

On the Go

Rideshare News for Southern California Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs)

January/February 2016

News for Your
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Mark Your Calendars—Big Events for 2016

JANUARY

Jan. 13—Metro Average Vehicle Ridership (AVR) briefing, which helps ETCs better navigate the surveying process; [click here](#) for the 2016 ETC Briefing schedule.

Jan. 25—Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) Southern California general membership meeting in Anaheim, [socalact.org](#)

FEBRUARY

Feb. 8—Ventura County Transportation Commission Transportation Needs Public Hearing, 1:30-3 p.m. at Camarillo City Hall

Feb. 28-March 5—Telecommuter Appreciation Week, sponsored by the American Telecommuting Association, 1.800.ATA4YOU, [yourata.com](#)

MARCH

March 5—Grand opening of the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension, [metro.net](#)

March 7-11—Bike event at LA River, [socalact.org](#)

Also in March (or early April):

- **Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)** will host an ETC Marketing Certificate Workshop

APRIL

Earthquake Preparedness Month, get your employees ready for commuting in crisis conditions; contact [caloes.ca.gov](#) or your local Red Cross office

April 12-14—ACT Legislative Summit in Washington, DC, [socalact.org](#)

April 22—Earth Day, [earthday.org](#)

April 24—OCTA Bike Festival at Huntington Beach Pier Plaza, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Also in April:

- **IE Commuter** rideshare marketing certificate class, 1.866.RIDESHARE
- **ETC Marketing Certificate Workshop**, sponsored by Metro Los Angeles

MAY

National Bike Month, sponsored by the League of American Bicyclists, [bikeleague.org/bikemonth](#), and locally by Metro

Los Angeles, and the counties of Orange and Ventura. Bike Commute Week is May 16 - 20.

Clean Air Month, sponsored by the American Lung Association, 1.800.LUNG.USA, [lung.org](#)

May 15-21—National Transportation Week, highlighting careers in transportation, [dot.gov](#)

Also in May:

- **OCTA Bike Week Bike Rally** and group ride from the Metrolink station in Orange to OCTA headquarters

[More >](#)



What's Your New Year's Rideshare Resolution?

We asked ETCs to tell us their rideshare resolutions for 2016. *What are you doing differently or better to get your employees to rideshare in the New Year?* Here's what some had to say...

“Emphasize more on marketing strategies to help increase ridership in our commuter programs.”

—Heydi B. Garcia-Rojas, Cal State Los Angeles

“We plan to focus on our drive-alones this year—pull them into focus groups to find out what we can do to get them to join rideshare, and hopefully make it happen.”

—Andrea Ellison, Los Angeles County Employee Retirement Association

“We will be increasing our subsidy to 75% off (the cost of any monthly transit pass). This will be a pilot program to increase our ridership by adding 250 new riders within a year.”

—Erika Garcia, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, which as of last month began subsidizing 75% of vanpool costs as well



Metro



[Calendar of Events](#)

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Mark Your Calendars...

(Continued from page 1)

JUNE

June 5—World Environment Day, started by the United Nations to raise awareness of environmental issues worldwide, unep.org/wed

June 8—Swap & Share, where you can get new ideas for your rideshare program, to be held at Los Angeles Children's Hospital, socialact.org

Also in June:

- **Dump the Pump Day**, sponsored by American Public Transportation Association, get free marketing materials at apta.com

JULY

July 31-Aug. 4—ACT International Conference in Portland, OR, actweb.org

AUGUST

Aug. 3-14—Visit Ventura County Transportation Commission at the Ventura County fair, goventura.org

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 29—ACT marketing workshop at Metro offices in downtown Los Angeles, socialact.org

Also in September:

- **ETC Marketing Certificate Workshop**, sponsored by Metro Los Angeles

OCTOBER

Oct. 3-7—Rideshare Week, promoting alternatives to driving alone

Oct. 24—ACT professional development workshop and marketing certificate workshop, socialact.org

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

- **IE Commuter** rideshare marketing certificate class, 1.866. RIDESHARE

• **Metro, OCTA and Omnitrans "Stuff a Bus"** in coordination with Spark of Love Toy

Drive, metro.net, octa.net, omnitrans.org, abclocal.go.com/kabc



It's Official — Transit and Vanpool Parity Is Signed into Law

If you offer transit or vanpool benefits to employees—or if they purchase their own passes or pay fares—the monthly taxable cap for the benefit is now permanently on par with parking, thanks to a bill signed into law at the end of the year.

The monthly cap on transit, vanpool, and parking will increase to \$255/month starting Jan. 1. So, just like parking, vanpool and transit expenses are tax-free up to the cap.

