September 2006

# RideNow!
# Evaluation Draft Report

## Alameda County
## Congestion Management Agency


Submitted by:

Nelson|Nygaard
consulting associates

in association with
RideNow, Inc.

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# Executive Summary

Dynamic ridesharing is a new alternative to traditional ride-matching programs. It differs from traditional car pools in that it is designed as an "instant match" by maximizing flexibility and accommodating last minute requests for ride matches. Rather than commuters forming traditional regular carpools, they request ride matches only on days when they want to share a ride. The major benefits are that it requires minimal advance planning and accommodates changing travel times reducing the barriers to traditional carpooling.

This dynamic ridesharing pilot project, known as RideNow[1], was a focused test of dynamic ridesharing at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station. The concept, created by Dan Kirshner, originally with the Environmental Defense Fund and now with RideNow Inc., was funded by a grant from the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) and implemented by the ACCMA and its partners BART, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Caltrans, the cities of Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore and San Ramon, and the Hacienda Business Park. RideNow was designed to convert solo drivers into carpoolers by offering special incentives and by retaining as much as possible the flexibility and convenience of solo driving. The goal was to free up parking spaces and increase transit use at the Dublin/Pleasanton station, where there is more demand for parking than supply. The two parking lots at this station are full by 8:35 am on weekdays.[2]

Designed by RideNow! Inc., the RideNow pilot project is an automated system that enabled BART patrons to request car pool partners just minutes before they leave home in the morning, or while on the BART train returning home in the evening. It provides both web and automated telephone ("Interactive Voice Response") access for users. Dynamic ridesharing attempts to match riders within a short time frame providing "instant matches".

The RideNow pilot project was intended to:

- Establish if dynamic ridesharing can provide a viable new travel option.
- Test the effectiveness of the program from a technical, administrative, marketing, operational and cost perspective.
- Assess the level of interest and usage in the program and evaluate its benefits and limitations.
- Determine the feasibility and applicability of expanding the program beyond the duration of the pilot project as well as to other locations within Alameda County or the San Francisco Bay region.

[1] The name RideNow is used by permission by RideNow! Inc.
[2] The Pleasanton lot fills up by 7:40 am and the Dublin lot fills by 8:35 am. According to BART Staff, February 6, 2004.

## Project Organization and Schedule

The Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA) is the lead agency administering the RideNow demonstration project in partnership with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, BART, Caltrans, the cities of Dublin, Livermore, Pleasanton and San Ramon, and the Hacienda Business Park. The project is funded through a Value Pricing Pilot Program federal aid grant from the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) with a 20 percent local match from the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA).

To provide advice and guidance in the development and evaluation of RideNow, a Task Force was established consisting of representatives from participating agencies and other interested stakeholders. The Task Force met regularly throughout the study process.

The RideNow pilot project was originally scheduled to "go live" in January 2005 and operate in the testing phase for six months. However due to a series of unforeseen delays associated with this new and innovative project, full operation did not begin until November 15, 2005. RideNow operated for a period of six months and terminated on May 19, 2006.

## Marketing RideNow

Marketing for RideNow took place in three distinct phases. Phase I was initiated in Fall 2004, when a marketing plan was developed. The focus of this first phase was to implement the program, enhance the software, define incentives, and develop name recognition for the program. It was in this phase that the Task Force was granted permission to use the RideNow name by RideNow! Inc. Phase II included initial strategies to "get the word out" about the program and begin the recruitment of program participants. Phase III marketing was a recruitment drive. After testing of the initial limited version of the program and proving that it worked, an effort was made to enhance participation in the RideNow program. A new marketing plan was prepared to address the goal to increase participation in the program by existing registrants and to achieve at least 100 active program participants. The focus of this marketing "push" included media information, additional incentives, signage and flyers at the BART station and an on-site recruitment and information drive.

Even though the focus of RideNow was a "high tech" approach, it was confusing for many participants to fully understand the program rules and regulations. It was determined that the marketing effort should focus on personalizing the information, demonstrating to potential registrants how the program is utilized to make it less complicated, and thus more likely to be used. Orientations were conducted with small groups of participants at the BART station. Feedback suggests this was a successful strategy for personalizing outreach.

The majority of marketing strategies were not focused on advertising and media outreach. Instead the concentration was on hands-on, face-to-face interaction. Being such a

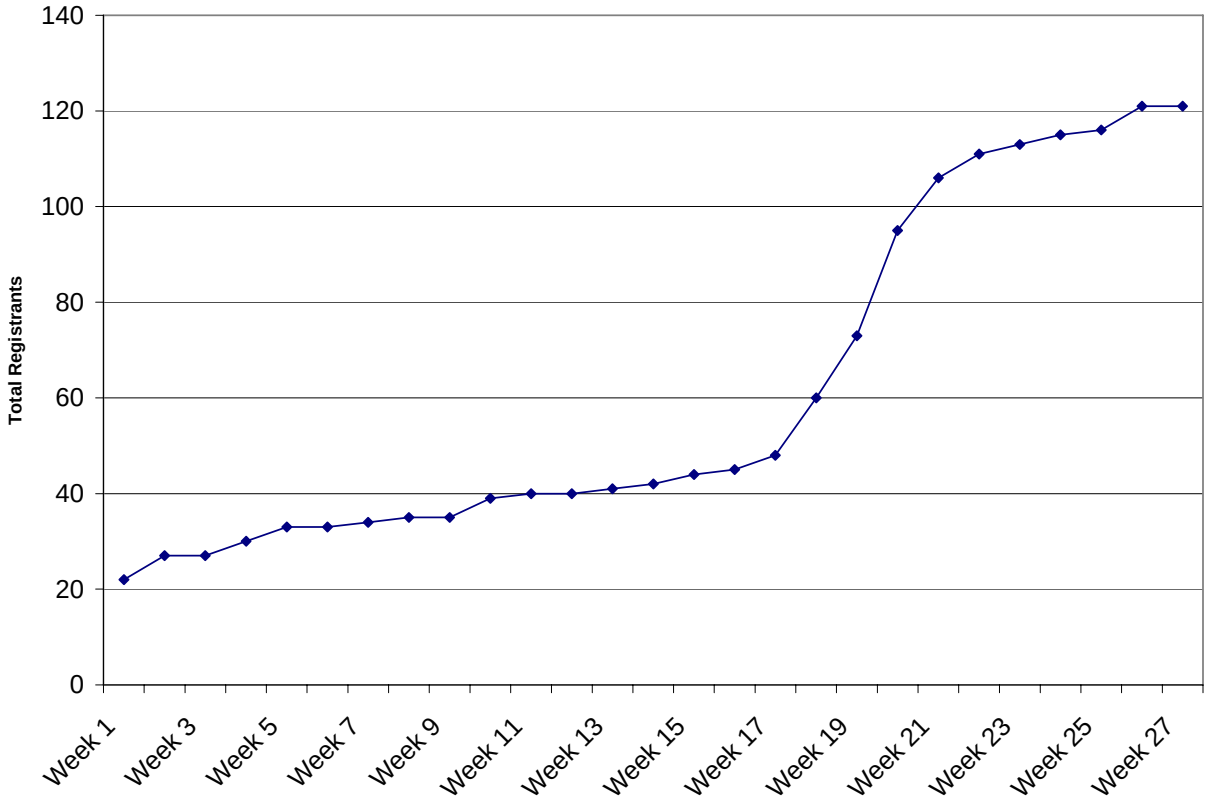
technology-focused program, it would seem that outreach and marketing strategies could have been handled entirely by the RideNow website and emails. However, the personal "intervention" made the marketing effort as successful as it was. Transportation agencies around the world have been experimenting with travel training and face-to-face information sharing, often called high-touch marketing, where the focus is to personalize the experience and participation as much as possible. Rather than blanketing communities with transportation billboards or putting advertisements on radio stations, personalized travel information has become the strategy of choice.

## Program Outcomes

A total of 244 people expressed interest in RideNow between October 2004 and May 19, 2006 when the program terminated. Although this was a substantial number of inquiries about the program during this 18-month period, only 121 (50%) actually went online and registered with the program. The remaining 123 people either did not follow through to register online, or were ineligible to participate in RideNow because they did not live in one of the four Tri-Valley cities. Based on anecdotal evidence from those inquires from potentially eligible participants, it is presumed that many did not become RideNow participants due to (1) the long timeframe between RideNow's initial publicity in December 2004 and RideNow implementation in November 2005 or (2) after learning about the program, they determined they did not want to participate.

Figure ES-1 shows participation during the program implementation phase in greater detail. When the program launched on November 15, 2005, 22 participants were already registered with RideNow and by the first week of April 2006, the number of program participants rose to over 100.

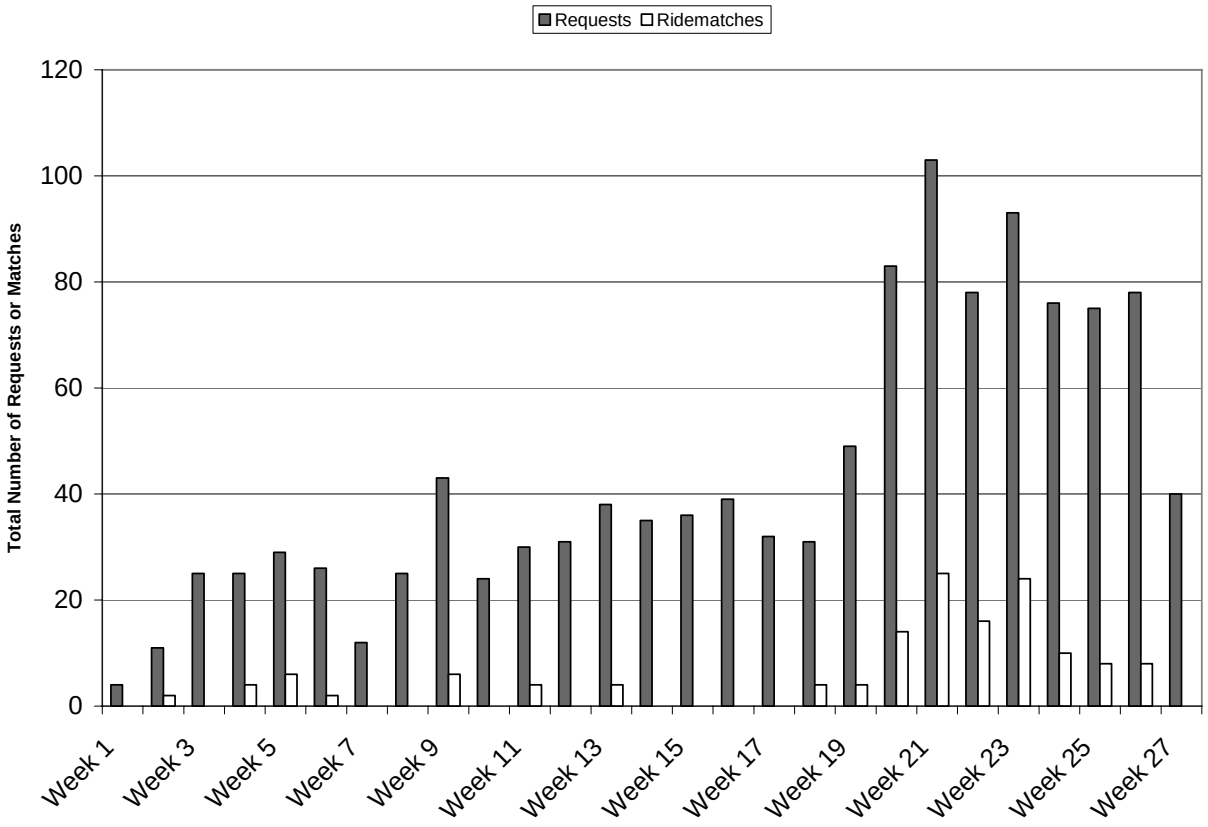
## Figure ES-1 Registrants by Week (November 2005 – May 2006)




A ride match occurred when two or more participants were successfully matched and rode to or from the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station together. A total of 141 ride matches out of 1,170 ride requests (12%) were made during the six-month pilot program. This ratio increased after the March marketing campaign because there were more participants in the program and more participants requested matches.

At the launch of the program in November 2005, few ride matches were made due to the low volume of requests resulting from a low number of participants. Prior to the marketing campaign in March 2006, approximately an average of six matches were made per week with some weeks having no ride matches. With the large increases in the number of participants and ride requests occurring in March and April, there was a corresponding increase in the number of ride matches. Twenty-five ride matches were made during the first week of April 16 were made the following week and 24 ride matches made during the last week of the month. The number of ride matches peaked during these three weeks in April (See Figure ES-2).

**Figure ES-2 Ride Match Requests and Ride Matches (November 2005 – May 2006)**




## Participant/Customer Satisfaction

Participant input is used to understand the attractiveness and limitations of RideNow from the participants' perspectives and to obtain practical suggestions to improve the program. A "Before Survey" was conducted with participants at the time of enrollment, and an "After Survey" was conducted at the completion of the demonstration phase. Key findings from these surveys are summarized below.

- Preferential parking was the most important reason for enrolling in the program. Other major reasons cited for joining the program include an interest in a more convenient way to access the BART station followed by a desire to improve air quality by reducing vehicle trips and interest in an innovative program.

- The majority of survey respondents heard about RideNow through three channels; flyers at the station (banner signs hanging at the station, a digital display sign at the platform or windshield flyers), BARTtimes and by seeing the kiosk at the BART station.

- While participants were generally satisfied with RideNow, they made several specific suggestions for improving it including starting the program before 7:00 am, being notified about ridematches further in advance, allowing afternoon ridematch requests to be made from office computers (rather than solely from cell phones while on board a BART train) and upgrading the telephone system.

- Most RideNow participants are between the ages of 25 and 59, have an income of $75,000 or more, work in the management, business, computer, and financial industries, and are men.

## Program Costs

Total program costs are presented in Figure ES-3 and are broken down into three categories: capital and hardware investments, one-time start-up costs, and program operating costs. Hardware investments for the RideNow pilot program included computer hardware, the display kiosk at the station and the installation of a streetlight. One-time start-up costs included the development of an implementation plan, a marketing plan, and an operations plan. It also includes $5,000 in BART tickets that were used as incentives. The operational costs represent costs that are for day-to-day operations of the program and include project oversight from agency and consultant staff. The operational costs are representative of what it would cost to run the program once it was established.

### Figure ES-3 RideNow Budget

| Category | Cost | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Capital and Hardware Investments* | $8,000 | 3% |
| One-Time Start-Up Costs** | $62,000 | 29% |
| Six Months of Operations | $143,000 | 67% |
| Total | $213,000 | 100% |

*Capital and hardware include all one-time infrastructure costs, which are computers, a kiosk, and a streetlight.
**One-time start-up costs include $5,000 in BART ticket incentives, background research, and developing an implementation, marketing, and operations plan.

Figure ES-4 compares costs to key program statistics. The data is presented in two ways. First the number of total registrants, ridematch requests, and ridematches are compared to total costs. The same program statistics are then compared to on-going operating costs without the capital and start-up costs included. This cost would be more representative of what it would cost to operate an established program.

## Figure ES-4 Total and Ongoing Costs and Key Statistics

| | |
|---|---|
| Total Costs | $213,000 |
| Ongoing Operating Costs | $143,000 |
| | |
| Total Registrants | 121 |
| Total Ridematch Requests | 1170 |
| Total Ridematches * | 141 |
| | |
| Total Cost/Registrant | $1,760.33 |
| Total Cost/Ridematch Request | $182.05 |
| Total Cost/Ridematch | $1,510.64 |
| | |
| Ongoing Cost/Registrant | $1,181.82 |
| Ongoing Cost/Ridematch Request | $122.22 |
| Ongoing Cost/Ridematch * | $1,014.18 |

*This represents 141 individuals who were matched with one another.

# Challenges in Implementing a Complex Program

There were a number of challenges encountered in implementing a complex project that involves multi-jurisdictions and consultants. The three most difficult obstacles were:

- **Parking**. While preferential parking provided a strong incentive for participants, it was also a major obstacle. The parking challenges were many and varied; from securing dedicated RideNow parking spaces at the BART station, to regulation by BART Police, to explaining to participants about parking rules and regulations.
- **Kiosk Installation**. Initially, the RideNow computer and ridematch display was going to be placed near the assigned RideNow parking spaces in a shelter provided on-site by BART. However, when this option provided to be unworkable, an alternate solution was developed to install an ATM-like kiosk in the station. Placement of the RideNow kiosk at the BART station required coordination between several different divisions within BART and with outside vendors and took four additional months to implement.
- **Guaranteed ride home program.** The Guaranteed ride home (GRH) program provided a taxi ride home for participants who requested, but were unable to make a match for the evening commute. It required taxicab pick–up at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station and was difficult to implement. BART was unable to allow RideNow participant pick up at the station, and the City of Pleasanton was unable to allow RideNow pick-up on their streets. An alternative site was identified just beyond the station and located within the City of Dublin's jurisdiction. This site

required installation of a streetlight, necessitating City Council approval and coordination with PG&E, BART and the City.

Getting the RideNow program "up and running" required overcoming implementation issues that resulted in delays and additional costs to the project. Resolving these issues required a close working relationship with the Task Force and its members to overcome these obstacles and to develop creative solutions. The primary implementation issue had to with do with working with multi-jurisdictions to implement a new, innovative program that required flexibility and relaxed rules as well as confusion about the parking program in general.

## Findings and Recommendations

The RideNow pilot project provided BART patrons with a new and flexible option for traveling between home and the Dublin\Pleasanton BART station. Based on feedback from participants and the participating agencies, the program did have value for people who desire to carpool, but have complex commutes that do not permit participation in more traditional carpool programs. However, not enough information is known about how many people would be attracted to this type of flexible program compared to other ridesharing or other programs designed to get people out of their single occupant vehicles or if the program would be cost effective. Both agencies and program participants believe that if the program were continued it would need to be substantially simplified in terms program operations including the phone system, the amount of information that needs to be transferred to participants when they register, and the parking rules and requirements. They also feel that increased marketing activities to target audiences, and more time to build volume would be needed.

Recommendations to improve a future test of dynamic ridesharing and to help implement and market other alternative transportation services are summarized below. For a more detailed review of major program findings and recommendations, please refer to Chapter 5.

- **Simplify the RideNow Program**. Even though participants were generally satisfied with RideNow, there are several program features that were difficult for users to understand and need to be refined to be more user-friendly. Some specific suggestions include improvements to the phone system and website, parking policies and requirements, and amount of information to be transferred to participants. Other suggestions are to allow participants to request afternoon matches while at their workplace, and extend RideNow hours in the morning from 6am and extend to 9am.
- **Improve Cost Effectiveness of Dynamic Ridesharing Programs.** While it is important to distinguish this program from casual carpooling and regular carpool programs, there is value in packaging and marketing this program in conjunction with other ridesharing services. By incorporating a dynamic ridesharing element like RideNow into the toolbox of ridesharing and TDM services it could gain credibility and visibility in the ridesharing community and address broader transportation goals

by providing flexible option to traditional and non-traditional carpoolers and supporting traditional carpooling programs.

- **Streamline the Process When Implementing a Complex Project.** It is recommended that routine polices and procedures be streamlined to offer greater flexibility to help "jump start" these types of projects. This could mean relaxing some of the rules for issuing permits, bypassing routine approval processes, or streamlining efforts to "fast track" purchasing or installing hardware. In the case of RideNow, successful and timely implementation was challenging because there was more than one agency involved in the implementation that created institutional barriers.
- **Expand dynamic ridesharing programs to regions outside Alameda County and the Bay Area if they contribute to congestion in the Bay Area.** If a regional ridesharing agency were to implement a dynamic ridesharing program like RideNow, it is recommended that the program consider including regions outside Alameda County and the Bay Area that contribute to congestion in Alameda County and the Bay Area. In the case of RideNow, approximately one-quarter of the people who expressed interest in the RideNow program were ineligible because they did not live in one of the Tri-Valley cities. Many of them lived in the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys in cities like Tracy and Stockton and commuted to the Bay Area. Given this interest and the growing bedroom communities in these areas, it is valuable to explore the benefits and drawbacks of extending the program to serve communities outside the Bay Area.

- **Develop a Personalized Marketing Strategy for Transportation Alternatives.** Consistent with the recommendation to incorporate RideNow into a broader package of ridesharing alternatives, future marketing strategies should be developed with a more holistic approach addressing a broad array of transportation alternatives. Marketing and outreach strategies that emphasized the personalized touch were the most effective in attracting interest in the program. This approach called high-touch marketing is gaining popularity in the transportation industry and may have application as a strategy for other programs in the Bay Area.

# Chapter 1. Introduction

Dynamic ridesharing provides a new alternative to traditional ride-matching programs. It differs from traditional car pools in that it is designed as an "instant match" by maximizing flexibility and accommodating last minute requests for ride matches. Rather than commuters forming traditional regular carpools, dynamic ridesharing participants request ride matches only on days when they want to share a ride. The major benefits are that it requires minimal advance planning and accommodates changing travel times reducing the barriers to traditional carpooling.

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Designed by RideNow! Inc., the RideNow pilot project is an automated system that enabled BART patrons to request car pool partners just minutes before they leave home in the morning, or while on the BART train returning home in the evening. It provided both web and automated telephone ("Interactive Voice Response") access for users. RideNow matched riders within a short time frame providing 'instant matches". For more details on how the program works, please refer to Chapter 2.

The RideNow pilot project was intended to:

- Establish if dynamic ridesharing can provide a viable new travel option.
- Test the effectiveness of the program from a technical, administrative, marketing cost and operational perspective.
- Assess the level of interest and usage in the program and evaluate its benefits and limitations.

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[2] The Pleasanton lot fills up by 7:40 am and the Dublin lot fills by 8:35 am. According to BART Staff, February 6, 2004.

