



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 21, 2012

CONTACT: Jennifer Jones
415.749.4900
Ursula Vogler, MTC
510.817.5785

Bay Area students & parents spare the air by trying new ways to get to school

SAN FRANCISCO - With programs supported by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, thousands of Bay Area students are heading back to school this week using people-powered modes of transportation to reduce congestion, improve air quality and reinforce healthier habits. From neighborhood carpools to bike rodeos to free transit for students, Bay Area communities are working together to create safer and healthier environments around their schools.

“Back to school time in the Bay Area is often the hottest time of the year, and hotter days create conditions where pollution levels can increase and become unhealthy,” said Lisa Fasano, Air District communications director. “Since most families live within a mile or two of their school, alternatives like neighborhood carpooling, biking, walking or riding a scooter are excellent alternatives to driving. Eliminating some of these small trips each week goes a long way towards creating healthier communities.”

Automobile trips to and from school account for 14.3 percent of all Bay Area auto trips. To help alleviate this, the Air District and MTC have provided incentives and funding to county agencies, schools and community groups throughout the Bay Area to develop greener ways to school. These include funding for a regional Safe Routes to School program, a program that makes walking and biking to school a safe and routine activity, and for the Spare the Air Youth Program, a new program which focuses on providing alternative transportation resources for Bay Area youth, their families, teachers and program providers.

In addition to Safe Routes to School and Spare the Air Youth, a number of other local programs include:

- Idle Free Tri Valley - Three elementary and middle schools in Dublin, Pleasanton and San Ramon are urging parents not to idle near school campuses and instead, are encouraging carpools, park and walk, biking, and other alternatives.
- [The Alameda County Bike Mobile](#) - Offers training for youth to repair and maintain their bikes.
- San Mateo County Carpool Rewards - Parents who pick up two or more kids from different households at least twice a week can earn \$25 gas card rewards.
- [Marin Safe Routes to School](#) – A countywide campaign in Marin’s elementary, middle and high schools to reduce congestion, improve air quality and increase safety.
- Dublin Police Department Bike Rodeo – Students learn how to ride safely to school and around town.

- Free and Reduced Transit - Students ride free or for reduced fares on [Wheels](#) in the Tri Valley; [BART](#), [AC Transit](#), [VTA](#), [Golden Gate Transit](#), and [SamTrans](#)

“Back to school is an exciting time for kids and their families—with lots of new experiences and opportunities,” said Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty, who serves on both MTC and the Air District. “It’s also a time for developing new patterns, like how you get to school. This year, we’ve helped support dozens of different programs and activities designed to reduce car trips and increase safety and health. Check out [511.org](#) for local programs in your county and see how you can find a new way to school this year.”

For more information, visit www.sparetheair.org.

#