The legislation also retroactively sets that transit/vanpool cap at \$250/month for 2015.

For more information, visit the Association for Commuter Transportation at actweb.org.

New \$3 Metrolink Fares

As of Jan. 1, Metrolink lowered short distance fares system-wide to \$3 for regular one-way tickets (\$1.50 for senior/disabled). The short distance fare is being offered to encourage local travel on Metrolink and is good for one station to the next on any line Metrolink serves. For schedule information, go to metrolinktrains.com or call 1.800.371.LINK.



3 Key Times to Get Employees to Try Ridesharing...

In ridesharing as in life, timing is everything—and, lucky for your rideshare program, there are those times when even the most die-hard drive alone commuter might be open to the idea of sharing a ride.

Here, we suggest three key occasions when it's worth a little effort to get the message to employees since they're more likely to listen:

1 When there's a new service/option. Studies show that most people choose the way to work they feel is the most convenient, so let them know when an option pops up that could make carpooling or taking transit as easy as (or easier than) driving. It could be a closer bus stop being installed... new express service such as the **Metro Silverline Express**...or one of the new handy apps that take the guesswork out of when a bus arrives.



New services coming soon: The **Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension** opening on March 5, which will extend the Gold Line for 11.5 miles from eastern Pasadena to the Azusa/Glendora border, as well as the Expo Line rail to Santa Monica slated to open as early as April.

The good news is that it doesn't always take something as dramatic as broken bones to get employees to share the ride. Metrolink regularly



2 When there's a problem with their usual commute. People who wouldn't consider ridesharing under normal circumstances are sometimes willing when the threat of road construction, a freeway closure or even a personal emergency suddenly makes driving harder. When Denise VanStratten of DVS Consulting broke both her wrists, she found she couldn't drive for two weeks. So she dug out her old RideGuide to find a carpool partner. It turned out she had a neighbor right down the street more than glad to give her a ride—although VanStratten laughingly adds, "I do not recommend falling off a ladder to try to find a carpool partner."

The good news is that it doesn't always take something as dramatic as broken bones to get employees to share the ride. Metrolink regularly

promotes itself as an alternative to **ongoing construction on Santa Ana Freeway (I-5)**. Always be on the lookout for "problems" near you—a parking structure that's closing, a local event that will divert traffic—and turn these problems into opportunities to help employees find a better commute.

3 When they're new or have moved. Many ETCs include ridesharing as part of new-hire orientation so they can get employees ridesharing before they get into a drive-alone rut.

Also be sure to reach out to employees whose commute may be changing, whether due to an office relocation or change of residence, to help them to find a rideshare option to suit their new commute. If you're short on time and/or staff resources, at least make sure employees have the link to generate their own RideGuides at **ridematch.info** (Los Angeles/Orange/Ventura) or **iecommuter.org** (Inland Empire).



Los Angeles

Metro Real-time Transit Updates Now on Google Maps

Want to know if your Metro bus is running on schedule? Now you can find out on your smartphone using Google Maps.

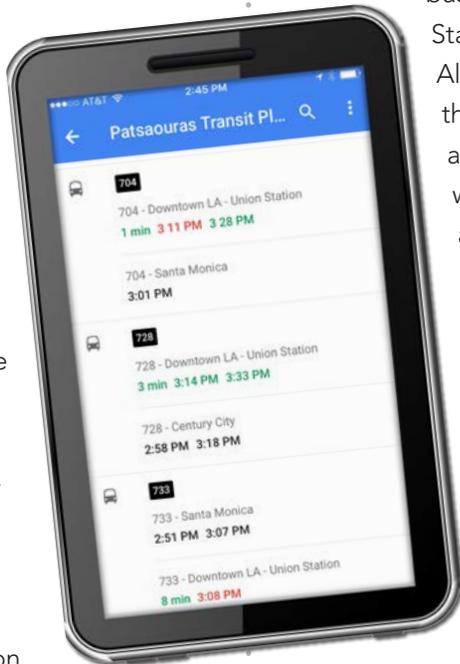
Simply start by opening the app. After it identifies your location, tap on the transit icons that appear on the map. You'll then see a screen that lists any lines that use your closest stop or station, along with color-coded arrival times.

Green = bus is on schedule

Red = bus is behind schedule

Black = listing of the scheduled arrival time but not real-time prediction yet

Real-time schedule information is also available using [Nextrip](#).



Temporary Closure at a Gold Line Station

The Little Tokyo/Arts District station on the Metro Gold Line is slated for a three-month closure starting in January to allow for construction on an underground Regional Connector.

