MONTEREY BAY AREA
511 Implementation Plan

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Executive Summary

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) and Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) have been afforded a tremendous opportunity to offer web based 511 traveler information services for Santa Cruz County and Monterey County cost effectively. Currently, in either county, there is not one “go to” place where people can get travel information. Information is scattered in many locations making it challenging for people to know what resources are available and their many options for how to get around. Traveler information can help drivers to make more informed choices for when and how they travel. It can allow travelers to alter their routes, their departure times, or decide to avoid the trip altogether. Knowing what to expect when they get out on the road will also reduce frustration and allow travelers to plan ahead. Travelers may also decide not to drive the car, but to take the bus, ride their bike or walk to their destination if it is not too far.

This implementation plan describes how 511 multimodal transportation services can be provided on the web. This can be accomplished by integrating Caltrans QuickMap traffic conditions webpage and other 511 resources into each agency’s web presence and rideshare program. Given the considerable amount of congestion in the Monterey Bay Area and environmental concerns from greenhouse gas emissions, 511 traveler information will provide a way to better inform travelers in our region of their alternatives.

QuickMap provides a traffic conditions web page with numerous additional real time features (e.g. traffic camera images, CHP incident, lane closure information) comparable to other 511 systems that have taken significant resources and effort to develop. Multimodal resource information is also an important component of 511 services to inform users of their many travel options. Google’s multimodal trip planner, transit schedules, specialized transportation, bicycling and pedestrian resources are a sampling of the types of information that would be available on the 511 web sites. By partnering with Caltrans and using their Quickmap, quality 511 multimodal traveler information services can now be provided via the internet that takes advantage of current technology with minimal effort and resources from Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties.

By establishing a web presence for traveler information in our region, people will become familiar with 511 as the place to go for information. This is even more important during an emergency that people know where to go to get the latest real time information. A 511 web presence will reduce the number of 911 calls, both daily and during an emergency, leaving those emergency phone lines available for people in need of a live operator. Examples of emergency events in the last few years where people would have benefitted from a “go to” place for real time transportation information include the tsunami warning and Big Sur Highway 1 landslide in March of 2011 and the Trabing fire near Highway 1 in Watsonville in June 2008.
Phone calls to 511 originating from our region will be routed to the state’s California Highway Information Network (CHIN) that provides roadway condition information due to construction and weather. Caltrans will coordinate this effort with telecommunication companies at no expense to the local transportation agencies.

Due to the already limited amount of resources needed to implement 511 for Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties and the additional economy of scale of integrating 511 with each agency web presence (and rideshare for Santa Cruz County), funding needs for 511 are very low. The total start-up costs for RTC are approximately $92,030 with annual operations and maintenance of approximately $48,030. Start up costs for TAMC are higher at approximately $124,000 as they will be creating a new website both for their agency and to house 511. Annual operations and maintenance for TAMC will be approximately $48,030.

There are currently funds in the RTC Commute Solutions program to fund $54,000 of the startup costs for 511 Santa Cruz County. Additional start up costs ($38,030) and operations and maintenance costs ($48,030/year) are available from RTC SAFE funds. 511 Monterey County implementation costs ($124,030) and annual operations and maintenance costs ($48,030) are available from TAMC SAFE.

As the implementing agencies of 511 traveler information via the web, RTC and TAMC would be proactive in providing traffic condition information as well as multimodal information so people are informed of the variety of travel options in our region.
Chapter 1 – Introduction

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County have developed a feasibility study and implementation plan for a 511 traveler information service that would provide travelers in the Monterey Bay Area with traffic information and multimodal resources. This work was funded by a planning grant from Caltrans to establish 511 traveler information services throughout California. This is consistent with the National 511 Deployment Coalition’s goal for 511 systems to be operational throughout the nation by 2010. Currently, 511 traveler information services exist throughout most of California and more than two-thirds of the United States. Providing traveler information in Santa Cruz County and Monterey County would help to close the gap in 511 traveler information services along the Central Coast of California.

The Monterey Bay Area 511 Feasibility Study was completed in January, 2012. One of the key tasks of the feasibility study was to assess the need for a 511 traveler information system, to determine the primary objectives, and to evaluate the different models available to discern the appropriate system for the Monterey Bay Region. The need for a 511 traveler information system for the Monterey Bay Area was established with the following objectives:

- Consider a 511 traveler information system that provides real-time traffic conditions and multi-modal information.
- Consider providing, to the greatest extent feasible, a traveler information system that can gather all relevant information into one source (“one-stop shop”).
- Ensure that any 511 system deployed takes advantage of existing resources to the greatest extent feasible (“low-hanging fruit”).
- Provide significant benefits to the traveling public while deploying a system that is safe to operate.
- Consider planning and building a system to first focus on the needs of the greatest number of people and target markets (“biggest bang for the buck”).
The project team, with the assistance of the ICx Transportation Group consulting firm, identified a number of models that could be used to deliver traveler information to the public. The various models considered were contracting for full deployment of a 511 system (phone and web); building a 511 system in-house; sharing resources by contracting with an existing 511 system; creating a web-based traveler information hub with information that is currently available, but from many different sources and found in a variety of locations; building an advertiser- and sponsor-supported system so that there are no public costs; and doing nothing.

To help the RTC and TAMC determine which model best meets the goals and objectives of this 511 Plan, each model was set against evaluation criteria measuring the cost to deploy and operate a system, the ranges of functionality available, and the expandability and scalability of a system. In addition to these criteria, factors such as the level of risks involved and how well user needs would be met were used in the selection process.

Compared to the challenge of securing sufficient funding to develop a customized system from scratch, a deployment that takes advantage of existing resources and makes traveler information available in a centralized location would add value at a relatively low cost. The key finding of the Feasibility Study was for the RTC and TAMC to partner with an existing traveler information system in order to deliver 511 services to the Monterey Bay Region. The potential partners that were identified in the feasibility study were the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) and the San Francisco Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in order to use the selected agency’s existing 511 system infrastructure. RTC Commissioners and TAMC Board of Directors approved moving forward with developing a recommended implementation strategy, cost estimate, project structure and design and schedule in January and February 2012 respectively.

In July 2012, after completion of the Feasibility Study, Caltrans launched “QuickMap” that provides real-time traffic information on the internet via a traffic map page. Caltrans created QuickMap to comply with the federal requirements of SAFETEA-LU as spelled out in Final Rule 23-CFR 511. This rule requires each state department of transportation to: establish a real-time system management information program in their state; monitor traffic and travel conditions of the major highways; and share information to address congestion problems and facilitate traveler information. These requirements continue under the current MAP-21 transportation bill.

Information available on QuickMap includes traffic speeds on highways and local roads via a Google traffic map, incidents, lane closures, traffic camera images, and changeable message sign display information. In developing QuickMap, Caltrans utilized the Google traffic conditions map as the base layer and took on the effort of transferring the CHP incident feed, Caltrans lane closures, traffic camera and changeable message sign information onto the web map. This real-time traffic map page is available at no cost and can be embedded onto a website. While there are other free traffic information services available on the internet, these services don’t provide all the additional real time features that are available on QuickMap (e.g. live traffic camera images and changeable message sign information) and the sources of information are unknown.
RTC and TAMC staff have concluded that the most cost-effective way to provide traveler information to the region is to partner with Caltrans, and use Caltrans’ QuickMap as the traffic map for 511 Traveler Information Services websites that are offered separately for Santa Cruz County and Monterey County. The 511 Traveler Information websites would be a comprehensive place to access traveler information in each county including not only QuickMap, but also emergency alerts, transit trip planning, rideshare information, bicycle and pedestrian resources, and specialized transportation services. It would include services provided by the respective transportation agency and those offered by other entities.

Development of a 511 phone service would also be through a partnership with Caltrans. Caltrans is working with telecommunication providers to route 511 calls to the Caltrans Highway Information Network (CHIN) in regions that do not currently have a 511 phone system in place. CHIN currently provides limited road condition information, but capabilities of this system may increase over time. More details are discussed in the following report.

This Implementation Plan serves as the business plan for what the 511 traveler information services will offer and how they will be developed, managed and funded by RTC and TAMC. This plan includes the following sections:

**Chapter 2 – Components.** This chapter describes the components of each of the 511 services for both Santa Cruz County and Monterey County. Content for the initial launch of 511 services, as well as potential future content areas, is discussed.

**Chapter 3 – Website Structure and Design.** This chapter proposes the approach to developing the web-based 511 service. Content development; site design; usage, hosting, storage and delivery; procedures and protocol; and mobile strategies are reviewed.

**Chapter 4 – Coordination and Operations.** Roles and responsibilities for the various partners are outlined in this chapter as well as agreements that may be needed. Management, staffing and operations, and performance measures for 511 are discussed along with market demand, sustainability and integration with existing agency operations.

