



# OC Commuter

News for a better commute from the OC Rideshare Office



## Is Vanpooling for You?



A vanpool is five or more people who commute together regularly in a leased van, splitting expenses. It's a bargain, low-stress way to commute. But is it for you? It could be if you live 15+ miles from work and have fairly consistent work hours.

There are plenty of good reasons to vanpool, and the Rideshare Office can help you get started. In the meantime, you probably have questions... and we've got answers!

### "Exactly how does a vanpool work?"

There are plenty of vanpools up and running in Orange County (and you can always start one of your own). In a nutshell, a vanpool is like a carpool—only it's five or more people sharing the ride in a leased van, splitting expenses. One person usually leases the vehicle and does the driving for a reduced fare and/or for the option to use the vehicle on weekends. Riders pay a monthly fare to cover lease and gas costs.

### "How do I find a vanpool?"

- Go to [octa.net/vanpool/seatfinder.aspx](http://octa.net/vanpool/seatfinder.aspx) or call 511 to see if there are currently any vanpools serving your commute— *(Continued on page 2)*

## Upcoming Events...

**Heart & Stroke Walk**—March 14. Join Metrolink and the American Heart Association for the **Heart & Stroke Walk**, a family-friendly 5K walk at Angel Stadium of Anaheim. Be sure to stop by the Metrolink booth to win Metrolink swag and prizes.

**Get on Board Day**—April 16. Join **OC Bus** and **Metrolink** as they roll out Get On Board Day, a national holiday that celebrates the many benefits of bus and rail. Follow them on social media for this and other events.



**Don't forget, every Thursday is Rideshare Thursday!** It's a great day to ditch the solo

commute and get to work in a carpool, vanpool, bus, train—or even bike or walk. Rideshare Thursday isn't the only day you can rideshare. It's just been dubbed rideshare's official day because it is traditionally the busiest commuter traffic day of the week.

**50th Annual Earth Day**—April 22. Earth Day festivals, fairs and other events *(Continued on page 4)*



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vanpools that match your home and work location and schedule. Some Orange County vanpools are also listed here on page 3.



### “What if no vanpools showed up on my search?”

Consider changing your start location to a Park & Ride lot along your route to work instead of home. You may be able to drive part of the way, then park and catch a vanpool for the rest of the ride. (Find a map of Southern California Park & Ride lots at [go511.com](http://go511.com) and [IE511.org](http://IE511.org).)

### “There’s a vanpool that’s perfect for me, but there’s not an open seat.”

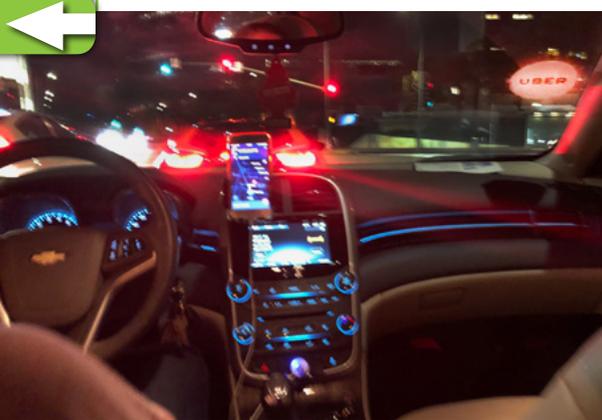
Email the [Rideshare Office](#) and we’ll add you to a wait list in case there’s an opening.

### “How much does it cost?”

Vanpool riders pay a monthly fare based on the size of the van (7-passenger SUV or minivan, up to 15-passenger van), commute distance, number of passengers, fuel, parking, etc.

### “What if I need to get home in an emergency?”

You won’t be stuck at work if you’re sick or need to get home due to emergency. The County participates in [Guaranteed Ride Home \(GRH\)](#), which reimburses the cost of your ride if you take a taxi, rental car, Metrolink, Uber/Lyft or bus home (up to two times per fiscal year).



## Starting One Is as Easy as 1-2-3

If there’s no vanpool serving your commute, start one of your own!

1) Find other riders at your worksite. Call the OC Rideshare office at 714.834.7600 and we can prepare a RideGuide for you to help locate riders who live near you with similar schedules. We can also set up a “meet and greet” of your potential vanpool riders to get it off the ground.



2) Decide on your route and common pick-up location for riders.

3) Contact an approved vanpool leasing vendor to let them know you are ready to start a new vanpool and they will provide you with pre-qualification forms for the vanpool driver to complete in advance.

## Vanpool Perks & Subsidies

- If you start a new vanpool, you could be eligible for a **\$300 start-up bonus**.
- Orange County Transportation Authority offers a **\$400 monthly subsidy** toward vanpool lease costs for qualifying vanpools, lowering fares on average 25%.
- Sign up to pay for vanpool fares through the Rideshare Office using pre-tax dollars to **save money by reducing your overall taxable income**.
- Vanpooling will allow you to join Club Rideshare, **earning a \$40 bonus**, plus being eligible for \$25 gift card prize drawings throughout the year.



## Did You Know...?

If you buy or lease an electric vehicle or a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle, you may be eligible for a **\$100 incentive through the Get a Charge program**. (Must have bought/leased within the past 90 days to qualify).





## Find a Vanpool

Below is a list of some of the vanpools with County of Orange destinations. If you see one that could work for your commute, contact the Rideshare Office for details and contact information.