During that time, Metro will provide bus service linking Union Station and the Pico/Aliso Gold Line Station through the Little Tokyo area. In addition, they will offer a local shuttle and validated parking to encourage people to visit businesses in the area.

The Regional Connector project is expected to be complete in 2020. It will connect the Metro Blue and Expo Lines and the Gold Line, allowing riders to travel from Azusa to Long Beach and from East Los Angeles to Santa Monica without the need to transfer between rail lines.

Find out more at [metro.net](#).

Sign Up for Free Emergency Alerts

Get ready for El Nino by signing up for free emergency alerts—including news on flooding, mudslide or other road hazards— via text or voicemail for the City of Los Angeles at [notifyla.org](#). You'll also find tips on how to prepare for and respond to an emergency at [readyla.org](#).



Big News on Two Wheels

At long last, Los Angeles is getting a bike share program! Metro is joining forces with the City of Los Angeles to launch a 65-station pilot program with more than 1,000 bikes to be up and running by mid-year.

The first downtown-area bikes will be available at Union Station, the Convention Center, Staples Center, Grand Park, the Seventh Street Metro stop, Grand Central Market, Pershing



Square, the Arts District, the future Figueroa Cycle Track corridor and USC.

People will be able to use convenient fare media to use the bicycles, with TAP cards as a possible option, according to Metro.

Look for updates in future issues of *On the Go*.

Orange

Is Your OC Bus Route Going to Change?

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is planning changes to improve service on OC Buses, and you have a chance to give your input.

The proposed plan will "add, increase, reduce and/or eliminate services in an effort to reverse the trend of declining ridership and optimize the efficiency of the bus system," according to OCTA. The



agency estimates 92% of riders would see improved bus service or no change to service.

Visit octa.net/2016busplan

to view the proposed changes for each route. You can also tell OCTA what you think by completing a short survey. Your comments will help determine the outcome of the plan, which will go into effect June and October 2016.

Another opportunity to give feedback is at a public hearing to be held Jan. 25, 9 a.m. at OCTA headquarters in Orange.

There's 11% More of These on the Road

The number of Orange County vanpools jumped 11% in 2015, with 53 additional vanpools now on the road. That makes for a total of 511 OC vanpools. The increase was not only due to special cash incentives, but also a new policy that allowed as few as five riders to qualify as a vanpool, "making it easier to get them up and running," says OCTA's Kristopher Hewkin.

In addition, OCTA offers \$400 worth

of assistance per month, per vanpool, covering roughly 30-50% of the monthly lease cost.

Find out more at octa.net/vanpool.



Get the Vanpool Mobile App

OCTA will soon have an app for vanpool drivers and coordinators that will make it quicker and easier to do the reporting required to qualify for incentives. Available in early 2016, it will allow users to input their required trips and expenses on a mobile-friendly map rather than having to input it on the website, as is currently required.

If you're a currently registered vanpool or ETC, OCTA will send you an email with the details when the app is available to download.

San Bernardino

Are You a Rideshare Week Winner?

IE Commuter wants to wish congratulations to the 2015 Rideshare Week prizewinners, as well as a big thank you to the sponsors who made Rideshare Week possible. For a full list of winners and sponsors, visit iecommuter.org.



As If Distracted Driving Isn't Bad Enough...

These days even distracted pedestrians can be a hazard if they're so busy texting or watching the latest cat video that they aren't watching where they're going. To help get



their attention, Omnitrans recently installed audible turn signals in 15 buses that actually "talk." The caution announcement, given in English and Spanish, is triggered every time the driver turns the steering wheel—so even if someone doesn't see the bus coming, they'll hear it.

Omnitrans will evaluate the effectiveness of the new safety feature before considering a retrofit of the rest of its 177-bus fleet.

Video Perfect for Transit "Newbies"



Omnitrans, the transit provider for the San Bernardino Valley, has a newly-created training video that gives riding tips, "how to's" and updated transit information, such as where to find apps that help you check bus arrival times. The 27-minute video is ideal for new-hire orientations, staff training and/or to run on loop at your next rideshare event. See it at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sMDe9i1ZwA>

Helping in a Tragedy

A special thanks goes to Omnitrans, whose buses helped transport people evacuated from the scene of the deadly terrorist attack in San Bernardino last month.

Through the county's Emergency Operations Center, Omnitrans was called upon to help people get from the Inland Regional Center and surrounding businesses after the shooting, taking them first to a local church to be interviewed by police, and later to a community center to be reunited with family and friends.

"We played a limited but important role in assisting our first responders during this tragic event," said Omnitrans CEO P. Scott Graham. Four Omnitrans vehicles including three 40-foot and one 60-foot bus were utilized, transporting more than 460 passengers.

