



OC Commuter

News for a better commute from the OC Rideshare Office



Find a Better Commute—Join a Virtual “Lunch and Learn”

The Rideshare Office is offering a series of “Lunch and Learn” workshops where you can find out about various rideshare options that can help you find a better way to commute.

The 30-minute workshops are conducted online via Teams, followed by a 30-minute session for participants to ask questions.

Mark Your Calendar for the Next Lunch and Learn:

Wednesday, April 19, 12 Noon

Topic: Vanpooling — Is It For You?

Details: A vanpool is a group of people who commute together on a regular basis in a leased van—saving riders money and time while reducing stress. It’s ideal for people who travel 15 miles or more to work.

Learn how to get a vanpool going, qualify for monthly subsidies of up to \$500, pay for fares while saving on income tax and more.

How to Join the Lunch and Learn

You don’t need to pre-register. Just [click on this link](#) at the start of the workshop to participate.

If you have questions, or to sign up for an email reminder about the Lunch and Learn, contact the Rideshare Office at 714.834.7600,

rideshare@ocgov.com.

“My Commute”

Deanna Parsons rides the bus most days from Lake Forest to where she works at the Santa Ana Courthouse. Her commute takes about 45 minutes, which she says is no longer than it would take to drive.



“I take the bus in order to save on gas and save wear and tear on my car,” she says.

Instead of battling traffic, she’s able to use her commute time to relax or listen to audio books.

One of the main things Deanna appreciates about taking transit to work is that it’s so convenient. “It’s just one bus to get to work. I don’t have to do any transfers,” she says. “It’s very simple.”



Introducing...SoCal511.com

Now you can find resources for planning your commute at the recently expanded website SoCal511.com (formerly go511.com).

It’s a one-stop-shop for transportation help in Southern California. Access traffic maps and alerts, traffic cameras showing real-time road and freeway conditions, transit trip routing, Park & Ride lot maps, as well as information on biking, vanpooling, carpooling and more.



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How Are County and Superior Court Employees Getting to Work?

It turns out—even though more of you are returning to in-office work—you're not all driving alone to get here.

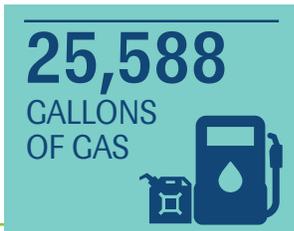
According to the most recent transportation survey, the top alternative to driving solo among County and Superior Court employees continues to be teleworking.

Flexible work schedules also helped keep cars off the road. During the survey week, more than 13,000 round-trip commutes were eliminated thanks to days off from people working flex schedules.

Carpooling increased 23% over the year prior. Bus ridership more than doubled.

A few other findings:

COMMUTERS SAVED (BASED ON ROUND TRIPS)



Work Begins on SR 55—Get Construction Alerts

Construction is now underway on four miles of SR-55, between I-405 and I-5 as part of a three-year improvement project.

Crews are demolishing a portion of the first of four bridges. The two outside lanes on northbound SR-55 will be closed, and detour signs will be in place to guide motorists around the closures.

For construction updates or to sign up for alerts, [visit the project website at octa.net](#). You can also text 55FWYProject to 877.587.3065 to receive text notifications.



The Dodger Stadium Express Rolls Out March 30

Baseball fans can again get to games at Dodger Stadium without the hassle and expense of driving and parking with the **Dodger Stadium Express**.

Buses run from two locations: Union Station in downtown Los Angeles (accessible by Metrolink) and the South Bay Harbor Gateway Transit Center in Gardena.

It's free to ride, though regular fares apply on all other connecting bus and rail services.

Students Save 25% on Metrolink Fares



This spring, students of any age are eligible for a 25% student discount. Simply select the student fare type when purchasing

your ticket at any Metrolink ticket machine or on the Metrolink Mobile App. A valid Student ID must be available upon fare inspection. Get details at [metrolinktrains.com](#).





Earth Day Is April 22

Celebrate clean air efforts by ridesharing on Earth Day.

On average, you can prevent about a pound of pollutants for every mile you don't drive.

You can ride free all day on L.A. Metro Bus and Rail. Metrolink may also offer special Earth Day promotions—join them on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to learn more.

Earth Day organizers offer a fun guide featuring [52 Ways to Invest in Our Planet](#)—from driving less to switching to a clean-fuel vehicle to buying less plastic and more.

You can also link to a [personal carbon footprint calculator](#)—see how those changes you make (like ridesharing) can add up.

Go to [earthday.org](#) to find out about virtual and in-person Earth Day events.



Free Guided Wilderness Hike

OCTA runs free docent-led hikes on the wilderness preserves it protects. The next hike is April 22, 9-11 a.m. at [the Pacific Horizon Preserve in Laguna Beach, octa.net](#).

