

On the Go

Rideshare News for Southern California Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs)

January/February 2019

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What a Change a Year Can Bring

Changes to the tax law, construction underway and new transit service—a whole lot happened in the past year that impacts your rideshare program. In case you missed any of it, here's a recap of a few of 2018's transportation highlights:



Under the new tax law that went into effect on Jan. 1, 2018, employers can no longer write off subsidized transit, vanpool (and parking) costs, among other changes. If you could use clarification, read [Tax Reform—Changes to the Transit Benefit—Myths & Realities](#), available from the Association for Commuter Transportation.

Construction got underway on a 16-mile section of the I-405 Freeway between State Route 73 in Costa Mesa and I-605 near the L.A. County line. When complete, the project will add express lanes and four new lanes in total, as well as other improvements. Ongoing updates (including closure alerts) are at octa.net/405improvement.

Metrolink unveiled a new station, extending service one mile from the Santa Fe Depot to the San Bernardino Transit Center downtown.



Transit agencies helped get out the vote. On Election Day for the mid-term elections, numerous transit agencies, including Los Angeles Metro, AVTA, LADOT, Long Beach Transit, Pasadena Transit and more offered free rides on Election Day—contributing to California's highest midterm primary election turnout in two decades.

Plenty of changes to TAP—Starting last year, riders could only transfer between TAP-participating agencies using their TAP card (vs. cash fare or tickets). Making it easier: Users can load fare in as little as \$1 increments, among other changes. Find out more at taptogo.net.



Carpool lanes opened on the I-5 Freeway nearly six miles in each direction—through San Clemente, Dana Point and San Juan Capistrano.

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2019 Rideshare Calendar

Telecommuter Appreciation Week is March 3-9, and is sponsored by the American Telecommuting Association, 1.800.ATA4YOU, yourata.com.



April is Earthquake Preparedness Month. Get your employees ready for commuting in crisis conditions; contact caloes.ca.gov or your local Red Cross office.

Earth Day is April 22—a great time to celebrate rideshare contributions to clean air, earthday.org.

May is National Bike Month, presented locally by the transportation agencies for Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura counties.

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What a Change a Year

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Metrolink adopted holiday fares. Now it's only \$10 to ride all day on many legal holidays—the list is at metrolinktrains.com.

Metro Bike Share lowered fares and introduced electric bikes. The walk-up price dropped to \$1.75 per half hour (vs. the previous \$3.50). Last month, as a pilot project, Metro added electric bikes to downtown L.A. locations. Find out more at metro.net/bikeshare.



A new \$400 monthly subsidy helped make vanpooling more affordable. The subsidy—called VanClub—is available to new and current vanpools traveling to destinations in Riverside County. Visit

VANCLUB.net, or

contact Riverside County Transportation Commission at 1.844.VANCLUB.



The introduction of OC Flex bridged the gap between car sharing and transit. The new curb-to-curb shuttle allows riders to book a ride that they share, getting picked up and dropped off at requested locations. Unlimited rides are \$4.50 a day (with the OC Flex mobile app) or \$5 cash. Find out where it's available at octa.net/ocflex.



Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) snazzed up its website, adding an easy bus trip planner, interactive maps, and mobile responsive design. Check it out at goventura.org.



Speaking of VCTC... in March, during a 2-week closure of the 101 Freeway after the devastating mudslides in Montecito, VCTC worked with other transportation agencies to make sure that essential workers could get

to their jobs.

Dedicated buses carried medical personnel, educators and other vital workers across the mudslide



zone. Again in December, with highway closures due to wildfires, transportation agencies helped keep people moving.

The installation of new optic readers allowed the one-third of Metrolink riders who transfer to Metro Rail to transfer by simply scanning their phone at Metro Rail gates when buying their ticketing using the mobile app (no need to find a vending machine to purchase a paper ticket).



Can Bring (continued from page 1)

Plus the launch and expansion of many new bus/rail options, including...

...RTA's **CommuterLink Express Route 200**,

express bus service between Riverside, San Bernardino and Orange counties. Traveling on express toll lanes and with amenities like free Wi-fi, plush seats and USB charging ports, it's a bargain at \$3 or less.



...VCTC's **East-West**

Connector, the first fixed-route transit service between Simi Valley, Moorpark and West Ventura County. It serves the cities of Simi Valley, Moorpark, Camarillo, Oxnard and Ventura using Highways 118, 34 and 101.



