

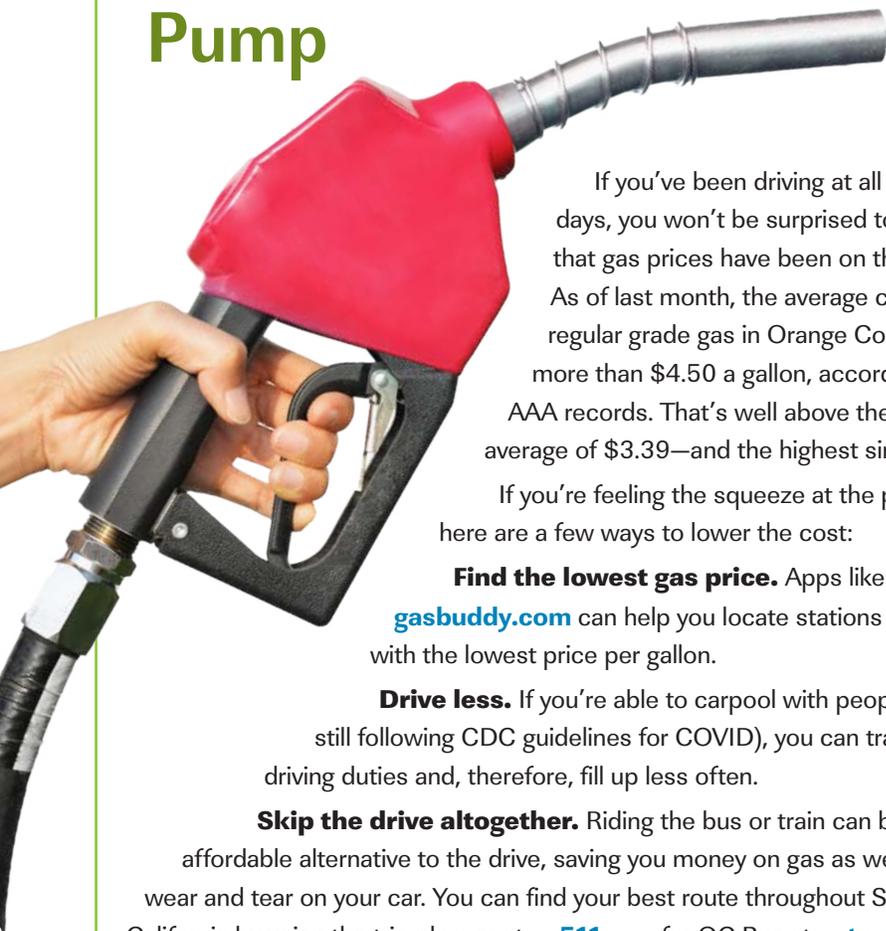


OC Commuter

News for a better commute from the OC Rideshare Office



5 Ways to Avoid Sticker Shock at the Pump



If you've been driving at all these days, you won't be surprised to hear that gas prices have been on the rise. As of last month, the average cost for regular grade gas in Orange County was more than \$4.50 a gallon, according to AAA records. That's well above the national average of \$3.39—and the highest since 2012.

If you're feeling the squeeze at the pump, here are a few ways to lower the cost:

Find the lowest gas price. Apps like gasbuddy.com can help you locate stations near you with the lowest price per gallon.

Drive less. If you're able to carpool with people (while still following CDC guidelines for COVID), you can trade off driving duties and, therefore, fill up less often.

Skip the drive altogether. Riding the bus or train can be an affordable alternative to the drive, saving you money on gas as well as wear and tear on your car. You can find your best route throughout Southern California by using the trip planner at go511.org, for OC Bus at octa.net, or on Metrolink at metrolinktrains.com.

Per TSA regulation, masks are required on all public transit.

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Win Free Tickets in the Metrolink Weekend Holiday Sweepstakes

OCTA is partnering with Metrolink to award free tickets to help people get to their favorite holiday events, shopping centers and other destinations.

They'll be conducting monthly random drawings for 20 sets of tickets (approximate prize value \$110).

Find out more about the Metrolink Weekend Holiday Sweepstakes and enter at octa.net.



Ride All Day for Only \$10

On Christmas and New Year's Day, Metrolink will celebrate the holidays by running on its Saturday schedule and price—so it's only \$10 to travel all day, anywhere you need to go on Metrolink.



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5 Ways to Avoid Sticker Shock... (Continued from page 1)

Drive smarter. Studies have shown that personal driving habits are the single biggest factor that affects vehicle fuel consumption, according to the AAA. Keeping your car maintained, not accelerating quickly and other habits can add up in the long run to lower gas use. Visit AAA for a list of [smart strategies to use less gas](#).



If you're in the market for a car, consider an electric vehicle. That way, the price of gas won't be an issue at all. [California's Clean Fuel Reward](#) program can allow you to take \$750 off the purchase price. You may also qualify for a [\\$100 incentive from the Rideshare Office](#).



We've Got Your Number

Every year with the transportation survey, we track how County of Orange employees commute and the impact that has on traffic and air quality in the region.

Usually, we'd compare year-to-year. Since 2020 was such an unusual year (with so many employees working at home), it's more helpful to compare 2021's data to 2019's to see how employees are getting to work.