Ventura

Calling All "Instagrammers"

Follow Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) on Instagram at @Go_VCTC to take part in a weekly photo quiz and show

your knowledge of your surrounding community!

Help Improve Bicycling in Ventura County

Whether you bike to work, to school, to stay in shape or simply for fun, you can help create better bikeways in Ventura County. As part of its Bicycle Wayfinding Program, VCTC is identifying intercity and cross-county routes, and they need your input.

Log in to the Bicycle Wiki Map at goventura.org by Jan. 29 to fill out a brief survey, and then create bike



routes through the interactive map. If you track your bike rides with GPS or Strava, you can upload your routes to be included in the project.

With help from this data, VCTC will develop a plan that designates important regional bike routes and create better signage to help cyclists easily find and navigate them. The plan will also prioritize gaps in the regional network of bike paths for future improvements.

Finding the Cash to Fix Ventura's Roads

Congress recently passed a \$350 billion transportation bill that includes

some funding for improvements in Ventura County, such as ongoing work on the Highway 101/23 interchange in Thousand Oaks. The bill also designates funds for preliminary



environmental work on improvements to Highway 118 between Simi Valley and Moorpark and Highway 101 between Thousand Oaks and Ventura.

That's only partial good news, however. Without new sources of local matching funds, Ventura County stands to lose out on the millions needed to construct major highway improvements, repair local streets, enhance safety at grade crossings and ease traffic congestion around the region, according to VCTC Executive Director Darren Kettle.

Ventura County leaders are considering ways to generate those critical local funds. One proposal is to increase the local sales tax, with the additional money going to fulfill local transportation needs. Read about it in a *Ventura County Star* editorial, "[None Too Soon, Congress Agrees on a Highway Bill.](#)"

Calendar

Jan. 25—Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) Southern California general membership in Anaheim, socialact.org



Jan. 25—Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) public hearing on proposed OC Bus changes, 9 a.m. at OCTA headquarters in Orange.

Ventura County Transportation Commission will hold forums to get

public input on what the county needs to keep traffic flowing—from relieving bottlenecks and repairing potholes to expanding transit services

and improving bike paths. Public forums will be held 6-7:30 p.m. Jan. 25 at Moorpark City Hall, Jan. 26 at Santa Paula Community Center, and Jan. 28 at Oxnard Public Library, goventura.org.



Network Meetings

Century City TMO serves businesses in the Century City area; contact Linda Paradise Lyles, 310.453.1714, linda@cctmo.org.

Glendale TMA meets regularly; call 818.543.7641.

IE Commuter offers bi-annual meetings for ETCs in the Inland Empire; call 1.866. RIDESHARE (866.743.3742).

Orange County Network meets regularly; email sharetheride@octa.net.

Pasadena TMA meets Jan. 7; call Jenny Cristales, 626.744.7464.

Santa Monica ETC Network meets regularly; call 310.458.8956.

South Bay/Westside TMA meets monthly; contact Christina Corrales at 310.652.1290, email sbwmta@gmail.com.

Torrance Transportation Network meets regularly; call Kim Fuentes at 310.784.7902

Warner Center TMO meets monthly; call 818.716.5520.

Training

Metro Rideshare upcoming briefings—where Los Angeles area employers can learn about the transportation survey process and services Metro has to offer—are Jan 13, Feb. 17 and March 16, 9:30–11:30 a.m. To reserve your space, email rideshare@metro.net.

South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) offers one-day ETC training for \$168.92. Upcoming sessions are Jan. 14 and Feb. 11 at SCAQMD offices in Diamond Bar and Feb. 25 in Culver City. Contact the SCAQMD's training program at etctraining@aqmd.gov or visit aqmd.gov.



ON THE GO

Editor/Writer: Jill Smolinski

Art Director: Harlan West

For subscription information or to change your ON THE GO e-mail address, contact your representative at the rideshare office nearest you.

Metro Rideshare

One Gateway Plaza
MS 99-19-06
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952
Business: 213.922.2811
rideshare@metro.net

OCTA Share the Ride Programs

550 S. Main St., Orange, CA 92868
Mailing address:
PO Box 14184, Orange, CA 92863
Business: 714.636.RIDE option 4

Ventura County Transportation Commission Commuter Services

950 County Square Dr., Ste. 207
Ventura, CA 93003
Business: 805.642.1591, ext. 119
CommuterServices@goventura.org

San Bernardino Rideshare Program IE Commuter

Business: 1.866.RIDESHARE (866.743.3742)

Commuter Information 511

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