Rideshare News for Southern California Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs)

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2026

ONTHEGO

News for Your Employees

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Ride Free on Transit Equity Day

Ride Free on February 4th!

Feb. 4 is Transit Equity Day. In honor of Rosa Parks' birthday, it's a day that promotes making transit affordable and accessible to people in all communities.

Fares will be free Feb. 4 on Metrolink trains throughout Southern California.

Simply arrive at the station and board the train (no ticket required) to ride Metrolink all day, anywhere it goes.

Rides are also free for the day on Metro Bus and Rail and Bike Share, and all Riverside Transit Agency, San Bernardino County and Ventura County buses.

2026 Rideshare Calendar

Mark your calendars, then look for event updates in future issues of *On the Go.*

- **Feb. 4 is Transit Equity Day.** (See story, Left).
- **National Transit Operator and Worker Appreciation Day** is March 18—take a minute to thank a transit worker!
- **April is Earthquake Preparedness Month.** Get your employees ready for commuting in crisis conditions; contact California's Office of Emergency Services at **caloes.ca.gov** or your local Red Cross office.
- **Earth Day** is April 22—a day to celebrate ridesharing's contribution to clean air, **earthday.org.**

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Metro OCTA RCTC sbcta VCTC

Calendar of Events

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2026 Rideshare Calendar

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- **May is National Bike Month,** presented locally by the transportation agencies for Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura counties and traditionally featuring prizes, rides, rallies and more. Bike Week is May 11-15.

- **May is also Clean Air Month,** and the American Lung Association kicks it off with the release of its *State of the Air Report* (a report grading major cities' air quality), **lung.org.**
- **Employee Health and Fitness Day** is May 20, a great day to remind employees about the health benefits of alternatives to solo driving like biking and walking.

- **Dump the Pump Day** is June 18, urging people to choose alternatives to driving to save money on gas.

- **Rural Transit Day** is July 16, recognizing the importance of ensuring that transit is available and accessible in rural areas.
- **Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) International Conference**—where ETCs and other transportation professionals can network and learn the latest in commute management—is July 26-29 in Philadelphia, PA, **actweb.org.**
- **September is Rail Safety Month,** and See Tracks? Think Train Week is Sept. 21-27 **oli.org.**

- **National Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Week** is Sept. 15-19, sponsored by ACT promoting efforts to promote alternatives to driving alone, **actweb.org.**

- **National Drive Electric Month,** featuring workshops and events, is typically held over a month straddling September and October, **driveelectricweek.org.**

- **Rideshare Week 2026** is Oct. 5-9, promoting alternatives to driving alone in Southern California.
- **California Clean Air Day** is Oct. 7, **cleanairday.org.**

Also Coming in 2026—3 New Ways to Ease Traffic

Plenty of big changes are in the works in transportation for the new year. Here are three:

1. LAX Is Expected to Roll Out the People Mover Train.

The Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) People Mover is expected to open this year, providing travelers with access to terminals, parking and pickup/drop-off curbs. It will also connect to the Los Angeles Metro rail system and several regional and city bus providers.

Roughly 30 million passengers per year are anticipated to use the People Mover when it opens. That means an easier trip to and from LAX—and about 117,000 fewer vehicle miles traveled per day.

Trains will travel at speeds of up to 47 miles per hour. They'll arrive at stations every two minutes during peak hours with a total travel time of 10 minutes end-to-end.

2. All Aboard the OC Streetcar.

Orange County is on track to get its first modern streetcar this spring. The OC Streetcar will serve Santa Ana's historic downtown, which includes courthouses, government offices, colleges, restaurants and more.

The streetcar will operate along a 4.15-mile route. It connects with the Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center (SARTC) and Metrolink, as well as a new transit hub at Harbor Boulevard and Westminster Avenue in Garden Grove.