...**Omnitrans's sbX**—a 16-mile rapid transit line—extended service from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m., connecting riders to Metrolink at the San Bernardino Transit Center.



...**The Warner Shuttle** replaced the single Metro Orange Line stop at the Warner Center Station. Orange Line riders connect to the shuttle at the Canoga Station with 10 new stops, improving access to Westfield Topanga, The Village, Warner Center Corporate Park, Kaiser Permanente and more.

...**The Amtrak Pacific Surfliner** added early morning service starting at 5 a.m. in Simi Valley taking commuters to Santa Barbara and Goleta (with stops at Moorpark, Camarillo, Oxnard, Ventura and Carpinteria).



2019 Rideshare Calendar

(continued from page 1)

May is also Clean Air Month, and the American Lung Association kicks it off with the release of its *State of the Air Report* (a report grading major cities' air quality), lung.org.

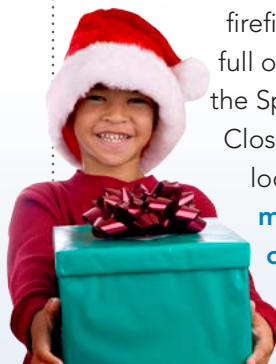


Dump the Pump Day is typically the third Thursday in June, and reminds motorists that finding alternatives to driving alone helps save money on gas. Get free marketing materials from the American Public Transportation Association at apta.com.

Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) International Conference is Aug. 4-7 in New York City, a chance to network and get new ideas for your rideshare program, actweb.org.

Rideshare Week is Oct. 7-11, promoting alternatives to driving alone.

In the spirit of sharing, every November and December, transit agencies partner with firefighters to stuff buses full of toys for needy kids in the Spark of Love Toy Drive. Closer to the event date, look for information at metro.net, octa.net, omnitrans.org and abclocal.go.com/kabc.





Hey, Can We Talk?

At *On the Go*, we always enjoy talking to ETCs to find out what they're doing to run rideshare

programs. Do you serve as an inspiration by ridesharing to work? Did you start a fun contest? Offer an interesting incentive? Or do you just love what you do?

If you're willing to chat with our editor for about 5-10 minutes at your convenience about your rideshare program, please send an email to Jill Smolinski at socalrideshareagencies@gmail.com. Include your name, company, best phone number to reach you and—if you want—a word or two about your program (but not required).

On the Go is a service of Los Angeles Metro, Orange County Transportation Authority, Riverside County Transportation Commission, San Bernardino County Transportation Authority, and Ventura County Transportation Commission.

IRS Cap Up \$5

For 2019, the IRS cap for employees who pay for transit and vanpool fares and parking using pre-tax dollars gets a slight bump—from \$260 to \$265 per month.

Allowing employees to purchase vanpool/transit fare using pre-tax dollars (usually done through a payroll deduction) is by far the most common form of providing commute tax benefits at U.S. worksites.

For more information, consult your tax professional, your county rideshare representative or visit actweb.org.

Metrolink Corporate Partners Going Mobile

If you participate in the Metrolink Corporate Partner Program (CPP), starting this month, Metrolink is rolling out CPP features on its Mobile App.

Metrolink's CPP is a pre-tax benefit program that allows savings when providing Metrolink fares as an employee benefit. For new accounts that sign up there is an additional 25% discount being offered for a 6-month period.

Learn more at metrolinktrains.com/cpp.



On the Go in the COUNTY

Los Angeles

Getting Around During the New Blue Improvements Project



The Metro Blue Line is undergoing an update and renovations, which will require it to be out of service in two phases, beginning with the southern segment from Jan. 26 to late May.

The southern segment will be out of service beginning Jan. 26—from downtown Long Beach to the Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Station (at the Green Line connection, which will remain unaffected).

When the southern portion reopens, Metro will begin work on the northern portion, (late May through September), from Willowbrook/Rosa Parks to 7th/Metro in downtown Los Angeles. (During the northern closure, the Expo Line will be out of service from Pico Station to 7th St./Metro Center beginning in late May for 45 days—details to come.)

Metro is asking ETCs to help spread the word about alternative transportation options for rail riders during the closure, including:

- **Bus shuttles**—Buses will shuttle riders in place of rail service. Metro will offer free local bus shuttle service at every closed station during the same hours as the usual Blue Line service, as well as **select and express shuttles** Monday-Friday during peak hours for \$1.75.

- **Car share**—Metro's car share program is expanding in January to include Blue Line stations (see story following). Car share vehicles will allow people who take the rail line to use an available car share vehicle instead to get to their destination.

