



# Club Rideshare

March Newsletter



## "Why I Rideshare"

Giles Matthews rides his bike nearly 20 miles round trip from Huntington Beach to downtown Santa Ana, where he works in Public Works. "I'm lucky most of my ride is on the river so I don't have to contend with too much traffic."

He typically bikes daily and has for his entire career, only using the bus as a backup if he's injured or his bike is in need of repair. Because of the pandemic, his schedule is now a combination of telework and biking into the office.

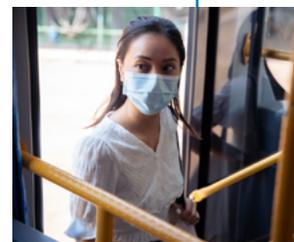
For Giles, the benefits of biking are both to reduce his carbon footprint and to stay fit. "It's definitely good for my mental health," he adds. "It helps me unwind at the end of the day."

## Reminder: Masks Required

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) last month issued an Order requiring transit riders to wear masks at transportation hubs and while riding. This includes OC Bus, OC ACCESS, OC Flex, Metrolink, taxis, ride-shares and other shared public transportation.

The mask must cover the nose and mouth. A scarf, handkerchief, or face shield is not acceptable. Transit operators must also wear masks.

Find out more at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).



## What a Year It's Been...

### How COVID-19 Has Impacted County of Orange Workers' Commutes—and Where the Road Goes from Here

A year ago, on March 19, Governor Gavin Newsom issued a Stay at Home Order due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The Order instructed Californians to stay home, except for essential work, local shopping or other permitted errands.

While some of the restrictions have since been lifted, the crisis is definitely not over—which means the Rideshare Office is still working to help employees manage their commutes in an ever-changing work and transportation environment.

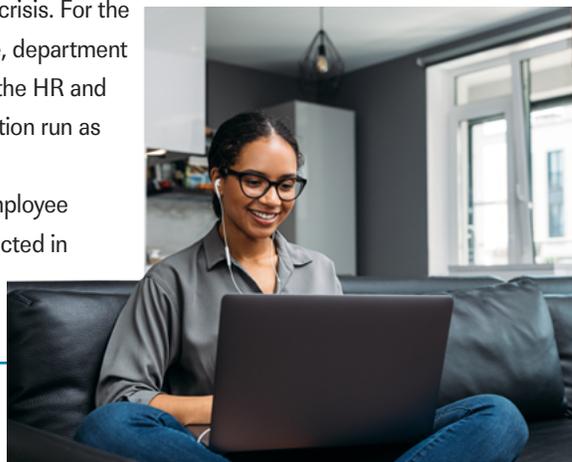
Here is some of what's happened here in the past year, and a glimpse at what's happening now:

### A large percentage of County employees switched temporarily to telework.

First off, thank you to all County workers who stayed on the front lines to keep services going during this crisis. For the employees who could work offsite, department managers worked in tandem with the HR and IT departments to make the transition run as smoothly as possible.

According to data from the employee transportation survey conducted in September, working at

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## What a Year It's Been... (continued from front)

home was up a whopping 1,543% over the same time last year. During that week, more than 6,400 employees telecommuted.

## Due to telework, the "rideshare rate" increased at the County.

Largely due to all those people working at home, far fewer employees overall drove in to work. The rate of ridesharing (or people not driving alone to the worksite) was up 26% at the time of the survey.

## We had cleaner air, at least temporarily.

Fewer cars and trucks on the road as people stayed home meant fewer emissions being spewed into the air.

Shortly after the Order got underway, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) reported slightly improved air quality (though that was due to favorable weather as well as car traffic dropping by about a third).

## Transit agencies reduced and/or changed schedules.

OC Bus, Metrolink and other transit providers stepped up efforts to provide a safe environment for riders and transit workers—and they continue to do so.

This includes a mix of increasing cleaning protocol, providing hand sanitizing stations, and providing masks to riders, among other efforts to reduce the spread of the airborne virus.

Metrolink has adjusted schedules due to low ridership, and also to keep train capacity at 30% or below.

OC Buses are currently running with about half the ridership but at 70% service levels to allow riders to social distance.

## Some road construction moved ahead of schedule.

One small silver lining is that road construction zoomed ahead of schedule because of near-empty freeways. Carpool lanes on the I-5 opened months ahead of schedule, as did several sections of the I-405 and other key Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) improvement projects designed to make traveling easier in Orange County.

Progress is expected to continue in 2021, OCTA recently reported in its blog post, "[Busy Year Ahead in Orange County Transportation Construction.](#)"

## Whether your commute is to the worksite, or to your home office, we're here to help.

At the Rideshare Office, we're here to help you with your commute needs—especially as they have changed and will continue to change over the coming months. Contact us at [rideshare@ocgov.com](mailto:rideshare@ocgov.com) or by calling 714.834.7600.

## If You Haven't Yet Done So...

It's time to renew your Club Rideshare membership! When you do, you'll get a \$15 bonus in your paycheck—plus qualify for other rideshare program perks.

Please note: Although working at home does not typically qualify you for membership, the Rideshare Office is being flexible due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is currently allowing telework days to count toward the minimum requirement of 20 or more rideshare days over the past 90 days.

Contact the Rideshare Office if you didn't receive your renewal information or if you have any questions.

## Congratulations Club Rideshare Winners

We'd like to extend a big "congrats" and thanks for ridesharing to February winners of the Club Rideshare monthly prize drawing of \$25:

- Neil Jessen, Procurement
- Giles Matthews, OCPW
- Emma Jones, OCCR

## Have You Moved?

If your home address, work/home phone number or email has changed, please let the Rideshare Office know by sending an email to [rideshare@ocgov.com](mailto:rideshare@ocgov.com).

**Correction:** In last month's *Club Rideshare* we said that ridesharing employees can qualify for two free emergency rides home per calendar year. It is actually per fiscal year.



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