**Chapter 5 – Marketing Strategies.** Promoting awareness of 511 and web-based traveler information is integral to successful usage of these services. This section outlines some low-cost, high impact strategies, including branding, media relations, advertising, and utilizing partners to help promote these services provided by RTC and TAMC.

**Chapter 6 – Financial and Schedule Information.** The Implementation Strategy provides cost, funding and schedule information for a 511 service in Santa Cruz County and Monterey County. Projected funding needs and potential revenue streams are identified for development, implementation and operations.

**Chapter 7 – Conclusion.** Conclusions and next steps to implement 511 in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties are discussed.
Chapter 2 – Components

One of the greatest benefits of 511 traveler information services is to have a central location so people know where to go for traveler information. Many types of traveler information exist, but are scattered across multiple locations and agencies making it difficult for people to know what is available and how to find it. Developing a central location for 511 traveler information services will also help people better understand their travel choices. Traveler information can vary significantly from one region to another. Separate 511 systems would be developed for Santa Cruz County and Monterey County with the following components that are tailored to each region.

511 WEBSITE TRAVELER INFORMATION

Traffic Information

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

Caltrans has developed a traffic information webpage called QuickMap for the state of California which provides real-time traffic information layered on a Google Map. QuickMap includes traffic speeds, incident reports, traffic camera snapshots, changeable message sign content, construction closures, and chain control requirements. Traffic speed is indicated by color-coded lines overlaying the roadway. Other information is identified by icon images on the map. Clicking on an icon displays details in a pop-up window. QuickMap can be embedded on a 511 traveler information website for both Santa Cruz County and Monterey County. Traffic information for the entire State of California is provided by QuickMap which enables users to get traffic condition information beyond the boundaries of the region for interregional trips. Figure 1 provides a screen shot of QuickMap with the various information that it displays. QuickMap has also been formatted for viewing on all smart phones and tablets through use of a QuickMap mobile web page version. A QuickMap app for Android devices is also available.
Traffic Speed

Traffic speed for both highways and local roads is available with Caltrans QuickMap as color bands on a road map (Figure 1). Data for traffic speed comes from Google Map’s traffic layer. Google Maps traffic layer has numerous sources for their speed data which is proprietary information, but includes data from cell phones, automatic vehicle locators, Caltrans traffic detectors and potentially other sources as well. Traffic data on QuickMap is refreshed every 3 minutes.

Figure 1: Caltrans Quickmap Traffic Information Page
Construction Lane Closures and Incidents

Lane closures from construction, incidents, and other events that affect road conditions are available on QuickMap. Real-time incident data for highways is shown as a yellow or red triangular hazard marker with an exclamation point and is provided by the California Highway Patrol through their Traffic Information Communications Center. Real-time construction data for highways is shown as an orange or red cone and is provided by Caltrans. Clicking on the icon will provide more detailed information in a pop-up window such as whether a single lane is closed or all lanes are out of service as shown in Figure 2. Only closures actually in effect are displayed.

Figure 2: Caltrans Quickmap showing CHP incident information in pop-up box
**Closed-Circuit Television Cameras**

QuickMap also provides recent snapshot images from the closed-circuit television cameras located at various places along Hwy 1 and 17 in Santa Cruz County and along Hwy 1, 68, 101 and 183 in Monterey County. The images are stamped in the lower left hand corner with the date and time that the image was recorded. (Caltrans' goal is to update the camera images every 20 minutes or less.) There are currently 16 operational CCTVs in Santa Cruz County and 15 operational CCTVs in Monterey County that provide travelers with real time images of the roadway. These images provide motorists with an additional way to assess traffic conditions on major highways. They are shown as icons on the traffic map and when clicked, open the image in a pop-up window as shown in Figure 3.

![Figure 3: Closed-circuit Television Icons and Image](image)

**Changeable Message Signs**

Real-time messages posted on Changeable Message Signs are also available on QuickMap. They are presented as icons on the map and when clicked, a pop-up box provides the sign’s current message being displayed to motorists traveling that section of the highway (Figure 4).
MULTIMODAL INFORMATION

Multimodal Trip Planner

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

Multimodal trip planning is now a common feature on 511 web sites. Google offers a trip planner that can be embedded on the Santa Cruz County and Monterey County 511 websites that provides options for trip planning for motor vehicle, transit, bike and walk trips. Figure 5 shows a transit trip from Santa Cruz to Monterey using the Google Map trip planner that includes a travel map, suggested route and directions. Google Maps lets you do the following when planning your trip: calculate travel time, calculate travel distance, get turn by turn driving directions, see road, street, and highway detail, view highlighted maps with traffic, get details on the bus fare, the nearest bus stop and how long it will take to walk to the stop. Google Maps is available in 12 different languages and is compatible with screen readers for the visually impaired. The Google Transit Trip Planning feature is also available on selected mobile devices through Google Maps for mobile. (Google notes that bike and walk trip planning features are currently in a beta test stage.)
Transit Information

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

Transit information is essential to include on a 511 website. In addition to providing the Google multimodal trip planner that includes planning trips by bus as discussed above, static transit information on 511 is planned to include schedules, maps, and general information about riding transit. This information will be accessed by clicking links to transit agency websites (Santa Cruz Metro and Monterey-Salinas Transit).

Information on Greyhound bus services and seasonal shuttle services (e.g. City of Capitola and City of Santa Cruz) will also be linked to/from a web page. Instructions will be included about using public transit to get to popular local destinations, train connection locations, and airports.

Real-Time Transit Information

Currently in both Santa Cruz County and Monterey County, real-time transit information is not yet available. Real-time transit information promotes increased ridership as riders tend to spend less time waiting at their stops and feel less frustration since they can...
manage their time more effectively. MST, the transit agency serving Monterey County, has automatic vehicle locators (AVL) on their buses which is the initial technology required to provide real-time transit information. Santa Cruz Metro is seeking funding to install AVL on its fleet. Both Monterey County and Santa Cruz County realize the importance of increasing transit ridership and will consider developing a means to deliver real-time transit information to travelers during a future phase of the 511 project.

**Rideshare Information**

**Santa Cruz**

Commute Solutions is the regional rideshare agency for Santa Cruz County. Commute Solutions serves commuters, employers, schools and other travelers by helping them successfully use the transportation system to access the things they want and need. Personalized commute trip planning, commute program assistance for employers and bike and pedestrian support are core Commute Solutions services that help people make sustainable transportation choices, and thus make the best use of our current transportation system. Online carpool and vanpool matching is also provided by Commute Solutions through an agreement with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Additional information includes the location and availability of park and ride lots, options for finding carpool partners for commute or one-time trips, telecommuting and alternative work schedules and other relevant information for making travel decisions such as the cost of driving calculator. These services can be obtained online, on the phone or in person. Commute Solutions services would be combined with a 511 Traveler Information Service for Santa Cruz County. It is envisioned that self-serve traveler information would be accessed through 511 with Commute Solutions HelpDesk services still available to provide personalized assistance to businesses and individuals by phone, email or in person.

**Monterey County**

The current rideshare program that serves Monterey County, Commute Alternatives, is run by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG). This rideshare information will be linked to and from the 511 Traveler Information website for Monterey County. Plans to transition the Rideshare program to TAMC are under consideration.

**Monterey County/Santa Cruz County**

Real-time ridesharing provides an opportunity to share rides on very short notice. Due to GPS navigation devices, smart phones and social networks, real-time ridesharing is becoming much more of a reality. In future phases, Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties will investigate the requirements for setting up this service for the respective counties or in recommending third party vendor(s) that are successfully and responsibly offering these services. For example, in preparation for the recent BART strike, the Bay Area 511 recommended a real-time carpool service to commuters who normally took public transit to get to work.
Bicycling and Pedestrian Information

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

Web pages on both Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties 511 websites will be devoted to bicycling and walking resources. Identification of the many resources available through the RTC and TAMC will be available as well as links to other biking and walking resources such as bicycling maps, safety information, bike registration, advocacy groups, bikes on buses, educational programs, walkability assessment tools and other relevant information. A hazard report will be available online for walkers and bikers to report access problems such as broken sidewalks, overgrown vegetation, potholes or other conditions that need attention. This information will be forwarded to the appropriate public works department for the area of concern. Google’s bicycle and walking trip planner (as discussed under section on multi-modal trip planning) can be used to recommend routes for pedestrians and cyclists from a specified origin and destination. The Bay Area’s online ridematching service which both counties provide, also helps people find bike buddies. The availability of this bike buddy matching service will be promoted through the 511 Traveler Information program.