- Vanpool 001-SG travels from Claremont/Diamond Bar to Orange (CHOC) & Santa Ana Civic Center (CJC); Orange 7 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., Santa Ana 7:30 a.m.- 4:40 p.m.
- Vanpool 002-DL travels from Eastvale to Santa Ana Civic Center (CAS), 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- Vanpool 003-MG travels from Lake Elsinore to Newport Beach (HJC), 6:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Vanpool 004-LL travels from Riverside/Corona to Orange (Main) & Santa Ana, 7 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



## A Whole New Ballgame

Baseball season will soon be back—and so are ways to get to the ballgame without the stress of traffic.

• **Metrolink Angels Express** is only \$7, dropping riders off steps from Angel Stadium at the Anaheim ARTIC station.

New this year: For Friday night Angels games, if you're coming from Riverside, **Metrolink trains will depart from Riverside-Downtown and travel directly to the Anaheim Artic station.** (Previously riders had to transfer to an OC Bus at Orange.)

• **The Dodger Stadium Express** shuttles game-goers from Union Station and the South Bay for all home games—and your Dodger ticket is good for the fare.

## New: Payroll Deduction for Metrolink Daily Passes



Do you on occasion buy Metrolink One-Day, Round-trip passes for your commute? Or would you like to ride the train to work, but not on a daily basis? Here's good news: Now you can pay for One-Day, Round-trip passes through the Rideshare Office using payroll deduction.

Payroll deduction allows you to pay for transit costs using pre-tax dollars. It's not only convenient but can reduce your taxable income, potentially saving you money.

### Here's how it works:

The County of Orange provides the option to buy passes using payroll deduction by participating in Metrolink's Corporate Quick Card Program. This program allows employees to retrieve Metrolink passes from vending machines located at the train stations and have the cost deducted from their paychecks on a monthly basis.

Previously only available for monthly and 7-Day passes, Metrolink has expanded the program to accommodate daily pass users as well.

To sign up to purchase One-Day, Round-trip passes using payroll deduction:

- Complete the **OC Rideshare Program Payroll Deduction Form** and check the box for Metrolink One-Day Pass(es). A Metrolink Corporate Quick Card will be mailed to you.
- Simply use the card at any ticket vending machine located at the Metrolink train station to retrieve a One-Day, Round-trip pass (up to 31 per month).
- At the end of the calendar month, Metrolink will send the County of Orange an invoice that indicates the number of One-Day, Round-trip passes you retrieved. This amount will then be deducted from your payroll the following month.

For more information on Metrolink fares and schedules, go to [metrolinktrains.com](http://metrolinktrains.com).

To participate in payroll deduction to purchase One-Day, Round-Trip passes, complete the **OC Rideshare Program Payroll Deduction Form** and scan/email to the Rideshare Office at [rideshare@ocgov.com](mailto:rideshare@ocgov.com) or call 714.834.7600.

## Improved Service on OC Bus

OC Bus recently made changes on several of its routes that travel to County worksites. With more frequent service and improved routing, riding OC Bus could be a convenient (and affordable) way to get to work.

- New Route 123 (replacing Routes 21 and 24) runs from Anaheim to Huntington Beach, with new and better connections to Fullerton and Cypress.
- Route 143 between La Habra and Brea (with stops in Fullerton) now has more frequent weekday service.
- Route 72 between Sunset Beach and Tustin, with a stop at Mile Square Park, has increased weekend service.

For more information on these and other OC Bus routes and changes, go to [octa.net](http://octa.net).



## Upcoming Events...

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are planned throughout Orange County. Find a list of local events at [earthday.org](http://earthday.org) and at [orangecounty.net](http://orangecounty.net).

**National Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day**—April 23. Kids count as passengers in a carpool so if they're riding along, you can legally use the carpool lane. Once you see how much faster you get to work, the Rideshare Office will be more than happy to help you find a coworker to carpool with on a regular basis.

## Save on OC Flex

OC Flex is an on-demand curb-to-curb service operating in portions of Huntington Beach and Westminster. Some recent changes:

- For a limited time, OC Bus riders can transfer free to OC Flex showing an OC Bus regular 30-Day Pass.
- A 50% discount for group rides on OC Flex is now available daily. Regular cash fare is \$5 per person to ride all day (\$4.50 if you book using the app). With the group discount, you can ride for as little as \$2.25 all day.
- OC Flex's service area has been expanded. Get details, including a map of new territory that OC Flex covers, at [octa.net/ocflex](http://octa.net/ocflex).



## New Construction on I-5

Construction will begin this month on the second segment of the I-5 Widening Project. It focuses on a 2.1-mile stretch between SR-73 and Oso Parkway that borders Mission Viejo, Laguna Hills, Aliso Viejo, and Laguna Niguel.

Improvements include adding one general purpose lane to increase capacity and reconstructing Avery Parkway to expand it from four to six lanes. Bike lanes will be widened and sidewalks installed on both sides of the street.

The project will also convert carpool lanes to continuous access to make it easier to enter and exit.



## Free Rides When You #TakeTheTrain

To celebrate the 50th annual Earth Day, the County of Orange is partnering with Metrolink in a #TakeTheTrain challenge. Ways that County employees can participate:

- On April 21, the day before Earth Day, join other Southern Californians going car-free. You'll be able to make the pledge online at [metrolinktrains.com/earthday](http://metrolinktrains.com/earthday) to find an alternative to driving alone.
- Get a free round-trip ticket via the **Metrolink mobile app** when you sign up using your work email.
- On Earth Day, April 22, Metrolink is offering free rides all day.
- New to riding Metrolink? Contact the **Rideshare Office** to sign up for the program to save on fares and to find out if you qualify for a free 1-Day Pass.
- Inspire others and share your decision to #TakeTheTrain on social media.
- Look for Metrolink #TakeTheTrain pop-ups with giveaways and prizes at Union Station on April 22.



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