



OC Commuter

News for a better commute from the OC Rideshare Office



Get in Gear for Bike Month



May is Bike Month—and in Orange County, it’s also “Bike Everywhere Month.”

Orange County Transportation Association (OCTA) is issuing a special 31-Day Challenge to promote cycling as a low-cost, environmentally-friendly way to get where you need to go.

To participate, just make a [pledge online](#) to bike daily during May—or as often as you can.

When you do, you’ll be entered into a drawing to win prizes, including a Trek FX 2 Disc Bike or a Saris Bones 2-Bike Bike Rack. [\(More\)](#)

3 Good Reasons to Bike

- 1. Saving money.** The upkeep of a bike is a whole lot cheaper than gas and auto maintenance.
- 2. Cleaner air.** Every time you opt to ride a bike vs. drive, you’re preventing emissions from being released into the air.
- 3. Getting fit.** Biking burns calories instead of gasoline.

Make the Pledge & Win

Join Metrolink for Bike Month. Starting May 3, you can pledge to participate for a chance to win an [electric bike](#).



Throughout May, Metrolink will also be inviting cyclists to hit the trails and will provide bike-friendly itineraries, all accessible via train.

Ride free on Metrolink on Bike to Work Day, Friday, May 21, when you bring your bike onboard.

Find out more at metrolinktrains.com.

Bike Your Way to Club Rideshare Membership

If you’re new to ridesharing and bike to work (or rideshare in any combination) 20 days in a 3-month period, you’ll qualify for the County’s Club Rideshare program. Members get a one-time \$40 incentive in their paycheck, \$10 annual renewal bonus—plus qualify for \$25 monthly drawings and other benefits.

Contact the [Rideshare Office](#) to find out more.



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(Continued from page 1)

The more days you bike during May, the more chances you have to win.

Each day, OCTA will issue a fun biking challenge, such as “bike on your lunch break,” “bike 8 miles,” or “ride with a friend or family member.”

“Usually during the annual Bike Month campaign, we encourage people to ride a bike to work or to their local transit stop if they live too far from the office to bike all the way,” says Kristopher Hewkin with OCTA. “With so many people working at home these days, we also wanted to stress that biking is a great way to get around locally as well. You can get some healthy exercise and help reduce traffic and smog even if you’re only headed to a nearby store.”

For more information and to get a peek at all the daily challenges, visit octa.net/BikeEverywhereMonth.

“My Commute”

Joseph Harrison keeps his commute “all in the family,” carpooling with his wife, Romelia. They both live and work for the County in Santa Ana—he for the Health Care Agency and she’s in Social Services.



“We’ve done this for probably 15-plus years,” Joseph says. “We have two cars, but we’re able to use just one. It saves on wear and tear, and saves money—especially with the price of gas these days.”

Because they work in different areas of the city, she typically drops him off before continuing on to work. He adds, “What’s nice about this is it allows us to organize our mornings better. Mornings can be hectic, but this keeps us on schedule.”

He also likes doing his share for cleaner air and less traffic. “When COVID first started, traffic wasn’t that bad. But now that things are getting back to normal, or what we are calling normal right now, it’s picking back up.”

Weigh in on Walking and Biking Options

What do you think is needed to make it better to walk or ride a bike where you live and work? Caltrans is conducting an online survey—allowing you to pinpoint on a map the areas that need improvement.

Your input will be considered when developing future projects.

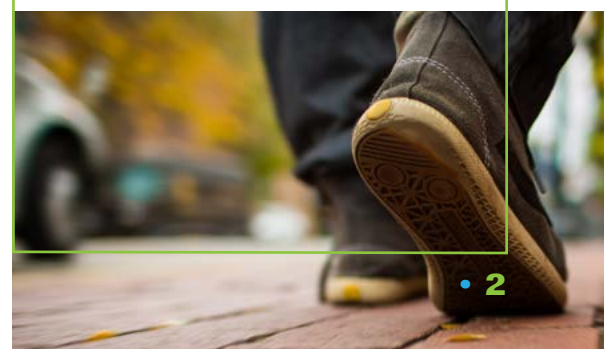
Give your feedback by May 15 at survey.catplan.org.

OC Bike Resources

- **The OC Loop.** The OC Loop provides off-street trails that connect to some of Orange County’s most popular destinations, including transit hubs. So far, 54 miles of the loop are open (there will be 66 miles when the project is complete).

- **Orange County Bikeways Guide.** Orange County is criss-crossed by about 1,000 miles of bikeways that can take you from Santa Ana to San Juan Capistrano, from Brea to the beach. OCTA offers an [online map](#).

- **Biking Apps.** Free apps such as [MapMyRide](#) and [Strava](#) help you find a bike-friendly route, highlighting routes with wider streets and bike lanes where available.