- Determine the feasibility and applicability of expanding the program beyond the duration of the pilot project as well as to other locations within Alameda County or the San Francisco Bay region.

## Lessons Learned from Other Similar Dynamic Ridesharing Programs

In developing the RideNow program, it was valuable to learn how other dynamic ridesharing programs work to gain first hand knowledge about their experiences in attracting and retaining program participants, developing effective marketing strategies and other important program findings. The lessons learned from four other dynamic ridesharing demonstration projects—Seattle Smart Traveler (University of WA), Bellevue Smart Traveler (WA), Smart Traveler, Los Angeles (CA), and Washington DC-based NuRide – informed the implementation of the RideNow pilot project. A brief description of each program and the number of participants and matches is presented in the Appendix.

Even though the four dynamic ridesharing programs were unique, there were valuable lessons learned that were applicable to the RideNow program. These are summarized below:

- People have complex and erratic schedules requiring flexible carpooling and dynamic ridesharing arrangements
- Targeted marketing is important including printed instructions to explain program requirements and procedures
- Financial incentives effectively attract dynamic ridesharing participants
- Participants have concerns about sharing rides with strangers. To overcome this issue, one suggestion was to pre-screen participants, while others felt this could inhibit participation.
- A guaranteed ride home program was a necessary element to ensure participants if no ride matches, they could still get a ride home.
- There needs to be a certain "volume level" for matching to be effective. When this doesn't occur, people get discouraged further inhibiting the chance for successful matches.
- Participants were more willing to offer rides and less willing to be a rideshare passenger.

These valuable lessons were considered when developing and implementing the RideNow project.

## Project Organization and Schedule

The Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA) was the lead agency administering the RideNow pilot project in partnership with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, BART, Caltrans, the cities of Dublin, Livermore, Pleasanton and San Ramon, and the Hacienda Business Park. The project was funded by a grant from the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) awarded to the ACCMA, who provided the local match. RideNow! Inc. provided the dynamic ridesharing software.

To provide advice and guidance in the development and evaluation of RideNow, a Task Force was established consisting of representatives from participating agencies and other interested stakeholders. A list of Task Force members and the agencies they represent is presented in the Appendix. The Task Force met regularly throughout the study process.

The project was initiated in September 2004. During the initial phase of the project, detailed implementation policies and procedures were developed including an operation, technical and marketing plan. Other implementation steps included installing a kiosk at the station, arranging for designated parking spaces at the BART station, developing a back-up guaranteed ride home program, and coordinating all the logistics with the CMA's partner agencies.

The RideNow pilot project was originally scheduled to "go live" in January 2005 and operate in the testing phase for six months. However due to a series of unforeseen delays associated with this new and innovative project, full operation did not begin until November 15, 2005. RideNow operated for a period of six months and terminated on May 19, 2006.

## Report Organization

This report is an evaluation of the RideNow demonstration project. Following this introductory chapter the report consists of four other chapters.

- Chapter 2 describes in detail how the program works and the changes that were made during the six-month demonstration to respond to participant feedback.
- Chapter 3 evaluates the project from an administrative perspective providing feedback from the participating governmental agencies.
- Chapter 4 evaluates the effectiveness of the software, marketing strategies, costs and funding, and presents information on program usage including the number of participants, ride match requests, ride matches and other relevant data. The findings from two user surveys are also presented in this chapter.
- Chapter 5 summarizes the key findings from the RideNow pilot project and makes recommendations for future ridesharing programs.

# Chapter 2. Program Description

RideNow is a web based ridematching program that matches drivers and riders traveling between Pleasanton, Dublin, Livermore or San Ramon and the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station. To qualify for the RideNow pilot program, interested persons must live in one of the four Tri-Valley "test cities" and have a cell phone. A detailed description of how the program works is the subject of this chapter.

## Initial Program Setup and Guidelines

### Registration

The first step for persons interested in the RideNow pilot program was to register online at an identified RideNow! website. Once at the website, the "register here" button requested basic ride information requesting participants to:

1. Choose a preferred start location. The location could be either an exact home address or cross streets (nearby intersection).

2. Specify ride preference as driver, rider, or both. Drivers were requested to provide license plate information and the number of seats in their car, although this information was not required.

3. Enter a cell phone number and assign themselves a personal identification number (PIN). Access to a cell phone was a program requirement, allowing participants to make afternoon ridematch requests and providing a means for "matched" drivers and riders contact each other. The cell phone number and PIN were used to log onto the website and phone system.

4. Choose a notification preference. Participants could receive their ridematch information via cell phone call, text message, email, or any combination thereof. The message informed participants if they were matched and how to contact their match partner.

Once the registration was complete, participants were asked to attend a short orientation session at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station. Although participants were encouraged to attend the orientation before they used the program, there was no way to prevent participants from using the program once the online registration was complete.

## Orientation

Orientations were held on the concourse level of the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station during the evening commute. They were scheduled after the train arrived at the station to make it convenient for participants to attend the orientation on the way home from work. At the orientation, participants received the following information:[1]

1. RideNow orientation sheet describing how to use the program
2. RideNow parking placard allowing the participant to park in one of the ten reserved RideNow parking spaces on the Pleasanton side of the station
3. Three (3) taxi vouchers for the Guaranteed Ride Home part of the program
4. RideNow "Before" Survey[2]
5. An incentive ticket for registering and attending the orientation

The purpose of the orientation was to provide a face-to-face overview of the program and answer questions. Before receiving the RideNow incentive ticket, taxi vouchers, and parking placard, participants were required to complete the "before" survey, write down their placard number, and verify they received the BART incentive ticket.

For participants not able to attend the orientations at the station, phone orientations were available on an individual basis during normal business hours. Materials were mailed to the participant once the phone orientation had been completed.

## Morning Match Requests

In the morning, the RideNow program operated from 7:00 am to 8:00 am. To make a morning request, participants logged on to the RideNow website or called into the phone system using a local telephone number on the morning of their request or the prior evening. Participants were requested to state the time they would be leaving from their starting location. They could specify any time period between 7:00 am and 8:00 am in five-minute increments. Up to 15 minutes before their scheduled departure time, the RideNow system contacted the participant and announced if they had been matched with a partner. Participants who stated they could either drive or ride, were selected to be a driver or rider based on the preferences of their match partner. If both match partners specify "both", the driver and rider designations were assigned randomly.

**Matched in the morning:**

[1] A sample Orientation sheet, the RideNow parking placard and the taxi vouchers are shown in Appendix B
[2] For details on the Before Survey, please see Customer/Participant Satisfaction section of Chapter 4.

- Driver – The RideNow system contacted the driver and specified the rider's name, pick-up location, and phone number. The driver and rider typically contacted each other by phone to verify their meeting location. The driver then drove to the meeting location and picked-up the rider (their ridematch partner). The driver was entitled to park in one of the reserved RideNow parking spaces located on the Pleasanton side of the station. One parking credit was subtracted from the driver's account (Parking credits are discussed later in this chapter).
- Rider – The RideNow system contacted the rider and specified the name of the driver and their phone number. The rider proceeded to go to the specified pick-up location and waited for their driver to arrive.

**NOT matched in the morning:**

- Driver – If a participant requested to be a driver and was not matched, then he/she traveled to the BART station on his/her own. By offering to give a ride, the driver was allowed to use one of the reserved RideNow parking spaces. One parking credit was subtracted from their account.
- Rider – If a participant requested to be a rider and was not matched, then the rider found his or her own way to the station. If the rider chose to drive to the station, the rider may not use a RideNow parking space.

## Evening Requests

The RideNow program was available during the evening commute from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. In the evening, the only way participants could make a ride match request was with their cell phones while riding BART. To make a request, participants dialed into the phone system using one of the two designated RideNow telephone numbers. The RideNow system asked which BART station they were approaching on the Dublin/Pleasanton line. Based on the next station they were approaching, the program determined the exact train they were on and the time they would arrive at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station. The participant also specified if they wanted to be a driver or a rider. Once at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station, the participant went to the RideNow kiosk and checked to see their match status. Drivers received an additional parking credit each time they made an afternoon request.

**Matched in the afternoon:**

- Driver and Rider – The kiosk displayed the match pair with the name of the driver and rider and their phone numbers. The kiosk was also the designated place for matched participants to meet to complete the ridematch. The driver drops off the rider at their specified location. The driver receives an additional parking credit for offering a ride.

**NOT matched in the afternoon:**

- Driver –If not matched, the kiosk displayed the driver's name and phone number and thanked them for offering a ride and that they did not have a ridematch. The driver went home as usual. The driver also received a parking credit for attempting to make a ridematch.
- Rider –If not matched, the kiosk displayed the rider's name and phone number and informed the rider that they did not have a ridematch. The rider was asked to wait 15 additional minutes for the next train to arrive.
  - If the rider was not matched on the second arriving train AND the rider used RideNow to travel to the station in the morning, the rider was eligible to receive a guaranteed ride home. To redeem the guaranteed ride home, the rider called the designated taxi company listed on the voucher, and informed them they were a RideNow participant. The rider waited for the cab to arrive on Scarlett Court on the Dublin side of the station. The rider filled out a voucher (provided at the orientation), kept the bottom copy, and provided the top two copies to the taxi driver.
  - If the rider was not matched on the second arriving train but did not use the program to get to the station in the morning, the rider must find their own ride home. They were not eligible for a guaranteed ride home.

### Parking Credits

Every participant registered with RideNow started with three (3) parking credits. Every time a participant made a morning ride request to be a driver, one parking credit was subtracted. The RideNow program assumed that the driver used one of the reserved RideNow parking spaces even if the participant was not matched because the space was made available to the participant.

Parking credits were earned by offering to be a driver in the afternoon. Every time a participant made an afternoon request to be a driver, one credit was added to their parking account. No parking credits were subtracted or added for requesting to be a rider.

## Program Changes in Response to Participant Feedback

Based on the results of "before" survey and informal feedback from RideNow participants, several changes were made over the course of the six month pilot to respond to participant preferences.

### Extending Program Hours

Many participants were unable to use the program in the mornings due to the limited hours of 7:00 am to 8:00 am. The "before" survey and anecdotal information received at the orientations revealed that many people accessed the BART station after 8:00 am. As a result, program hours were extended in the morning by one hour, until 9:00 am. The

extension allowed more people to use the program and provided more flexibility for participants.

In addition to extending morning hours, evening hours were extended by one hour, from 7:00 pm. 8:00 pm. Even though the "before" survey, revealed that many participants do not arrive at the station after 7:00 pm, the extension increased program flexibility allowing participants to arrive at the station later in the evening and still use RideNow. Morning and evening hours were extended three months into the pilot program.

## Afternoon Rider Request

An emerging pattern revealed a series of afternoon ridematches that were not successfully completed. Drivers informed RideNow staff that some riders were not showing up at the RideNow kiosk in the afternoons. This was because riders were not waiting an additional 15 minutes for the next train to arrive. This probably occurred because it was inconvenient for them to wait or they did not understand that they were supposed to wait and they found another ride home. Based on low guaranteed ride home usage and participant comments, the requirement for riders to wait for an additional train for a possible ridematch was eliminated three months into the pilot project.

## Website Registration Information

Changes were made to the participant registration form on the RideNow website. Initially only the registrant's cell phone number and pickup location were required. As a web based program, most RideNow announcements and notifications were sent via email. Without participants email addresses, contacting participants about orientations and program use and changes became increasingly difficult and time consuming, especially with an increasing number of registrants. Without the participant's home address, RideNow staff was unable to send materials such as the BART incentive ticket or the RideNow parking placard through the U.S. mail. Full name and home (or work) address, and email address became required fields for registration four months into the program.

## Kiosk Information Change

RideNow participants expressed concerns that their personal information was being displayed to the general public on the kiosk at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station. Participants making afternoon requests had their name and cell phone number displayed on the kiosk and this information was available for any BART rider to see. The system was changed so only the last four digits of phone numbers were displayed for participants who were not successfully matched. The full phone number continued to be displayed for successfully matched participants in case the driver or rider needed to contact their match partner.

## Parking Credits

The parking credit system was confusing to many participants. The RideNow system was programmed to subtract a parking credit every time a driver made a morning request. It

automatically assumed that the driver would use a reserved RideNow parking space whether they were matched or not. In practice however, many RideNow drivers claimed that when they were not matched with a rider, they chose to park in a regular parking space rather than in a reserved RideNow parking space or they found some other way to get to the BART station. Numerous calls and emails were received from participants who wanted parking credits added back into their accounts because they did not use the reserved space. To respond to participants, an option was added to allow drivers to re-credit one parking credit to their account on a morning when the participant offered to be a driver. If a driver did not use a reserved space, the participant was able to log onto the RideNow system that day at work and add a credit to their account.

## "Do Not Match" List

Based on participant feedback, a pattern of unsuccessful ridematches was occurring. In many cases, the RideNow computer system successfully matched a driver and rider but either the driver or the rider would not show at the specified pick up location. As a result, a "do not match" list feature was added to the program. If a driver or rider experienced a situation in which their partner did not show up at the specified time and location, then they could choose not to be matched with that person.

# Chapter 3. Administrative Evaluation

This chapter evaluates administrative aspects of the RideNow pilot project. It presents the benefits and challenges of the pilot project and summarizes the implementation issues encountered in implementing a complex project that involves multi-jurisdictions and consultants. The administrative evaluation is based on interviews with staff from the participating agencies and the consultant team observations. The last section of this chapter is devoted to parking because it was a major issue during the six-month demonstration.

## Program Benefits

The RideNow program was considered beneficial to the ridesharing community because it offered another choice for BART commuters who have few options for getting to the Dublin/Pleasanton station besides driving alone. It was noted that it is valuable for BART patrons to recognize that BART is trying to improve station access and is using all available means for doing so. It was noted that while the pilot program demonstrated its value as an alternative for getting to the BART station, it was not given enough time to succeed especially because the aggressive marketing campaign did not occur until the last two months of the demonstration.

It was felt that RideNow demonstrated that people are willing to take a risk and try something different, especially if it means they can get preferential parking at the station. This is particularly important now that BART will be introducing parking charges at the station. Staff from one of the participating cities stated that people might be more willing to participate in the program after the parking charges go into effect.

Even though most agency representatives believed the program has merit and could be a valuable addition to the ridesharing toolbox, they all stressed the importance of simplifying it so it would be easier for commuters to understand and administrators to explain. Another concern was that the program has the potential for being confused with other established carpool programs that result in long term carpool partner matches rather than instant matches. It was recommended that future versions of the RideNow program be branded or marketed differently to distinguish it from these established carpool programs.

## Major Challenges

Parking was a major obstacle during the six-month demonstration period. The parking challenges were many and varied; from securing dedicated RideNow parking spaces at the BART station, to regulation by BART Police, to explaining to participants about parking credits. It was suggested by one agency that a technological approach, such as a SMART parking program may be appropriate to address the complicated parking situation not only for RideNow, but as an overall parking strategy at several BART stations. Because parking

is such a complex issue and was an overwhelming challenge with RideNow, a separate section on parking is presented at the end of this chapter.

Unlike most ridesharing programs, RideNow marketing and recruitment focused on residential location rather than employers. This was challenging because there are no "tried and true" marketing strategies to target people at the home end, which was further complicated by the program being difficult to explain in short, easy sound bites. The marketing activities that were most effective were face-to-face interactions, which are labor intensive, time consuming, and expensive to maintain. A more complete discussion of marketing strategies and their effectiveness is found in Chapter 4.

The lack of technological support for addressing day-to-day problems associated with the program software was a challenge. Even though the software worked well overall, there were some minor glitches that could not be easily identified or remedied. There was no dedicated staff to "trouble shoot" the software on a "real time" basis. As a demonstration project, one of the objectives was to respond to participant feedback by refining policies and procedures early on during the six-month trial period. It was difficult to make minor revisions to the software in response to participant feedback without readily available technological support.

Another challenge was the "false starts" in launching the RideNow program. Marketing activities were initiated in December 2004 with a scheduled launch for March 2005. However, due to implementation issues, the RideNow program did not begin operations in March 2005 as planned and started eight months later in November 2005. As a result, people who initially expressed interest in the program may have lost interest and chose not to participate in November 2005 when the program actually got underway. Program delays were also challenging for BART, the ACCMA (sponsoring agency) and the company managing RideNow.

## Implementation Issues

Getting the RideNow program "up and running" required overcoming implementation issues that resulted in delays and additional costs to the project. Resolving these issues required a close working relationship with the Task Force and its members to overcome these obstacles and to develop creative solutions. The primary implementation issue had to with do with working with multi-jurisdictions to implement a new, innovative program that required flexibility and streamlined processes as well as confusion about the parking program in general.

While it is recognized that it can be challenging to implement a "high tech" innovative and complex project with multi-jurisdictional involvement, agency representatives noted that government rules and regulations need to be more flexible under these special project circumstances. If there was more flexibility and procedures could be streamlined, then RideNow might have been implemented in a timelier and less expensive manner. The long lead time of almost one year from the time the initial steps were taken to obtain permits and install the kiosk, to program launch, meant a loss of momentum, and loss of

participant interest. Three primary examples of how implementation of the project was delayed are described below and include kiosk installation, the guaranteed ride home program, and parking.

## Kiosk Installation

Initially, the RideNow computer and ridematch display was going to be placed near the assigned RideNow parking spaces in a shelter provided on-site by BART. The shelter needed to be substantively renovated to protect the computer from vandalism and inclement weather. The cost and time to renovate the existing shelter proved to be more than the budget and schedule could permit. The Task Force developed an alternate solution of installing an ATM-like kiosk in the station. Placement of the RideNow kiosk at the BART station, which needed both DSL connection and electrical hook-up, required coordination between several different divisions within BART and with outside vendors. This was further complicated by BART union rules and regulations. The amount of time it took to coordinate all of the logistical complexities was faster than renovating the shelter, but still took four additional months to implement.

## Help Desk

To help in the administration of the RideNow pilot program, a "Help Desk" was established to provide live, personal telephone assistance to answer questions about the program or report any problems. The Help Desk was intended to provide "hands on" assistance to program participants during weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. To familiarize Help Desk personnel understand the "nuts and bolts" of the program, supervising staff attended RideNow meetings and a training session was conducted with Help Desk staff prior to the program launch. Each call was documented by completing a customer service form that requested basic information such as the date and time, and the nature of the call. During the six-month pilot program, only three customer service call forms were received from Help Desk staff. Due to the complexity of the program and perhaps the face-to-face orientations conducted by Nelson\Nygaard, the consultant selected to set up, operate and evaluate the program, program participants chose to call Nelson\Nygaard rather than the Help Desk. As the consultants administering the operations, Nelson\Nygaard was better equipped to address difficult questions especially the complex issues surrounding parking credits and other nuances of the program.

## Guaranteed Ride Home

The Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program, which required taxicab pick–up at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station, proved to be difficult to implement and delayed the project by eight months. Even though there are designated locations for taxis to queue at the station, the RideNow program was unable to use the established taxi services to allow participants to take a taxi on a first come first served basis if a rider was not matched with a driver in the evening. The CMA was required to have signed agreements with participating taxi companies for administrative and liability reasons (vouchers were used because the CMA was unable to reimburse directly for taxi rides). It was not possible in

the short time frame available to the study for the CMA to sign contracts with each taxi company providing service at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station, nor was it guaranteed that the taxi companies would agree to enter into an agreement with the CMA if approached. BART was unable to allow RideNow participant pick up on site because of existing policies with the taxi companies at the station and because of not wanting to promote the perception of queue jumping if one taxi cab company with a CMA contract was able to jump the taxi queue to pick up a RideNow participant. The City of Pleasanton was unable to allow RideNow pick-up on their streets because of established policies with taxi companies in taxi overflow locations and potential interference with bus operations. Ultimately, an alternative site was identified just beyond the station and located within the City of Dublin's jurisdiction. This site was not well lit creating potential security concerns. The solution was to install a streetlight, which required City Council approval and coordination with PG&E, BART and the City for installation. All of these details were coordinated by the ACCMA and delayed project implementation.

## Parking

Preferential parking was an important benefit for RideNow participants. The "before" survey revealed that the most important reason was for joining the program was "preferred parking" with 35% of the responses. Parking enforcement and parking issues became an increasingly important and complex issue during the demonstration especially with increased participation.

### Parking Setup

At the beginning of the pilot program, BART allotted ten parking spaces for RideNow participants. The parking spaces were located in the carpool lot on the Pleasanton side of the Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station. To denote the parking spaces, three RideNow parking signs were mounted on the normal carpool parking signs. The RideNow parking signs displayed the RideNow logo, the text "Park Here", as well as the valid hours and days of the week, and the website address.

To use one of the RideNow spaces in the morning, a participant was required to make a morning request to be a "driver" or "both", either a driver or a rider. Regardless of whether a match was made in the morning, drivers were notified that they could use one of the reserved RideNow parking spaces. Participants who chose "both" were allowed to park in a RideNow parking space if they were matched as a driver only or if they were not matched at all. When a participant was informed that they were allowed to use a RideNow parking space, one parking credit was subtracted from their parking credit account. All participants started with three parking credits. Once a participant used all their credits, he/she could no longer park in a reserved RideNow parking space unless additional credits were earned by requesting to be a driver in the afternoon.

### Parking Challenges

When the program launched in November 2005, program usage was low and very few cars were eligible to park in the reserved parking spaces. However, RideNow staff

received feedback from participants that the reserved RideNow parking spaces were sometimes full. This meant that RideNow participants who were eligible to park in these spaces were unable to find a space. Not knowing what to do and the regular lot being filled up, participants either chose to park in the regular carpool lot or drove home and found another means to access the station. As a result, in the early part of the pilot, there was a parking ticket issued to a participant who parked in the wrong lot.