A few fun facts about the OC Streetcar:

- Capacity: Up to 220 riders
- Trip time: 22-minutes end-to-end
- Number of stops: 10 in each direction
- Frequency: Every 10 to 15 minutes

Find out more and get construction updates at **octa.net.**

3. The I-15 Will Go High-Tech to Improve Traffic Flow.

A pilot project on the I-15 Freeway will use sensors and "smart" technology to monitor real-time traffic conditions to better manage traffic. It's planned for an eight-mile, non-tolled section of northbound I-15—from the San Diego/Riverside County Line in Temecula to the I-15/I-215 Interchange in Murrieta.

Designed as a two-year pilot project, it aims to improve overall traffic flow by maintaining steadier travel speeds. Adaptive ramp meters will be set to allow more or fewer vehicles to enter I-15 at any given time based on current traffic conditions.

While drivers may wait slightly longer at on-ramps, the aim is to improve overall travel time, with fewer starts and stops.

Transportation Fringe Benefit Gets a Raise

Employees can receive transit and vanpool benefits tax- free up to $340 a month in 2026, according to a recent announcement by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). That's a $15 monthly increase over the current transportation fringe benefit.

The IRS allows both employers and employees to receive tax benefits through the pre-tax purchasing of public transit fare media including vanpool fares. Employers can also choose to provide employees with a direct subsidy up to the monthly limit, perhaps eliminating the cost of commuting altogether.

Parking is also an allowable transportation fringe benefit—and the monthly maximum an employee claims can be a mix of transit and parking.

For more information, consult your tax professional.

Take the Guesswork Out of Riding the Train

Not knowing the "how tos" of riding the train could be keeping employees from trying this faster, less stressful way to commute. Good news: Metrolink now offers an **online rider guide.** It offers step-by-step instructions, including:

- Finding the nearest station to home and work
- Checking train schedules for the most convenient route
- Buying tickets, including details on discounts
- Identifying connections on shuttles, bus or micro transit for the last leg of the ride if it's too far to walk

The guide also gives information on amenities, rules and accessibility options.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Read Up on the Latest News from Metro's Blog, *The Source*

- **Metro's LIFE program** can make transit more affordable for riders whose income meets eligibility requirements. New enrollees can get unlimited free rides for the first 90 days.

- Get tips on how to ride the **A Line Extension.** The nine-mile extension recently opened with new stations in Glendora, San Dimas, La Verne and Pomona. It is on track to be a popular alternative to the often congested 10 and 210 freeways.

- **Weigh in on Metro's comprehensive budget** now through May to influence how the agency allocates resources. You'll have a chance to review the budget, understand where the money comes from and where it goes. By participating, you'll also be entered for a chance to win a $100 TAP card or a $50 gift card.

- Metro last month made **bus service changes** to improve frequency, speed and reliability on bus and rail.

Find more Metro news and sign up to subscribe to the blog at **thesource.metro.net.**

ORANGE COUNTY

OC Bus Offers Tips for a Healthier New Year

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is helping riders get off to a healthier, happier new year with its OC Navigator. **This online tool connects riders with health and wellness resources.**

"We want people to know that riding OC Bus is an opportunity to invest in your own personal health, physically and mentally," says OCTA chair Tam T. Nguyen.

In partnership with the OC Health Care Agency, the website includes tools for mental wellness, tips on happiness and gratitude, and mindfulness apps, among other resources.

What's in the Works for the Next 10 Years in Orange County Transportation

OCTA last month released its **Measure Next 10 Delivery Plan.** The plan provides a roadmap for delivering freeway, street, transit, and environmental improvements across Orange County through 2035.

It outlines several top priorities, including the OC Streetcar, railroad track stabilization in south Orange County, as well as dozens of freeway project segments expected to be completed in the coming decade.

RIVERSIDE/ SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

RTA Service Changes Coming Soon

Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) will adjust routes and trips on Jan. 11 to improve bus service.

Several routes are being adjusted for better connections at the Perris Station Transit Center and the Vine Street Mobility Hub.

