



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Mayor Sam Liccardo,
Vice Mayor Chappie Jones,
Council Member Sylvia Arenas

SUBJECT: CUT THE COMMUTE PLEDGE

DATE: October 20, 2020

Approved

Sam Liccardo, Chappie Jones

Date: October 16, 2020

Sylvia Arenas

RECOMMENDATION

1. Direct City Administration to sign and implement the [Cut the Commute Pledge](#) in accordance with current policies and technical support resources.
2. Direct the City Manager to bring the additional items outlined below forward during, council policy priority-setting, budget process, meet-and-confer, or other appropriate future discussions on prioritizing City workload and resources:
 - a. Encourage a remote work policy of at least 25% in accordance with the City's Administrative Policy 4.2.14 on Flexible Workplace. For those employees that don't have that flexibility, the organization will encourage the use of public transit and alternatives to driving alone through its existing resources and programs.
 - b. Consider and evaluate Recommendations number 2 through 5 of the October 7, 2020 Rules Memo via its existing workplans to realize the City's adopted Climate Smart and General Plan goals.

DISCUSSION

As an effort to clarify the recommendations outlined in the Rules Memo of October 7, 2020, it is important to note that if the City of San José were to take the pledge to Cut the Commute, it is a voluntary program. It would allow employees to telecommute, or work remotely, about 1-2 days per week, post pandemic and once a sense of normalcy resumes in our daily lives and activities, e.g. children and students are physically back at day-care and school, nonessential employees are

allowed to be back in the office full-time. This proposal significantly differs from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's work-from-home proposed mandate that would require employers with more than 25 employees and the ability to conduct work remotely to have 60 percent of their workforce telecommute. Such a mandate could have concerning effects on the economics of downtown businesses, the disproportionate burdens on those who can't afford spacious living and remote work conditions, and potentially may disincentivize development and use of low carbon transportation options such as public transit, biking or walking.

The Cut the Commute campaign differs in that it aligns with several policies and goals of the City aimed at improving sustainability, reducing Green House Gas (GHG) emissions, and supporting employee wellness and work-life balance. The objective of this proposal is to adopt and implement the pledge in alignment with our current policies and goals, particularly the [City's Administrative Policy on Flexible Workplace](#), which was last updated in July 2020. The policy states the Flexible Workplace Program allows a flexible workplan agreement between the manager and employee and is intended to:

- Increase productivity by allowing employees to spend less time commuting and more time on job duties
- Support employee work/life balance
- Reduce the workforce carbon footprint by allowing employees to reduce trips
- Decrease traffic congestion by allowing employees to travel during non-peak hours
- Increase employee job satisfaction
- Attract and retain employees
- Protect employee health and safety and reduce the risk of exposure to communicable disease, when necessary
- Allow for the continuity of government services in the event of an emergency.

In light of COVID-19 we have been given the opportunity to reevaluate some of our programs, processes, and daily activities. Thanks to our commendable staff and administration, the City of San José has already successfully invested in making large-scale remote work feasible and productive during the current pandemic and will likely continue to do so as we transition through the State's COVID-19 Framework. On October 5, 2020 in the presentation update on [Climate Smart San José to the Transportation & Environment Committee](#), it was noted that our employees' commute is the second largest contributor to our Municipal Green House Gas Inventory. Thus, as we work towards achieving our Climate Smart and General Plan goals, it would be a reasonable action for the City of San José to join and lead the regional effort to "Cut the Commute" and that our employees contribute to emissions reductions in advancement of our stated goals.