Deals & Discounts



SoCal Explorer

Get Discounts and Earn Free Tickets with the Metrolink SoCal Explorer Loyalty Program

Earn points every time you ride Metrolink—whether you're a daily rider or only take the train on occasion. Points can be redeemed for future Metrolink tickets.

As a SoCal Explorer member you'll earn 1 point per mile weekdays. On weekends, you earn 50 points no matter where your trip takes you.

It's free to sign up. As a member, you'll also get access to discounts at restaurants, retailers and attractions across Southern California.

For details, and to see a list of participating merchants, visit [metrolinktrains.com](#).

Earn up to \$125 in Gift Cards When You Start Ridesharing

If you live in Riverside or San Bernardino counties, you may qualify to earn gift cards when you start ridesharing.

With the \$5/Day Incentive Program, you can earn \$5 a day in gift cards—up to \$125—for every day you carpool, vanpool or ride bus/rail to work in a three-month period. It's open to new ridesharers who have not yet participated in the program.

For details, visit [IECommuter.org](#).

Save Up to 75% on Fares When You Try Transit

Did you know...? The County's Try Transit program [reimburses you up to 75% of the cost of your OC Bus or Metrolink train pass for the first three months](#).

Give transit a try and you may qualify for 75% back on fares for the first month, 50% the second month and 25% the third month.

The incentive is open to new ridesharers only.

Call the Rideshare Office at 714.834.7600 or email [rideshare@ocgov.com](#) for more information.



Get in Gear for Bike Month

May is Bike Month, with Bike to Work Day on Thursday May 18. Locally, transportation agencies—including the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and Metrolink—are gearing up to offer special events for bicyclists all month long.

Here, we offer some tips to get ready to participate in the big event:

- If it's been a while since you've rolled out your bike, consider taking it for a tune-up to make sure it's road ready.
 - Visit OCTA online for tips [on bike safety](#) and to brush up on the rules of the road.
 - Find a route. You can use the [OC Bikeways map](#) or an app such as [MapMyRide](#), which identifies routes with bike lanes or fewer hills.
 - Live too far from the office to bike the whole way? Metrolink allows you to bring your bike onboard. OC Bus (and most transit agencies) have front-end bike racks where you can stow your bike before you board.
 - OCTA will feature Bike Month contests and information at [octa.net/bike](#) and on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). You can also look for Bike Month events at [metrolinktrains.com](#).



Thank a Bus Driver—Win a Bus Pass

National Transit Operator and Worker Appreciation Day is March 18. In honor of the occasion, OC Bus riders are asked to thank their coach operator and leave a positive comment online at [octa.net](#) for a chance to win a 30-Day OC Bus Pass.



Win Metrolink Tickets to Get to Swallows Day in San Juan Capistrano

Take a Metrolink Daycation to the Swallows Day Parade in San Juan Capistrano on March 25. Enter to win two round-trip Metrolink tickets at [octa.net/MetrolinkWeekends](#).

Regular Metrolink fare is \$10 for adults on weekends, and kids 17 and under ride free.



OC Bus Service Changes

OC Bus last month made schedule adjustments on dozens of bus routes to improve service and better meet riders' needs.

For the most current OC Bus routing information, call 714.636.RIDE or visit [February 12 eBusbook](#).



SUBSCRIBE



Sign Up for Next Stop for the Latest OC Bus News

Next Stop—a free monthly online newsletter for OC Bus riders—is packed with news about saving, discounts, great places to go and how to get the most out of your ride.

Sign up to have it delivered to your email inbox at [octa.net](#).



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Email: rideshare@ocgov.com
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601 N. Ross St., 2nd Floor, Santa Ana



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“My Commute”

Edgar Cisneros drives to work in an electric vehicle (EV)—from where he lives in Riverside to his job with the Probation Department in Santa Ana. The EV not only saves him money on gas, but he saves time, too.



“I have the decal so I can go in the carpool lane and also take advantage of the 91 FasTrak,” he says. “Plus, with an EV, you also don’t waste time at gas stations.”

When purchasing his EV, he was able to take advantage of incentive programs through the State of California, as well as the **\$100 bonus incentive** offered through the County Rideshare Office.



Metrolink \$15 Summer Day Pass

Metrolink is bringing back its \$15 Summer Day Pass, which provides unlimited rides on one weekday of travel throughout the Metrolink system.

Available exclusively via the Metrolink Mobile App,* the \$15 Summer Day Pass will be offered through Sept. 2. It’s a great

(Continued on page 2)



3 New Things to Know About Life in the Fast Lane

Southern Californians have access to a vast network of carpool lanes and express toll lanes that are designed to save motorists time on the drive. A few things you should know before hopping into the fast lane:

1. Before entering carpool lanes, not only should you always check signage to make sure you have enough riders to qualify, but also check the road striping. In the past few years, Orange County changed from double yellow lines to double white lines to indicate where you *cannot* cross into the carpool lanes.