Another issue was that "Carpool to BART" users parked in the reserved RideNow parking spaces. While this was in violation of BART parking regulations, BART police informed RideNow staff that the RideNow parking signs were unenforceable due to confusion with the regular carpool parking signs. To correct this situation and allow parking enforcement in the reserved parking spaces, RideNow staff purchased and posted new parking signs in accordance with BART Police specifications. The new signs displayed the RideNow logo, the text "Parking Permit Required", and the valid program hours and days. To further clarify the location of the RideNow parking spaces, BART staff added arrows to the parking signs showing drivers exactly which spaces were reserved for RideNow.

In late March 2006 when the volume of RideNow participants increased threefold, RideNow staff received comments from participants who were unable to park in the RideNow parking spaces because these spaces were occupied. Some participants began parking in the regular carpool spaces, which resulted in issuance of two parking tickets. BART police were aware of this problem. It was assumed by RideNow staff that "Carpool to BART" participants were parking in the RideNow parking spaces. To educate carpool users about valid parking spaces for Carpoolers and RideNow participants, RideNow staff monitored the parking spaces on two separate days in April 2006 from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. All RideNow participants were notified of the monitoring effort. Only one regular carpooler was observed trying to park in the RideNow section and was asked to find another parking space. RideNow staff recorded the RideNow parking placard numbers of all participants parked in the spaces. A total of three vehicles over the two days were parked in the RideNow spaces without making a RideNow request in the morning. The participants who erroneously parked in these spaces were reminded of the rules and asked not to park in the reserved spaces without making a ride request in the morning. Despite monitoring the parking lot and informing BART police of ongoing issues with the parking, comments continued to be received from participants about the spaces being fully occupied. According to the RideNow program statistics, program usage never exceeded the number of ten parking spaces allotted to the program. As a result, it is not known exactly why spaces were occupied, but it was probably a combination of program misuse by participants and others parking illegally in RideNow spaces.

### Parking Enforcement

Despite increased enforcement of the parking spaces, BART police did not have the proper tools to be able to effectively enforce parking and specifically target participants or others misusing the program. All participants who attended a RideNow orientation received a RideNow parking placard. This is the only item that BART police could check to determine if a driver was allowed to park in the RideNow parking spaces. BART police

had no access to the daily ridematch requests that was needed to determine parking eligibility. As a result, there was some misuse by participants who did not make a morning ridematch and parked in these spaces anyway. BART police had difficulty in understanding the complex aspect of the parking program and did not have access to whether a participant had parking credits.

According to BART Police, they were unsure what to look for when policing the RideNow parking spaces. They were uncertain if two people should be leaving the vehicle as required in the Carpool program or if there were other requirements. Since they were unclear about the program rules, BART Police simply assumed cars were eligible to park in the RideNow parking area provided they displayed the RideNow placard.

While BART Police and the Community Service Officers (CSOs) were provided information about RideNow, many felt the details were not adequately explained to them nor were they provided written information. One police officer suggested that a good venue would have been through regular monthly meetings held between BART Police, CSOs and the Parking Program staff. Another suggestion to improve parking enforcement was to require participants to provide license plate numbers that could then be used to generate a list of eligible parkers on a daily basis. The list could be sent via fax to BART police who would then verify license plates against the official list. While this may have been a good strategy for parking enforcement, the Task Force felt that participants may be reluctant to give their license plate numbers and in the early stages of the program, BART police and CSOs did not have enough staff to monitor RideNow parking at this level. The issue of parking and parking enforcement was a major challenge with RideNow, and while there is no easy solution, an inter-departmental approach during the planning and design phase might have minimized these issues.

# Chapter 4. Program Evaluation

The first section of this chapter presents a technical evaluation of the RideNow demonstration project followed by an evaluation of the marketing program and a discussion of program costs. The final section of the chapter presents the program outcomes including program usage and participant feedback.

## Technical Evaluation

The evaluation begins with a description of the program software followed by a discussion of how it operated during the pilot and its overall effectiveness. Based on the consulting team experience with the software and participant feedback, areas for improving the software for future use of the program are then identified.

### Description of the Software

The RideNow pilot program was designed to be interactive with participants. The program software uses web-based and telephone-based systems to allow participants to find carpool partners on a "real-time" basis. Both the web pages and the telephone system access a standard database system (MySQL). Communication among the web, telephone, and database systems occurs over standard network (local-area or wide-area/Internet) connections.

The RideNow database contains user information from the "Basic Ride Info" page on the website and information on each ridematch request. Periodically the ridematch "engine" (the computer algorithms that match drivers and passengers) queries the database for current ridematch requests, and places into the database the ridematch results that the engine produces. The program notifies participants up to 15 minutes before their scheduled leave time to inform them of their match status. Ridematch results are accessible through the web pages and are also sent to participant via email, phone message, or text message.

The ridematch engine is very flexible, and accounts for geographic information, including the locations of freeway onramps, the number of seats available in a passenger car, and whether users have a "window" in which they can arrive or leave work (plus or minus 5 minutes). The ridematch engine also takes into account where each participant lives and will only match participants who live close to each other.

The web page system accesses, via standard Internet connections, a geocoding service to provide the latitude and longitude of address or intersection locations, and a mapping service so that users can verify that their location is properly identified.

## Software Effectiveness

Overall, the software worked well by successfully performing its intended functions as described above. The RideNow program was interactive and enabled participants to access the program in the morning either via the website or phone. It provided flexibility with morning departure times by allowing participants to choose (in five minute increments) their window of time for morning matches. Participants were able to select any combination of the match notification options (phone, email, or text message). In most cases, the program software matched participants who lived in close proximity to each other and displayed a map showing the approximate location of participant residential location. In the afternoon, the software provided participants with the results of their ride match requests via the RideNow kiosk located at the BART station. The kiosk successfully displayed the ride match results most of the time. There were a few occurrences in which participants claimed the ride match results were not displayed at the kiosk, but these were unable to be verified.

A total of 121 people were able to successfully register on the RideNow website. Participants successfully submitted 1170 ride requests and the software made 141 ride matches.

## Potential Program Improvements

While the RideNow software generally worked well, there are some areas where changes in the way the software operates could result in an improved system as described below. Suggested improvements address issues with the website and registration, the ridematch request process, the kiosk and the telephone system.

### Website and Registration

One of the important administrative improvements to the software would be to provide automatic feedback to the participants when they registered for the program. When participants registered for the RideNow program via the website, they assumed they could immediately start using the program. No confirmation was automatically sent to them about their registration and their required attendance at an orientation. The orientation at the Dublin/Pleasanton station was a vital program requirement that provided a face-to-face explanation of how to use the program and allowed participants to obtain program materials. Without the benefit of this orientation, participants submitted match requests without full knowledge of how the program worked or the need for a RideNow placard to park in the reserved RideNow parking area. As a result, several ride match attempts were not successful because participants did not fully understand the nuances of the program or were simply confused.

Another software improvement would be to automatically inform RideNow staff of new program registrants. Under the current software operations, staff had to check the administrative website on a daily basis to review the registration dates of all participants to determine if someone new registered with the program. RideNow staff then had to contact the new registrant and ask them to sign up for an orientation and not park in the RideNow

parking spaces until they received a parking placard. Making the system more automatic would reduce labor costs.

Initially, the website did not require adequate information from program participants. Registrants were required to enter a phone number, an intersection (cross streets) and city of residence for ridematching purposes. Even though information was sent to participants primarily via email, it was necessary to mail incentive tickets through the U.S. mail. Without participants full mailing address, it was problematic and participants had to be called individually. The program was updated during the pilot to require full name, address, and email.

### Ridematch Request Process

Software improvements could be implemented that would improve the ridematch request process. Some of those described below have already been implemented.

Many RideNow "driver" participants commented that the program was matching them with riders who were "out of their way". Especially in the morning, the program often matched a driver with a rider who was located in the opposite direction of the BART station, requiring the driver to back track to get to the BART station. As a result, some drivers chose not to follow through with the computer ridematch.

There were two cases of mismatching participants. Rather than matching participants who live in the same city, the program matched participants living in one city with a participant in another city. The software administrator was informed of the software "glitch" and the software problem was resolved.

Real time BART schedule information should be used rather than static timetables. The afternoon ride requests were based on the BART schedule. When a participant called into the system while aboard BART, the RideNow software would calculate their arrival time based on which BART station they were approaching. The program used static timetables based on the official BART schedules rather than "real-time" information. Schedule delays were not considered. If a participant called into the system and the train they were on was delayed, the program would match them based on the fixed schedule not accounting for delays. As a result, the participant could be matched with someone who arrived at the station at an earlier or later time creating confusion and an unsuccessful ridematch.

### Kiosk

Some participants commented that the kiosk displayed the wrong arrival time for their ridematch request. For example, the ridematch status was not listed on the kiosk until approximately 15 minutes after the participant arrived at the station. As a result, participants simply left the station since they did not see their name displayed and were unaware of their ridematch status. The software administrator was contacted about the issue but no problem was readily detected. Arrival time errors could be a result of late trains.

Participants also contacted RideNow staff about an occasional appearance of an error message on the kiosk. When the error message appeared on the screen it was easily fixed. While the message did not affect the software capability, it did partially obstruct the view of the ridematch display and may have caused participants to feel the software was unreliable.

### Phone System

Participants suggested a number of improvements to the phone system. Most of the suggested improvements would make the phone system easier to use and involve making it easier to hear the instructions while on BART, automating the phone instructions, and providing an easier to understand phone format.

Participants commented that it was difficult to clearly hear the telephone instructions while riding BART. They explained that with the background noise on the train it was challenging to hear the options and sometimes chose not to place a ridematch request.

RideNow participants also commented that the afternoon request process could be more automated. In the afternoon, the participant was required to go through all the ridematch options in addition to specifying which BART station they were approaching. Participants noted that the system should automatically know what the participant's ridematch preference is, especially if they used the program in the morning.

Many afternoon requests were not successfully submitted due to participants not knowing they had to push # (pound) to confirm their ride request before hanging up the phone. Once RideNow staff realized this was a problem, RideNow participants were sent an email reminder about pushing # and a message was placed on the phone system that reminded participants to press # before hanging up.

The current phone system does not allow participants an option to "go back" when selecting from the menu. As a result, if a mistake was made or an option needed to be changed, the participant had to hang up, redial and repeat the steps in completing a call. The phone system software should be improved to provide these options.

## Marketing Evaluation

Marketing for RideNow took place in three distinct phases. Phase I was initiated in Fall 2004, when a marketing plan was developed. The plan identified a set of basic objectives for beta-testing a limited version of the program through incentives for program participation. The focus of this first phase was to implement the program, enhance the software, define incentives, and develop name recognition for the program. It was in this phase that the Task Force was granted permission to use the RideNow name by RideNow! Inc. Marketing objectives were defined as part of the Marketing Plan. These included the following:

- Recruit participants to use and provide feedback on the service.

- Encourage additional registration throughout pilot phase.
- Provide incentives to test pilot program.
- Encourage repeat use among registrants.
- Provide instruction on how to use the service and how to find the kiosk or meeting spot.
- Deliver the program in a cost-effective manner.
- Obtain feedback on how to make the program more attractive to future users.

The RideNow logo in green, white and black provided the unique identity for the program. The logo was used on the kiosk, website, and all informational and marketing materials

One of the initial participation goals set forth in the marketing plan was to achieve 50 to 75 registrants by project start-up. The program had 30 registered participants during Phase I of which 18 would be considered active.


RideNow flyers were distributed at the BART station and on all cars in the BART parking lot. Hacienda Business Park donated printing services for the flyers.

Phase II included initial strategies to "get the word out" about the program and begin the recruitment of program participants. A wide range of strategies were employed including contacting the various homeowner associations in the area, putting information in the myBART email newsletter, placing an article in BART Times and doing a "seat drop" (putting flyers about the program on BART trains). The phase also included preparing signs to promote the program and to identify parking spaces, as well as some preliminary program orientations.

Phase III marketing was a recruitment drive. After testing of the initial limited version of the program and proving that it worked, an effort was made to enhance participation in the RideNow program. A new marketing plan was prepared to address the goal to increase participation in the program by existing registrants and to achieve at least 100 active program participants. The focus of this marketing "push" included media information, additional incentives, signage and flyers at the BART station and an on-site recruitment and information drive. After the Phase III marketing strategies were applied, the program had 121 participants.

Figure 4-1 illustrates the range of marketing and public information activities carried out throughout the course of the pilot program.

## Figure 4-1 Summary of Marketing Activities

| Activity | Timeframe | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| **Phase I** | | |
| Permission granted to use RideNow name. Logo adopted | October 2004 | |
| Developed Marketing Plan | December 2004 | |
| Contacted Homeowner Associations in Tri-City Area | December 2004 | Some HOAs put articles in newsletters, made announcements at meetings |
| Kiosk installation | December 2004 | Kiosk itself was intended to promote program |
| **Phase II** | | |
| Articles in BART Times | January and March 2005 | Informative articles and notices about program |
| Flyer Seat Drop | January 2005, and Feb 2005 | Flyers distributed on BART cars prior to "original launch date" of March 2005 |
| Email to myBART members | January 2005 | |
| Press release to newspapers | February 2005 | |
| Station Poster | February 2005 | |
| Station Banner | February 2005 | |
| Digital display message | February & November 2005 | Electronic sign on platform |
| Outreach table at station | March 2005 | Table set up near kiosk during PM peak periods (2 days) to generate interest and sign up registrants |
| Sandwich board signage | March-May 2005 | Set up at RideNow parking area |
| **Phase III** | | |
| Notice in BART Times | January 2006 | Informative notice about program |
| Flyers for distribution in BART station | February 2006 | Distributed to patrons at the station during the morning commute |
| Orientations | February, March and April 2006 | Orientations were conducted at the BART station. |
| 3000 flyers for parking lots | March 2006 | Distributed in BART parking lots |
| RideNow press release | March 2006 | Issued to local newspapers, TV, and radio stations |
| RideNow links on websites | March 2006 | RideNow link placed on 511.org and city websites |
| RideNow Registration Event | March 2006 | Speakers, free gifts and sign-up incentives in the BART station |
| Digital display message | March 2006 | Electronic sign on platform |
| Updates to RideNow.org | March 2006 | |
| Television coverage | March 2006 | A RideNow segment aired on TV 30 in the Tri-Valley on March 29, 2006 |
| BART incentives | March 2006 | $5 and $10 BART ticket incentives were received from BART and distributed to eligible participants |
| Newspaper articles | April and May 2006 | Published in the April 2, 2006 Contra Costa Times, the April 7, 2006 Pleasanton Weekly and the May 1, 2006 San Ramon Sentinel |

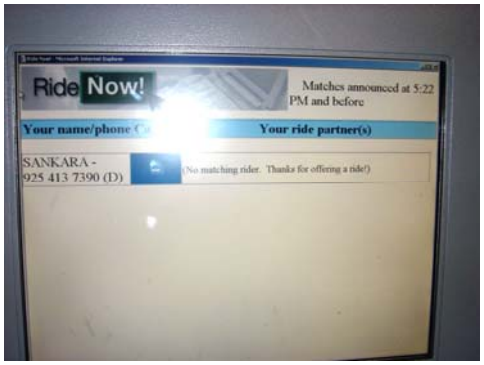
## Incentives and Obstacles

Although the marketing effort faced several obstacles, the program offered incentives, both tangible and intangible, to encourage participation. The focus of the marketing effort was on promoting the advantages of using the program and providing enough information to overcome the obstacles.

Key incentives that were identified and integrated into the marketing effort included the following:

- The high-tech aspect of the program
- The fact that it was free to use
- The fact that it was simple to use, once you understood it
- The opportunity to share a ride and meet new people
- That the program was new and cutting edge
- The convenience of being able to catch a ride to and/or from the BART station
- Free reserved parking close to BART
- Free BART tickets for participating
- Customer service and the availability of personal assistance

Several obstacles for successful implementation and utilization of the program were also identified. Efforts were undertaken to target marketing to overcome some of these obstacles. For example, a technology-based program that provided instant ridematching with parking credits and a kiosk seemed confusing on the surface. It was determined that the marketing effort should focus on personalizing the information, demonstrating to potential registrants how the program is utilized to make it less complicated, and thus more likely to be used. Orientations were conducted with small groups of participants at the BART station. Feedback suggests this was a successful strategy for personalizing outreach.



The RideNow kiosk was a valuable marketing tool. It had a permanent presence in the BART station and showed real-time matches as they were being made.

Another obstacle was that some people expressed concerns about riding with a stranger. Some individuals asked if there was any screening of the applicants to make sure they would be safe riding with the individuals with whom they might be matched. The marketing emphasis put on this obstacle was the more positive "meet new people."



The RideNow registration drive in March 2006 included presentations by Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty, BART Director Gail Murray, City of Pleasanton Mayor Jennifer Hosterman and other dignitaries as well as City of Dublin Public Works Director Melissa Morton and Beth Walukas of the CMA . Representatives from Nelson\Nygaard, the CMA, MTC, Caltrans, the cities of Dublin and Pleasanton, and the Hacienda Business Park were on hand to provide information about the program and register new participants. Balloons, colorful signs and several giveaways (including radios and purses donated by the City of Pleasanton, canvas bags and pens provided by MTC, and free tickets provided by BART were used as incentives to encourage interested individuals to sign up). (Top: Gail Murray and Beth Walukas address the crowd getting off BART; Bottom: interested individuals talk with staff and register for the program at the BART station)

Once individuals were trained on how to use the program, they generally became comfortable with the program procedures and requirements. Nevertheless, understanding parking credits, when to call to see if a ridematch had been made, and other program procedures were explained in a series of emails from the "RideNow team" to keep information fresh, keep users updated and address confusion that arose during the course of the pilot program.

Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles during Phase I was the lack of success that many RideNow participants had in making a successful ridematch. After trying a few times without success, some program participants gave up. Overcoming this obstacle was a key focus of the registration push in March 2006. By signing up sufficient numbers of participants, persons were more likely to have opportunities to rideshare to and from the BART station. Putting flyers on the cars, spending time on the BART platform handing out information about the program, putting program information and links on various transportation and municipal websites, and doing outreach and on-the-spot orientations as part of the RideNow registration drive resulted in a significant increase in participation. This led to a higher number of ridematches.

## Marketing Strategies

Although the marketing strategies are shown in Figure 4-1, it is worth noting that the majority of the strategies were not focused on advertising and media outreach. Instead the concentration was on hands-on, face-to-face interaction. Being such a technology-focused program, it would seem that outreach and marketing strategies could have been handled entirely by the RideNow website and emails. However, the personal "intervention" made the marketing effort as successful as it was.

Transportation agencies around the world have been experimenting with travel training and face-to-face information sharing, often called high-touch marketing, where the focus is to personalize the experience and participation as much as possible. Rather than blanketing communities with transportation billboards or putting advertisements on radio stations, personalized travel information has become the strategy of choice. In fact, the Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC) in the San Francisco Bay Area is studying high-touch marketing strategies in other Alameda County communities, going door-to-door with transportation information for residents who have completed surveys about their transportation choices. TALC's strategy focuses on the need to personalize the information to the individual's own travel needs, working with each person to find transportation mode solutions that are more environmentally friendly.

With the program orientation, distributing information on the BART platforms and offering regular email updates, RideNow made some strides in personalizing the experience of registering for and using the program. If the program is replicated in the future, marketing for the RideNow program might be approached differently, focusing less on how the program works and more on how the program can be part of a TDM strategy to meet other transportation goals. Typically TDM strategies are marketed through employers at the workplace, because the jobsite is the location where everyone congregates (the employer is the commute destination). RideNow is a TDM strategy, but not one that was marketed via employers. Instead RideNow was marketed at the transportation hub, near the home-based trip origin. This caused complexity in providing outreach for potential users. The program would benefit from employer-based marketing and public information, yet it is challenging to identify an appropriate employer. Thus, the best strategy specifically for the BART-based program remains providing outreach at the BART station. However, future marketing efforts might take a more holistic approach to encourage transportation mode alternatives and describe how RideNow is one of several transportation options. This outreach could be conducted at places where people congregate, at schools and shopping centers, and through further homeowner association outreach. It will also be worthwhile to follow the results of TALC's research on door-to-door transportation outreach.

### Marketing Results

The results of the outreach effort speak for themselves. When the program launched at the end of Phase II in the marketing outreach effort, about 30 people signed up. Marketing was limited until Phase III, when the comprehensive marketing outreach effort was undertaken. As a result of the Phase III activities, participation increased from about 45 in early March 2006 to almost 120 registrants by in April 2006. If the program had had more time to allow people to register, it is presumed additional registrants would have participated.

Survey results identify the most noted reasons for registering as preferential parking and the alternative that RideNow provided for accessing BART. BART ticket incentives played a role in encouraging people to participate, but were not the key drivers to encourage participation.

## Program Costs

Total program costs are presented in Figure 4-2 and are broken down into three categories: capital and hardware investments, one-time start-up costs, and program operating costs. Hardware investments for the RideNow pilot program included computer hardware, the display kiosk at the station and the installation of a streetlight. One-time start-up costs included the development of an implementation plan, a marketing plan, and an operations plan. It also included $5,000 in BART tickets that were used as incentives. The operational costs represent costs that are for day-to-day operations of the program and include project oversight from agency and consultant staff. The operational costs are representative of what it would cost to run the program once it was established.

Figure 4-2 shows that of the $213,000 total program costs, three percent were for capital and hardware purchases and 29% account for one-time start up costs. The remaining 67% or $143,000 reflects ongoing costs to operate RideNow.

