies:			

# **SIGNATURE PAGE**

Acceptable Use Policy: Memorandum of Understanding	Telecommuting Policy: g: <make a="" selection=""></make>	Ergonomic Guidelines: Management Resolution:
all of the additional conditions of these conditions of	ions outlined in this Altern change, I will immediately telework is a privilege, not	d conditions therein. I also agree to abide by ative Work Schedule/Telework Agreement. If notify my supervisor. I understand that an a right. I understand that the County reserves

Employee:	Date:
Supervisor/Manager:	Date:
Information Technology:	Date:

One copy of this AWS/T Agreement Form should be sent to the CEO/Human Resources.

I hereby affirm by signature that I have read Santa Barbara County's:

**DRAFT** 

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