Offices praised for traffic plans

By Steve Johnson
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A coalition of business and government groups praised 103 Bay Area employers Wednesday for helping reduce traffic and air pollution by offering their workers carpools, subsidized transit passes, emergency rides home and other such services.

It is the second year the group -- Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters Coalition -- has honored local employers for providing transportation-related benefits. Last year, 84 employers were recognized, which suggests the coalition's message is catching on, according to Robin Snyder, a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency official involved with the coalition.

``I think it's amazing that we're able to increase the list because the economy really hasn't turned around much,'', Snyder said. ''It also says something about the companies' commitment to the environment.''

``To be honored, employers must offer their employees at least one major service -- such as a transit pass, paying workers not to use company parking, or significant telecommuting opportunities -- as well as three other benefits. The benefits could include services like van pools, showers for bicyclists and on-site day care facilities.''

Cisco Systems was among those that made the list. Among other things, it subsidizes employee use of light rail and other public transit, and it runs shuttles from its buildings to nearby transit stations.

Genencor International of Palo Alto, which says one-third of its employees use public transportation, provides cars for its employees to use during the day for emergencies, medical appointments and errands.

And the city of Mountain View recently bought bicycle shelters at a light-rail station to encourage its employees to leave their cars at home.

Source: Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters Coalition