### Figure 4-2 RideNow Budget

| Category | Cost | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Capital and Hardware Investments* | $8,000 | 3% |
| One-Time Start-Up Costs** | $62,000 | 29% |
| Six Months of Operations | $143,000 | 67% |
| **Total** | **$213,000** | **100%** |

*Capital and hardware include all one-time infrastructure costs, which are computers, a kiosk, and a streetlight.
**One-time start-up costs include $5,000 in BART ticket incentives, background research, and developing an implementation, marketing, and operations plan.

Figure 4-3 compares costs to key program statistics. The data is presented in two ways. First the number of total registrants, ridematch requests, and ridematches are compared to total costs. The same program statistics are then compared to on-going operating costs without the capital and start-up costs included. This cost would be more representative of what it would cost to operate an established program. The figure shows that it costs over $1,700 to register a person in the RideNow program including all costs and under $1,200 if only ongoing operating costs are considered. This compares to an approximate cost of $426 to place a person in a carpool through the 511 Regional Ridesharing Program[1]. These cost comparisons do not reflect actual usage or the reduction of vehicle trips. Since RideNow was designed to test if dynamic ridesharing is a viable new option, it is premature to evaluate the cost per carpool trips. Without a longer period of operation and experience with a more established RideNow program, the cost per carpool trip might not be a valid cost indicator.

## Figure 4-3 Total and Ongoing Costs and Key Statistics

| **Total Costs** | **$213,000** |
|---|---|
| Ongoing Operating Costs | $143,000 |
| | |
| Total Registrants | 121 |
| Total Ridematch Requests | 1170 |
| Total Ridematches * | 141 |
| | |
| Total Cost/Registrant | $1,760.33 |
| Total Cost/Ridematch Request | $182.05 |
| Total Cost/Ridematch | $1,510.64 |
| | |
| Ongoing Cost/Registrant | $1,181.82 |
| Ongoing Cost/Ridematch Request | $122.22 |
| Ongoing Cost/Ridematch * | $1,014.18 |

*This represents 141 individuals who were matched with one another.

The total cost for each ridematch request is around $180 and over $1,500 for a successful computer ride match. Since there are both one time capital purchase and one-time start-up costs in these figures, it is reasonable to compare ongoing costs as a better reflection of the day-to-day costs to operate, market and administer RideNow. The ongoing cost per ride match request is $120 and $1010 for each successful computer ridematch.

[1] Based on information from 511 Regional Rideshare Program Contractor Report Card, FY 2005/06 (through April 2006)

# Operational Program Outcomes

Understanding the day-to-day operational aspects of the program is an essential element of the RideNow evaluation. This section presents the program outcomes, describes the program registrants and their participation in RideNow, number ride matches and other relevant information.

## Registrants

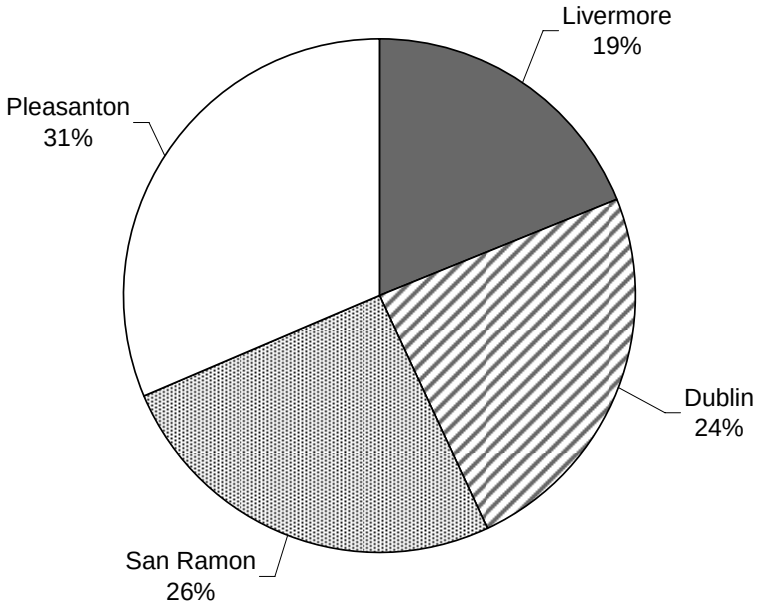
RideNow was unique among transportation programs, because it required individuals to sign-up online. Two methods to inquire about the program and register were provided to prospective participants. They could either send a message to RideNow by email (Info@RideNow.org) or sign up through the RideNow website at www.RideNow.com.

A total of 244 people expressed interest in RideNow between October 2004 and May 19, 2006 when the program terminated. Although this was a substantial number of inquiries about the program during this 18-month period, only 121 (50%) actually went online and registered with the program. The remaining 123 people either did not follow through to register online, or were ineligible to participate in RideNow because they did not live in one of the four Tri-Valley cities (about 50 inquiries). Based on anecdotal evidence from those inquires from potentially eligible participants, it is presumed that many did not become RideNow participants due to (1) the long timeframe between RideNow's initial publicity in December 2004 and RideNow implementation in November 2005, (2) after learning about the program, they determined they did not want to participate, or (3) they lived outside the Tri-Valley.

### Residential Location

RideNow participants were distributed relatively evenly between the four cities in the Tri-Valley as displayed in Figure 4-4. Pleasanton led with 38 participants, followed by San Ramon (31), and Dublin (29). Livermore, the city furthest from the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station, had the fewest participants (23).

## Figure 4-4 Participants by Residence




### RideNow Registration

Figure 4-5 shows the total number of RideNow registrants, based on when they began participating in the program, from March 2005 through May 2006. The figure illustrates that for the first six months of the program planning phase, there were no more than five registrants. This is probably due to the delayed start of the program, which was originally scheduled to launch in March 2005. Beginning in November 2005 when the program was actually launched, program participants increased to nearly 30 in the first month and rose to 45 by February 2006. In March 2006, coinciding with the aggressive marketing campaign, the number of total program participants more than doubled, and nearly tripled by May 2006.

## Figure 4-5 RideNow Registration (March 2005 – May 2006)

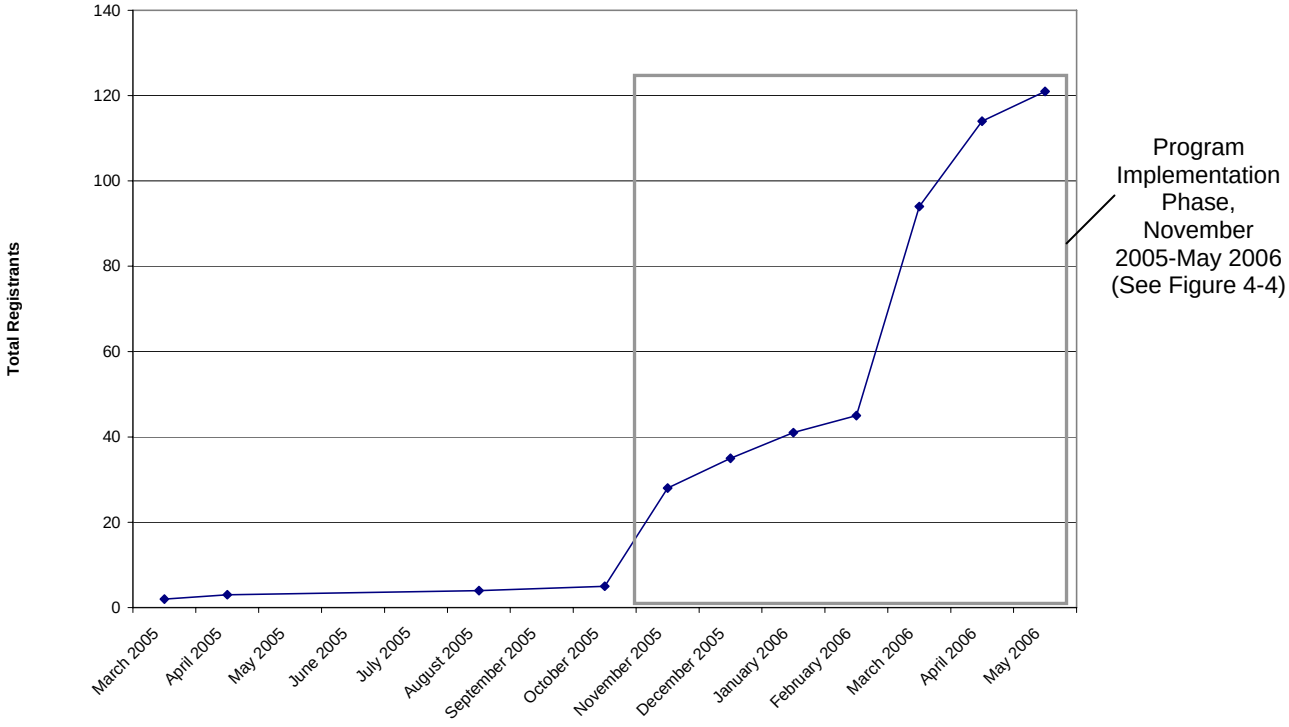
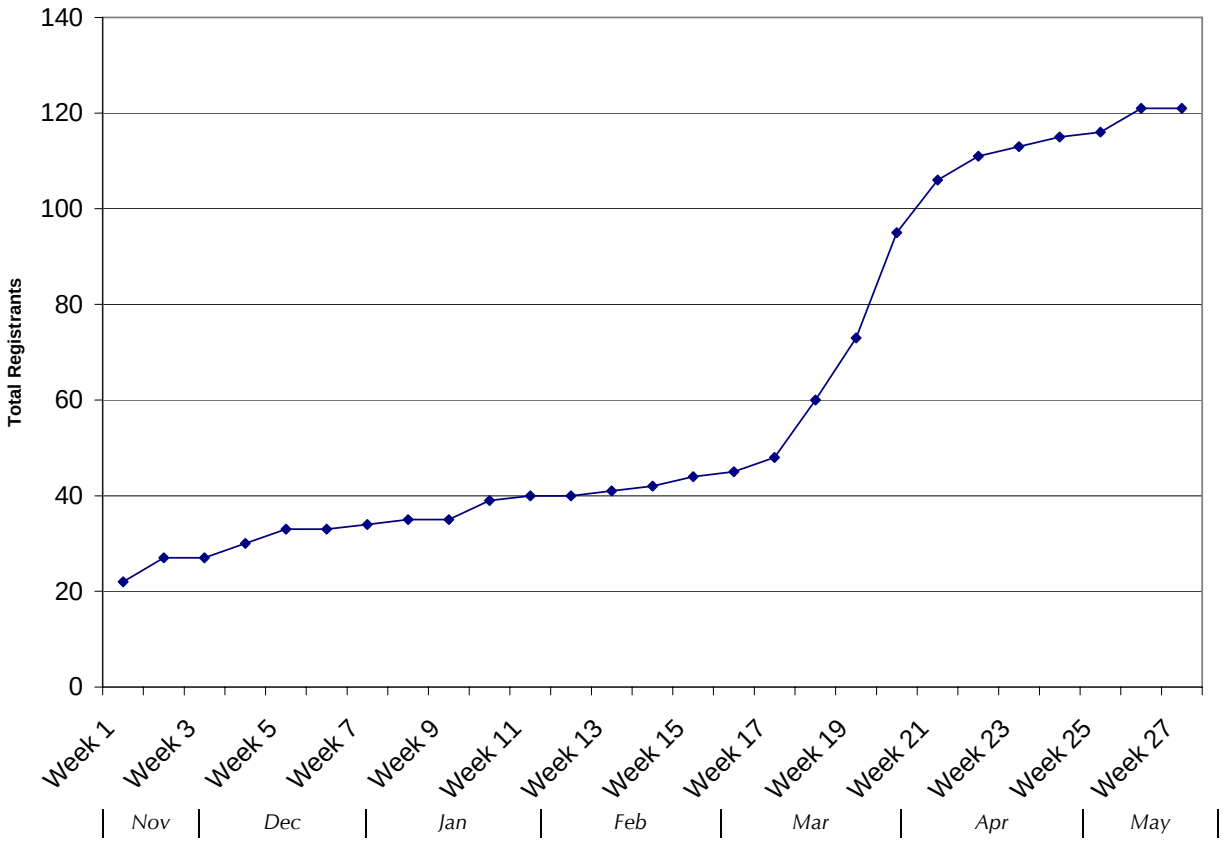



Figure 4-6 shows participation during the program implementation phase in greater detail. When the program launched on November 15, 2005, 22 participants were already registered with RideNow. March 2006 included the launch of an aggressive marketing campaign, and by the first week of April 2006, the number of program participants rose to over 100.

## Figure 4-6 Registrants by Week (November 2005 – May 2006)

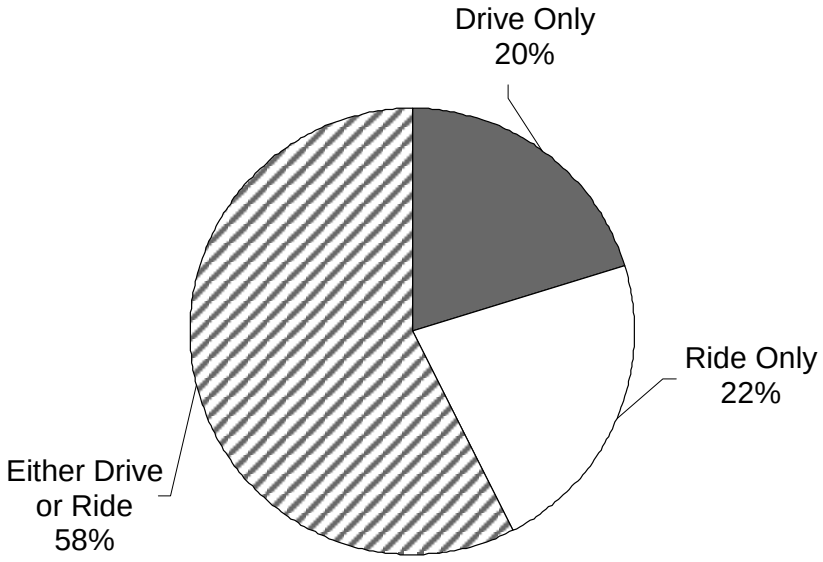



# Program Participation

## Mode Preferences

Although 121 people were registered when the pilot program ended, not every registrant participated in RideNow. Of the 121 registered users, about half (59 participants) actually used the program. These are considered "active" participants. Of these active participants, a majority (58%) specified that they could either drive or ride to the BART station. A few more riders than drivers registered, with the remaining active participants nearly split among riders only and drivers only, as shown in Figure 4-7 below.

## Figure 4-7 Registrant Preferences

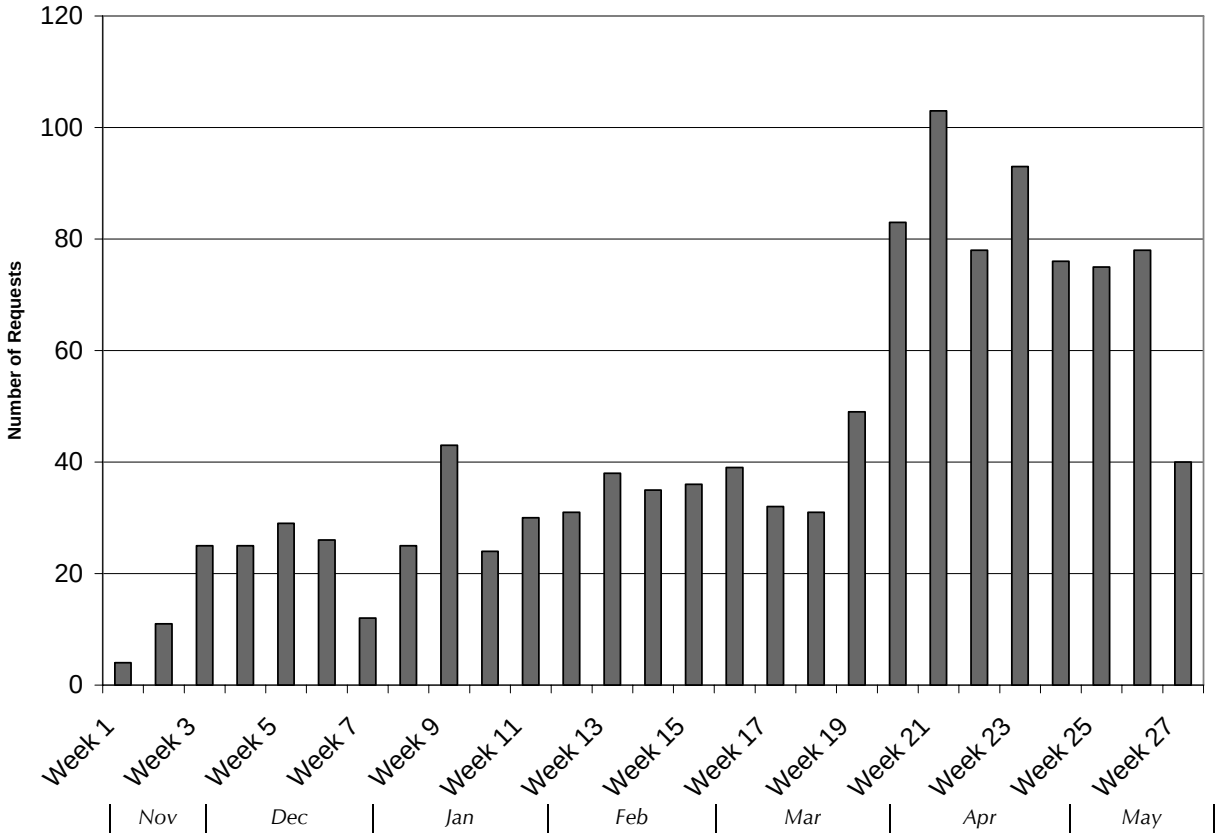



### Match Requests

Whenever a participant called into the RideNow system or logged onto the RideNow website and requested a ride match, it was recorded. A total of 1,170 requests were placed over the course of the six-month pilot program.

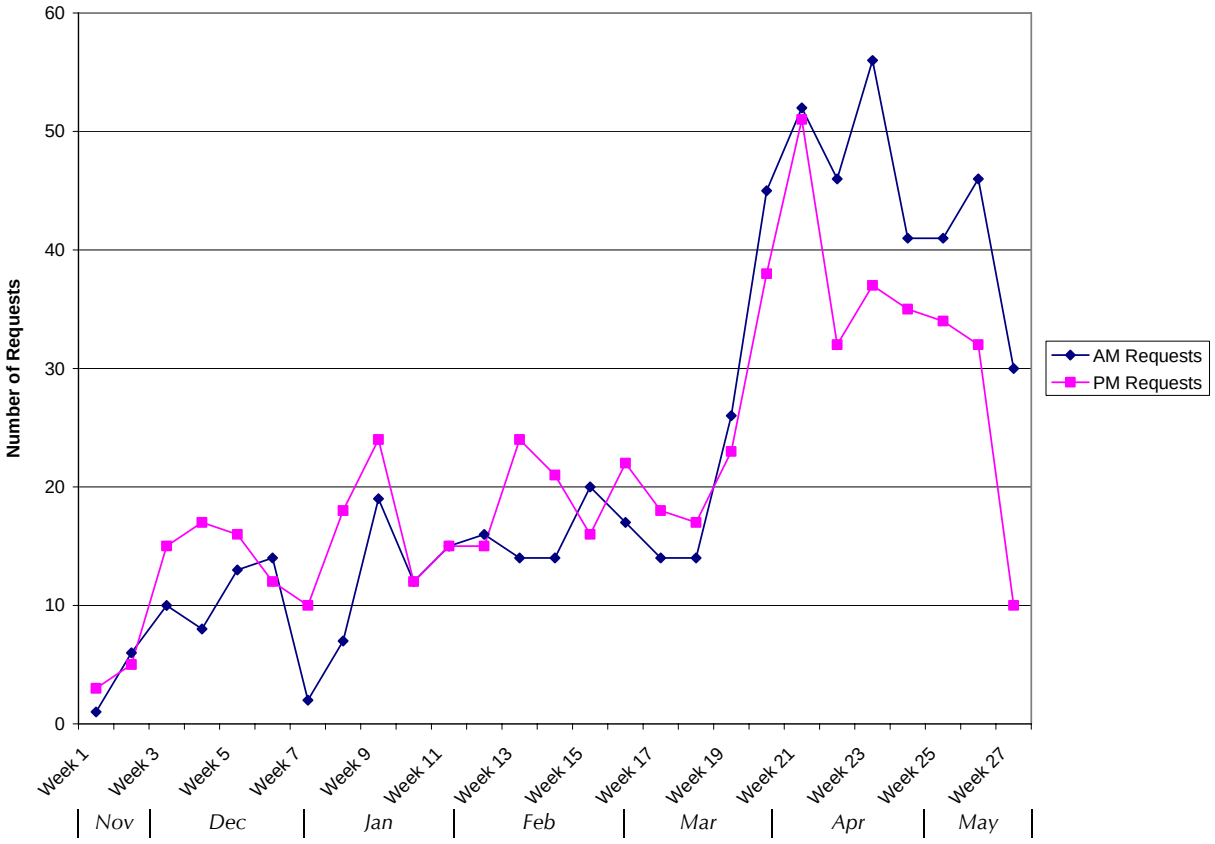
The number of ride match requests by week is presented in Figure 4-6. It shows that by the fifth week of the program, the number of weekly requests was hovering at about 25 and remained at this level during the holiday season. By February 2006, an average of 36 requests were being made each week. In the beginning of March 2006, requests dipped slightly and then sharply increased at the end of March coinciding with enhanced marketing activities and new incentives. During the first week of April 2006, RideNow peaked with 103 requests. Requests tapered off thereafter but remained significantly higher than before the marketing activities with an average of 80 requests per week. After the announcement that the RideNow program would be ending on May 19, 2006, requests dropped to pre-marketing launch levels with only 40 requests being placed between May 15 and May 19, 2006.