Other information that will be considered is a bike commute calculator, bicycle maintenance tips, and rules of the road for cyclists. A webpage could be dedicated to employers on the benefits to their company and the various incentive programs that encourage employees to bike, walk or take transit to work. An announcements section that keeps the public apprised of new bicycle and pedestrian facilities, programs, classes, volunteer opportunities could also be considered.

Specialized Transportation

Santa Cruz County/Monterey County

Accessible transportation services assist people who would otherwise use the public transportation system, but are prevented from doing so due to disability. Resources will be provided that will assist in navigating the network of specialized transportation options. In addition, the Google trip planner tool is compatible with screen readers for the visually impaired.

The following links will be included for Santa Cruz County:

- RTC’s Guide to Specialized Transportation
- Lift Line/Community Bridges
- Santa Cruz Metro’s ParaCruz, accessible services and mobility training
- UCSC/Cabrillo College/School Districts
Veteran’s Services
United Way’s 211 service
Ambulance and Medical Transportation
Volunteer Center Transportation

The following links will be included for Monterey County:

- Monterey-Salinas Travel Training and RIDES program
- CSUMB/Hartnell College/Monterey Peninsula College/Naval Postgraduate School/Defense Language Institute/School Districts
- Veteran’s Services
- United Way’s 211
- Ambulance and Medical Transportation

**Park & Ride Lots**

Park and Ride lots are centrally located pick up spots where commuters can park their cars during the work or school day to meet a carpool, vanpool, or bus ride. Most are located along highways or near transit centers. Parking is free for public use during specified hours, but no overnight parking is allowed.

**Monterey County/Santa Cruz County**

There are six Park and Ride lots that serve Santa Cruz County commuters and 4 lots that serve Monterey County commuters. Maps and user guides of the Park & Ride Lot locations will be available to view and download for both Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. It may be possible to enable a Google map layer that includes the location of park and ride lots since Caltrans maintains an inventory of these facilities.

**Parking**

**Monterey County/Santa Cruz County**

Parking information (car and bicycle) that is available on local jurisdiction websites will be linked from 511.
EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

511 is a valuable way to get information about emergencies out to travelers. A scrolling banner across the top of the home page is planned that would give important information about road closures, evacuation routes, or other information related to the specific emergency. Twitter feeds can also be displayed on the home page during events that could affect traffic including tweets posted by the transportation agencies, CHP, Caltrans, Metro and the Office of Emergency Services. In the event of an emergency or major transportation disruption, a special “Alert” webpage is planned to publicize information about commute alternatives and the latest service provider information.

Examples of emergency events in the last few years where people would have benefitted from a “go to” place for real time transportation information include the tsunami warning and Big Sur Highway 1 landslide in March of 2011 and the Trabing fire along Highway 1 in June 2008. A 511 web presence will reduce the number of 911 calls, both daily and during an emergency, leaving those emergency phone lines available for people in need of a live operator. Referrals to 211 for information about shelters and meal sites during an emergency will be part of the emergency coordination protocols.

Real-time wild fire information is available on QuickMap. The extent of the fire is mapped and the flame icon, when clicked, provides a pop-up box providing details about the fire (Figure 6). Real-time information during an emergency is crucial so people can avoid the area, reducing the potential for safety issues and providing first responders more room to navigate.
Additional emergency information that could affect traffic conditions can be provided by linking to a number of websites that would inform the public in an emergency with the most up-to-date information. Examples include Office of Emergency Services, County Road Closure Information, earthquake, tsunami, fire and weather information websites.

**OTHER RESOURCES**

**Radio**

**Monterey County/Santa Cruz County**

A number of local radio stations broadcast traffic reports during peak commute hours. Providing a list of radio stations on the 511 website that offer traffic information to their listeners is another way to get traveler information out to motorists.
Carshare

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

There are an increasing number of options to participate in carsharing programs in order to reduce the need for and expense of owning your own car. Carsharing information, such as links to Zipcar, RelayRides, GetAround, Hertz 24/7 and Enterprise CarShare will be provided on a 511 website in order for people to better understand all their options for getting around without having to own a vehicle.

Electric Vehicles

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

Electric vehicle charging locations within Santa Cruz County, Monterey County and surrounding counties can be found on the Plug Share and the Monterey Bay Electric Vehicle Alliance (MBEVA) websites as well as by searching on Google maps for “electric vehicle charging”. This information (now totaling more than 70 charging sites in the region) will be provided on the 511 websites for Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties along with other regional EV resources as they are developed.

Taxis/Airport Shuttles

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

Taxis play an important role in providing flexible travel options. In addition, some taxi and transportation providers publicize their availability to provide Safe Rides Home during holidays that typically involve alcohol consumption such as New Year’s Eve. Contact information for taxis and airport shuttles will be made available on the 511 websites. Information about taking public transit to access airports in our region will also be provided as well as the specialized transportation service known as taxi scrip.

Truck/Freight Information

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

511 can be a valuable resource for truck drivers. In addition to general information about road conditions that appeals to all drivers, 511 can also provide specialized information about moving goods and freight.

Examples of potential trucking resources include:

- Truck load and height restrictions
- Bridge height and weight limitations
• Road closures that specifically affect trucks
• Links to state permitting offices
• Weekly short term restrictions, oversize or overweight permits
• Weigh station requirements
• CA weigh station map (there are currently no weigh stations in Santa Cruz or Monterey Counties)

Caltrans is currently developing a special “truckers version” of QuickMap designed specifically with information for truckers. 511 in Monterey County and Santa Cruz County will include a link to this new truckers map once available.

**Rail Information**

**Monterey County/Santa Cruz County**

The Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay Railway offers freight and recreational rail service operated on the 32 mile Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line by Iowa Pacific Railway. Roaring Camp Railroads operates recreational service from the San Lorenzo Valley to the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and steam trains that travel through the redwood forest from Roaring Camp up Bear Mountain. Passenger rail is provided through Monterey County with expanded service from Salinas to the San Francisco Bay Area planned for 2018. Light rail transit is also planned for the Monterey Branch Line which will eventually connect Castroville to Monterey. Links to information on these services will be provided.

Links to rail service in surrounding counties will also be provided including information about connecting to Caltrain, Santa Clara VTA’s light rail and AMTRAK service.

**Customer Comments**

**Monterey County/Santa Cruz County**

Users of the 511 websites will be able to provide feedback to their respective counties on the information provided through an online commenting system. Specific information about how users can report data discrepancies and help improve service will also be provided.

**511 Phone Traveler Information**

More and more individuals are looking to the internet or web-based applications for travel information. From discussions with other 511 providers in CA, the percentage of 511
phone calls relative to 511 web usage has been decreasing over time with the increase in use of smart phones and tablets to access information on the internet. Phone service is also one of the more expensive components of 511 for a couple of reasons. A 511 phone service requires real-time traffic speed data to be collected, processed and disseminated over an interactive voice response system. Because QuickMap utilizes Google Map as the base layer for traffic speed information, traffic speed data for Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties is not available in a format that could be utilized for a phone system without a significant cost associated with it. Phone service is also one of the more expensive components of operating a 511 because of the cost per call charged by the telecommunications companies and additional fees charged to transfer calls to other transportation agencies.

In an effort to keep costs down, but still provide traveler information by phone, initial implementation of 511 phone service in the Monterey Bay Area will utilize existing phone systems to route 511 calls made in our region to the California Highway Information Network (CHIN). CHIN is an automated telephone system that gives roadway condition information (such as construction and chain control requirements) for all state highways in California. Callers are prompted to say or enter the number of the highway they would like information about and the CHIN system lists off all of the roadway conditions for that particular facility. (This information is also available online, and links will be provided on the 511 website.)

RTC and TAMC staff does not recommend any additional 511 phone service beyond CHIN at this time. Staff will monitor the need for a 511 phone service for future phases and stay abreast of technological advancements that may provide voice activation and response services at a more reasonable cost.

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND PUSH NOTIFICATIONS**

An important component of this plan is to provide ways to deliver and receive transportation information from users of the 511 service. During transportation emergencies, notifications can be pushed out to 511 eNews subscribers. Posting on agency Facebook and Twitter accounts will be used to drive traffic to information available on the 511 website. Twitter can also provide a public forum for receiving and transmitting corridor specific notifications and during transportation emergencies.
Chapter 3 – Website Structure and Design

The approach to implementing 511 traveler information services in the Monterey Bay Area is to provide a centralized, one-stop-shop for transportation information in each county. However, simply providing transportation information in a single website location is not enough to become the preferred “go-to” resource. Information on a website must be eminently findable, easily and quickly accessed and visually appealing. Consequently, the 511 websites proposed for the Monterey Bay Area will be designed to have a high degree of usability by travelers. This will be achieved through a number of strategies including providing content that is easy to locate, up-to-date, well-organized and aesthetically attractive. Mobile Responsive Design will allow elements of the website to change depending on the maximum screen size of the device being used. This will allow for viewing on phones and tablets as well as via traditional computers. Strategies to achieve and maintain good rankings in search engines so that people can easily find the site through web searches will be built into the site planning and design.