- **Carpool/vanpool**—Commuters are encouraged to visit ridematch.info or call 511 to get a list of potential carpool partners or vanpools based on their home and work locations and work schedules.

- **Regular fixed bus service**
Metro's Trip Planner provides

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door-to-door itineraries on regular fixed bus service, including Metro and any other L.A. County provider serving the route.

The Blue

Line opened in 1990 and is Metro's oldest rail line. Modernization work has been ongoing since 2014 with a series of safety and operational improvements.

Find out more at [Metro's The Source](#).

Get regular updates on the project, including which stations are open or closed, shuttle options and more [metro.net/newblue](#).

Plus stay tuned to future issues of *On the Go* for updates.

Metro's Car Share Expands This Month



Starting last month, [Metro's car share program](#) expanded to 21 locations along Metro's rail lines and busways. In January, locations along the Blue Line will be added into the program.

Car share customers can rent, locate and unlock vehicles from a mobile application, turning any car into a connected car. Transit patrons can park and ride, then make their

vehicles available for others to use as a connection to their final destination.

Find out more about car share at [zipcar.com](#) and [getaround.com](#).

Orange

Changes to the 91 Express Lanes

91 Express Lanes will soon begin phasing out hard-case transponders



in favor of stickers, which are cheaper and don't require batteries. At the same time, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), which operates the lanes in Orange County, will make adjustments to payment plans.

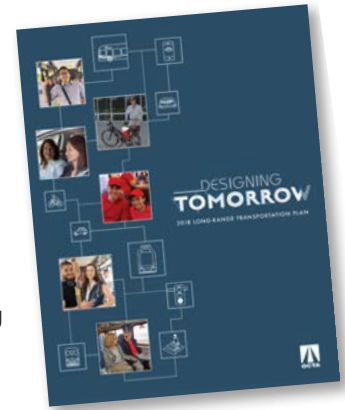
Among the changes: Dropping the monthly fee on the Standard Plan from \$7 to \$2. Customers will also receive a \$1 discount on all tolls above 30 trips (up to \$50). For cash customers, OCTA is eliminating the \$35-\$50 transponder deposit fee.

As always, 3-plus person carpools ride free or at a discount.

Current 91 Express Lane users can expect to start receiving stickers in February at no cost.

What Does Transportation Look Like in OC's Future?

Find out in OCTA's Long Range Plan, which outlines how the county plans to keep people moving now and in the coming decades. Read it [here](#).

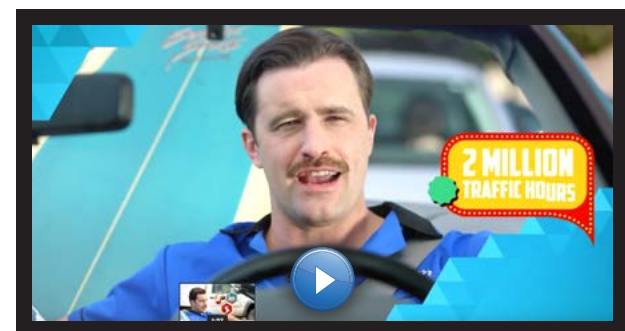


Catch Up on I-405 Construction News

OCTA recently held a series of open houses to answer questions about construction now underway on the I-405 Freeway, running between SR-73 and I-605. If you missed the open houses, [you can get the highlights from the comfort of your computer](#), including:

- Open house meeting materials
- A video of an open house meeting
- Fun facts about the project (for example...it's not only adding a carpool lane, but also 11 new bike lanes).

You can also get a brief introduction in this [entertaining video](#).



Riverside/San Bernardino

Metrolink to Keep Fare Discount



A 25% discounted fare that's been in effect since last May on the San Bernardino Line is now the regular fare, as of Jan. 1. It was launched as a temporary promotional fare. Since its introduction, ridership increased by 10%, leading to the Metrolink Board's decision to make it permanent.

Metrolink's San Bernardino Line connects downtown San Bernardino to Los Angeles Union Station through 14 stations and 57.6 route miles. The San Bernardino Line replaces car trips of more than 26 million freeway miles annually.

For more information, visit metrolinktrains.com.

RTA Schedule Changes Coming Jan. 13

Schedule and route changes will go into effect Jan. 13 on Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) buses. Highlights include the extension of Route 40 in Menifee, and the new Route 28, which will serve Hemet and Perris and

cover portions of the soon-to-be discontinued Route 212.