## Figure 4-8 Total Requests




When comparing total morning and afternoon requests, they are nearly equivalent (morning requests represent 51% of the total). Only in the last month of the program were more morning than afternoon ride match requests made. This may have occurred because participants who tried and did not successfully make a morning match, drove themselves to the station in the morning, and did not need to request an afternoon match. The last week of the program the number of afternoon requests decreased significantly because participants were probably motivated to deplete their parking credits. Morning versus afternoon ride match requests is shown in Figure 4-9.

## Figure 4-9 Ride Match Requests (AM and PM)



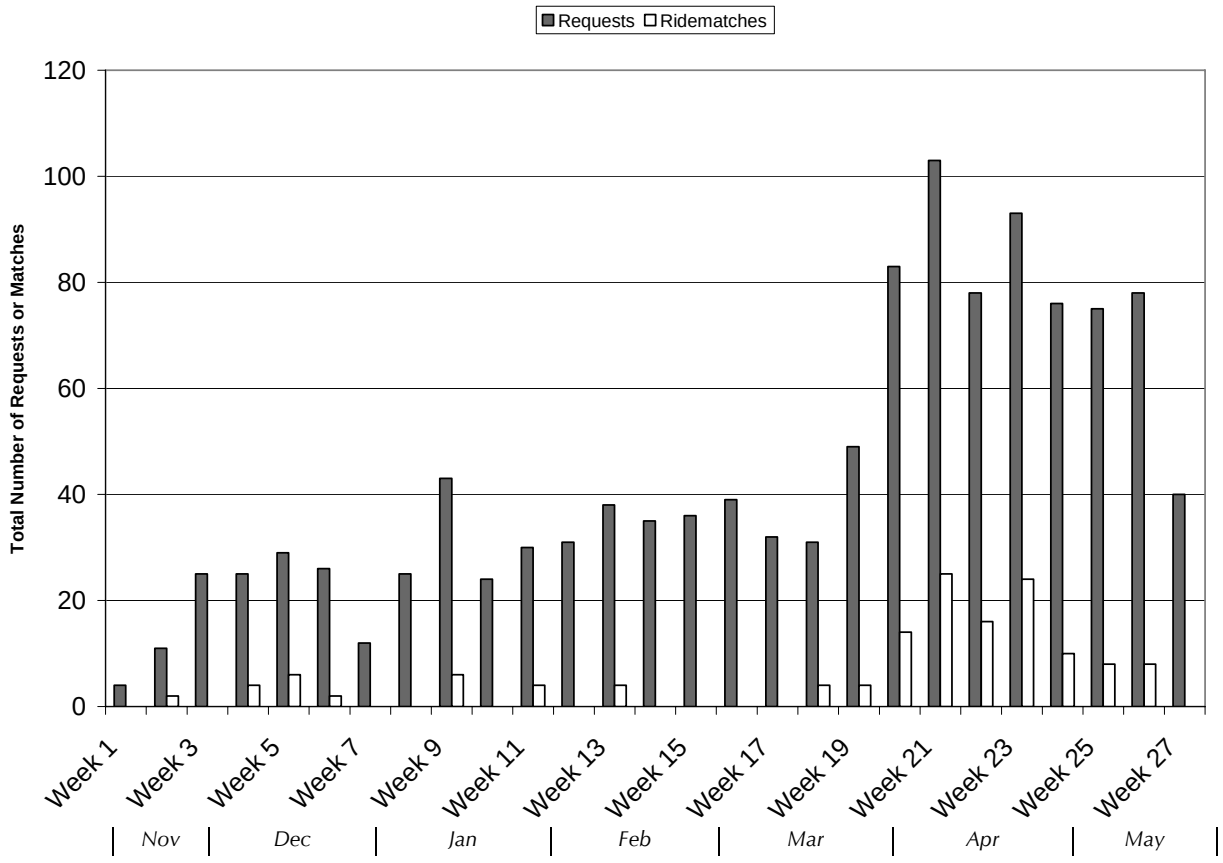

## Ride Matches

A ride match occurred when two or more participants were successfully matched and rode to or from the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station together. A total of 141 individuals were matched out of 1,170 ride requests (12%) were made during the six-month pilot program. This ratio increased after the March marketing campaign because there were more participants in the program and more participants requested matches.

At the launch of the program in November 2005, few ride matches were made due to the low volume of requests resulting from a low number of participants. Prior to the marketing campaign in March 2006, approximately an average of six matches were made per week with some weeks having no ride matches. With the large increases in the number of participants and ride requests occurring in March and April, there was a corresponding increase in the number of ride matches. Twenty-five ride matches were made during the first week of April, 16 were made the following week and 24 ride matches made during the last week of the month. The number of ride matches peaked during these three weeks in April (See Figure 4-10).

Ride matches were relatively unsuccessful in the afternoons. Of the total 141 ride matches, only 21 were afternoon matches. In the afternoons, most requests for a ride match were by drivers, with few riders making requests.

## Figure 4-10 Ride Match Requests and Ride Matches (November 2005 – May 2006)




The above discussion relates to successful ride matches. A problem that arose during the demonstration was that participants often did not follow through with their ride matches. Either a driver would not show up at an agreed-upon pick-up location or a rider would not arrive at the specified time. To eliminate this situation, RideNow staff contacted participants and urged them to contact each other to confirm logistical details.

Between March 29 and May 19, 2006 there were 604 ride match requests. The computer software matched 105 of these requests, representing a 17% match rate. However, there were only 46 individuals actually matched to one another, an eight percent match rate, as shown in Figure 4-9. This means that only eight percent of the matches were successfully completed with driver and rider arriving to/from the BART station together. When asked, participants gave the following reasons as to why they elected to not follow through on a ride match once it was made and a partner identified:

- Drivers not willing to drive in the opposite direction of the BART station in order to pick up their rider
- Drivers not interested in crossing over the freeway to pick up a match partner
- Participants making a mistake in choosing their ride preference
- Participants choosing "both" assuming that they would be matched as a driver and not a rider
- Participants leaving before their self-specified ride match window

The problem was especially significant in the afternoon. Participants were not sure where to wait for their ride match partner and as a result many would just leave the station without telling their match partner. Based on feedback, all participants were contacted and the afternoon ride match procedure was clarified. The orientations were modified to emphasize how the afternoon match worked. Another problem that occurred was that participants sometimes chose the wrong match preference. Many people specified that they were riders when they had actually driven to the station that morning.

### Figure 4-11 Requests Versus Matches: March 29 – May 19 (Sample Time Period)

| Ride Matches | Number of Individuals | Percentage of Total Ride Match Requests |
|---|---|---|
| Total Number of Requests | 604 | N/A |
| Computer-Generated Ride Matches | 105 | 17% |
| Successfully Completed Ride Matches (Actually Shared a Ride) | 46 | 8% |

## Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Voucher Use

In order to prevent participants who used the RideNow program in the morning from being stranded at the BART station in the evenings if no ride match was available, a Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program was available. The GRH program provided participants with vouchers to get a free-of-charge taxicab ride home.

While almost half of all requests were made in the afternoon, most were made by drivers and few were made by participants who wanted to be the rider. As a result, only nine requests during the six-month pilot program were eligible to use a GRH voucher (nine people who rode to the BART with a driver requested a ride home, but were not matched). Out of the nine eligible requests, only two actually used the vouchers to get home. It is not known how the other seven got home.

# Participant/Customer Satisfaction

Participant feedback is a valuable tool in evaluating RideNow. Participant input is used to understand the attractiveness and limitations of RideNow from the participants' perspectives and to obtain practical suggestions to improve the program. Surveys were used to solicit information about participants' reasons for joining the program, how they heard about it, ideas for making it easier to use as well as participant commute patterns and demographic information. This chapter presents the findings from two participant surveys; a "Before Survey" conducted with participants at the time of enrollment, and an "After Survey" conducted at the completion of the demonstration phase.

# Methodology

All potential participants were asked to complete a "Before Survey" as part of the on-site orientations held at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station. Surveys, clipboards and pencils were distributed to respondents. They were asked to complete the short survey and submit it to RideNow representatives before being awarded a BART incentive ticket and a parking placard.

The "After Survey" was conducted at the end of the RideNow pilot program. The survey was distributed online via "Survey Monkey". An email was distributed to all individuals who had expressed interest in the program, including participants and a few individuals who had never registered or used the program, but had expressed an interest in using it. Individuals were offered a $10 BART card incentive to complete the survey. Individuals had 13 days to complete the survey.

A total of 121 people registered for RideNow either through the website, by phone, or during an event held at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station. Sixty-five (65) respondents filled out a "Before Survey". All individuals who attended the on-site registration filled out a "Before Survey". Sixty-one (61) respondents filled out an "After Survey." While most respondents to the surveys did register for and use RideNow, it should be noted that a few respondents did not register for the program and/or did not participate. Copies of the surveys are in Appendix C and D.

# Participant Commute Patterns

## Participant Home Locations

Respondents to the surveys live in Pleasanton, San Ramon, Dublin and Livermore. The home locations for respondents to the surveys generally reflect the distribution of home locations for all who participated in RideNow.[2]

## Participant Work Locations

The majority of survey respondents work in San Francisco. Oakland is the second most popular destination. The remaining respondents work in seven different Bay Area locations including Orinda, Alameda, San Jose, Hayward, Mountain View, San Bruno, and at the San Francisco Airport. RideNow participant travel patterns are similar to those of BART passengers entering or existing at the Dublin/Pleasanton station in general. San Francisco is the top destination for all BART passengers entering or existing at the Dublin/Pleasanton station (representing about 60% of trips) followed by Oakland (over 20%).[3]

## Access Mode

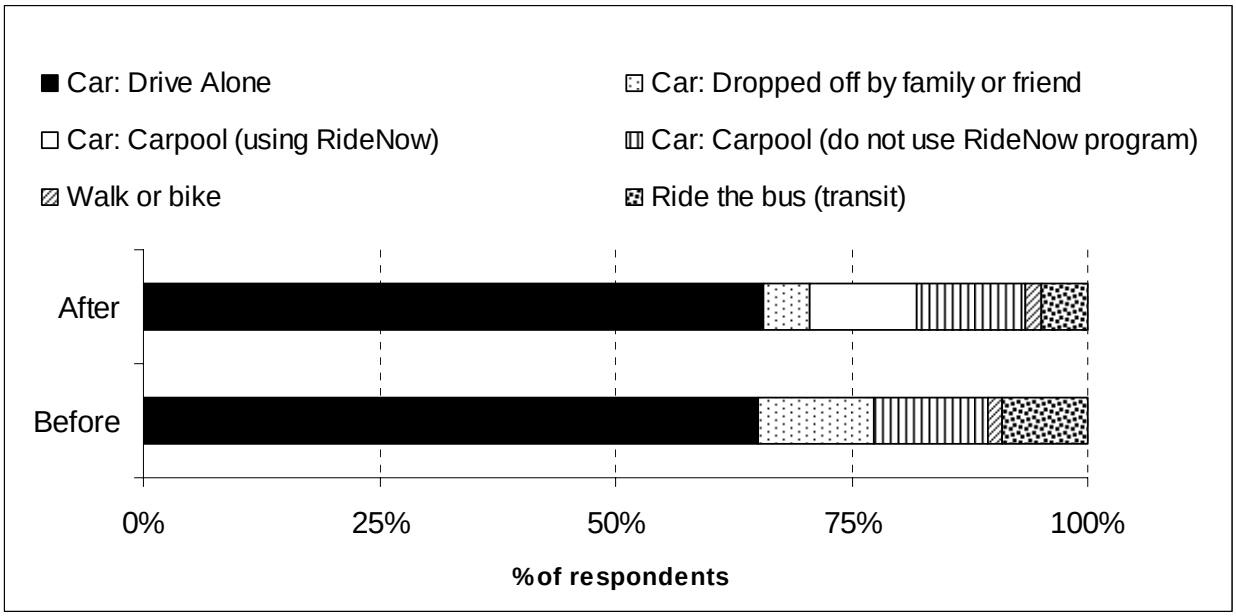
RideNow provided a new transportation option for participants to get to and from the BART station. In the "After Survey" about 10% of respondents indicated that they usually carpooled using RideNow in the mornings and in the evenings. Figures 4-12 and 4-13 show the access modes to the BART station before and after RideNow in the mornings and the evenings. Comparing the mode to and from BART before the RideNow program and after, fewer respondents got dropped-off by a family member or friend, suggesting that some people who used to get dropped-off switched to using RideNow. Getting dropped-off at the BART station decreased by 7% to 14% between before and after participating in RideNow. Carpooling without using RideNow also decreased by 1% to 9%.

The results of the before and after surveys indicate that participating in RideNow did not reduce the percentage of people who drove alone to the BART station. Before participating in RideNow, 65% of respondents drove alone to the station in the morning, compared to 66% after the RideNow program.[4] In the evenings, 63% of respondents drove alone from the BART station before participating in the program, and 67% said they typically drove home alone after participating in RideNow.

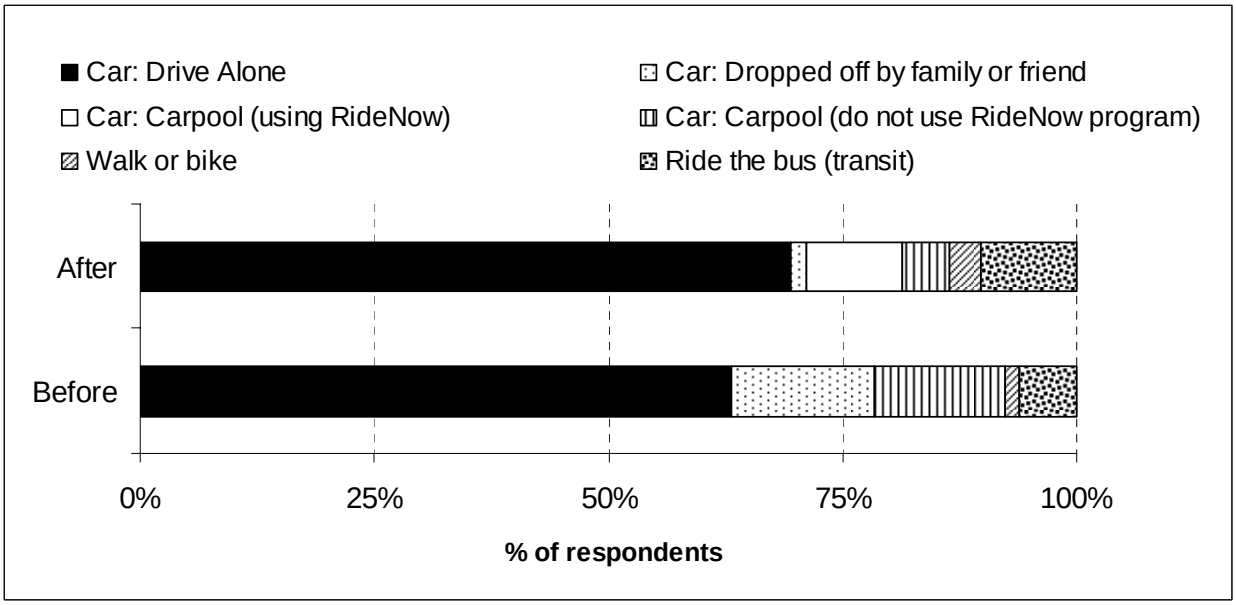
Transit use decreased slightly in the morning and increased slightly in the evening after RideNow. Walking or biking, with a small percentage of the mode share, increased slightly in the evenings and remained the same in the morning.

[2] See Figure 4-2 for residential location.
[3] BART Entry/Exit Spreadsheet, August 2004, Janice Lee
[4] 65% does not include the two respondents who did not take BART on the survey date and 66% does not include two respondents who selected "other" mode.

## Figure 4-12 Mode to BART in the *Morning*, Before and After RideNow



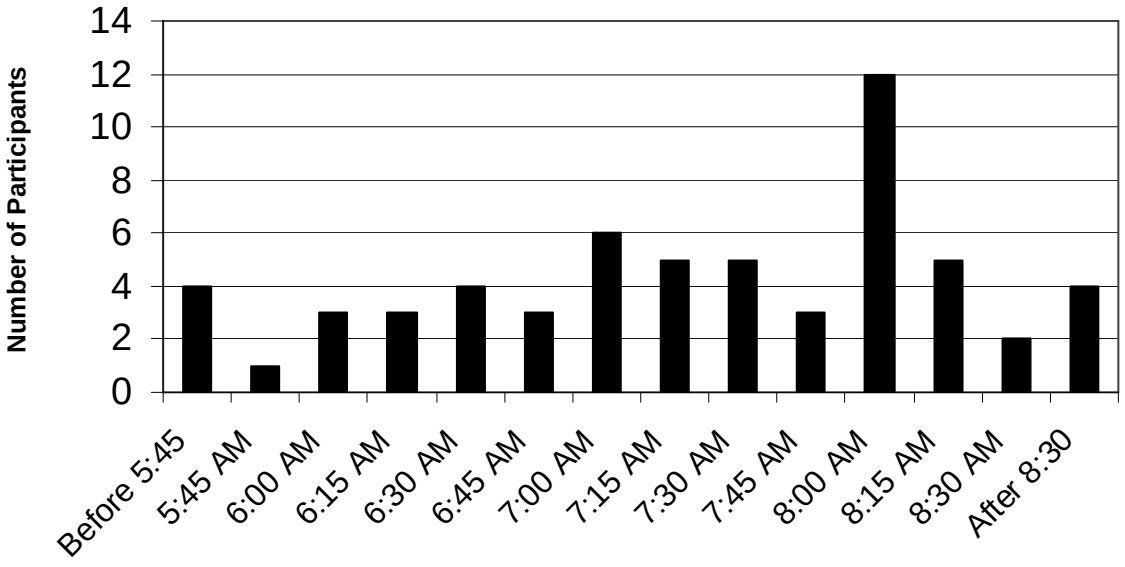

## Figure 4-13 Mode to BART in the *Evening*, Before and After RideNow



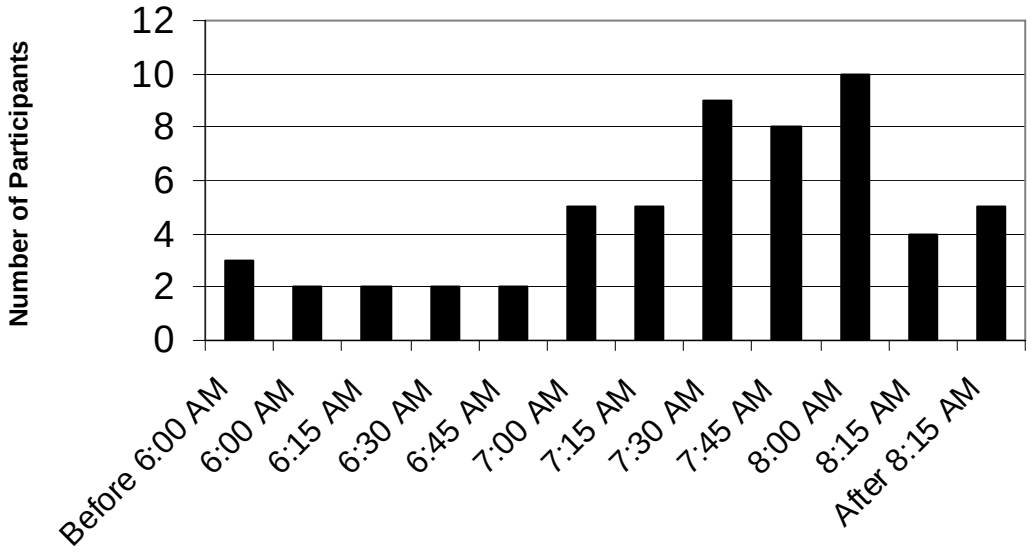
## Time Arriving at BART in the Morning

Commute times vary for survey respondents as displayed in Figures 4-14 and 4-15 below. In the morning, "Before Survey" respondents indicated that they arrive at the BART station as early as 4:30 am and as late as 9:30 am. Most arrive between 7:00 and 8:15, with 8:00 being the most common arrival time. Similarly, for "After Survey" respondents, 61% usually arrive at the BART station between 7:00 and 8:00 am.

### Figure 4-14 Time Arriving at BART in the Morning "Before"




### Figure 4-15 Time Arriving at BART in the Morning "After"



## Time Arriving at BART in the Evening

In the evening, most "Before Survey" respondents arrive at the BART station between 4:45 pm and 6:15 pm, with 5:30 pm being the most frequent response. "After Survey" respondents arrive slightly later at the BART station. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of respondents said that they usually arrive at the station between 5:30 and 6:30 pm. Over three-fourths of "Before Survey" respondents said they are flexible in their arrival time at the BART station. About half of those with flexible schedules are flexible by 15 minutes, and over a third were flexible by 20 or 30 minutes. Figures 4-16 and 4-17 show arrival times at the BART station in the evening before and after RideNow.