As proposed, 511 websites for the Monterey Bay Area are intended to meet the routine daily information needs of travelers and to ramp up and deliver a higher volume of service during emergency situations. Given this dual role, some features of the websites will be developed and turned on only during emergencies such as scrolling text announcement banners and special alert pages. Planning adequate server capacity will ensure that during such emergencies, websites remain live and are not overwhelmed by a surge of users seeking critical information simultaneously. Creating procedures for identifying and deploying the human resources needed to maintain the websites and keep them updated on an ongoing basis as well as the reinforcements who will be called in to respond in emergencies are another aspect of 511 website planning. Recent lessons learned from New York and New Jersey’s 511 services as well as examples from the Bay Area and Los Angeles are invaluable to 511 planning for both day to day and emergency conditions.

The proposal for delivering traveler information in our region is for the transportation agencies to implement a 511 service in their respective county utilizing a similar set of components and features and integrating 511 with other transportation information already available through their agency and rideshare program websites. The sites will provide content from both internal and external sources. Planning for each agency’s website will include: content development, site planning and design, plans for viewing the site on mobile devices, a strategy for sufficient hosting, storage and delivery capacity, and the human resources that will be required.
Web-based 511 programs for the Monterey Bay Area will be designed in accordance with the following attributes:

- Cost-effective: High benefit to cost ratio and utilizes existing resources
- Streamlined: 511 information architecture contains only pertinent components that can be easily and efficiently managed and operated
- User-friendly: Easy for users to find and understand information. High site ranking in search engine queries.
- Adaptable and scalable: Able to adapt and take advantage of new technology without having to significantly change the basic program structure/framework
- Easy to navigate across counties
- Integrate with social media such as Twitter feeds, Facebook alerts, etc...

**CONTENT DEVELOPMENT**

**Monterey County/Santa Cruz County**

A significant limitation of the existing Traffic Conditions page on the RTC Commute Solutions website is that it only provides links to resources. Additional clicks are needed to access information. Directly embedding QuickMap onto the page would make viewing traffic conditions immediately available to the user and allow them to interact with the information. Adding Google’s multimodal trip planner to the same 511 home page with the traffic map would allow the viewer immediate access to other travel options as they are checking out the traffic conditions. Both of these – QuickMap and the Google Trip Planner – are proposed to take central positions on the 511 Santa Cruz and 511 Monterey traveler information home pages.

Additionally, existing content from the current Commute Solutions and Commute Alternatives websites will be integrated with the new offerings to implement a fully multimodal 511 site in Santa Cruz County and Monterey County respectively. Further value to users will come from expanding content beyond those services offered by the RTC and TAMC to include information about other community transportation services and providers as well as emergency transportation information sources (See Chapter 2 for more information on Components).
**SITE DESIGN**

**Monterey County/Santa Cruz County**

Drawing heavily upon the finely-tuned layout and organization of several successful 511 traveler information websites and market research conducted during the Feasibility Study for our region, the layout of the website’s content and an outline of the navigation structure will be developed to guide the site design and technical work required to publish the 511 sites. Some user testing may be used to help inform 511 project team members about customer preferences. Strategies and tools for search engine optimization will be included in the design to ensure that the 511 service ranks at the top of the list in online search results and that this position is maintained.

**Santa Cruz County**

In 2011, the RTC launched two new agency websites – sccrtc.org and commutesolutions.org. Although they use different color palettes, the websites have a similar look and feel and both sites use WordPress, a robust, free, open source publishing platform that is actively maintained and upgraded. This platform allows for easy updating and administration and permits RTC staff members to add pages and update copy to keep the website content current. A framework that sits on top of WordPress as well as widgets and plugins are used to leverage and extend site functionality.

The sccrtc.org website provides information to the public regarding the RTC’s functions primarily as a planning and funding organization. The commutesolutions.org website reflects the RTC’s long-standing commitment to help people successfully use the existing transportation network efficiently by providing information about a variety of transportation options including carpooling, vanpooling, walking, biking and riding the bus. The redesigned Commute Solutions website now includes more than 50 pages of transportation resources.

Among the most important of these new pages is the Traffic Conditions page that brings together links to many real-time transportation resources that can help travelers make choices about when to travel, what route to take, or if a trip can be avoided altogether. Even though this page relies exclusively on links, it now ranks as the page most frequently accessed directly by users visiting the Commute Solutions website. Currently one quarter of the visitors to the Commute Solutions website are visiting the Traffic Conditions page generating 700 page views per month.

The 511 website will build upon the commutesolutions.org website and will continue to use the WordPress publishing platform. To create a website that allows pages to be viewed on a wide variety of devices (Mobile Responsive Design,) the latest version of WordPress that includes html5 will need to be installed along with some site redesign.
Monterey County

In 2012, new webpage templates were designed for the Transportation Agency website. The templates were built on a CSS platform which enables content to be viewed via mobile device (compatible with Android, iPhone and Blackberry). The Transportation Agency website is expected to be updated using the new templates in 2014. To ensure design consistency and minimize cost, the Monterey County 511 website will use the new Transportation Agency website templates. In addition to providing traveler information, the 511 Monterey website will include rideshare information and resources for Monterey County. Rideshare information for Monterey County will be adapted from the rideshare website currently managed by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments.

Usage

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

Predicting potential usage of a 511 Traveler Information website is somewhat challenging since this will be a new service for the region and we are one of the first California communities to approach implementing 511 by utilizing Caltrans Quickmap as the cornerstone for providing traffic information. Analytic tools installed on the site will continuously monitor volume and usage. Automated reporting systems will enable 511 team members to stay apprised of activity on the site. Performance targets will be established following the first 6 months of operation. Currently, there is significant unused capacity on the Commute Solutions website which utilizes less than 1/10th of the disk space allotted to it and 1/50th of the bandwidth available. (See Chapter 4 – Coordination and Operations, for a list of proposed performance measures.)

Mobile Strategies

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

According to the Pew Research Center, as of May 2013, 91% of US adults have a cell phone and more than half of these (56%) use their phone to go online. Add to these “mobile internet users”, another 60% of adults who access the internet via a tablet or eReader and it becomes clear that plans for delivering 511 must include optimizing the experience for mobile device users, the fastest growing segment of the internet market. Project staff recommends a two-fold approach -- using mobile responsive design to ensure that 511 website resources are easily viewed on mobile devices right now and consider developing apps in the future. The trend seems to be that apps are becoming less utilized as responsive design continues to increase.
Monterey County

The CSS platform that the 511 Monterey website will be built on enables content to adjust to mobile device viewing automatically. There will be no additional cost associated with providing mobile access as the templates that will be used for the 511 Monterey website have already been designed using a CSS platform.

HOSTING, STORAGE & DELIVERY

Santa Cruz County

Currently, the RTC uses a firm based in Houston, Texas to host its three websites and there are no plans to change this arrangement in the foreseeable future. The web host’s servers are 130% wind powered -- equivalent to taking 444 cars off the road each year. There are advantages to the hosting servers being located in another state. Emergencies specific to California conditions such as earthquakes and tsunamis are unlikely to affect the hosting operations in Texas. The RTC’s web host has a 99.9% uptime guarantee as well as 24/7 support. In addition to having backup generators available during power outages, regular backups to a different storage area are made in the event that the hardware on the hosting server fails so RTC doesn’t lose data. The agency’s local web support contractor is available to help handle after hour emergencies.

The agency has confirmed that the capacity of the server on which the Commute Solutions website is currently hosted can handle a significantly higher volume of traffic than it currently receives and is scalable based on demand. If, in the final planning stages, more overall resources are required, RTC’s hosting plan can be upgraded without additional coding or moving servers. Pages will be cached for site speed and hosting requirements.

Monterey

The Transportation Agency is considering the use of a cloud-based web hosting service that offers unlimited bandwidth and storage. Advantages to cloud-based hosting are that they are cost-effective, can handle spikes in use which is important in case of an emergency, and are not themselves susceptible to local emergency conditions. Currently the Transportation Agency uses a brick and mortar hosting firm located in Salinas, California. If the Transportation Agency stays with the current firm it may be necessary to increase the server capacity in order to accommodate increased user traffic and peaks in use during times of emergency.
PROcedures & Protocols

Santa Cruz County

Agency staff is already performing many of the functions that will be needed for managing the 511 service. That is part of what makes implementation of this project so cost effective. Not only are streamlined systems for updating information already in place, but there is no learning curve needed for using WordPress, the software platform upon which the 511 site will be built. Most of the day-to-day maintenance of the RTC’s websites is conducted by a web/social media team of three. In addition, a highly capable web local contractor provides technical support for the agency’s three websites when something is needed beyond the skill set of the staff.