If you see a single solid white line, you can enter/exit the carpool lane, but only if it’s safe to do so. This striping is meant to discourage drivers from crossing where they’re located (and it’s actually illegal to do so in some states).

Stretches of carpool lane with dashed white lines are the preferred entry/exit points.

(Continued on page 2)



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...Life in the Fast Lane (Continued from page 1)

2. You may have heard that the **91 Express Lanes allow carpools of three or more people to ride free or at a discount**—and that’s true! It’s important to know, however, that you still must have a transponder in your vehicle. You must also ride in the designated 3+ occupant lanes.

Otherwise, you could face fines starting at \$25 plus tolls.

3. If you’re traveling to Los Angeles County, there’s a recent change to the toll policy on Metro ExpressLanes on the 10 and 110 Freeways.

In the past, if you entered the lanes without a valid FasTrak account, you’d get a violation notice of \$25 plus the posted toll. To allow people to use the lanes even if they don’t have an account, **Metro recently dropped the violation fee to \$4 plus the toll.**

Carpools can ride free or at a discount if they have FasTrak account. Visit metroexpresslanes.net for details.



...Summer Day Pass

(Continued from page 1)

way to explore Southern California without the hassle and expense of driving and parking. It may also be a bargain option for your commute if the usual Metrolink round-trip fare is higher.

Metrolink will continue to offer its \$10 Weekend Day Pass.

Get details at metrolinktrains.com.

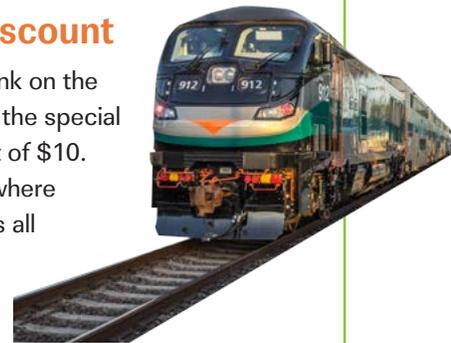
**The Summer Day Pass cannot be purchased through payroll deduction.*

July 4th Discount

Ride Metrolink on the Fourth of July at the special holiday discount of \$10.

You can go anywhere Metrolink travels all day long. The \$10 Holiday Pass can be purchased on

the Metrolink Mobile App or at Metrolink Ticket Machines found under “special ticket options.”



Lunch & Learn: All About the Money-Saving Perk Pass

The Rideshare Office is offering a series of virtual “Lunch and Learn” workshops where you can find out ways to improve your commute.

The next Lunch and Learn is June 21, 12 Noon to 1 p.m. Tune in to learn more about the annual OC Bus Perk Pass, a swipe-card that can be used on any local OCTA fixed-route bus and qualifies you for a lower per-ride rate.

You don’t need to pre-register to attend the Lunch and Learn. Just [click on this link](#) at the start of the workshop to participate.

If you have questions, or to sign up for an email reminder, contact the Rideshare Office at 714.834.7600.



Enter to Win Two Metrolink Tickets and a \$100 Gift Card

Metrolink can help you get to work faster and with less stress than driving—and it’s also great for exploring all that Southern California has to offer.

Until June 30, you can enter to win two roundtrip Metrolink tickets to any Metrolink destination, plus a \$100 gift card, with Metrolink’s Spring Daycation Sweepstakes.

Visit metrolinktrains.com to find destinations you can reach by trains, plus discounts and deals, including the So Cal Explorer loyalty program





OC Green Expo June 10

Find out more about electric vehicles—and maybe even test drive one—at the OC Green Expo and EV Test Drive, June 10, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. in downtown Anaheim.

The free, family-friendly event features interactive activities, booths with EV information, raffles and prizes.

For details, visit anaheim.net/greenexpo.

Free Summer Trolleys

Skip the drive and hop on free summer trolleys that take you to destinations around Orange County:

- **The San Clemente Trolley** operates daily until Oct. 1. The system is made up of two routes: a Downtown Red Line and a North San Clemente Blue Line.

- **The Laguna Niguel Trolley** will take riders “from the hill to the sea” all summer long, and at Stop #3 (in front of the Ritz-Carlton Resort), riders can connect with the free trolleys operated by Dana Point and Laguna Beach. The trolley runs Thursday through Sunday every 20 minutes until Sept. 5.

- **The Dana Point Trolley** runs daily through Sept. 5 with two loops that give riders access to coastal cities and allow them to easily transfer between other city-run trolleys.

- **The Balboa Peninsula Trolley** runs Saturdays and Sundays through Sept. 4, providing service around the peninsula. It also offers service on Independence Day and Labor Day.



Profile: OC Bus Route 453

If you work at the 500 S. Main Street building in Orange, OC Bus Route 453 might be a great option for you—especially if you ride Metrolink to work (or would like to).

Route 453 buses are timed to coordinate with Metrolink trains arriving in the morning and departing in the afternoon. One of the stops is just steps from the 500 S. Main Street building.