For details on the full set of changes, visit **riversidetransit.com.**

Reset and Recharge in Riverside

Metrolink every month features an itinerary of fun destinations and events to get to on the train. In January, it is helping riders in Riverside get off to a healthy start. Learn about parks, pathways and spa experiences that can guide you into a revitalized new year.

You can also explore further with itineraries in Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Ventura counties.

Find out more at **metrolinktrains.com.**

Remember, residents of Riverside and San Bernardino counties are eligible for up to 90 days of free train tickets with IE Commuter's **Experience Metrolink** program, making it a great time to try the train.

Need Help With Your Rideshare Program?

If your New Year's work resolution is to improve your rideshare program, IE Commuter can help. The agency offers one-on-one assistance to employers in Riverside and San Bernardino counties, including helping with the transportation survey process.

Your employees may also qualify for incentives, such as vanpool subsidies and $5/Day gift card incentives for trying ridesharing.

Visit **IECommuter.org,** email **info@iecommuter.org** or call 1.866.RIDESHARE (866.743.3742).

VENTURA COUNTY

Tap2Ride Offering Reduced Fares

Seniors and Medicare cardholders can receive reduced fares when using a **Tap2Ride payment card** on VCTC Intercity Bus.

Reduced fares are 80 cents for Zone 1 and $2 for Zone 2.

With the Tap2Ride payment system, riders can pay fares with a credit card or mobile device. Simply tap a credit/debit card or phone/watch on the payment reader to board. No app or account is needed.

Tap2Ride also features fare capping, so once riders reach the 31-day cap, they ride free.

Ventura County's Short Range Transit Plan Draft is Now Online

Wondering what's coming in transit in Ventura County? You can now review the **draft Short Range Transit Plan** online. The 343-page plan provides a look at current transit availability across Ventura County and projects and priorities through 2034.

Find out more at **goventura.org.**

CALENDAR

Events

Transit Equity Day is Feb. 4. Metrolink, Metro, Riverside Transit Agency, San Bernardino County and Ventura County transit providers will be celebrating by offering free rides all day.

The Spring Virtual Marketing Workshop for ETCs is April 8, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. It will feature ways to market your rideshare program, details on Bike Month events and qualifies you to earn a South Coast AQMD marketing certificate. It is open to ETCs in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura counties. Sign up information will be emailed or call your Rideshare Representative.

Training

Metro Commuter Options & Regulatory Compliance Support offers free ETC Briefings where Los Angeles area employers can learn about the transportation survey process. Until further notice, briefings are being offered online only. **To register for a briefing, click here.** If you can't make that meeting, email Metro to set up a one-on-one virtual meeting. Upcoming ETC Briefings are Jan. 7 and Feb. 4, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) offers two-day ETC training via Zoom for $237.81. The next scheduled sessions are Jan. 13 and 15, Jan. 27 and 29, Feb. 10 and 12 and Feb. 24 and 26. For more information, contact the South Coast AQMD's training program at **etctraining@aqmd.gov** or visit **aqmd.gov.**

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Network Opportunities

Burbank TMO serves businesses in Downtown and Media District areas; call 818.953.7788, **director@btmo.org.**

Go Glendale meets regularly; call 213.425.0955; email **director@goglendale.org**.

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

Irvine Spectrum TMA meets regularly; call 949.727.4273 or email **kelly@spectrumotion.com.**

The LAX TMO hosts quarterly virtual meetings with employers who operate at LAX. Email **commuteLAX@lawa.org** to be invited to the next meeting.

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

Pasadena TMA meets regularly; contact Talin Shahbazian at **tshahbazian@cityofpasadena.net.**

Playa Vista's TMA, Compass, meets regularly. Employees who commute to Playa Vista are eligible for incentives for all modes of sustainable transportation. For more information, email Noe Solano at **noe@playavistacompass.com.**

Santa Monica TMO meets regularly; contact **info@GoSaMoTMO.org,** or call 213.425.0955.

ONTHEGO

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