Monterey County

Staff regularly updates the Transportation Agency website and provides traveler information reports online. Minimal additional staff time will be required to manage and maintain the 511 Monterey website. Initial content development of the 511 Monterey County website will require additional staff time. Once the 511 Monterey County website is up and running, portions of the website will be updated on a weekly basis with changing traveler information such as the “Cone Zone Report”, which details planned lane closures due to construction projects.
Chapter 4 – Coordination and Operations

Since a substantial portion of the 511 product will be generated from external resources, the success of implementing 511 in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties depends on maintaining strong relationships and effective communication between the transportation agencies and our respective partners and information providers. This chapter makes the case for how the 511 websites proposed for our region will fill a market niche that is currently unmet, provides a discussion of staffing and oversight, and the particular suitability of the RTC and TAMC to deliver this service. It also highlights the roles and responsibilities of partners, discusses recommended agreements, production and operations and proposes performance measures for 511.

COORDINATION

Market Demand

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

The market for traveler information services has grown over the past decade as more and more web based transportation information services have been developed. Real-time traffic condition information used to be the exclusive domain of motorists who had on board navigation systems installed in their vehicles and who paid for this subscription service. The proliferation of free and low-cost, web-based services and apps such as those offered by Google, Sigalert, Beat the Traffic, Waze, and Garmin OnDemand has tremendously increased access to this information. As mentioned previously, the market segment that the proposed 511 system will serve is travelers in the region who want to find a wide variety of transportation resources assembled in one place – not just a site limited to traffic information or about a single mode such as bicycling.

While the 511 brand will be new when it is rolled out in the Monterey Bay Area, in fact this brand is now already widely used and recognized throughout the country including the San Francisco Bay Area and Greater Sacramento regions. Customers will be residents, visitors, commuters, and travelers in the region. Within that group, the target market for this free service will be people who use computers, tablets and phones to access information on the internet. In recognition of the fact that not all travelers have access to this technology, maintaining existing personalized trip planning assistance offered by the
rideshare agencies is proposed as a way to ensure that everyone has access to traveler information.

While providers of traffic maps and other online transportation resources and apps might be characterized as competitors, in reality they are only offering a portion of the 511 information service being proposed. The most obvious strength of taking the comprehensive approach to transportation information is that there is definite value added by providing a single place for the customer to find a wide range of transportation resources. The challenge of this approach is that there are lots of content and information resources to keep fresh and up-to-date. This challenge will be mitigated by linking to other sites where possible so information will be kept up-to-date by providers.

Given the rapidly changing market conditions in terms of how people access information online, and via computers, tablets and phones, we will create a website that is responsive to current technology and highly adaptable to future developments. (For information about proposed strategies to market 511 in our region, see Chapter 5 – Marketing Strategies.)

**Agency History and Operations**

**Monterey County/Santa Cruz County**

The agencies that would be responsible for developing and launching 511 are the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County. These two Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) have had the primary responsibility for conducting long-range planning and funding for transportation in their respective counties. In addition, they offer motorist aid services such as the Freeway Service Patrol tow trucks and the yellow call boxes along the highways that can be used by stranded motorists.

The RTPAs are well established and well respected in the community having managed and delivered many highly visible and innovative projects in recent years. For the RTC in Santa Cruz County, these include the purchase of the rail corridor, the development of a sustainability framework for the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan and the construction of the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project. For TMC, recent noteworthy projects in Monterey County include the planning and construction of the US 101 interchange at San Juan Road, Prunedale Improvement Project, Highway 1-Salinas Road interchange, and securing funding for a passenger rail service extension to Monterey County. The addition of the 511 service would complement existing roles and services offered by the transportation agencies.
Santa Cruz County

The RTC has a long track record of providing transportation assistance services to the Santa Cruz County community including personalized trip planning for all modes and helping people find carpool and vanpool partners with whom they can share rides. For 34 years, RTC has helped people learn about their travel options and how to successfully navigate the transportation system. Personalized help under the Commute Solutions brand is provided via phone, email and at outreach events. While this has allowed the agency to deliver highly customized services, this method is quite labor intensive. Starting with the shift that moved carpool matching services to the web, the trend has continued to shift tools and services provided by rideshare agencies to an online environment. The RTC followed this trend when it converted its paper True Cost of Driving worksheet on a printed brochure to an interactive online calculator which is now frequently cited and used by people all over the country.

Online tools allow travelers greater self-serve access to transportation resources and tools and are available around the clock. The strategy for implementing 511 in Santa Cruz County is to further this trend by formally integrating traveler information with rideshare agency services creating a significantly stronger and more effective online resource for travelers. This strategy is expected to reduce Commute Solutions costs as staff resources can be applied to developing quality online services which have the potential to serve multiple people at the same time. Commute Solutions is committed to continued availability of personalized assistance for people who can’t access online resources.

Sustainability Goals

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

In addition to the obvious value that a 511 service would provide travelers in terms of improving mobility, it also helps to advance the transportation agencies sustainability goals. Requirements from Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 375 call for regions throughout California to reduce greenhouse gas (GhG) emissions from cars and light trucks. Making it easier for people to find out about how to access services by walking, biking, and/or transit will help reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled and in turn GhG produced. Regardless of the initial reason a traveler is drawn to the 511 website, every time they visit, they will be exposed to the range of travel choices available to them. Having the Google multimodal trip planning tool also readily available on the site can help take the mystery out of how to use alternative transportation modes, reducing anxiety about trying out a new way to get around.
Staffing and Oversight

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

Oversight of both the development and implementation of the 511 traveler information service would be conducted by the Executive Director of each transportation agency. Staff assigned to planning and web projects in each agency will manage the 511 service and serve on the 511 project teams. A reorganization of duties and responsibilities of RTC’s rideshare staff would result in no net increase in staffing after development and launch of the site is complete. Day to day management of the site will be conducted by transportation agency staff. A small technical consulting contract with a firm specializing in web design and programming will be needed to provide expertise beyond the skill set of agency staff assigned to the project.

Roles & Responsibilities of Partners

Monterey County/Santa Cruz County

Partnerships among public agencies and private partners are critical to a successful 511 implementation and sustainable operations. A principal relationship between the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTC and TMC) and Caltrans will continue to be fostered as the 511 service for both counties depends on the accuracy and reliability of Caltrans’ QuickMap. The list of partners and their roles are included in Table 1 and 2.

Table 1: Santa Cruz County Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission</td>
<td>Santa Cruz County 511 Traveler Information lead agency; share resources with TMC for development of 511 Traveler Information website; Rideshare Agency for Santa Cruz County; publisher of Guide to Specialized Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Agency for Monterey County</td>
<td>Monterey County 511 Traveler Information lead agency; share resources with RTC for development of 511 Traveler Information website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caltrans Headquarters</td>
<td>Provide QuickMap and CHIN; collect, manage and distribute transportation data through the Commercial Wholesale Web Portal; provide statewide perspective and coordinate alliance of all CA regional 511 services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td>Provide multimodal trip planner; provide basemap and traffic speed layer used in Caltrans QuickMap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments</td>
<td>Intelligent Transportation System Architecture; Rideshare Agency for Monterey County and provide some Transportation Demand Management programs for region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caltrans Districts 4 and 5</td>
<td>As Transportation Management Center operators for the region, provide construction, changeable message sign and camera data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Highway Patrol</td>
<td>Provide incident data for region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District</td>
<td>Provide fixed-route transit and paratransit service and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay Area 511/MTC</td>
<td>Provide use of online ridematching database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz County 911</td>
<td>Provide emergency information and response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz County Office of Emergency Services</td>
<td>Provide emergency response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz County 211</td>
<td>Provide information about specialized transportation and human service needs in emergencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz County Conference and Visitors Council</td>
<td>Provide visitors with travel and event information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2: Monterey County Partners

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<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Transportation Agency for Monterey County</td>
<td>Monterey County 511 Traveler Information lead agency; Share resources with RTC for development of 511 Traveler Information website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission</td>
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<td>Provide QuickMap and CHIN; Collect, manage, and distribute transportation data through the Commercial Wholesale Web Portal; Provide Statewide perspective and coordinate alliance of all CA regional 511 services</td>
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<td>Provide multimodal trip planner; Provide basemap and traffic speed layer used in Caltrans QuickMap</td>
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<td>California Highway Patrol</td>
<td>Provide incident data for region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monterey-Salinas Transit District</td>
<td>Provide fixed-route transit and paratransit service and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay Area 511</td>
<td>Provide use of online ridematching database</td>
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<th>Agency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau</td>
<td>Provide visitors with travel and event information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coordination with Council of San Benito County of Governments**

This 511 planning effort was coordinated with the Council of San Benito Governments (San Benito COG). San Benito COG was working on a related project to implement Google Transit in San Benito County which has been now been completed. Several meetings were held between the two project teams to exchange information and explore opportunities to collaborate. Trips between Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties and San Benito County can now be planned using Google’s multimodal trip planner, a planned feature of the 511 systems for Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties. The model selected for implementing 511 in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties by integrating Caltrans QuickMap and Google’s multimodal trip planner into existing agency websites could also be utilized by San Benito COG. In the event that San Benito COG is interested in pursuing this direction, both TAMC and RTC could share resources.