Metrolink riders transfer free to OC Bus with a valid Metrolink ticket stamped with the same day’s date.

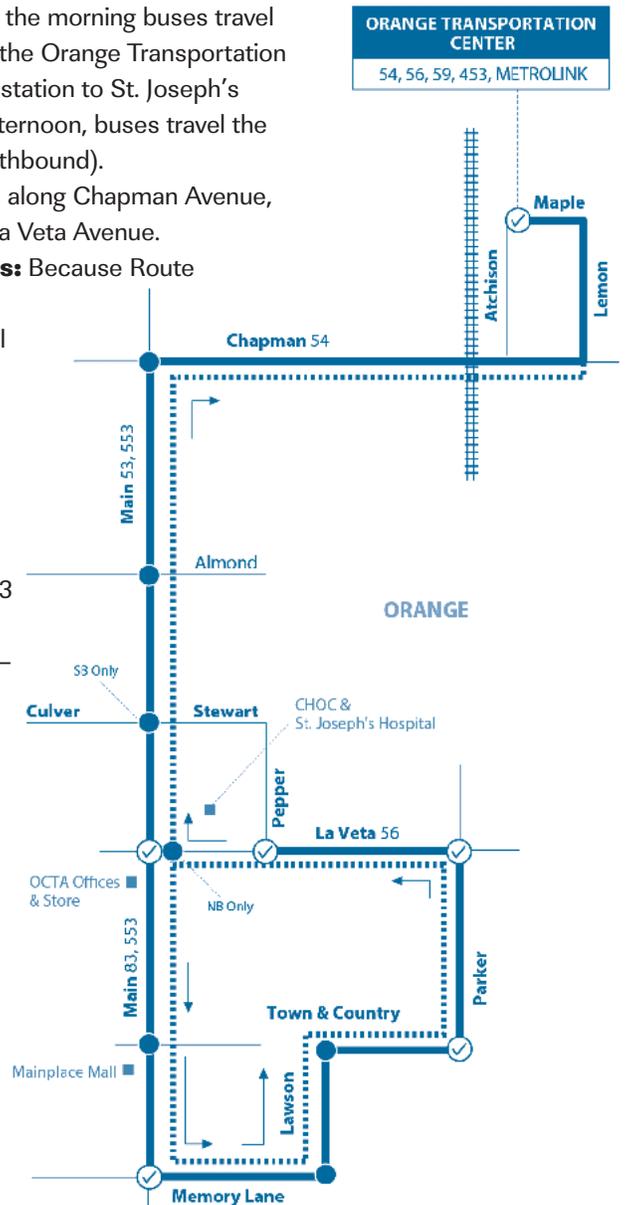
The route: In the morning buses travel southbound from the Orange Transportation Center/Metrolink station to St. Joseph’s Hospital. In the afternoon, buses travel the reverse route (northbound).

The route runs along Chapman Avenue, Main Street and La Veta Avenue.

Limited stops: Because Route 453 offers limited stop service, you’ll get where you’re going faster.

Schedule: It runs Monday through Friday, southbound approximately 5:43 – 9:07 a.m. and northbound 3:28 – 5:38 p.m.

Find out more at octa.net.





If You Missed the Vanpool Workshop...

If you couldn't join in the recent Lunch and Learn workshop—which was all about vanpooling—we want to make sure you still get to hear about this low-cost, low-stress way to commute.

Here's what you missed:

What's a Vanpool?

A vanpool is a group of people who commute together regularly in a leased van, splitting expenses. Some vanpools designate a person (or persons) who do the driving for a discount on fares. Others rotate driving duties among riders.

Vanpooling is a great option if you...

- Commute 15 or more miles each way.
- Work a consistent schedule.
- Can ride with the OC vanpool at least three to four days a week.

Save Big Over Driving Alone

Fares are a bargain over driving alone since riders split expenses.

OCTA also **offers a monthly subsidy to vanpools that covers roughly 25% of the cost of vanpooling.**

For further savings, you can pay vanpool fares using pre-tax dollars via payroll deduction, lowering your overall taxable income.

To Start Vanpooling...

• Contact the Rideshare Office or log onto ridematch.info to see if there's a vanpool with a seat available that will work for you.

• No current vanpool? You can get help to get one started. The Rideshare Office offers how-to advice and can identify potential riders.

You may even be able to qualify for a **\$300 vanpool start-up subsidy** through the County.

OCTA's Vanpool Program specialist also offers assistance in organizing a vanpool—from helping with how to lease a van to setting up the rules for the road. Get details at octa.net/vanpool or by calling 714.560.5331.



