ITS SEMINAR

WEB AND TELEPHONE TECHNOLOGY FOR DYNAMIC RIDESHARING: BAY AREA PILOT PROJECT

Co-sponsored by the
Department of Planning, Policy and Design

Dan Kirshner

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2003
12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m.
Social Ecology I, Room 306

The goal of "dynamic ridesharing" is to provide a technological environment that helps commuters find carpool partners in "real-time" -- close to the time that they actually want to travel. In contrast, traditional carpooling requires fixed schedules specified well in advance. This seminar will describe the San Francisco Bay Area's BART Ride Now! pilot demonstration project. Ride Now! is an Internet-based system that uses each traveler's location and desired travel time to search for the best combination of match partners. Users are notified by an automated telephone voice response system when a match has been made. Previous tests of similar systems have not been successful. The BART project may be promising, however, because it incorporates additional incentives in the form of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane time savings and/or parking spaces reserved for carpoolers in areas where parking is scarce. This presentation will describe the history and design of the system, choice of pilot test locations, and implications for marketing and public relations.

Dan Kirshner worked for many years as a senior economic analyst in the Oakland, California, office of Environmental Defense, a national non-profit environmental advocacy organization that emphasizes the integration of science and economics to solve environmental problems. At Environmental Defense, Dan worked on energy conservation and electric utilities and developed a computer model -- ELFIN -- that was used by the California Energy Commission, Southern California Edison Corporation and other agencies to compare investment in energy conservation with investment in power plants. More recently, he has worked in transportation, advocating congestion pricing. He has promoted a "HOT" lane project that would allow fee-paying solo drivers to use carpool lanes on Interstate 680 in the San Francisco Bay Area. Dan holds bachelor's degrees in economics and physics from the University of California, Santa Cruz. He recently left Environmental Defense to pursue the BART Now! project: http://www.ridenow.org/