### Figure 4-16 Time Arriving at BART in the Evening "Before"

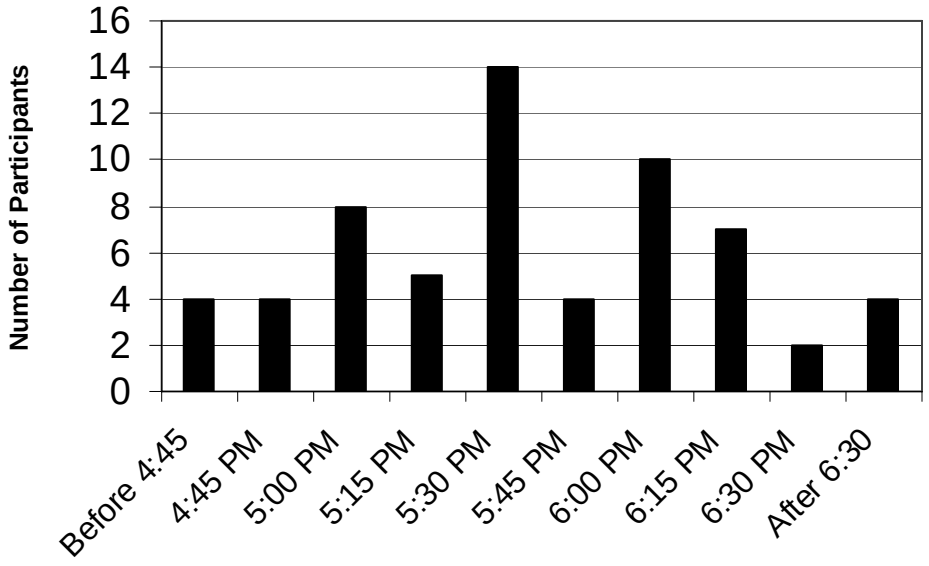
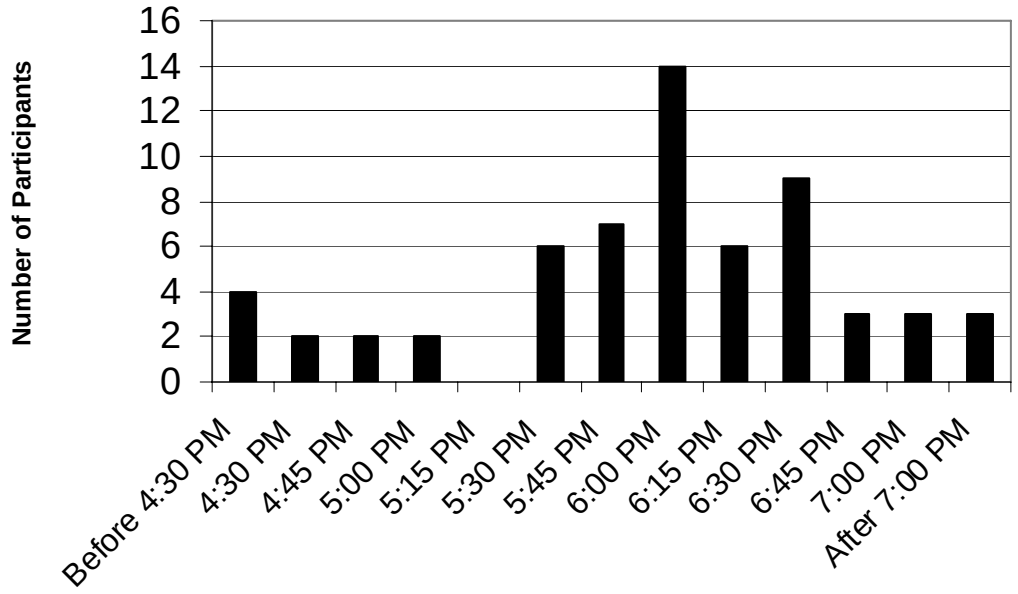


**Figure 4-17 Time Arriving at BART in the Evening "After"**




# Respondent Profile

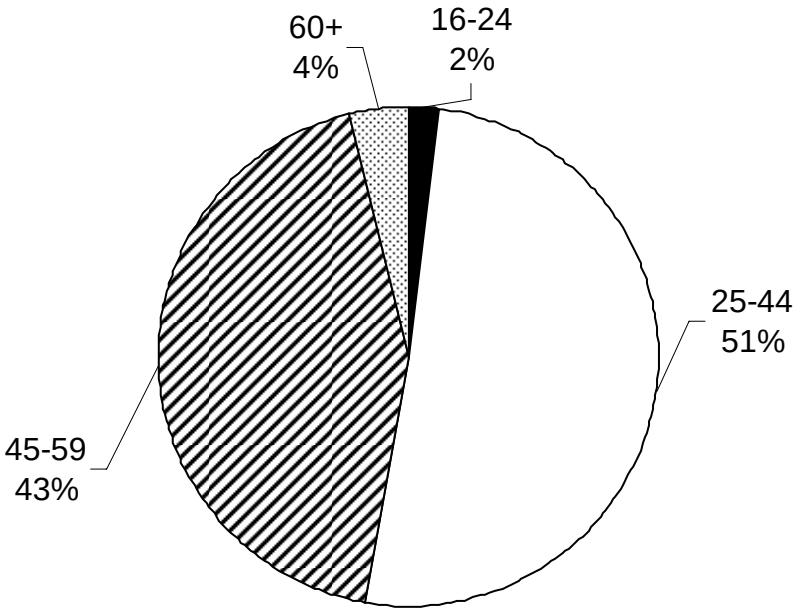
Most RideNow participants are between the ages of 25 and 59, have an income of $75,000 or more, work in the management, business, computer, and financial industries, and are men.

## Age

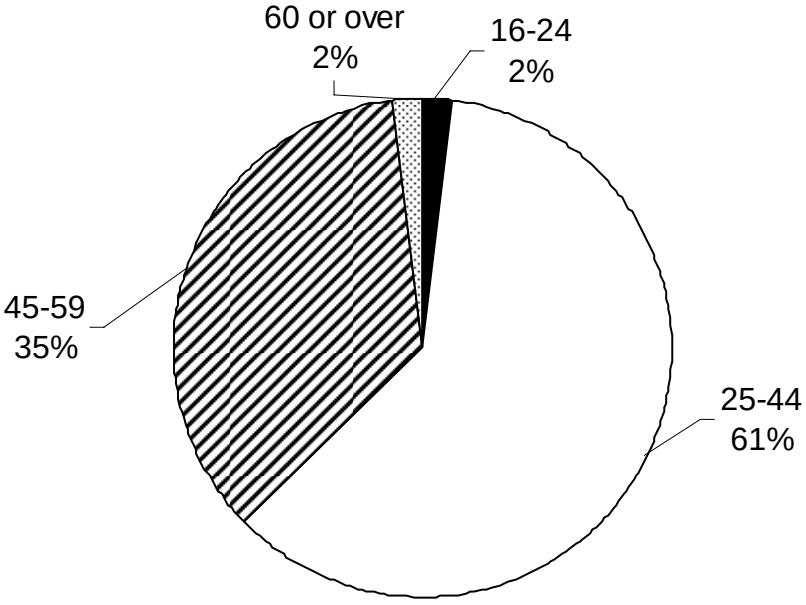
Figures 4-18 and 4-19 show age of respondents to the before and after surveys. More than half the respondents are between the ages of 25 and 44. The age distribution for respondents of the before and after surveys was similar to the age distribution of BART riders at the Dublin/Pleasanton station as a whole (55% are between the ages of 25 and 44, and 37% are between the ages of 45 and 64).[5]

[5] 1998 BART Station Profile Study

## Figure 4-18 Age of "Before Survey" Respondents



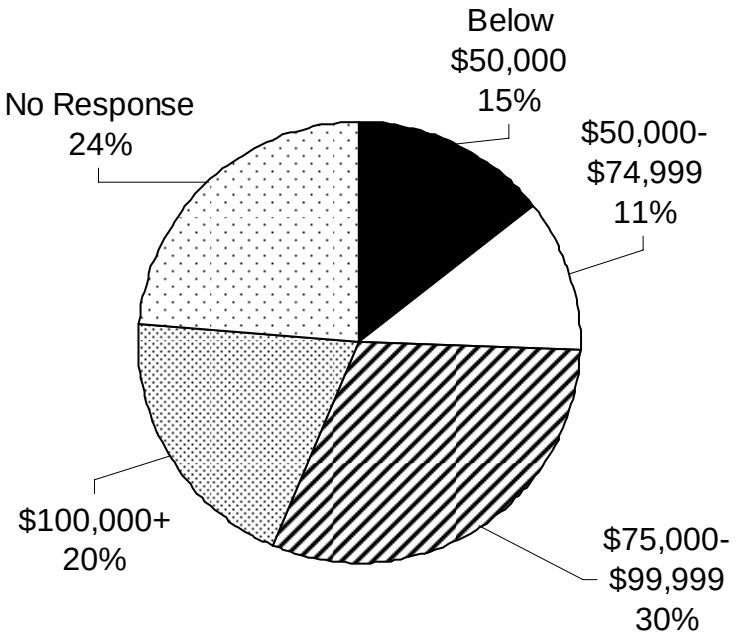

## Figure 4-19 Age of "After Survey" Respondents



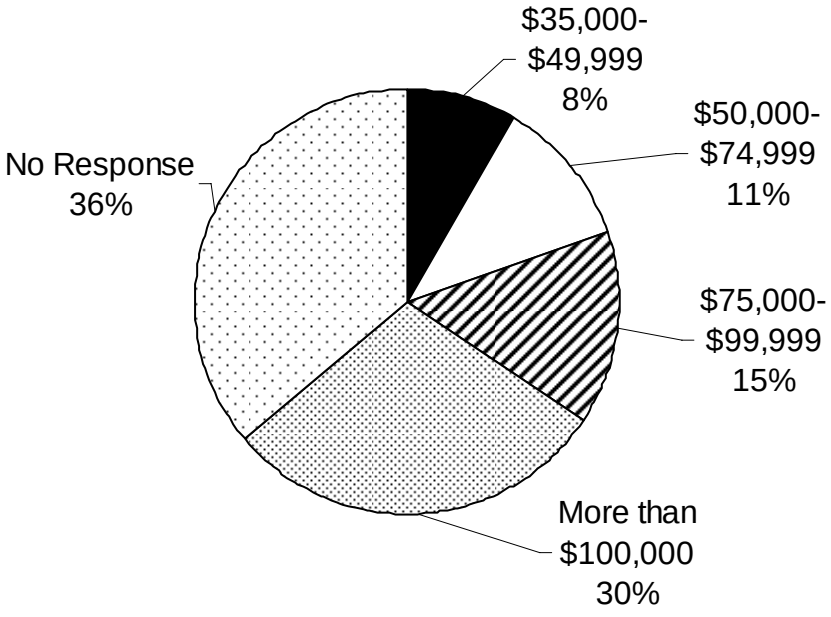
## Income

About a third to a fourth of respondents chose not to answer the question about income. About half of respondents said they earn $75,000 or more. Figures 4-20 and 4-21 show the incomes of before and after survey respondents.

### Figure 4-20 Income of "Before Survey" Respondents



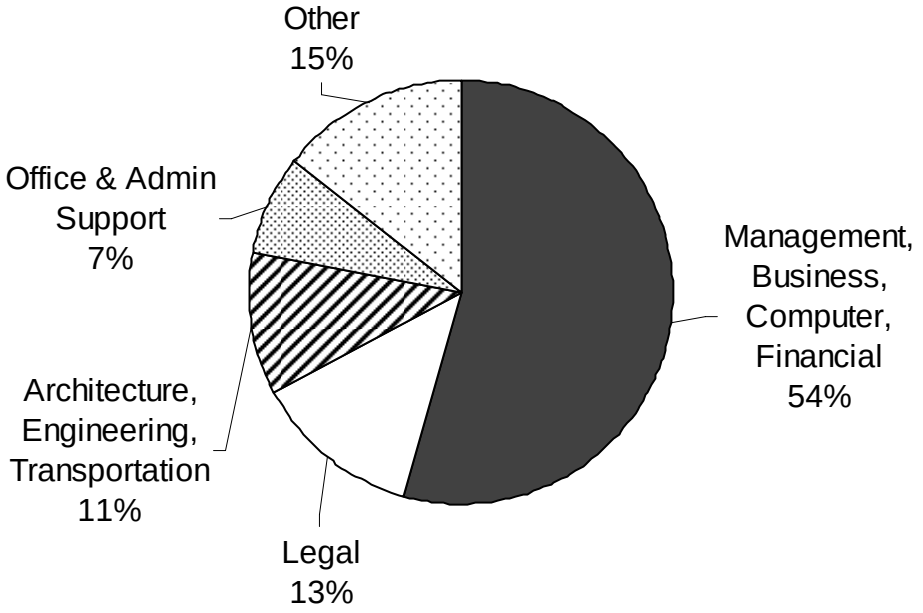

### Figure 4-21 Income of "After Survey" Respondents



## Occupation

Over half of RideNow participants work in the management, business, computer, and financial industries. Thirteen percent (13%) work in the legal profession; 11% work in the architectural, engineering, and transportation industries; and 7% work in office and administrative support. Figure 4-22 shows occupation of "Before Survey" respondents.

### Figure 4-22 Occupation of "Before Survey" Respondents

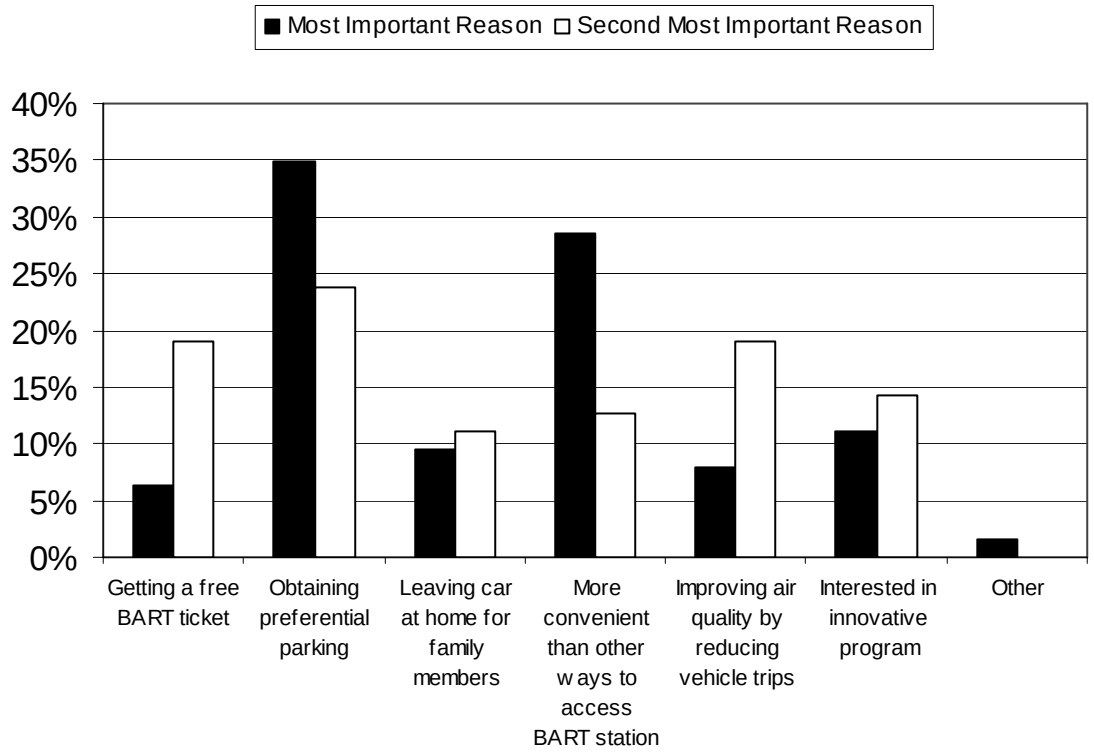



# RideNow Participation

## Reasons for Joining

The "Before Survey" asked respondents to select the most important and second most important reasons for registering for RideNow. Thirty-five percent (35%) of respondents indicated preferential parking was the most important reason for enrolling in the program and 24% cited it as the second most important reason. Preferential parking is an appealing incentive because both the Pleasanton and Dublin lots fill up early. The Pleasanton side lot fills by 7:40 am and the Dublin side fills by 8:35 am. Respondents also registered for the program because they thought it would be more convenient than other ways to access the BART station. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the survey respondents stated this to be their most important reason for enrolling in RideNow. Improving air quality by reducing vehicle trips was the second most important reason stated by 19% of respondents. Other important reasons for registering for RideNow include interest in an innovative program, leaving a car at home for family members and getting a free BART ticket. Figure 4-23 shows the reasons people register for RideNow.

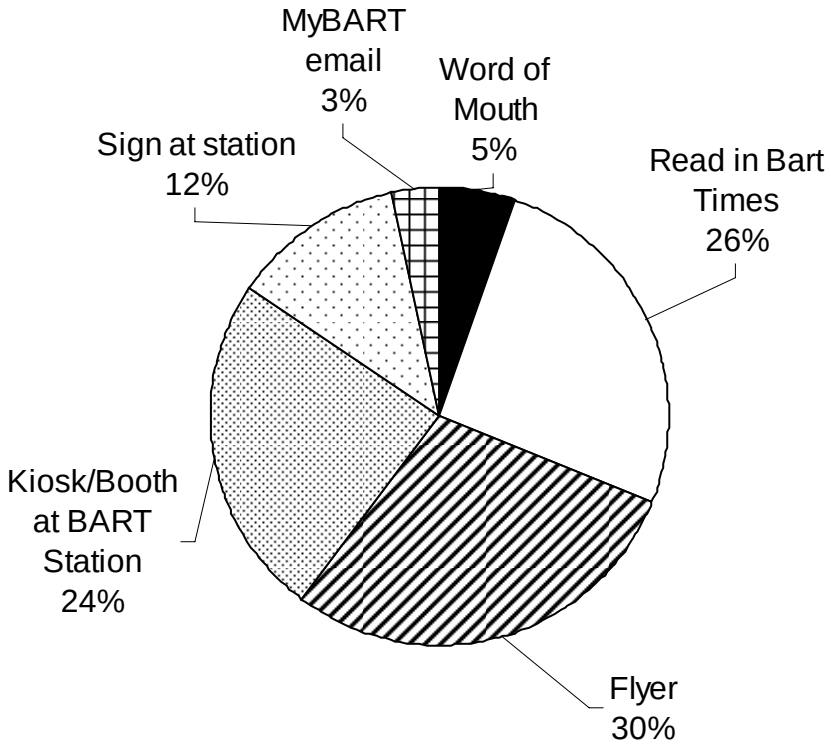
## Figure 4-23 Reasons Respondents Registered for RideNow




## How Respondents Heard about RideNow

Respondents heard about RideNow from a variety of sources. Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents heard about the program through three channels; 30% heard about the program from a flyer; 26% read about RideNow in the BARTtimes and 24% found out about the program from the kiosk at the BART station. Since there were many different types of flyers distributed over the course of the program including a seat drop flyer, a windshield flyer, and a flyer handed out at the BART station, the 30% of participants who heard about the program from a flyer could be referring to any of several distributed flyers. Another 12% found out about RideNow from a sign at the station. This could have been the banner sign hanging at the station or a digital display sign at the platform. The remaining learned of the program through word-of-mouth and MyBART email (see Figure 4-24 below).

## Figure 4-24 How Respondents Heard about RideNow




## Orientation

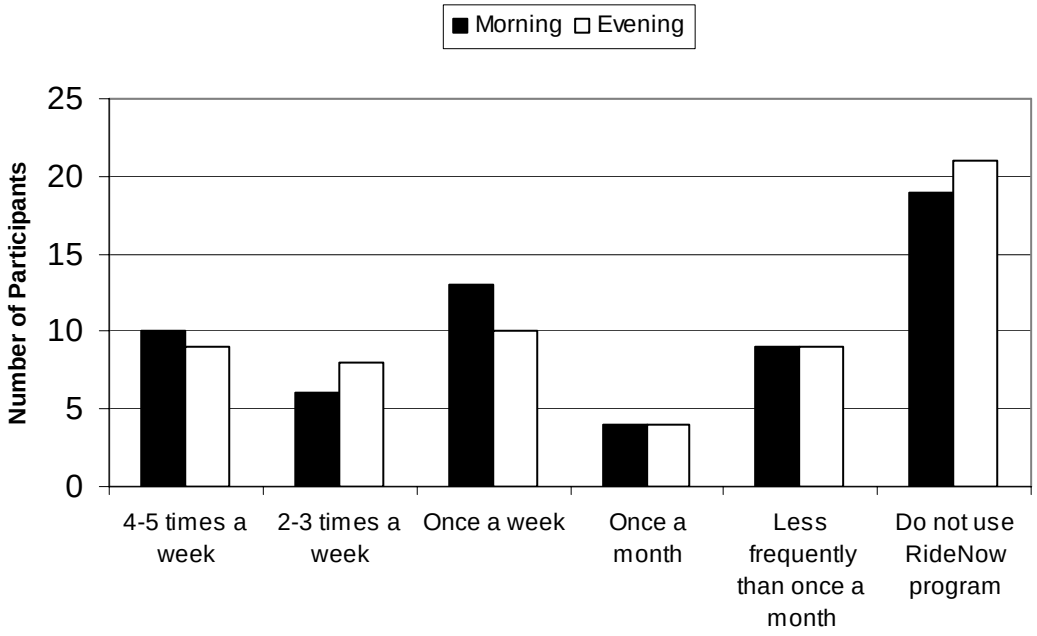
The "Before Survey" asked if the RideNow orientation was helpful and it provided space for respondents to offer comments. Over ninety-five percent of respondents indicated that the orientation was helpful because it answered detailed questions about how to use the program. Several people stated they would like extended morning hours for ride match requests (from 6:30 am to 8:30 am rather than 7:00 am to 8:00 am).

## Participation

When looking at the number of drivers versus riders, it appears that the driver to rider ratio was higher than ideal. About half of respondents to the "After Survey" said they usually participate as a driver. Twenty-eight percent (28%) participate as both a rider and a driver, and 19% participate as a rider.

Participation rates were low for those who responded to the "After Survey". About a third of respondents said they typically do not use RideNow in the morning or in the evening. Participation rates are similar in the mornings and the evenings. Sixteen percent (16%) to 21% of respondents said they use RideNow once a week. Only 15% to 16% of respondents said that they use RideNow four to five times a week. Figure 4-25 shows the frequency of using RideNow in the mornings and the evenings.