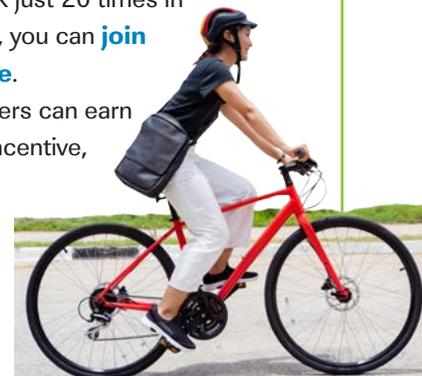
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Do You Qualify to Join Club Rideshare?

If you carpool, vanpool, take the train or bus, drive an EV/PHEV, bicycle or walk to work or telework just 20 times in a 90-day period, you can **join Club Rideshare.**

New members can earn a \$40 sign-up incentive, plus are eligible for monthly drawings for a \$25 bonus (paid via payroll), special perks and more.

Each year you renew, you get a \$15 bonus.



New Fiscal Year, New GRH Rides

County of Orange and Superior Court employees can be reimbursed for a ride if they need to get home due to an emergency on a day they got to work by ridesharing—up to two rides per fiscal year. Emergency ride options include rental car, taxi, Uber/Lyft, transit or approved car-sharing companies.

Since a new fiscal begins on July 1, if you've claimed the maximum number of rides home this fiscal year, your total number of rides will then reset to zero.

To find out more about the Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program or to claim a reimbursement, **click here.**



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Web: <https://hrs.ocgov.com/hr-resources/rideshare>

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Drive Less, Save More

Join in on Rideshare Week for a Chance to Win Great Prizes!

Rideshare Week is Oct. 2-6, and it's your chance to enjoy a happier, less costly, less stressful commute.

Here's what's happening:

Throughout Southern California

MetroLink will be celebrating Rideshare Week. Details are still in the works, so check back at metrolinktrains.com, or join them on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Orange County

Rideshare at least one day during Rideshare Week and you'll have a chance to win great prizes.

For details and to make the pledge to participate, visit octa.net.

Riverside/San Bernardino Counties

If you live in the Inland Empire, throughout the entire month of October, when you sign up and log your rideshare activity on IECommuter.org, you'll qualify to win prizes. You may also be eligible for IE Commuter's **\$5/Day program** to earn additional rewards.

IMPORTANT DEADLINE: Transportation Survey Is Due Friday, Sept. 8

All County of Orange and Superior Court employees recently received the annual transportation survey via email. This survey collects information on how you commuted the week of Aug. 7-11.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey by the Friday, Sept. 8 deadline.

As a thank you for your participation, you'll be entered into a drawing to win one of 10 \$100 Amazon gift cards.

Don't have the survey? You can also download it [here](#).

It is Mandatory to Participate in the Survey.

The County is required to conduct this survey annually to meet Southern California clean air mandates.

The data is also used to evaluate how the County is doing

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Important Deadline... *(Continued from page 1)*

in providing commute services to employees and helps us identify areas where we can improve.

You Need to Submit a Survey Whether You Commute Daily, Telework or Work a Hybrid Schedule.

In fact, it's important that teleworkers and hybrid workers are included.

The survey measures on average how many employees are working vs. how many vehicles are coming into the worksite.

On a day you're working at home, that counts as a "zero" commute—which when averaged in helps lower the County's overall drive-alone rate.

Be Sure to Say "Yes" to a RideGuide.

When you fill out the annual transportation

survey, you have the option to receive a free RideGuide commute planner—which you can get by checking "yes" to the last question in the survey.

A few reasons you might want a RideGuide...

- It gives you commute options based on where you live, work and your work schedule—everything from bus/ rail routing to carpools to where to find a convenient Park & Ride.
- Even if you're not ready to rideshare now, it might come in handy if you find yourself in need of a way to get to work.
- Transit options change all the time, especially post-pandemic as agencies continue to restore service that had been reduced. The

RideGuide will give you the most up-to-date options.

- You don't have to use it, but it'll be there if you need it.

Get Help With Completing the Survey

The Rideshare Office offers **this short, helpful video on how to complete the transportation survey**. It answers the most often asked questions, including how to

indicate that you work a flex schedule, work a hybrid schedule, or vary the way you commute throughout the week.

For More Information...

Contact OC Rideshare at 714.834.7600 or rideshare@ocgov.com.



Metrolink Only \$10 on Labor Day

On Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 4, Metrolink will offer its special holiday discount rate. It's only \$10 to ride all day, anywhere Metrolink travels.

3 Surprising Rail Safety Facts

Did you know...?

1. Riding the train is a safe way to travel, but it's important for people to be careful around the tracks. A whopping 95% of all rail-related deaths are due to people walking on the tracks or vehicles at train crossings.

2. Every three hours in the U.S., a person or vehicle is hit by a train.

3. It takes the average train traveling at 55 mph more than a mile to stop. By the time a locomotive engineer sees a person or vehicle on the tracks, it is too late.

September is Rail Safety Month. **Get more safety tips at Operation Lifesaver**, a rail safety education organization.