**OPERATIONS**

The 511 service will be produced by leveraging existing online transportation resources and assembling them in a coherent, easy to use and to access format available to travelers in our region. To those resources, new original content will be added as needed to fill in any gaps in the information provided by others. The integration of both internal and external content will be an ongoing responsibility of the RTPAs.

One benefit of this strategy is that for the most part, it takes advantage of resources already developed and maintained by other entities. This significantly cuts down on time it takes to develop and prepare content for the web and has a major impact on reducing costs both to launch and operate the site. The down side of this strategy is that much of the information that the RTPAs are displaying is material and services that they have permission to use, but don’t directly own or control. Consequently issues with accuracy or timeliness of updates will have to be coordinated with the content owner. This is another reason that maintaining strong, cooperative relationships with our partners will be critical to the success of the operation.

As we’ve seen over the two years that we’ve been working on the 511 feasibility study and implementation plan, this industry is very dynamic and new developments take place all the time. In light of this, there will no doubt be plenty of opportunities to enhance the
offerings of 511. It will be critically important for project staff to keep abreast of feedback from customers using the service as well as new developments and industry trends in order to assess which ones make sense for our region and to present enhancements for consideration by their respective boards.

While the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County will own the 511 website services developed for their respective counties, it may be important to solidify arrangements to use key components of partner sites such as Caltrans’ QuickMap and Google’s Trip Planner.

**Agreements & Protocols**

Although not required, it may be in the interest of RTC and TAMC, to establish Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) regarding data availability with external providers so that expectations are clearly outlined. This includes MOUs with Caltrans regarding the use of QuickMap for providing 511 web-based traffic conditions information for Santa Cruz County and Monterey County as well as 511 phone calls being routed to CHIN. Agreements between the transportation agencies and Google may also be desirable regarding use of Google’s multi-modal trip planner. Agreements with telecommunications carriers for routing 511 calls originating in our region to Caltrans’s CHIN system will be determined by Caltrans.

During times of emergency, coordination with emergency information providers will be crucial. Lessons learned from 511 service providers during Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy along the East Coast stress the importance of accurate and reliable information. Protocols will need to be set up between the transportation agencies and emergency response providers to determine the chain of command for providing emergency transportation information to the public. Internal business operations processes also need to be established so that the respective transportation agencies can deploy staff resources efficiently in response to an emergency.

**Performance Measures**

**Monterey County/Santa Cruz County**

System monitoring is a critical function for 511. It can help to direct resources more effectively, and can be useful when seeking funding to continue or expand 511 services. In addition, system monitoring is an effective tool for ensuring customer satisfaction. Through monitoring the accuracy and reliability of the 511 system, agencies can obtain feedback on the quality of their 511 service, and can respond to problems or issues as they arise. System monitoring is important to ensuring that customers receive a high quality product.

System monitoring can be divided into four primary categories: usage, reliability, accuracy and customer engagement.
**System usage:** Usage of 511 website services will be tracked and reported by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County. Usage information is valuable in marketing and outreach activities and for fine-tuning how information is organized and presented on the website. Web analytics can help gauge consumer response and engagement with services, and enable comparisons to similar systems. A list of potential statistics to monitor and track is shown below.

- **Website visits** - the total number of visits to the 511 website
- **Pageviews** – how many individual pages are visited
- **Peak daily visits and reason** – the days that the system received the highest amount of traffic and possible reasons for this influx (for example: transit strike)
- **Peak load** – the peak number of simultaneous visits. This measure can assist the agency with planning for and activating additional resources when peaks occur.
- **User agent** - the type of web browser, operating system, and device that a user is visiting the site from. This conveys which users are visiting from mobile devices vs. from standard computers.
- **Length of visit** – the average amount of time spent on the site per user
- **Keywords** – the keywords people are using to find the website in search engines
- **Top categories** – a breakdown of visits to the top categories of information such as: Traffic Conditions, Transit, Bicycling, Carpooling / Vanpooling, Employer Assistance, Weather, Airports, Paratransit and Other Language

*Given this new approach to implementing 511 and the wide number of variables that could affect initial usage, data will be collected and monitored during the first six months of operation. Following this launch period, data and statistics will be reviewed and analyzed and performance targets established.*

**System reliability:** System reliability is the second key component of system monitoring. It is measured by comparing the system availability with a pre-determined standard. The national 511 Coalition recommends that the 511 system be available 99.8% of the time (allowing for 17.5 hours of downtime annually). The RTC and TAMC will use this standard for system reliability.

**System accuracy:** The purpose of system accuracy monitoring is to ensure that the 511 information provided to users matches actual conditions. This is especially true in terms of the traffic conditions displayed on Caltrans Quickmap. RTC and TAMC will effectively communicate the clear path for users to let our agencies, Google or Caltrans know when
issues arise with data and information provided through 511. Reported issues with data will be tracked in order to identify trends.

**Customer engagement:** Both users and non-users of 511 are excellent sources of information about how well the system is meeting people’s needs. Online surveys and comments submitted through the 511 website provide a way to get feedback from users that can be used to improve the service. Broader community based surveys will help assess the degree to which there is an awareness of the services offered through 511. It can also help identify where people go to get transportation information now and provide insights about potential new 511 advertising and marketing venues that could be utilized to reach more people.
Chapter 5 – Marketing Strategies

Promoting awareness of the availability of 511 for traveler information in the Monterey Bay region is an integral part of implementing and launching a 511 service. Considerations for marketing traveler information services include:

- Branding both phone and web-based tools
- Co-branding 511 with current traveler information resources such as the Commute Solutions/Commute Alternatives websites as well as existing transportation agency sites
- Partnering with local media to promote 511 as traveler information resource
- High impact, low-cost strategies that will provide sustained exposure to 511
- Utilizing a network of public and private partners to provide several channels for awareness
- Cost of marketing strategies both to launch and ongoing
- Promoting 511 as a free public service with no cost to users and broadly accessible to all segments of the population
- **Highlighting safe ways to access 511 and prevent distracted driving**

This section includes lessons learned from other areas’ marketing and outreach activities for their traveler information systems. It also includes strategies for co-branding phone and web traveler information tools, as well as preliminary recommendations for media coordination, involving partners to help market 511 in the Monterey Bay Area, and potential cost considerations to implement a marketing plan. Market research conducted as part of the 511 Feasibility Study is also factored into these recommendations.

**Identity and Co-Branding**

A focused outreach and promotional effort will establish 511 as the ‘brand’ for traveler information in Monterey Bay Area. While 511 is now nationally recognized as the place to go for traveler information, there is some variation between 511 systems in terms of services offered and delivery methods. Effective marketing will help guide users to access the specific services available to travelers in our region.
To support agencies in their 511 marketing efforts, American Association of State Highway Transportation Official’s (AASHTO) 511 Coalition developed a national 511 logo. This logo and corresponding design standards has helped to create an awareness of and a consistent look and feel for 511 services around the country (Figure 6). A version of this logo, used with or without a tag line, creates a brand awareness for 511 that is easily recognizable. The logo trademark is registered to AASHTO, but is available for deploying agencies to use. Both Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties will create 511 logos that represent their respective county.

![511 Logo](image)

**Figure 6: 511 Logo**

Branding 511 will need to take into account how the new brand will interact with existing traveler information resources in the region namely those offered by the rideshare agencies Commute Solutions in Santa Cruz County and Commute Alternatives in Monterey County. One option would be for the rideshare agencies to continue delivering the personalized services under the existing rideshare brands. For example, Commute Solutions’ Transportation HelpDesk would be used to refer to the personalized assistance available. Information offered in a more self-serve manner online would be part of the 511 brand.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION AND AWARENESS**

The most significant lesson learned from agencies that developed 511 services is that the agencies that did not market the availability of this information to the public often showed low usage of the service. Based in part on a review of other 511 efforts, as well as an understanding of the goals and objectives in promoting 511, several potential marketing strategies have been identified.
RTC/TAMC’s marketing efforts will focus on the following key areas:

- 511 Launch
- Media Relations
- Other Outreach Strategies
- Promotional Materials and Messaging
- Partner Co-promotion

Activities that will be most likely to reach a large number of potential users at a reasonable cost will be utilized. The following subsections provide additional detail of recommended marketing strategies within these focus areas.