For details and a guide to the service changes, visit riversidetransit.com or call 951.565.5002. New schedules will also be available on buses in early January.



sbX Starts Saturday Service

Beginning Jan. 7, sbX will operate every 20 minutes on Saturdays, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The sbX travels a 15.7-mile route along the E Street Corridor, from Cal State University San Bernardino at the north to Loma Linda University & Medical Center at the south.

Find out more at omnitrans.org.

Ventura

Try the Surfliner for Free

Free 10-ride trial passes are available to ride the Amtrak Pacific Surfliner early-morning train service from Ventura County to Santa Barbara and Goleta. Train riders enjoy ocean views along with amenities like a café car, free Wi-fi and power outlets, and more.

For schedule information and to sign up for free passes, [click here](#).



VCTC Fare Increase

Due to the rising cost of operations, the first VCTC Intercity Bus fare increase since 2011 will go into effect Jan. 14.

Zone 1 regular cash fare will be \$1.50 (from \$1.25). The price of the Zone 1 31-Day Pass will remain the same, and a new 5-Day Pass is being introduced at \$10.

1-Zone 2 (outside of Ventura County) will go up 50 cents, to \$3.50. The 31-Day Pass will be \$115 (from \$105).

For more information, visit Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) at goventura.org or call 1.800.438.1112.

Are You Signed Up for GRH?

In Ventura County, your employees who rideshare can get a free ride home via taxi or rental car in the event of an emergency with VCTC's Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program. Employees can register by asking their employer or rideshare coordinator, or by calling 951.352.8006. If you sign on as a worksite, you can offer GRH as part of your employee benefits package and will also get special marketing materials. Find out more at goventura.org or call 951.352.8006.



Calendar

Events

Six Metro Green Line stations will close Jan. 4-20—from Hawthorne/Lennox to Redondo Beach. Buses will shuttle riders in place of the closed stations. Get details at Metro's [The Source](#).



Saturday service on sBX in San Bernardino begins Jan. 7.

Metro's Blue Line will suspend service on Jan. 26 for four to eight months with bus shuttles replacing rail service—for details and regular updates, visit [metro.net](#).

Telecommuter Appreciation Week is March 3-9, and is sponsored by the American Telecommuting Association, 1.800.ATA4YOU, [yourata.com](#).



IE Commuter Marketing Workshop is March 20 at the Doubletree in Ontario. Emailed invitations with complete details and RSVP information will be sent in February. Call 1.866.RIDESHARE (1.866.743.3742) for more information.

Network Opportunities

Burbank TMO serves businesses in Downtown and Media District areas; call 818.953.7788, bronwen@btmo.org.

Century City TMO serves businesses in the Century City area; call Linda Paradise Lyles, 310.453.1714, linda@cctmo.org.

Compass at Playa Vista meets regularly; call Aaron Gaul, 310.929.5946, aaron@playavistacompass.com

Go Glendale meets regularly; call 818.543.7641.

IE Commuter offers bi-annual marketing workshops for ETCs in the Inland Empire; call 1.866. RIDESHARE (866.743.3742).

Irvine Spectrum TMA meets regularly; call 949.727.4273, email steve@spectrumotion.com.

Orange County Network meets regularly; email sharetheride@octa.net.

Pasadena TMA meets regularly; contact Talin Shahbazian at tshahbazian@cityofpasadena.net.

Santa Monica TMO meets regularly; contact Puja Thomas-Patel, 424.330.4298.

Torrance Transportation Network meets regularly; call Kim Fuentes at 310.784.7902.

Training

Metro Rideshare (free) upcoming briefings—where Los Angeles area employers can learn about the transportation survey process and services Metro has to offer—are Jan. 29, Feb. 26 and March 19, 9:30-11:30 a.m. To reserve your space, email SharedMobility@metro.net. For details, visit [metro.net](#).

South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) offers one-day ETC training for \$183.32. Upcoming sessions are Jan. 17, Feb. 7 and March 7 at SCAQMD offices in Diamond Bar and Feb. 21 in Culver City and March 21 in Irvine. Contact the SCAQMD's training program at etctraining@aqmd.gov or visit [aqmd.gov](#).



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Riverside/San Bernardino Rideshare Program

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(866.743.3742)

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[@TheRCTC](#), [@goSBCTA](#)

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Instagram: [@iecommuter](#), [@therctc](#),
[@gobscta](#)

Blog: <http://www.rctc.org/the-point/>

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Commuter Information 511

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