Metrolink Discount for Low-Income Riders



Metrolink last month introduced **Mobility-4-All**, the relaunch of its low-income discount program. It offers a 50% discount on all Metrolink tickets and passes for

riders with a California Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card.

Riders can use their EBT card at any Metrolink station ticket machine to validate and unlock the discount.

All Aboard for Trainfest



Trainfest returns to historic Los Angeles Union Station Sept. 9 and 10 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

This free, family-friendly event will feature exhibits, tours and activities celebrating the legacy and future of Union Station and Southern California's rail systems.

For more information, visit unionstationla.com/happenings.

Go Electric

National Drive Electric Week is Sept. 22-Oct. 1. Find events and networking opportunities (many are online) to learn more about electric vehicles—especially helpful if you're thinking of buying or leasing an EV.

Find details and a frequently updated list of events at driveelectricweek.org.



Don't Miss Out on Rideshare Program Perks

If you carpool, vanpool, ride transit, bike or walk to work, you can enjoy a lower-cost commute vs. driving alone. Through the County Rideshare Office, you may also qualify for other money-saving benefits.

- **\$40, Plus Monthly Prize**

Drawings—If you rideshare, telework or drive an EV/PHEV to work as few as 20 times over the past 90 days, you can join Club Rideshare. You'll earn a \$40 sign-up bonus, plus qualify for monthly prize drawings of \$25 gift cards.

- **"Try Transit" Fare**

Reimbursement—Save Up to 75%—If you're new to riding transit, **you may be able to be reimbursed for a portion of your OC Bus or Metrolink train passes** for the first three months.

- **"Get a Charge" EV Incentive**

County and Superior Court employees can save 75% the first month, 50% the second month and 25% the third month. You may be eligible for a **\$100 incentive when you purchase or lease an electric car or truck or plug-in hybrid**.

Reduce Your Taxable Income—Use payroll deduction to purchase bus, train or vanpool fares. You'll be able to pay for them using pre-tax dollars, which will reduce your overall taxable income by up to \$300 per month.

- **Monthly Vanpool Subsidy**—A vanpool is a group of people who commute together regularly in a van, splitting expenses. If you start a new vanpool, **you could be eligible for a \$400 monthly subsidy** toward the cost of leasing a vanpool vehicle. The Rideshare Office can help you find fellow riders and offer advice for getting a vanpool underway.

- **Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH)**—If you need to get home due to an emergency on a day you rideshare, you can **be reimbursed for the cost of a taxi, rental car or Uber/Lyft ride** (up to two times per fiscal year, July 1 - June 31).

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Back to School: Kids Ride Free on OC Bus

Youth Free Ride passes are available from your child's participating Orange County school. The pass is for youth ages 6 to 18 and allows them to ride OC Bus at no cost.

For information on how to get a Youth Free Ride Pass for the 2023-2024 school year, visit octa.net/passes.

California Clean Air Day Is Oct. 4

Make a commitment to do something on Clean Air Day to contribute to air quality—whether leaving the car at home and riding the bus instead of driving, planting a tree or changing out your car's air filter.

Find Clean Air Day events near you at cleanairday.org.



What Will It Cost to Ride in I-405 Express Lanes?

Express toll lanes on the I-405 Freeway between SR-73 in Costa Mesa and I-605 at the Orange County Line are set to open later this year. These lanes allow motorists to access free-flowing lanes for a fee—and in some cases, for free!

So what will it cost you to travel in the “fast lane?”

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) recently announced the toll policy. Good news for ridesharers: Vehicles with three or more people—along with motorcycles and vehicles with designated veterans license plates or disabled person license plates—will get to travel on the 405 Express Lanes for free.

Vehicles with two people will be able to travel on the lanes for free during non-peak hours. Solo drivers (and two-person carpools during peak hours) can pay a toll to use the lanes.

Tolls will vary by hour, day of the week, direction of travel and distance traveled.

According to OCTA, drivers on average will pay about \$3 to travel the entire 14 miles. The maximum toll rate when the facility opens will be \$9.95 from 3-5 p.m. on Fridays if traveling from SR-73 north to the county line.

All vehicles—including carpools—must have a FasTrak transponder, which can be used on any toll facility in California.



Save Cash With Perk Pass



If you ride OC Bus, be sure to sign up for a Perk Pass, which saves you money over the usual fares.

The Perk Pass is a swipe card that can be used on any fixed route OC Bus. Individual fares on a Perk Pass is \$1.25 per boarding. The most you'll pay is \$69 per month, no matter how many trips you take.

Sign up for a Perk Pass through the Rideshare Office. You can also sign up to pay for transit fares using pre-tax dollars, lowering your overall taxable income.