**511 Launch**

A 511 launch provides an excellent opportunity for a focused marketing campaign. An event to launch the 511 system will be the first public notification that RTC and TAMC are making this service available to travelers. Several regions have had a very formal launch event while other regions have opted to issue press releases to announce the availability of 511 phone and/or web based tools. Providing media with information about 511 in advance of the launch date will help to generate mentions and potentially articles about traveler information services in the Monterey Bay Area. Media materials should include the following:

- Press release
- Fact Sheet and/or Rack Card on 511 Traveler Information Service
- FAQ’s and tips for using the system

The formal launch will take place after a soft launch and beta testing have been conducted.

**Media Relations**

Media, including radio, television, and online and print publications, will be RTC and TAMC’s most powerful public awareness tool for 511. RTC and TAMC will need to actively coordinate with and educate its media partners about the 511 system and its benefits. Building upon successful media relations that both agencies already have will help to keep 511 in the news long after the launch event.
Media Contacts/511 Media Database

511 staff will review the transportation agencies’ respective contact and distribution lists of print, online and broadcast media and update as needed. Public information officers for transportation related agencies and staffs of RTC, TMC, and Caltrans should also be included on the 511 media contact list along with:

- AM and FM Radio stations including Spanish language stations
- TV news stations (weather and traffic reporters)
- Newspapers (major dailies, as well as weekly and/or regional publications)
- Online news services
- Social media communities and networks
- Special interest magazines and publications, with an emphasis on tourism
- Private sector traffic information services
- AAA California
- California Highway Patrol
- City Police Departments
- Trucking Associations
- Cities and County Public Works Departments
- Transit agencies

Ongoing Media Releases

RTC and TMC will have an opportunity to promote 511 with each media release issued. Transportation or weather advisories, major construction projects, enhancements to the traveler information service and others should include a short description of 511 and encourage travelers to use these resources for up-to-date information. Potential media releases include:

- In advance of major holidays and high-volume driving weekends (Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas) long-term construction projects, and emergency news releases about incidents or weather impacting roadways and travel.
- A ‘trigger’ event to generate news coverage including 511 milestones (5,000 web visits, or at the 6 month and one year system launch anniversaries).
• ‘Triggers’ can also include announcements of major enhancements to the information or services provided.

**Roadway Signs**

Many regions install roadway signs to promote 511, typically in conjunction with use of a tag line such as “Dial 511 for Travel Info”. Since 511 service in our area will primarily be web rather than phone based, installing new highway signs in our region is a significant expense and is not being recommended at this time.

Signs with the phone numbers of local Rideshare Agencies are already installed in several high visibility locations along the state highways in our region to promote carpooling. It may be possible to repurpose these existing roadsigns by adding a new 511 logo and website url to the existing rideshare message and sign. The agencies will explore this option with Caltrans.

The Bay Area’s Transportation Management Center is responsible for posting messages to be displayed and maintaining the infrastructure that supports the Changeable Message Signs (CMS) in Santa Cruz County. Due to this relationship, when new 511 signs were installed onto the Changeable Message Signs throughout the Bay Area, the CMS signs in Santa Cruz County were included in this installation. While the 511 logo is the color scheme and design used in the Bay Area, it helps reinforce the 511 brand rather than detract from it. For that reason, plans are to keep the 511 signs that are currently installed on Changeable Message Signs in Santa Cruz County.

**Radio Advertising**

Paid radio spots have been demonstrated as an effective 511 outreach tool in several states, including Iowa, Kansas, the Bay Area, and others. However, paid radio ads come at a high price. Radio spots that last 10, 15, or 20 seconds during peak drive times on popular radio stations are at a premium because they have the potential to reach several thousand drivers while they are en-route. For this reason, it is not recommended that paid advertising be used for RTC/TAMC 511 promotional efforts. The exception would be if contracting for some paid spots could be used as leverage to get a substantial number of additional donated spots by a radio station.

**Public Service Announcements (PSAs)**

PSAs are an alternative to paid advertising that is relatively low-cost to develop and that do not require payment for airing. Most commercial radio stations have an annual target for the number of PSAs they run. To help raise awareness following the initial launch of 511, a 511 PSA could be developed by RTC and TAMC and distributed to radio (AM and FM) contacts throughout the region. Follow-ups with the radio stations will help encourage them to play the PSAs.
Leveraged Advertising

Partnering with other transportation agencies, facilities, and providers can be a cost-effective way to increase awareness of 511. Examples include having the 511 logo and call to action printed on transit schedules and bus stops, or working with event managers to include a “511” message in event programs and media releases. Both exterior and interior advertising on transit buses will be explored.

Promotional Material

RTC and TAMC’s marketing and outreach will be supported by collateral pieces that are intended to be: multi-purpose, cost-efficient, widely distributed and have a long shelf-life. The following are examples of promotional materials that can be prepared to promote recognition of 511 in Monterey Bay Area. They would be provided to media and partner agencies as a comprehensive guide to traveler information resources available through the system. These materials can also be distributed to Welcome Centers, airports, rental car companies, hotels, attractions, restaurants, and other venues.

- Fact Sheet and/or Rack Card on 511 Traveler Information Service – provide an overview of the services, how to access information, what information is available.
- Frequently Asked Questions – provide answers to typical questions about 511 services and tips for using the system

Messaging about ways to safely access 511 will be included in outreach and marketing efforts with the express intent to prevent distracted driving. Recommendations such as the driver viewing the traffic map before starting their trip to find out the current conditions, having a passenger access 511 on a phone or mobile device or simply pulling over and stopping their vehicle in order to consult 511 will all be promoted. Providing users with the radio stations that broadcast traffic reports during peak commute times will also be among the resources provided on 511.

The National 511 Coalition has made various logo and written materials available to deployers to support their 511 marketing and outreach efforts and to foster a national identity for 511 services across the country. Whenever possible, RTC and TAMC will make use of 511 Coalition materials to help offset design and production costs.

Partner Co-Promotion

Promoting 511 in the Monterey Bay region will require establishing a network of partners, both public and private, to help get the word out about these traveler information resources. These partners can help promote 511 by including press release info and features about 511 in their newsletters (both print versions as well as on web and social media sites) and by providing links to 511 on their web sites. Combined with coverage in print and broadcast media, promoting 511 through other partners will provide increased exposure on a regional level.
Organizations that will be requested to add links to 511 to their websites and social media venues include:

- Conference and visitor organizations
- Chamber and business organizations
- Trucking associations
- City/County governments
- College and universities
- 211 services
- Transit operators
- Environmental and conservation organizations
- Transportation providers
- Businesses (add to their address and map info)
- Media

**MARKETING COSTS**

Levels of investment in marketing 511 vary substantially. Based on the specific strategies proposed for implementation, marketing costs for each agency’s 511 traveler information service are estimated at $15,000 for the launch year and $10,000/year for ongoing operations. These identify both direct costs and staff time. Although some of the costs are one-time start up costs, ongoing media releases, roadside signage, and co-promotion with partners are long-term strategies that typically are found to be the most cost-effective, and which will be utilized by RTC and TAMC.
Chapter 6 – Financial and Schedule Information

Cost Estimates

511 traveler information web services can be implemented, operated and maintained for the Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties extremely cost-effectively. The ability to utilize the Caltrans QuickMap for real-time traffic condition information as well as the economy of scale of integrating 511 with agency websites and rideshare services will allow 511 to be developed for our region for a minimal cost compared to most existing systems. In addition, since Caltrans will be setting up a 511 phone service directed to CHIN for regions in California without a current service, RTC and TAMC will not require funding for this phone service.

Startup costs as well as ongoing operations and maintenance expenses for both 511 Santa Cruz County and 511 Monterey County are listed in Table 3.

The total start up costs for RTC will be approximately $92,030 with annual operations and maintenance of approximately $48,030. Start-up costs include the equivalent of approximately a half-time employee for one year as well as consultant fees on the order of $18,000. Annual maintenance and operation costs include the equivalent of approximately one-quarter employee for one year as well as tech support of approximately $10,000. Major efficiencies are anticipated by utilizing information resources and tools previously developed and delivered by RTC’s Commute Solutions program.

