



OC Commuter

News for a better commute from the OC Rideshare Office



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.

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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.

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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.

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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)



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