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Phone: 714.834.7600
Web: <https://hrs.ocgov.com/hr-resources/rideshare>

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Human Resource Services
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5 Ways to Beat High Gas Prices

With the average price of gas in Orange County topping \$5 a gallon, many people are getting sticker shock at the pump. Here, we offer five ways to save:



- 1. Slow down.** According to the US Department of Energy, each 5 miles per hour you drive over 60 is like paying an additional 15 cents per gallon.
- 2. Find the best price on gas.** Free apps like **Gas Buddy** can help you find the best price on gas locally. Waze and Google Maps also include a gas price feature, so you can price shop without burning gas driving around to do so.
- 3. Drive less.** Walk or bike instead of driving for short errands. Trade off driving duties by carpooling to work. Riding the train or bus instead of driving can help you save big at the pumps—plus you'll also reduce the wear and tear on your vehicle.

(Continued on page 2)



Get There Faster in the New 405 Express Lanes

The much anticipated 405 Express Lanes are expected to open Dec. 1, according to Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA).

The lanes will combine the existing carpool lane with a new lane in both directions in the center of the freeway between SR-73 in Costa Mesa and I-605 at border of Los Angeles County.

The 405 Express Lanes will allow motorists to access free-flowing lanes for a fee—and in some cases, for free.

How Much Will It Cost?

- Vehicles with three or more people—along with motorcycles and vehicles with designated veterans license plates or disabled person license plates—will get to travel on the 405 Express Lanes for free.
- Vehicles with two people will be able to travel on the lanes for free during non-peak hours.
- Solo drivers (and two-person carpools during peak hours) can pay a toll to use the lanes.

(Continued on page 2)



OC Commuter

Get There Faster... (Continued from page 1)



Tolls will vary by hour, day of the week, direction of travel and distance traveled. OCTA recently announced that drivers on average will pay about \$3 to travel the entire 14 miles. The maximum toll rate when the facility opens will be \$9.95 from 3-5 p.m. on Fridays if traveling from SR-73 north to the county line.

All vehicles—including carpools—must have a FasTrak transponder, which can be used on any toll facility in California.

For more information, visit 405expresslanes.com.

County Workers Get the Scoop on Metrolink

County of Orange and Superior Court employees last month tuned into a Lunch and Learn workshop to learn all about Metrolink.

In case you missed it, here are a few of the highlights:

How to buy fares: Standard Metrolink fares vary based on your origin and destination. You can **purchase fares** at ticket machines located at stations, via mobile app or online (to print at home).

You might qualify for a special incentive for new ridesharers who try the train. If you're new to ridesharing, you may qualify to **be reimbursed for part of the cost of fares for the first three months** (75% for the first month, 50% for the second month and 25% for the third month).

Purchase through the Rideshare Office and save. You can **pay for tickets and passes using pre-tax dollars**, saving money by reducing your overall taxable income.

More Deals and Discounts

- Ride for only \$10 all day on Saturdays and Sundays as well as select holidays throughout the year.
- Metrolink also recently launched its **Student Adventure Pass**, offering free passes to students of any age.
- When you join Metrolink's **So Cal Explorer loyalty program**, you'll earn points every time you ride toward future free fares.

For more information on Metrolink, visit metrolinktrains.com or contact the Rideshare Office.



Five Ways... (Continued from page 1)

4. Lighten your load. If you tend to use your car as a storage unit, get rid of some of that junk in the trunk. An extra 100 pounds in your vehicle could reduce your miles per gallon by up to 2%. With gas prices as high as they are, that can add up.

5. Try "trip chaining." When possible, combine trips and errands—what's known as trip chaining. You'll save on gas over running them separately because you'll be starting a warmer, more fuel-efficient engine.

Regular	Credit Price	Gasoline	Cash Price
539	549	Regular	539
	569	Plus	559
	579	Premium	569
	609	Diesel #2	599



Buy One, Get Three Free on OC Flex

OC Flex is extending its discount summer offer: Now, through the end of the year, a group of up to four people can ride all day for just \$4.50.

OC Flex is on-demand microtransit service covering zones in Aliso Viejo, Laguna Niguel and Mission Viejo. It runs weekdays 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. and weekends 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The discount rate is only valid when booked using the OC Flex Mobile App. The group must ride with the person who booked the trip.

The usual price is \$4.50 per person to ride when booked via the app or \$5 cash onboard.



Easy Ways to Find Travel and Commute Assistance

As last month's closure of a portion of the 10 Freeway in downtown LA proved, you never know when you'll need an alternative to your usual drive.

To get help with transit routing, finding a carpool partner, traffic alerts and updates, locating a Park & Ride lot and more:

- Call 511 for automated assistance 24/7.
- Visit [Go511.com](https://www.go511.com).
- Register to get an instant list of customized commute options at ridematch.info.



The Rideshare Office is also happy to help you find commute options, including providing a list of potential carpool partners.

Save the Date for the Next Lunch and Learn

The Rideshare Office is offering a series of virtual "Lunch and Learn" workshops where you can find out ways to improve your commute.

