

OC Commuter

News for a better commute from the OC Rideshare Office



The Survey Results Are In Here's How County Employees Are Getting to Work, Saving Money and Reducing Smog...

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 2025 survey year, the County's AVR is 1.4 (up from 1.39 in 2024). "This marks the third year in a row that we increased AVR," says Thomas McCaughey, rideshare program consultant. "Fewer cars

**"Fewer cars
commuting
into the office
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(Continued on page 2)

Free and Discount Holiday Rides



OC bus will offer free rides on New Year's Eve.

Rides are also free on Metro Bus and Rail on New Year's Eve as well as Christmas Eve.

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.

How Ridesharing Helps You Keep Your New Year's Resolutions



Even with the best of intentions, it's easy to break your New Year's resolutions. Good news: If you rideshare, it might help you stick to them! Here, we take a look at some of the top resolutions people make—and ways choosing an alternative to driving alone can keep you on track.



Achieve your fitness goals. Walking or biking to work is a great way to incorporate exercise into your daily routine and burn extra calories during your commute. Surprisingly, taking public transit can also contribute to your health. Americans spend a median of nearly 20 minutes a day walking to and from their bus or train stops.

Save money. With the price of gas topping \$6 a gallon at the pumps, the money you save by driving less can really add up. You'll also spend less on auto wear and tear.

(Continued on page 2)



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The Survey Results Are In... (Continued from page 1)

Did You Know...?

This year, 1,131 employees requested RideGuides when completing the survey. RideGuides provide a personalized list of rideshare options, including potential carpool partners, transit routing and more.

Didn't ask for a RideGuide but want one now? Contact the Rideshare Office!

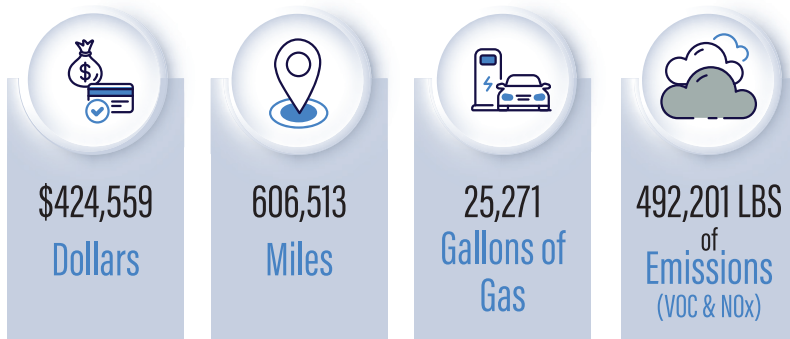
commuting into the office contributes to less traffic and cleaner air."

The most common alternative to driving alone to the office was not to drive into the office at all, with 23% of these employees reporting telework days.

Flex days—where employees work longer hours, fewer days—accounted for 16% of commute trips avoided.

Carpooling remained the most popular rideshare option for those commuting into the office.

By Choosing Alternatives to Driving Alone Daily, Employees This Year Saved:



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 by Sept. 5, all participants were entered into a raffle for \$100 Amazon gift cards.

Winners are:

- Edgar Rodriguez, OC Public Works
- Amanda Munoz, Child Support Services
- Jennifer Medina, Superior Court
- Donna York, OC Community Resources
- David Atkins, Health Care Agency
- Xavier Ornelas, Sheriff-Coroner
- Christopher Wallace, CEO/HRS/OCIT
- Anh Tran, Assessor
- Tiffany Tam, Social Services Agency
- Brittanee Carranza, Health Care Agency



How Ridesharing Helps...

(Continued from page 1)

Carpooling or vanpooling may also qualify you to ride for free in express lanes instead of paying a toll.

Spend more time with family.

Metrolink trains breeze past traffic, saving you time that can be better spent at home. Carpool lanes save users on average a minute per mile.

You might also find you're up for spending more time with family if you're not drained from fighting traffic.

Important Changes on EV Access to Carpool and Express Lanes

You may have heard that electric vehicles (EVs) lost their solo access to carpool lanes when the federal Clean Air Vehicle decal program ended on Oct. 1. If you get caught driving alone in the carpool lane, even in an EV, you can be cited.

It's not just carpool lanes that are affected. There is also no longer a discount for EVs using California's express lanes. Drivers of EVs will now pay the full toll unless they meet the carpool occupancy requirements and have a valid transponder in the vehicle.

In Southern California, these are:

- **91 Express Lanes:** 3+ person carpools ride free except eastbound weekdays from 4 to 6 p.m, when they get a 50% discount.
- **405 Express Lanes:** 2-person carpools ride free during non-peak hours, and 3+ person carpools ride free at all times.
- **Metro ExpressLanes on I-10 in Los Angeles County:** 3+-person carpools ride free at all hours, 2-person carpools ride free during off-peak hours.
- **SB Express Lanes on I-10:** 3+ person carpools travel toll free at all times.
- **Metro ExpressLanes on I-110:** 2+-person carpools ride free.
- **15 Express Lanes (Riverside Express):** 3+ person carpools always ride free.