Start up costs for TAMC will be higher at approximately $124,000 as they will be creating a new website both for their agency and to house 511. Start-up costs include approximately a three-quarter time employee for one year as well as consultant fees on the order of $28,000. Annual operations and maintenance for TAMC will be approximately $48,030. These costs include equivalent of approximately one-quarter employee for one year as well as tech support of approximately $10,000.
RTC start up costs will be directed primarily towards:

- Working with Caltrans to embed QuickMap
- Working with Google to embed the multimodal trip planner
- Working with emergency providers to develop a protocol for providing information to public during times of emergency
- Creating the information architecture, designing and testing the website
- Developing new content as needed to expand current multimodal information to include other transportation services in region.
- Launching and marketing the new service

### Table 3: DRAFT Cost Estimate for Deploying a 511 Traveler Information Service and Ongoing Operations and Maintenance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>511 Santa Cruz County</th>
<th>511 Monterey County</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start Up Costs for RTC</td>
<td>Annual Operation &amp; Maintenance Costs for RTC</td>
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<td>Project Management</td>
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<td>Phone - CHIN</td>
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<td>Web - Main</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Content development</td>
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<td>$57,000**</td>
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<td>- User testing and surveys</td>
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<td>- Architecture and Navigation</td>
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<td>- Site design, devt &amp; programming</td>
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<td>- Site management/maintenance</td>
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<td>- Ongoing tech support</td>
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<td>- Emergency alerts</td>
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<td>- Hosting &amp; domain registration</td>
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<td>- Translation*</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$92,030</strong></td>
<td><strong>$48,030</strong></td>
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* Google Translator
Currently, the Commute Solutions site has multimodal information related primarily to RTC programs. The multimodal information will be expanded to include a more comprehensive picture of multimodal resources throughout Santa Cruz County.

TAMC start up costs will be directed primarily towards:

- Working with Caltrans to embed QuickMap
- Working with Google to embed the multimodal trip planner
- Working with emergency providers to develop a protocol for providing information to public during times of emergency
- Creating the information architecture, designing and testing the website
- Developing content for multimodal information in region
- Launching and marketing the new service

RTC and TAMC operations and maintenance costs will primarily be for:

- updating content
- marketing and maintaining high ranking in search engines
- assessing performance
- rapidly disseminating customized information in emergencies
- serving as a liaison with partners
- working with contractor and managing tech support contract
- watching trends in technology and traveler information and proposing service enhancements as opportunities arise

**POTENTIAL REVENUE**

Implementing a 511 service will require financial and staff resource commitments to implement, operate and maintain this service. A variety of funding strategies using federal, state and local funds have been used to implement 511 systems throughout the country. In California, Service Authority for Freeway Emergency (SAFE) funds have been
used by a number of regional 511 programs. SAFE funds are local revenues generated by an annual $1 vehicle registration fee that can be used to provide motorist assistance.

There are currently funds in the RTC Commute Solutions program to fund $54,000 of the startup costs for 511 Santa Cruz County. Additional start up costs ($38,030) and operations and maintenance costs ($48,030/year) are available from RTC SAFE funds. Funds for 511 Monterey County for implementation ($124,030) and annual operations and maintenance ($48,030) are available from TAMC SAFE. Efficiencies and economies of scale will be realized by using the same staff and consultants who manage the agencies’ websites (and rideshare services for RTC).

PHASING PLAN

Given the current economic climate and rapid changes in technology, only an initial phase is being recommended at this time. The initial phase of the project will be to develop a 511 website which will serve as a comprehensive traveler information resource that includes features as outlined Table 4 of this chapter and in Chapter 2 – Components. The 511 sites for both agencies will be optimized to provide access via mobile devices. The Regional Transportation Agencies (RTC and TAMC) will partner with Caltrans to provide information through real-time traffic maps (QuickMap) which will be embedded on the 511 website for each agency. Also as part of this initial phase, RTC and TAMC will work with Caltrans as necessary to direct 511 phone calls to Caltrans Highway Information Network (CHIN) for road conditions information.

Future phases will be dictated by user need and funding availability. Possible projects include:

- Consider developing a service that would allow subscribers to get real-time conditions pushed out to them via text or email on routes that they travel regularly
- Work with local transit providers to provide real-time arrival and departure information at stops and stations via mobile devices
- Consider developing mobile apps in order to enhance use of the 511 websites or features of the website such as encouraging the use of alternative transportation or ridesharing
- Consider developing an interactive voice response (IVR) phone system that directs calls to various locations including transit, Bay Area 511.org, CHIN, rideshare, etc. if need is substantiated

Potential future phases are not being recommended at this time.
### Table 4: 511 Program Features and Phasing

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<th>511 Program Features</th>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Future Consideration</th>
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<td>Transit Information</td>
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<td>Real-Time Transit Application</td>
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### 511 Program Features

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<td>Rideshare Information</td>
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<td>Bicycling and Pedestrian Information</td>
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### 511 Program Features

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### 511 Program Features

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<td>California Highway Information Network (CHIN)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interactive Voice Response Phone System</td>
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DEPLOYMENT SCHEDULE

The schedules in Tables 5 and 6 show deployment of 511 Santa Cruz by November 2014 and 511 Monterey County by May 2015. TAMC will need to design a new agency website that will house 511 Monterey County and thus the public launch date is 6 months later than that of 511 Santa Cruz.

### Table 5: Santa Cruz County 511 Traveler Information Deployment Schedule

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Table 6: Monterey County 511 Traveler Information Deployment Schedule

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Chapter 7 – Conclusion

There are a multitude of benefits to providing a centralized web-based location for 511 traveler information services for Santa Cruz County and Monterey County. The transportation system in the Monterey Bay Area experiences significant congestion and environmental concerns necessitate the need to promote sustainable transportation alternatives. 511 traveler information can play a significant role in making better use of our existing transportation infrastructure and addressing environmental impacts of transportation.

511 traveler information services can improve traffic flow and increase safety by providing real time traffic condition information so people can be informed and avoid congested areas. Traveler frustration due to lack of reliability in the transportation system from experiencing unexpected delays can also be reduced when given the ability to become informed on the level of traffic congestion.

As necessitated by environmental concerns of greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and Senate Bill 375 requirements, the proposed 511 traveler information service will help the public become informed of their full range of multimodal transportation options to promote more sustainable choices. Available information will include: what mode(s) of travel are available, how long the trip will take, what traffic conditions are currently like, and identifying alternative routes that might be available.

Having a single “go to” place in each county for transportation programs and resources, would be of major value to both travelers and the region’s transportation service providers. While there are many transportation services in the region, they are scattered throughout the internet. RTC and TAMC are the logical choices for developing and operating centralized “one-stop” traveler information services. Both agencies already successfully operate motorist aid services in their respective counties in the form of the Freeway Service Patrol and Call Box Programs. In addition, the RTC also delivers rideshare assistance services to the community. The addition of a 511 Traveler Information service would complement these existing traveler services and integrate well with the wide range of transportation information already provided on the regional transportation agency websites.

Emergencies in our region are inevitable. Between earthquakes, floods, fires and tsunamis, we live in a very active area. Not to mention the unpredictability that climate change is having on established weather patterns. So the question is not if there will be an emergency that affects transportation, but rather when. Add to the equation that we rely on just a few major routes to carry a huge amount of traffic within and through our region, and it becomes clear how important good information about transportation conditions becomes in an emergency. Coordination with law enforcement and emergency
responders will be necessary to deliver their information through 511. Emergency features include scrolling banners, twitter feeds and special alert pages. Providing a “go to” place for transportation during emergencies will take some of the call load off of 911 dispatchers. In addition, having 511 in place, will provide 911 personnel with a place to refer callers who don’t need first-responder assistance, but who simply want timely information.

The economy of our area will benefit from a centralized 511 “one-stop” location. Tourists will know where to go to get the most reliable, real time traffic conditions information and the many alternative choices for getting around the Monterey Bay region. Employers, in striving to become green businesses or reach sustainability goals, can point their employees to 511 resources for sustainable transportation choices. Truckers will have accurate and reliable information on traffic delays to plan their pickup and delivery times.

The cost of offering 511 Traveler Information Services through a partnership with Caltrans for use of the QuickMap traffic conditions map and Google for use of its multimodal trip planner will be extremely low. The availability of Caltrans’ QuickMap for traffic conditions and Google trip planner for multimodal trip planning will save the transportation agencies in our region millions of dollars that transportation agencies in other areas of California have had to spend on developing these tools. In addition, an economy of scale will be realized by utilizing staff that is already assigned to managing the agency’s online and social media presence, and in Santa Cruz to delivering rideshare assistance services. Also, in the case of RTC, a wealth of content about alternative transportation that was recently developed for the Rideshare agency website can be integrated into the new 511 site design.

Given the numerous benefits of providing 511 traveler information services for our region and the low cost of implementation, RTC and TAMC have a remarkable opportunity to offer traveler information services to the public. A web-based 511 traveler information service can be quickly developed and deployed in Santa Cruz County and in Monterey County by the respective transportation planning agencies, RTC and TAMC, to offer Monterey Bay Area travelers access to a full range of 511 traveler information resources.