The next Lunch and Learn is Jan. 24, 12 Noon to 1 p.m. Tune in to learn more about the money-saving incentives the County offers to employees—from transit discounts to EV rebates to tax savings and more.

You don't need to pre-register to attend the Lunch and Learn. Just [click on this link](#) at the start of the workshop to participate.

If you have questions, or to sign up for an email reminder, contact the Rideshare Office at 714.834.7600.



Holiday Happenings on Bus and Rail

Ride the Metrolink Holiday Express Train



Metrolink's **Holiday Express Train** will return to Southern California this month, bringing holiday fun for the whole family.

These are specially ticketed round-trip rides with festive decorations, carolers, visits with Santa and Mrs. Clause and onboard activities for all ages.

Tickets are on sale now at \$25 per person.

Children 2-years-old and younger ride free provided they sit on a parent's lap. Tickets must be purchased in advance and will not be sold onsite at the host stations.

Holiday Express Trains on the Orange County Line will run on Dec. 16, departing from the Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo Station to the Oceanside Station and back. Morning and afternoon trains are scheduled, and rides last about an hour and a half.

Holiday Express Trains will also run Dec. 2 from Rancho Cucamonga and Dec. 9 from Simi Valley and Burbank.



Help Stuff a Bus with Toys

OC Bus invites you to participate in the 31st year of the **Spark of Love toy drive** and help "stuff a bus" with toys and sporting equipment for underserved children and teens.

Bring your unwrapped donation to the Honda Center in Anaheim on Dec. 8.

Metrolink will also be collecting toys for the Spark of Love drive at all its Holiday Express Train events.



Free Rides on New Year's Eve

OC bus will offer free rides on New Year's Eve. Details will be posted at [octa.net](https://www.octa.net).

Metrolink Holiday Discount

On Christmas and New Year's Day, Metrolink will run on its weekend schedule and price—so it's only \$10 to travel all day, anywhere Metrolink goes.

The holiday fare also applies to Metrolink's Arrow service between San Bernardino and Redlands.

(Continued on page 4)

2024

Holiday Happenings... *(Continued from page 3)*

Headed to the Rose Parade?

Metrolink will offer special train service for people traveling to the Rose Parade in Pasadena.

On Jan. 1, the first train on Orange County line will be rescheduled to arrive at L.A. Union Station between 7 and 7:30 a.m.

A special afternoon train will be added to help eventgoers return home earlier than Metrolink's normally scheduled service would allow.

Details will be posted at metrolinktrains.com.



Survey Results Are In...and It's Good News!

Remember that survey you filled out back in August that asked how you commute during the week? Well, the results are in.

It turns out—even though driving alone is still the most common way people are getting into the office—it isn't the only way.

The survey measures "average vehicle ridership," or AVR, which is how many people on average are in each vehicle arriving at the worksite.

For the 2023 survey year, the County's AVR is 1.38 (vs. 1.37 in 2022). "It's good news that we continue to hold steady in our AVR, and even get a small bump this year," says Thomas McCaughey, rideshare program consultant. "Fewer cars commuting into the office all contributes to less traffic and cleaner air."

The top alternative to driving solo among employees continues to be teleworking.

Flexible work schedules also helped keep cars off the road. During the survey week, nearly 12,000 round-trip commutes were eliminated thanks to days off from people working flex schedules.

You're also getting active about your commutes—biking and walking to work increased more than 15%.



BY CHOOSING ALTERNATIVES TO DRIVING ALONE DAILY, EMPLOYEES THIS YEAR SAVED...

346,835

DOLLARS



587,855

MILES



24,495

GALLONS OF GAS



477,097

LBS OF EMISSIONS (VOC & NOx)



Congratulations Transportation Survey Raffle Winners

The County of Orange is required to conduct a transportation survey each year.

As a "thank you" for turning in the recent survey, all participants were entered into a raffle for \$100 Amazon gift cards. Winners are:

- Alan Gordon, OCWR
- Colleen Valenzuela, PROB
- Sharon Leung, OCCR
- Arlene Erickson, SSA
- Thania Trujillo, CEO/HRS/OCIT
- Celia Cuevas, Superior Court
- Michael Slaughter, SSA
- Richard Zuniga, OCPW
- Krystal Perez, AC
- Shawn Tangard, Sheriff-Coroner



Departments That Went "the Extra Mile"

To collect the best data possible and meet clean air mandates, it's vital that the County gets a high participation for the transportation survey. Thank you to everyone who turned in a survey, and a special thanks to departments with a 100% response rate:

- Clerk-Recorder
- John Wayne Airport (JWA)
- Office of Independent Review
- Registrar of Voters (ROV)
- Treasurer-Tax Collector (TTC)



OC Commuter

Email: rideshare@ocgov.com
Phone: 714.834.7600
Web: <https://hrs.ocgov.com/hr-resources/rideshare>

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