New Express Lanes Open on the 15

Express Lanes are now open on the 15 Freeway in Riverside County, offering motorists the chance to travel faster for a toll.

The 15 Express Lanes connect to the 91 Express Lanes, allowing seamless travel between Riverside and Orange counties.

During the initial months of operation, carpools of three or more people can ride free. After that, they can ride at half price. A transponder set to "3" is required.

Get more information at riversideexpress.com.



Did You Know...?

Any time you can choose a way to get where you need to go without driving alone, you help reduce the emissions that cause smog. For every mile you don't drive, you prevent about a pound of emissions from being released into the air. That can really add up!

Answers to Your Questions About "Guaranteed Ride Home"

The Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program is one of the perks that the County offers employees who rideshare.

It reimburses you for the cost of your ride home if you need one due to illness or emergency, or if you miss your usual rideshare arrangement due to an unforeseen event.

Here, we answer your most-often asked questions about GRH:



"What kind of emergency qualifies for a free ride home?"

You can be reimbursed for a ride home if...

- You or a family member are ill or has a personal emergency.
- You miss your usual ride due to an unforeseen event.
- Your carpool or vanpool driver leaves early due to emergency or stays at work later.

"Do I have to be a member of Club Rideshare to use GRH?"

No, as long as you are a County of Orange employee and shared the ride to work on the day you need an emergency ride home, you qualify.



"What type of ride can I get?"

Your ride home can be via your choice of taxi, rental car, Uber/Lyft or other rideshare or car share service, Metro Rail, Metrolink or public bus.

"How do I book it?"

You arrange and pay for your own ride home, and then submit the receipt along with a [GRH Reimbursement Claim Form](#) within 60 days of the ride.

"What about tipping?"

You can be reimbursed for the cost of tipping your driver up to 15%.

"How often can I get a ride home?"

As many as two rides home per fiscal year (July 1-June 30).

"Can I be reimbursed for a ride home in an emergency if I drove alone that day?"

The GRH program is only for days that you got to work by ridesharing, which includes carpooling, vanpooling, riding bus/rail, bicycling or walking. The purpose of the program is to take the worry out of ridesharing—so you don't fear being stuck at work in an emergency.

"Does the ride have to be to my home?"

Every emergency is different, so it could be to a Park & Ride lot, a medical facility or daycare/school.

"Do I need to pre-register for GRH or get permission from the Rideshare Office before arranging my ride home?"

That is not necessary, although you are welcome to contact the [Rideshare Office](#) if you are uncertain if your emergency qualifies.



Get the Metrolink 5-Day Flex Pass & Save

If you ride Metrolink occasionally, the 5-Day Flex Pass could be a money-saving option for you. The 5-Day Flex Pass offers five 1-Day passes, valid for travel within 30 days. You'll save 10% off regular round-trip ticket prices.

It is available exclusively on the **Metrolink Mobile App** for safe, contactless ticketing.

County employees can save even more by paying for the pass via **payroll deduction**. This allows you to purchase the pass using pre-tax dollars, lowering your overall taxable income.



Laguna Beach Free Trolleys to Roll Again

After a year hiatus, Laguna Beach will again run its free summer trolley on weekends June 25 to Sept. 6. To allow for social distancing, trolleys will operate at a reduced capacity, and face masks are required for drivers and passengers.

Trolleys serve downtown shops and attractions, as well the coast.

For details and for trolley schedules, visit visitlagunabeach.com.

How Transit Can "Take You Out to the Ballgame"

Baseball is back—of course, with limited capacity games due to the Coronavirus pandemic. If you need an alternative to driving and parking, here are the options this year:

For Angels Fans

The Angels Express train is not operating this year. However, there are other public transit options to get you to and from the games, including regular **Metrolink train service**. (Metrolink is \$10 to ride all day Saturdays or Sundays, and **kids ride free** on weekends.)

OC Bus also offers service to the ARTIC Station in Anaheim, where it is a short walk to Angels Stadium.

If You're Traveling to Dodger Stadium

Metro's Dodger Stadium Express is offering modified service from Union Station and Harbor Gateway Transit Center to the ballpark for every home game.

Rides are free with a game ticket.



Need Help Finding a Commute Option?

The Rideshare Office is here to help.

As how and where people work continues to evolve with the changing times, that may have affected your commute.

Did your work hours change? Are you teleworking? Have you moved? Has your usual bus or train route changed? Or do you need a cheaper or less stressful way to get to the office?

The Rideshare Office can help you find a commute option that best suits your needs. We can give you a personalized RideGuide, a list of potential carpools, bus/rail routes, nearby Park & Ride lots and more.

Contact us at rideshare@ocgov.com or 714.834.7600.



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