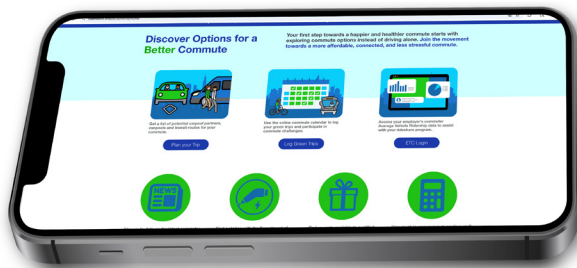
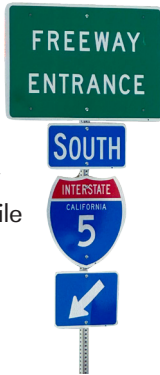


A Year in Review – 7 Big Changes You May Have Missed

From better carpool lanes to free shuttles and more, here are seven happenings in transportation in the past year that could affect how you get to work:

1. Traveling on the I-5 got a little easier. Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and Caltrans wrapped up improvements on the I-5 Freeway between SR-73 and El Toro Road. The 6.5-mile stretch now includes an additional general-purpose lane in each direction—from Avery Parkway to Alicia Parkway.

The project extended the second carpool lane from Alicia Parkway to El Toro Road. Carpool lanes were also converted to continuous access, making it safer and easier for motorists to enter and exit the lanes at any time.



2. Ridematch.info underwent a bit of a facelift. Ridematch.info's homepage got a new look and now sports a more user-friendly design and interface. **Ridematch.info** allows you to instantly generate customized carpool/vanpool matches and transit routing.

It features other ridesharing resources as well, such as Park & Ride lots and EV charging stations.

3. Costa Mesa launched a free shuttle. Costa Mesa this year launched **Let's Go Costa Mesa**, an on-demand rideshare service. ADA-accessible 10-passenger vans transport riders within an area around the East 17th Street shopping district. Vans run weekdays 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.



4. OCTA updated its Bikeways Map. The map can help you identify where safe bikeways are available, as well as bike routes that share traffic with vehicles but connect to dedicated bike lanes. In some cases, it also notes elevation—helpful if you're looking for a less hilly ride.

The map is available [here](#).



5. Metrolink riders can sign up for alerts. A new alerts tool makes it easier for riders to track real-time train arrivals and service interruptions. You'll be able to better time when you need to get to the station or make alternate travel plans if your usual train isn't available. **Sign up to receive notifications** via text or email that are specific to the route you usually ride.



6. LA Metro opened the LAX/Metro Transit Center, expanding transit options to LAX. Located at Aviation Boulevard and 96th Street, the LAX/Metro Transit Center offers riders dozens of convenient transit connections to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).

The station serves two light rail lines—the C and K Lines—as well as several Metro and partner agency bus lines.

Ultimately, it will include a direct connection to the airport via the LAX Automated People Mover, expected to open next year.



7. Metrolink introduced a new SoCal Day Pass. It offers unlimited rides for \$10 on weekends and \$15 on weekdays.

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 90% or higher response rate:

- Campaign Finance & Ethics
- Child Support Services (CSS)
- Clerk of the Board (COB)
- Clerk-Recorder
- Internal Audit
- John Wayne Airport (JWA)
- OC Community Resources (OCCR)
- OC Public Works (OCPW)
- Office of Independent Review
- Sheriff-Coroner
- Superior Court (COURTS)



Been Thinking About Trying Metrolink?

Metrolink now offers a **comprehensive guide** to walk you through everything you need to know—from finding your best route to buying tickets and even how to connect to local buses and shuttles at the station.

Once you start riding regularly, you may qualify for **discounts for your first three months through the Rideshare Office**. New riders can be reimbursed for 75% of fares in the first month, 50% in the second month and 25% in the third.



Keep an Eye Out for Your 2026 Perk Pass

Important news for County and Superior Court employees who ride transit: Your 2026 Perk Pass will be mailed to your home address during the first two weeks of December.

If you've moved in the last year, contact the Rideshare Office immediately to ensure you receive your pass.

The new annual Perk Pass is valid from Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2026.



Ride Free on Transit Equity Day

Feb. 4 is Transit Equity Day. In honor of Rosa Parks' birthday, it's a day that promotes making transit affordable and accessible to people in all communities.

Fares will be free all day on Metrolink trains throughout Southern California. Just arrive at the station and board the train (no ticket required).



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