## Figure 4-25 Frequency of Using RideNow in the Morning and in the Evening



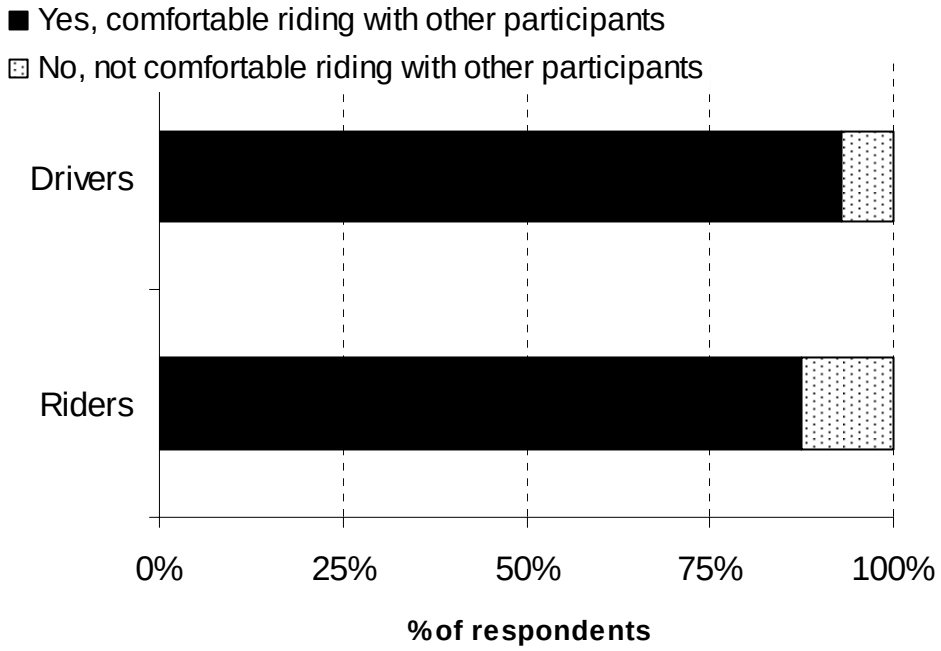

## Accessing the Ride-matching System

In the morning, the website was a more popular choice to access the ride-matching system than the phone. Seventy-four percent (74%) of respondents said they usually access the system through the website or both the website and phone. Twenty-six percent (26%) of participants access the system by phone. Eighty-three percent (83%) of respondents who used the website thought it was easy to use. Accessing the system by phone was easy to do for about three-fourths of respondents. Several participants mentioned that the phone system was not very user-friendly, that the menu could have been more intuitive, and that it took a long time to complete the request on the phone.

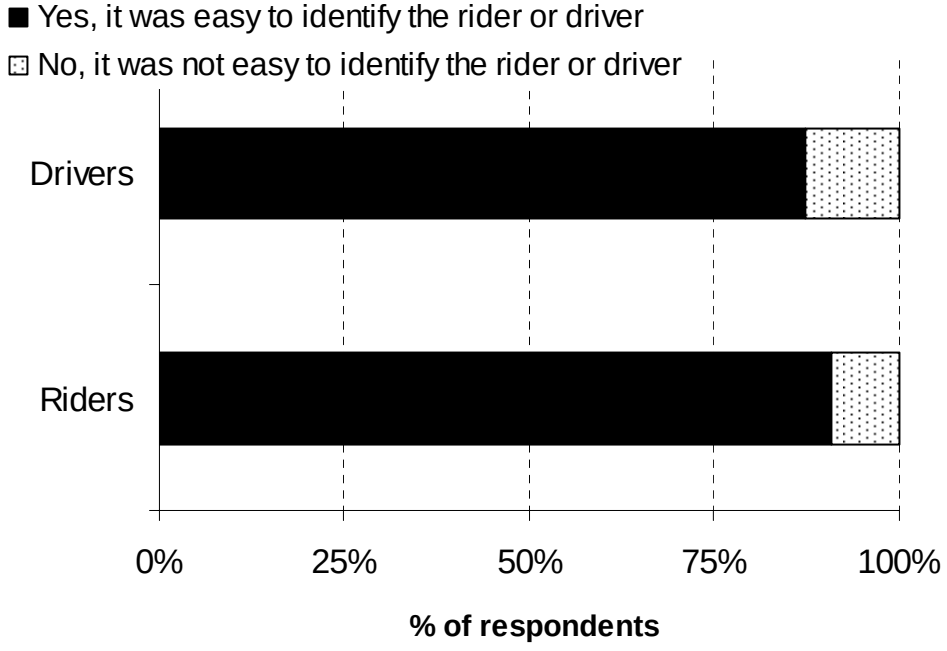
## Comfort Riding with Others

Figure 4-26 shows drivers and riders comfort levels in riding with other RideNow participants. Ninety-three percent (93%) of drivers said that they felt comfortable riding with other participants and 88% of riders said that they felt comfortable riding with others. Over 90% of riders thought it was easy to identify the driver picking them up. Almost the same percentage of drivers thought it was easy to identify the riders (see Figure 4-27). Respondents reported relatively short wait times. All drivers waited 15 minutes or less, with 59% waiting 5 minutes or less. Riders waited slightly longer. Ninety percent (90%) of riders waited 15 minutes or less, with 62% waiting 10-15 minutes to be picked-up.

## Figure 4-26 Drivers and Riders Comfort Levels in Riding with Others



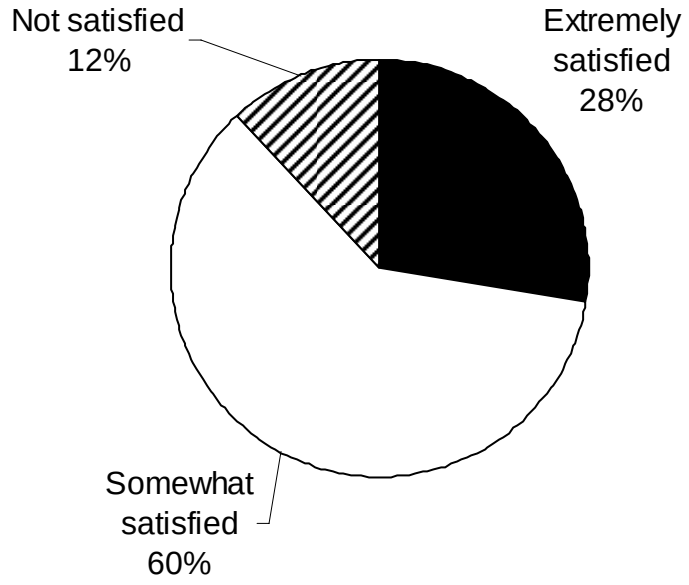

## Figure 4-27 Drivers Ease at Identifying Riders and Riders Ease at Identifying



## Satisfaction with RideNow

Overall, respondents indicated that they liked the program. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents stated that they were either somewhat satisfied or extremely satisfied with RideNow (see Figure 4-28). Eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents also thought that the program was convenient. When asked what they like best about RideNow, many people cited preferred parking at the BART station as their favorite part of the program. Participants liked having a guaranteed parking space close to the station. Several participants liked the concept of the program – the idea of flexibility, carpooling to BART, helping the environment, and reducing congestion. The free BART tickets were also mentioned as one of the best things about the program. Many people said that the program has great potential but needs some improvement.

## Figure 4-28 Overall Participant Satisfaction with RideNow




Of the survey respondents that received a ridematch, 50% stated they were extremely satisfied with the program and another 50% responded that they were somewhat satisfied with the program.

A further breakdown of respondents between those that received a ridematch and those that did not reveals variation in satisfaction levels. Of the respondents who did not receive a ridematch, only 14% were extremely satisfied, two-thirds (67%) were somewhat satisfied, and 19% were not satisfied with the program.

As shown in Figure 4-29 below, survey respondents who received a ridematch were much more likely to be extremely satisfied with the program.

## Figure 4-29 Participant Satisfaction Rate by Match Status

| | Matched | | Not Matched | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely Satisfied | 11 | 50% | 5 | 14% |
| Somewhat Satisfied | 11 | 50% | 24 | 67% |
| Not Satisfied | 0 | 0% | 7 | 19% |
| **Total** | **22** | | **36** | |

The "After Survey" asked people what they liked least about RideNow and what they would like to see improved. Many participants thought that the program should start earlier than 7:00 am. Respondents mentioned that the telephone system was frustrating or difficult to use. Some did not like having to access the phone system for the ride home while on BART. Having to wait until the last minute to make a call for a match was also mentioned as something respondents liked least about RideNow.

When asked what improvements they would like to see, participants mentioned that they would like to have a larger pool of participants so that they could obtain more ride matches. They suggested advertising the program more to encourage more people to use it. They also wanted RideNow to start earlier in the day. A couple of respondents mentioned that they would like to have drivers and riders pre-screened. Respondents also suggested setting up permanent carpools or creating a BART shuttle. Respondents would like to see the following improvements in the program:

- Longer hours
- Better phone system
- More participants
- More riders compared to drivers
- Ability to plan for rides ahead of time

# Anecdotal Participant Feedback

In addition to the before and after surveys, participants were able to ask questions about RideNow by either calling the RideNow hotline, emailing info@ridenow.org, or posting a comment on the RideNow bulletin board. After the aggressive marketing launch at the end of March 2006, program comments and questions were received on a regular basis.

The vast majority of participant feedback related to parking and parking credits. The most frequently cited comments addressed:

- Parking was unavailable in RideNow spaces
- Parking credit was subtracted from participants account in error
- Questions about how to earn parking credits

Other common comments were:

- "My match partner never showed up at the specified location"
- "The program hours should start earlier, before 7 am"
- "Ridematches should be announced earlier so I can plan ahead with some advance warning"
- "Picking up my ridematch partner would have required me to drive out of my way"

These comments suggest that participants are willing to make the effort to use a complex program, but that simplifying the program especially the parking requirements, and providing more flexibility in the hours of operation would be desirable improvements.

# Chapter 5. Major Findings and Recommendations

This chapter summarizes the major findings of the RideNow pilot project and presents a set of recommendations that are designed to improve the RideNow program for potential future use. The recommendations also address the implementation issues associated with complex regional projects and in developing marketing strategies for other transportation alternatives.

## Major Findings

The RideNow pilot project provided BART patrons with a new and flexible option for traveling between home and the Dublin\Pleasanton BART station. Based on feedback from participants and the participating agencies, the program did have value for people who desire to carpool, but have complex commutes that do not permit participation in more traditional carpool programs. However, not enough information is known about how many people would be attracted to this type of flexible program compared to other ridesharing or other programs designed to get people out of their single occupant vehicles and if the program would be cost effective. Both agencies and program participants believe that if the program were continued it would need to be substantially simplified in terms program operations including the phone system, the amount of information that needs to be transferred to participants when they register, and the parking rules and requirements. They also feel that increased marketing activities to target audiences, and more time to build volume would be needed.

The following section presents the major findings of the RideNow demonstration project.

### Complex Institutional Issues

There were several complex institutional issues making the RideNow program very difficult to implement. New hardware needed to be installed on BART property requiring coordination between several BART divisions, other governmental agencies, unions and private vendors. Another significant challenge was securing dedicated RideNow parking spaces at a station in which parking is limited and at a time when BART recently introduced a new carpool program. These issues were further complicated by the fact that the ACCMA, an outside agency, was sponsoring the project and had no oversight authority of BART personnel. There was no dedicated BART staff person serving as the Project Manager who would normally act as the project lead and oversee all aspects project implementation. Without a dedicated person committed to the project and serving as its champion, complex tasks requiring inter-departmental and inter-agency coordination do not receive high priority. As a result, it took much longer than anticipated to finalize all of the logistics and launch the program.

## RideNow Software

Overall, the RideNow software functioned well. Users were able to make ride match requests and it successfully matched riders with drivers. It captured a series of data on number of requests, ride matches, participant demographic information and other relevant data. However, RideNow automation was somewhat limited even though it is web-based software. For example, there was no automatic reply to people who successfully registered online leaving some people wondering if they indeed registered properly. Even though people could not reregister multiple times they were unable to verify their registration. It was not capable of maintaining an email list of participants to send out periodic email messages nor was it capable of other routine automatic replies for corresponding with users. This meant a significant amount of manual labor was required to maintain ongoing communications with participants. Additionally, the software was based on BART train schedules rather than real-time arrival times that resulted in some missed matches in the evening when trains were delayed or late. The kiosk erased names from the screen after 30 minutes, which meant participants who arrived late at the station might not have been aware of their matches.

## Complex Program

RideNow is a complex program that was not easily understood by participants. Even though the program had its own website with a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section, there were still many participants who stated they did not understand all of the program features. Based on survey responses and anecdotal feedback, the most difficult aspects of the program were understanding parking credits and uncertainty about successfully make ridematch requests, at least initially. Once individuals were trained on how to use the program at the orientation sessions or through one on one phone calls with the operator of the program, they became fairly comfortable with the procedures and requirements. To get program participants to this level of comfort and understanding required labor intensive hands on interaction. The complexity of the parking portion of the program also made it difficult for BART Police and CSOs to enforce misuse of the designated RideNow parking spaces. BART police were unsure what to look for when policing the RideNow parking spaces and did not have the ability to tell if people were misusing the program. Since they were unclear about the program rules, enforcement was difficult.

## Cumbersome Features

Program participants were generally satisfied with RideNow. The "after survey" revealed that 88% of respondents stated they were somewhat or extremely satisfied with the program. However, there are several aspects of the program that were problematic for users such as:

- Waiting until the last minute to request an afternoon ridematch that required using a cell phone while riding on BART
- Cumbersome phone system with some difficult prompts and hard to hear while aboard the BART train
- Complex parking rules and requirements especially the parking credits
- Hearing about morning ridematch within only 15 minutes of requested departure time
- Program hours were limiting

While RideNow staff communicated with participants through email and telephone communication to answer questions and help users navigate the system, it was not possible to make significant changes during the six-month demonstration period.

## Interest in Dynamic Ridesharing to Areas Beyond Tri-Valley Area

During the six month RideNow demonstration program, a number of inquiries were received by BART riders who expressed interest in carpooling to the Dublin\Pleasanton station but did not reside in one of the four eligible Tri Valley Cities - Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore, or San Ramon. Approximately 50 requests were made from commuters living outside the Tri-Valley cities, with the majority residing in the Central Valley; Tracy, Stockton, Modesto and even Merced. Other locations included Sacramento, Elk Grove and Vallejo, as well "reverse commuters" living in San Francisco and Oakland. These people were personally contacted and informed that they were not eligible to participate in RideNow during the demonstration period.

The RideNow program focused on Tri-Valley residents in eastern Alameda County. Many commuters who live in outlying communities and work in Alameda County need to travel through East County to get to work. This causes traffic congestion on East County roadways, especially Interstate 580, and 680 as well increasing traffic volumes on many local streets and roads. Interest in RideNow from residents in outlying communities reveals that commuters are looking for alternative and innovative ways to get to work. For residents in the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys, there are no viable public transportation options and alternative forms of transportation to the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station are limited. This could indicate that investments in transportation demand management (TDM) programs in neighboring counties could provide alternative forms of transportation and could relieve congestion and improve air quality in Alameda County.

## Marketing

Several different marketing strategies were employed to recruit participants with various degrees of success. The marketing activities launched in March 2006 that emphasized the "personal touch" yielded the best response. Even though RideNow is a "high tech" program, the most effective marketing strategies were face-to-face personalized information sharing with BART patrons. This type of marketing known as "High Touch" generated more interest

and participation in the program than any other strategy. These included on-site orientations, distributing flyers at the stations and personally speaking with interested BART riders.

# Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered to improve any potential future testing of RideNow and to help implement and market other alternative transportation services. These recommendations are based on the evaluation of the RideNow demonstration and the major findings described above,

## Simplify the RideNow Program

Even though participants were generally satisfied with RideNow, there are several program features that were difficult for users to understand and need to be refined to be more user-friendly. Specific suggestions for fine-tuning RideNow are:

- Increase and sustain marketing to attract a greater volume of participants. This includes marketing at the home end and going directly to employers who can target marketing to employers.
- Offer BART ticket incentives to initially attract program participants.
- Allow participants to request afternoon matches while at their workplace using the website.
- Simplify and automate the amount of information that needs to be transferred to participants after registration.
- Send periodic updates to program participants to keep them informed about changes to RideNow.
- Maintain preferential parking as a key feature but eliminate use of parking credits because it is difficult for participants to understand and for BART police to enforce.
- Upgrade and add features to the telephone system to provide more prompts and build in more flexibility in the telephone tree.
- Provide ridematch status in the morning with more advance lead-time. Ideally up to one hour is preferable.
- Base evening matches on real-time train schedules
- Enhance software matching capabilities so that drivers are not "backtracking" to pick up riders in the morning.
- Expand RideNow hours in the morning to begin program at 6am and extend to 9am.

## Improve Cost Effectiveness of Dynamic Ridesharing Programs

RideNow is a unique program designed to test the concept of dynamic ridesharing at the Dublin\Pleasanton BART station. It differs from traditional carpooling in that it is designed as an "instant match" and allows people with complex commutes to carpool on an as needed basis. While a ridesharing program like RideNow is of value to people in the ridesharing population, it is unknown how many people would be attracted to such a program compared to other ridesharing or other programs that encourage people to get out of their cars. More information is needed on how dynamic ridesharing programs like RideNow compare to other programs in terms of cost effectiveness and the ability to build a group of participants that can sustain the program.

One way to do this could be to distinguish this program from casual carpooling and regular carpool programs, but package and market this program in conjunction with other ridesharing services. As a stand-alone project, it was difficult and costly to market. By incorporating a dynamic ridesharing element like RideNow into the toolbox of ridesharing and TDM services it could gain credibility and visibility in the ridesharing community and address broader transportation goals by providing flexible option to traditional and non-traditional carpoolers and supporting traditional carpooling programs.

## Streamline the Process When Implementing a Complex Project

There are many diverse challenges when trying to implement a new and innovative transportation program. Demonstration projects can be especially difficult because they are testing something new and are not guaranteed a long-term future. Successful and timely implementation is further challenged when there is more than one agency involved creating institutional barriers that are difficult to overcome. While it is acknowledged that established procedures are in place for good reasons, it is recommended that implementing agencies consider offering greater flexibility in their routine policies and procedures to help jump start" these types of projects. This could mean streamlining the process for issuing permits, bypassing routine approval processes, or fast tracking efforts to purchase or install hardware.

## Expand Dynamic Ridesharing Programs to Regions Outside Alameda County and the Bay Area if They Contribute to Congestion in the Bay Area

If a regional ridesharing agency were to implement a dynamic ridesharing program like RideNow, it is recommended that the program consider including regions outside Alameda County and the Bay Area that contribute to congestion in Alameda County and the Bay Area. In the case of RideNow, approximately one-quarter of the people who expressed interest in the RideNow program were ineligible because they did not live in one of the Tri-Valley cities. Many of them lived in the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys in cities like Tracy and Stockton and commuted to the Bay Area. Given this interest and the growing

bedroom communities in these areas, it is valuable to explore the benefits and drawbacks of extending the program to serve communities outside the Bay Area.

## Develop a Personalized Marketing Strategy for Transportation Alternatives

The marketing and outreach strategies demonstrated that the personalized touch was very effective in attracting interest in RideNow. Speaking directly to BART patrons on the platforms, distributing flyers, "tabling" at the concourse level, and other face-to-face efforts played a key role in encouraging RideNow participation. This approach, known as high-touch marketing, is gaining popularity in the transportation industry. Based on RideNow's limited and successful experience with personalized marketing and other efforts in the Bay Area[1] suggests this approach should be further explored as part of an overall marketing strategy for a wide range of transportation alternatives. Consistent with the recommendation to possibly incorporate RideNow into a broader package of ridesharing alternatives, future marketing strategies could be developed with a more holistic approach addressing a broad array of transportation alternatives. This could take the form of marketing and outreach activities tailored to individual needs offering a wide array of transportation services with RideNow as one of several TDM options. This recommendation has broader context than the narrow focus of RideNow and may be valuable to further develop the concept of High Touch marketing in a regional context.

## Conclusion

The RideNow Pilot Program demonstrated that there is a demand for flexible and innovative carpooling options, establishing that dynamic ridesharing can provide a viable travel option for people who have complex commutes or who are not interested in traditional carpooling programs. This report evaluated the pilot from a technical, administrative, marketing, cost and operational perspective. As with any new program there were benefits (there is interest in flexible ridesharing programs like RideNow), limitations, and opportunities for improvement. To be more successful, dynamic ridesharing programs like RideNow could be incorporated into the toolbox of ridesharing and TDM services where it could gain credibility and visibility in the ridesharing community and address broader transportation goals.

[1] The Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC) of the San Francisco Bay Area is studying high-touch marketing strategies in Alameda County. See the marketing section of Chapter 4 for more details.

# Acknowledgements


**Task Force Members**

- Innaji Ike, BART
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- Jeff Holm, FHWA
- Allen Greenburg, FHWA

**Consulting Team**

*Nelson\Nygaard*

- Linda Rhine, Project Manager
- Joey Goldman, Marketing Specialist
- Jeff Flynn, Project Coordinator

*Ride Now, Inc.*

- Dan Kirshner, Software Program Designer

**511 Regional Rideshare**

- Deborah Maus
- LeShawn Martin
- Jon Eastlund

**RIDES* (RIDES participated in the pilot until June 2005)**

- Drew Hutchinson
- Judy Miller
- Karen Bakar

# APPENDIX A

## OTHER SIMILAR DYNAMIC RIDESHARING PROGRAMS

# Other Similar Dynamic Ridesharing Programs

## Seattle Smart Traveler

The Seattle Smart Traveler program focused on students, faculty, and staff at the University. The system could be accessed by e-mail or web pate 24 hours a day. The system automatically sent an email to the requestor listing the e-mail addresses and phone numbers of potential matches. Making contact and arranging a ride was left up to participants. Key statistics of the program are listed below.