Here's what we found:

AVERAGE VEHICLE RIDERSHIP (AVR)—on average number of people per vehicle arriving to the worksite



2019:	2020:	2021:
1.22	1.53 <small>(largely due to telework)</small>	1.38

Thank you for your participation!

Do You Ride OC Bus?

OC Bus Perk Passes are being mailed this month to all riders. Your Perk Pass allows you to use payroll deduction to pay for transit costs with pre-tax dollars, up to \$69 monthly.

If you don't receive a card in the mail—or if you're interested in signing up for a Perk Pass—call the OC Rideshare office at 714.834.7600.



Ride for Half Price on OC Flex

For a limited time, OC Flex group rides are half price.

OC Flex is the on-demand, curb-to-curb shuttle serving parts of Aliso Viejo, Mission Viejo and Laguna Niguel. Inside the OC Flex zone, unlimited rides are usually just \$4.50 a day per person with the OC Flex Mobile App or \$5 when paying cash.

During the promotion, two people ride for \$4.50 (rather than \$9), three people ride for \$6.75 (usually \$13.50), and four people ride for \$9 (normally \$18).

To take advantage of this discount, riders must book and pay using the mobile app. Groups must ride with the person who booked the trip.

Learn more by downloading the mobile app at octa.net/ocflex.



In Case You Missed It...

A whole lot happened in the past year that impacts your commute. In case you missed any of it, here's a recap of a few of 2021's transportation highlights:



OC Bus and Metrolink reinstated service.

Though they are still not offering service at pre-pandemic levels, both did adjust routes and schedules to accommodate more riders as people began to return to the worksite.

For the most up-to-date bus/rail routing, visit octa.net or metrolinktrains.com. You can also **contact the Rideshare Office** to request a RideGuide planner that gives you your best options based on where you live, work and your work schedule.



Express Lanes opened on the I-15.

Riverside County's **I-15 Express Lanes** opened, extending 15 miles from Route 60 to Cajalco Road in Corona.



They connect to the 91 Express Lanes and allow for seamless travel between Riverside and Orange counties.

OC Bus began offering free fares for students.

Riders 18 and under can now ride free on OC Bus as part of a special promotion that runs through the end of February 2022. **The Youth Ride free pass** allows them to ride any



OCTA fixed-route bus in Orange County at no cost.

OCTA worked with local schools to distribute the pass. It is also available in the OCTA store and online.

SunLine launched 10 Commuter Link.

SunLine Transit Agency launched **10 Commuter Link**, express bus service between the Coachella Valley and the San Bernardino Transit Center. Riders can then transfer to Metrolink and other transit providers.

The 92-mile route travels in timesaving carpool lanes on the 10 Freeway with five stops.



(More on page 4)



Thinking About Trying the Bus?

Learn the ins & outs of riding transit in Orange County with free, online and in-person workshops.

OC Bus offers these workshops to help people learn the basics of bus riding before riding for the first time. They're offered in five languages (English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean and Mandarin) and are designed for groups of 10-20 people.

Training includes trip planning, fare options, how to safely board and exit, ADA accessibility standards and using mobility devices.

Learn more and sign up at octa.net or call 1.888.878.2232.

Great Deals If You Live in the IE

If you're a ridesharer and live in western Riverside or San Bernardino counties, you can sign up for Rideshare Plus. It's easy and free to join, and you'll get access to savings at more than 500,000 merchants locally and nationwide.

To qualify, you need to have shared the ride and/or teleworked at least five days per month for the past three consecutive months.

Find out more and sign up at IECommuter.org.



In Case You Missed It...

(Continued from page 3)

Local businesses got a boost.

OCTA promoted two programs that highlight local businesses impacted by construction:

- **405 Forward Facebook group**—This group allows members to share their favorite local restaurants and retailers along the route of ongoing construction on the I-405 Freeway. When you **sign up**, you'll also learn about specials, discounts and offers.



- **Eat Shop Play**—The Eat Shop Play program supports local businesses impacted by construction along the path of the OC Streetcar. Sign up to get **deals and discounts at Santa Ana restaurants, shopping, entertainment** and more. You'll also receive coupons and learn about one-of-a-kind events.

Pacific Surfliner added service.

Amtrak Pacific Surfliner restored much of its service that had been reduced due to a pandemic-related drop in travel.

Changes include adding an additional round trip that travels the length of the corridor, more train departure and arrival times and spacing them out across the day for more consistent frequencies.



Thank You to Departments that Went the Extra Mile...

The Rideshare Office would also like to extend a special "thank you" to departments that had a survey return rate of 90% or higher.

That not only helps us meet clean air mandates, but it also gives us the most accurate data to help shape the programs and services that the Rideshare Office has to offer.

Thank you to the following departments:

- Assessor
- Auditor-Controller
- Campaign Finance & Ethics
- Child Support Services
- Clerk of the Board
- Clerk-Recorder
- County Executive Office
- Employees Retirement (OCERS)
- Internal Audit
- John Wayne Airport
- OC Waste & Recycling
- Office of Independent Review
- Public Defender
- Registrar of Voters
- Sheriff-Coroner (OCSD)
- Social Services Agency
- Superior Court



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