- 400 individuals registered
- 700 trips were requested
- 150 matches made
- At least 41 individuals actually established a carpool for the requested trip.
- Operated for 15 months from 1995-1997
- Contact: ITS Research Programs, UW (206) 616-1763 its@its.washington.edu[3]

## Bellevue Smart Traveler

The Bellevue Smart Traveler program in Bellevue, WA focused on employees who worked within an eight square block area of downtown Bellevue and lived throughout the Puget Sound area. The system could be accessed via telephone, pagers, and at a kiosk. Users were divided into groups based on where they lived and pick-up/drop-off points where they traveled. A guaranteed ride home program provided a back up for participants who were unable to obtain a return trip home. The results of the Smart Traveler Program are:

- 134 people applied for membership but only 53 members were in viable groups
- 3 ridesharing groups were formed varying from 8 to 27 people
- At least 6 ride marches were made (logging ride matches was optional, so there could have been more)
- Operated from November 1993 to April 1994[4]

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[3] Seattle Smart Traveler http://www.its.washington.edu/sst/; ITS Research Program, UW – Seattle Smart Traveler http://www.ivhs.washington.
edu/projects/sst.html; Seattle Smart Traveler http://www.ivhs.washington.edu/pubs/wc96sst.pdf; Seattle Smart Traveler http://www.its.washington.
edu/pubs/trb97sst.pdf; Seattle Smart Traveler: Dynamic Ridematching on the World Wide Web http://www.its.washington.edu/pubs/trans_c.pdf;
Assessment of the Seattle Smart Traveler http://www.itsdocs.fhwa.dot.gov/jpodocs/repts_te/8r401!.pdf

[4] http://www.itsdocs.fhwa.dot.gov/JPODOCS/REPTS_TE/1DF01!.HTM; Bellevue Smart Traveler: Design, Demonstration, and Assessment http://www.itsdocs.fhwa.dot.gov//JPODOCS/REPTS_TE/25Q01!.PDF

### Los Angeles Smart Traveler

As part of an overall ridesharing program the Smart Traveler program in Los Angeles was a dynamic ridesharing program offered after the 1994 Northridge Earthquake. The system could be accessed by phone. Ride match lists were provided to the requester who had the option of calling the potential matches or having a message automatically sent to people on the list. The program outcome is summarized below:

- The system recorded an average of 20 – 40 calls per week
- It is not known how many rides were actually arranged
- Operated from July 1994 - September 1994

### NuRide

NuRide is a dynamic ridesharing program currently in operation in the Washington DC area. The program is open to anyone who lives in the DC area. Participants register for NuRide on a website (there is no phone system) and trips are scheduled online. Trips can be scheduled up to 30 minutes ahead of time. After the trip, users confirm that the trip has been taken and rate each other. Through this rating system participants can earn points that can be redeemed at sponsoring retailers. Retailers participate because they get free marketing.

There are currently 2000 participants, and about 200 people sign up a month. NuRide only markets at large employers, such as AOL, and the rest is word of mouth. There is a Guaranteed Ride Home Program offered by the MPO but less than .1% of participants use it.

# APPENDIX B

## ORIENTATION MATERIALS

# Ride Now! Orientation

Thank you for participating in the RideNow Pilot Program. As a participant, you can share a ride to or from the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station by requesting a ride match right before you are ready to make the trip. Once you are registered, you can make rideshare requests by phone or by using the ridenow.org website. RideNow goes beyond traditional casual carpooling by using a software program to match potential riders and drivers.

To register, go to **www.ridenow.org**, click on "RideNow registration" (at the bottom left), fill out the registration form and submit your information.

To qualify for the RideNow pilot program you must have a cell phone and reside in Pleasanton, Dublin, San Ramon, or Livermore. You must attend our informational orientation and be willing to use the system to find carpool matches.

## Program Incentives

- You will receive a $32 BART ticket if you are one of the first 75 eligible participants to sign up and attend orientation and registration.
- You will receive an additional $20 BART ticket if you make three matches or make 10 requests during the first month of the program.
- As a RideNow driver, you can use preferential parking spaces at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station (see details below.)
- You get to participate in an exciting, new and innovative program!

## How does RideNow work?

You can use RideNow to get a ride to the Dublin/Pleasanton station in the morning and/or from the Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station in the evening.

► *To request a ride match in the morning to the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station:*

1. Call 925-847-7356 or 510-832-3131 or log onto the ridenow.org website that morning or any time the day before you want a ride match.
2. Follow the prompts for information. Indicate the time you would like to start your trip from home and whether you can ride and/or drive.
3. Up to 20 minutes before your anticipated departure time you will be notified of a ride match by a phone call, mobile phone text message, or email. Or you can check for yourself by phone or on the website.

► *To request a ride match in the evening from the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station:*

1. Using a mobile phone, while on the BART train to Dublin/Pleasanton at the first place you get service (likely between West Oakland and Castro Valley) call 510-832-3131 to request a ride match.
2. Follow the prompts for information. Identify the train you are on by indicating what station you are approaching. Indicate whether you will drive or you need a ride.
3. When you get to the Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station, check the kiosk for your ride match. If you get a ride match, meet your ride partner (s) at the kiosk. If you do not get a match, you may be eligible for a Guaranteed Ride Home (see details in "What if I do not get a match section").

## What if I do not get a match?

In the morning, if you do not get a match, you will need to provide your own transportation to the BART station.

In the afternoon/evening, if you got a ride in the morning and request a ride home, but there is no matching driver on your train, then you will be asked to wait for the next train to arrive to see if there is a matching driver on that train. If there is no suitable matching driver on that next train, then you are eligible to take a free cab ride home through the Guaranteed Ride Home program. Here is how it works:

► You will receive three ride vouchers at the orientation session. Vouchers can only be used for travel from the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station to one of the four designated cities – Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore or San Ramon.

► To request cab service, follow these three easy steps:

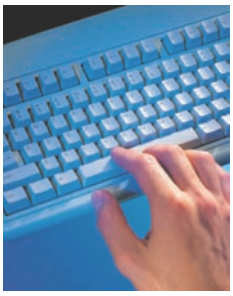
1. Call Tri-City Cab (925-556-0555) and arrange to be picked up at the station (on Scarlett Court).
2. When you are dropped off at home, both sections of the voucher should be completed – you fill out your portion and the driver fills out the driver portion. You retain your copy.
3. You do not pay for the ride; however, you are responsible for tipping the driver.

ALAMEDA COUNTY CMA CONGESTION MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Ride Now!

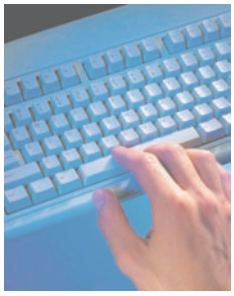
## What can I do to make RideNow work for me?

- Be flexible in the times you want to leave home for BART.
- Be willing either to ride or to drive in the morning.
- Be willing to try it again even if it doesn't work the first time.
- Tell other people about the service (the more people who participate, the more successful it will be.)
- Email info@ridenow.org to provide feedback.
- Complete the Evaluation Survey to provide valuable information for program improvements.



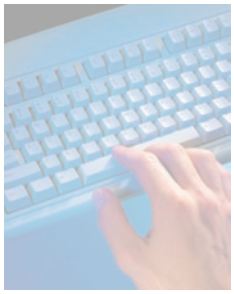
## When am I eligible to park in the preferential parking spaces?

- You can park in the preferential parking spaces if you request a ride match in the morning even if you do not get a ride match AND
- You have at least one parking credit in your account.
- You use a parking credit each time you park in the RideNow preferential parking spaces without a carpool partner.



## Where is the RideNow preferential parking section?

- The spaces are on the Pleasanton side of the station, to the right, as you exit the fare gates.
- Please refer to www.bart.gov for more details.



## How do I get parking credits?

Each participant starts with three parking credits. Drivers earn an additional parking credit each time they offer a ride home in the afternoon.

## How will preferential parking be enforced?

BART Police will enforce parking. When you drive in the morning, you will be asked to provide the license plate number of your car. You must have one or more parking credits in your account to park in a RideNow space without a carpool partner.

## What should I do if I have questions about RideNow?

- Call the RideNow help desk at **925-855-7433 (RIDE**) weekdays between 8:00 am and 9:30 am or between 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm.
- Email info@ridenow.org to request information or report a problem.


Ride Now!
RIDENOW
PARTICIPANT
PARKING
PERMIT
25


Tri City Cab and Limousine (925) 556-0555

Participant, please note:

- This voucher is assigned to you and is invalid if used by someone else.
- Print neatly and fill out form completely. Check mileage and reported fare.
- You are encouraged to pay for the taxi driver tip (10-15%)
- You are eligible for a taxi ride only if you did not find a ride match for your evening commute.

## TO BE COMPLETED BY RideNow PARTICIPANT

Participant Name _____ Date _____

Work Phone (___) _____ Time of Ride _____am/pm

Cell Phone (___) _____

Starting/Pick-Up Location: Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station

Destination/Drop-Off Intersection _____

Destination/Drop-Off City _____

*RideNow guaranteed ride home may only be used if you were a carpool rider this morning and you requested and did not get a match this afternoon.*

Participant Signature:_____

## TO BE COMPLETED BY TRI CITY CAB AND LIMOUSINE

Driver Name _____

Taxi License Number _____

Trip Distance _____miles

Total Fare $ _____

Driver Signature _____

**WHITE and YELLOW = Taxi Company** **PINK = Passenger Copy**

# APPENDIX C

## RIDENOW "BEFORE" SURVEY

Alameda County Congestion Management Agency

# *RideNow* Participant – Before Survey
## *After Completion of Orientation*

1. *In which city or community do you live?*

☐ 1 Dublin ☐ 2 San Ramon
☐ 3 Livermore ☐ 4 Pleasanton
☐ 5 Other *(Specify)*:_____

2. *In which city or community do you work?*

☐ 1 Oakland ☐ 2 San Francisco
☐ 3 Berkeley ☐ 4 Fremont
☐ 5 Other *(Specify)*:_____

3. *What was the most important reason that motivated you to sign-up for RideNow? (Select <u>one</u> answer)*

☐ 1 Getting a free BART ticket
☐ 2 Obtaining a preferential parking space
☐ 3 Leaving car at home for family members
☐ 4 More convenient than other ways to access BART station
☐ 5 Improving air quality by reducing vehicle trips
☐ 6 Interested in innovative programs
☐ 7 Other *(Specify)*:_____

4. *What was the second most important reason for signing-up for* RideNow*? (Select <u>one</u> answer)*

☐ 1 Getting a free BART ticket
☐ 2 Obtaining a preferential parking space
☐ 3 Leaving car at home for family members
☐ 4 More convenient than other ways to access BART station
☐ 5 Improving air quality by reducing vehicle trips
☐ 6 Interested in innovative programs
☐ 7 Other *(Specify)*:_____

5. *Was the* RideNow *program orientation helpful?*

☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No
Comments: _____
_____
_____

## BART Morning Commute

6. *How did you get to the BART station this morning?*

☐ 1 Car: Drive Alone ☐ 2 Car: Dropped off by family or friend
☐ 3 Car: Carpool ☐ 4 Walk or bike
☐ 5 Ride the bus (transit)
☐ 6 Other *(Specify)*:_____

7. *What time did you arrive at the BART station this morning?*

☐ 1 5:00 AM ☐ 2 5:15 AM ☐ 3 5:30 AM ☐ 4 5:45 AM
☐ 5 6:00 AM ☐ 6 6:15 AM ☐ 7 6:30 AM ☐ 8 6:45 AM
☐ 9 7:00 AM ☐ 10 7:15 AM ☐ 11 7:30 AM ☐ 12 7:45 AM
☐ 13 8:00 AM ☐ 14 8:15 AM ☐ 15 8:30 AM ☐ 16 8:45 AM
☐ 17 9:00 AM

8. ***Are you flexible in your arrival time?***

☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No

***8a. If yes, by how many minutes?***

_____ minutes

## BART Evening Commute

9. *How will you get home from the BART station this evening?*

☐ 1 Car: Drive Alone ☐ 2 Car: Picked up by family or friend
☐ 3 Car: Carpool ☐ 4 Walk or bike
☐ 5 Ride the bus (transit)
☐ 6 Other *(Specify)*:_____

10. *What time did you arrive at the BART station this evening?*

☐ 1 4:00 PM ☐ 2 4:15 PM ☐ 3 4:30 PM ☐ 4 4:45 PM
☐ 5 5:00 PM ☐ 6 5:15 PM ☐ 7 5:30 PM ☐ 8 5:45 PM
☐ 9 6:00 PM ☐ 10 6:15 PM ☐ 11 6:30 PM ☐ 12 6:45 PM
☐ 13 7:00 PM ☐ 14 7:15 PM ☐ 15 7:30 PM ☐ 16 7:45 PM
☐ 17 8:00 PM

OVER . . .

***11. How did you hear about RideNow? Please check all that apply.***

☐ 1 Word of mouth ☐ 2 Read in BART Times
☐ 3 Flyer ☐ 4 Kiosk/Booth at BART station
☐ 5 Mailing ☐ 6 Other *(Specify)*:_____

*12. Do you plan on participating as a:*

☐ 1 Driver ☐ 2 Rider ☐ 3 Both Driver and Rider

*13. Have you ever tried casual carpooling (informal carpools that form when drivers and passengers meet at designated locations)?*

☐ 1 Yes ► *go to 13a*
☐ 2 No ► *go to 13b* ☐ 3 Unfamiliar with it ► *go to 14*

*13a. What are some of the reasons why you tried casual carpooling?*

_____

_____

***13b. What are some of the reasons why you never tried casual carpooling?***

_____

_____

*14. What is your occupation? (Optional)*

☐ 1 Management, Business, Computer and Financial
☐ 2 Architecture, Engineering, and Transportation
☐ 3 Life, Physical and Social Science
☐ 4 Community and Social Services
☐ 5 Legal
☐ 6 Education, Training and Library
☐ 7 Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media
☐ 8 Healthcare
☐ 9 Protective Service (Police, Fire, Security, etc.)
☐ 10 Sales and Related
☐ 11 Office and Administrative Support
☐ 12 Other *(Specify)*:_____

*15. Age* (Optional)

☐ 1 16-24 ☐ 4 25-44 ☐ 2 45-59 ☐ 5 60 or over

*16. Income* (Optional)

☐ 1 Under $15,000 ☐ 2 $15,000 - $24,999 ☐ 3 $25,000 - $34,999 ☐ 4 $35,000 - $49,999
☐ 5 $50,000 - $74,999 ☐ 6 $75,000 - $99,999 ☐ 7 More than $100,000

*17. Gender* (Optional)

☐ 1 Female ☐ 2 Male

Thank you for your time!

# APPENDIX D

## RIDENOW "AFTER" SURVEY

Alameda County Congestion Management Agency

# *RideNow* Participant – After Survey

1. *In which city or community do you live?*

☐ 1 Dublin ☐ 2 San Ramon
☐ 3 Livermore ☐ 4 Pleasanton
☐ 5 Other *(Specify)*:_____

2. *In which city or community do you work?*

☐ 1 Oakland ☐ 2 San Francisco
☐ 3 Berkeley ☐ 4 Fremont
☐ 5 Other *(Specify)*:_____

## BART Morning Commute

3. *How do you typically get to the BART station in the morning?*

☐ 1 Car: Drive Alone
☐ 2 Car: Dropped off by family or friend
☐ 3 Car: Carpool (using *RideNow*)
☐ 4 Car: Carpool (do not use *RideNow* program)
☐ 5 Walk or bike
☐ 6 Ride the bus (transit)
☐ 7 Other *(Specify)*:_____

4. *What time do you typically arrive at the BART station in the morning?*

☐ 1 5:00 AM ☐ 2 5:15 AM ☐ 3 5:30 AM ☐ 4 5:45 AM
☐ 5 6:00 AM ☐ 6 6:15 AM ☐ 7 6:30 AM ☐ 8 6:45 AM
☐ 9 7:00 AM ☐ 10 7:15 AM ☐ 11 7:30 AM ☐ 12 7:45 AM
☐ 13 8:00 AM ☐ 14 8:15 AM ☐ 15 8:30 AM ☐ 16 8:45 AM
☐ 17 9:00 AM

5. *How often do you typically use the* RideNow *program to get to the BART station?*

☐ 1 4-5 times a week ☐ 2 2-3 times a week
☐ 3 Once a week ☐ 4 Once a month
☐ 5 Less frequently than once a month
☐ 6 Do not use *RideNow* program

## BART Evening Commute

6. *How do you typically get home from the BART station in the evening?*

☐ 1 Car: Drive Alone
☐ 2 Car: Dropped off by family or friend
☐ 3 Car: Carpool (using *RideNow*)
☐ 4 Car: Carpool (do not use *RideNow* program)
☐ 5 Walk or bike
☐ 6 Ride the bus (transit)
☐ 7 Other *(Specify)*:_____

7. *What time do you typically arrive at the BART station in the evening?*

☐ 1 4:00 PM ☐ 2 4:15 PM ☐ 3 4:30 PM ☐ 4 4:45 PM
☐ 5 5:00 PM ☐ 6 5:15 PM ☐ 7 5:30 PM ☐ 8 5:45 PM
☐ 9 6:00 PM ☐ 10 6:15 PM ☐ 11 6:30 PM ☐ 12 6:45 PM
☐ 13 7:00 PM ☐ 14 7:15 PM ☐ 15 7:30 PM ☐ 16 7:45 PM
☐ 17 8:00 PM

8. *How often do you typically use the* RideNow *program to get home from the BART station in the evening?*

☐ 1 4-5 times a week ☐ 2 2-3 times a week
☐ 3 Once a week ☐ 4 Once a month
☐ 5 Less frequently than once a month
☐ 6 Do not use *RideNow* program

9. *How important is the availability of the Guaranteed Ride Home program to your participation in* RideNow*?*

☐ 1 Very important ☐ 2 Somewhat important
☐ 3 Not at all important

OVER . . .

*10. Do you usually participate in* RideNow *as a "rider" or a "driver"?*

☐ 1 Driver ▶ *complete 10a-c* ☐ 2 Rider ▶ *complete 10d-f* ☐ 3 Both Driver and Rider ▶ *complete 10a-10f*

## Rider

*10a. If you usually participated as a "rider," did you feel comfortable riding with other participants?*

☐ 1 Yes
☐ 2 No

*10b. If you usually participated as a "rider," was it easy to identify the driver?*

☐ 1 Yes
☐ 2 No

*10c. If you usually participated as a "rider," how long did you typically have to wait for others?*

☐ 1 5 minutes or less
☐ 2 10-15 minutes
☐ 3 20-30 minutes
☐ 4 More than 30 minutes

## Driver

*10d. If you usually participated as a "driver," did you feel comfortable riding with other participants?*

☐ 1 Yes
☐ 2 No

*10e. If you usually participated as a "driver," was it easy to identify riders?*

☐ 1 Yes
☐ 2 No

*10f. If you usually participated as a "driver," how long did you typically have to wait for others?*

☐ 1 5 minutes or less
☐ 2 10-15 minutes
☐ 3 20-30 minutes
☐ 4 More than 30 minutes

*11. Did you understand where your pick-up/drop off locations were?*

☐ 1 Yes
☐ 2 No

*12. For your morning commute, do you typically access the ride-matching system by phone or from the website?*

☐ 1 Phone ▶ *go to 12a*
☐ 2 Website ▶ *go to 12b*
☐ 3 Both phone and website ▶ *complete 12a and 12b*

*12a. If you used the phone, was it easy to use?*

☐ 1 Yes
☐ 2 No
Comment: _____
_____
_____
_____

*12b. If you used the website, was it easy to use?*

☐ 1 Yes
☐ 2 No
Comment: _____
_____
_____
_____

*13. How convenient was the* RideNow *program to use?*

☐ 1 Very convenient
☐ 2 Somewhat convenient
☐ 3 Not at all convenient

*14. How would you rate your overall experience with* RideNow*?*

☐ 1 **Extremely satisfied.** I would recommend the program to a friend.
☐ 2 **Somewhat satisfied.** The program has some benefits, but needs improvement.
☐ 3 **Not satisfied.** The program needs improvement before I would use it regularly.

*15. What did you like best about the program?*

_____
_____
_____
_____

*16. What did you like least about the program?*

_____
_____
_____
_____

17. *How could the program be improved?*

_____

_____

_____

18. *Have you participated in* RideNow *in the last month?*

☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No

19. *If you are not participating, why not?*

_____

20. *What is your occupation? (Optional)*

☐ 1 Management, Business, Computer and Financial
☐ 2 Architecture, Engineering, and Transportation
☐ 3 Life, Physical and Social Science
☐ 4 Community and Social Services
☐ 5 Legal
☐ 6 Education, Training and Library
☐ 7 Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media
☐ 8 Healthcare
☐ 9 Protective Service (Police, Fire, Security, etc.)
☐ 10 Sales and Related
☐ 11 Office and Administrative Support
☐ 12 Other *(Specify)*:_____

21. *Age* (Optional)

☐ 1 16-24 ☐ 2 25-44 ☐ 3 45-59 ☐ 4 60 or over

22. *Income* (Optional)

☐ 1 Under $15,000 ☐ 2 $15,000 - $24,999 ☐ 3 $25,000 - $34,999 ☐ 4 $35,000 - $49,999
☐ 5 $50,000 - $74,999 ☐ 6 $75,000 - $99,999 ☐ 7 More than $100,000

23. *Gender* (Optional)

☐ 1 Female ☐ 2 Male

Thank you for your time!