

ONTHEGO

News for Your Employees

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Solving the “Last Mile” Problem

Tips to Help Employees Get from the Transit Station to the Worksite



It's a common dilemma for commuters: They wish they could save money and avoid the stress of driving by riding the bus, Metrolink or Metro Rail, but the station closest to the worksite is too far for them to walk.

You can help them make the switch to transit. Here, we outline options that can be used to tackle the “last mile” (or several mile) problem.

For potential Metrolink riders...

Identify **the station nearest your worksite**. Then visit the transit connections guide at metrolinktrains.com, which provides an extensive list of options by county.

On most local bus lines, riders transferring from Metrolink can ride free (and may get discounts on express buses or other non-local bus service). They just need to show their valid Metrolink pass when boarding.

Depending on location, you might also find special shuttles that service Metrolink stations, as well as options such as bike share, car share and micro-transit.

Bring your bike on board bus or rail—or pick up a bike share.

If it's too far to walk from the station, maybe riding a bike can get you the rest of the way.

Most buses in Southern California feature front racks where you can stow your bike before you board.

Riders can also **bring bikes on board Metro Rail cars**.

Metrolink trains allow bikes, and riders can look for specially designated bike cars that hold up to nine bikes on the lower level. Battery-powered bikes and scooters are also allowed.

Don't have a bike? In Los Angeles County, **Metro Bike Share bikes** are often located near stations, available for short jaunts from station to work and back again.



Continued on page 2 ➡

Rideshare Events Calendar for 2022



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

• **April is Earthquake Preparedness Month.** Get your employees ready for commuting in crisis conditions; contact the 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 rideshare's contribution to clean air, earthday.org.

• **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.

• **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.

Continued on page 3 ➡



📅 Calendar of Events

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Solving the “Last Mile” Problem

continued from page 1

Micro-transit—on-demand shuttles that service certain zones.

In Los Angeles County—**Metro Micro is on-demand rideshare service**, offering trips for as little as \$1 within several zones in LA County.

Service zones include portions of Watts/Compton, LAX/Inglewood, North Hollywood/Burbank, El Monte, Highland Park/Eagle Rock/Glendale, Altadena/Pasadena/Sierra Madre, Northwest San Fernando Valley and the recently opened UCLA/Westwood/VA Medical Center zone.



In Orange County—**OC Flex offers shared rides for \$4.50 all day** (with a limited-time promotion of half-price rides for two or more riders who book together).

OC Flex services parts of Aliso Viejo, Laguna Niguel, Mission Viejo.

Other potential last mile options...

Depending on in what city your worksite is located, commuters may have access to Dial-a-Ride, city-sponsored shuttles, scooters (i.e., Lime or Bird) or rideshare services (i.e., Lyft or Uber).

For employees that might be able to make it most of the way on transit, it could help your rideshare rate to let them know their last-mile options. You can find basic transit itineraries at go511.com (Los Angeles/Orange/Ventura) and IECommuter.org (Riverside/San Bernardino) or by calling 511.

U.S. Invests Big in Public Transit



President Biden recently signed into law the **Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal**, which will rebuild the nation's roads, bridges and rails and address the climate crisis, among other improvements.

In addition, the legislation provides nearly 90 billion in guaranteed funding for public transit over the next five years—the largest investment in public transit in U.S. history.

Some of what it includes:

- Modernizing transit and expanding options
- Replacing thousands of transit vehicles (including buses) with clean, zero emission vehicles
- Improving accessibility for the elderly and people with disabilities
- Making the largest investment in passenger rail since the creation of Amtrak 50 years ago
- Building a national network of electric vehicle (EV) chargers

Find out more at whitehouse.gov.

Free Resource Guide: Hybrid Workplace Strategies

As employees return to the worksite, it's still not “business as usual.” Instead of full-time, in-office work, many employers are offering a hybrid approach, providing employees with more flexible options to working and commuting.

The Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) offers a free guide to help employers manage a hybrid option of telework and in-office schedules to increase employee productivity, reduce traffic, and create a better work-life balance.

Download it at actweb.org.



Important Tax News

Transportation Fringe Benefit Gets a Raise



Employees can receive transit and vanpool benefits tax-free up to \$280 a month in 2022, according to a recent announcement by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

That's a \$10 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.

FLEXIBILITY IN COMMUTING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER.

Parking is also an allowable transportation fringe benefit—and the monthly maximum an employee claims can be a mix of transit and parking. “As people transition back to the worksite from teleworking, we’re seeing more of them do a mix of transportation options,” says Denise Van Stratten, a rideshare consultant. “Flexibility in commuting is more important than ever.”

For more information, consult your tax professional or visit the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) at actweb.org/fringe-benefit.

Riding Bus or Rail? Keep Masking Up!

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) recently extended the mask mandate in an effort to help curb the spread and COVID-19 and its variants and make transit safer for riders and drivers alike. Public transit riders are now required to wear a face covering on board at least through March 18.

The mandate applies to all transportation modes, including bus, rail, paratransit, micro-transit, vanpool and rideshare arrangements such as Uber and Lyft.

For details, visit tsa.gov.



Metrolink Lets You Moovit

Metrolink now uses the Moovit app to offer riders quick, convenient planning options. Riders can their mobile devices to plan their entire trip—from finding Metrolink routing and fares to connecting to other transit services.

Moovit users get real-time data so they know exactly when their bus or train is arriving.

Download it at moovit.com.



Rideshare Events Calendar for 2022

continued from page 1

- **Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) International Conference**— where ETCs and other transportation professionals can network and learn the latest in commute management—is July 31 – Aug. 3, at Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile, actweb.org.
- **Rail Safety Week** is Sept. 19-25, part of Rail Safety Month. Get safety tips to pass on to employees as well as news on campaign events from Operation Lifesaver at oli.org.
- **National Drive Electric Week** is Sept. 23-Oct. 2, driveelectricweek.org.
- **Rideshare Week 2022** is Oct. 3-7, promoting alternatives to driving alone in Southern California.
- **In the spirit of sharing**, every November and December, transit agencies partner with firefighters to stuff buses full of toys for needy kids in the Spark of Love Toy Drive. Closer to the event date, look for information at <https://abc7.com/sparkoflove/>.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY



Metro Offers Help for Low-Income Riders



After relaxing enforcement of fare collection on Metro buses during the pandemic, Metro will be reinstating fare collection on Jan. 10.

To help low-income riders, Metro is offering free or discount fares with its “Low-Income Fare Is Easy” (LIFE) program.

Qualifying riders can get reduced fare on weekly and monthly transit passes, or 20 free rides on any of the participating transit agencies.

People who are new to the program will get a free 90-day pass valid on Jan. 10. After the free pass expires, they will be able to load the LIFE discount fare onto their TAP card.

Sign up at metro.net/riding/life.

Metro Micro Launches in Westwood

Metro Micro last month began service in a new zone, the UCLA/Westwood/VA Medical Center.

Metro Micro offers on-demand, curb-to-curb shared service Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Rides are \$1 and can be booked via app, online or by calling 323.GOMETRO.

Find out more and download the app at micro.metro.net.

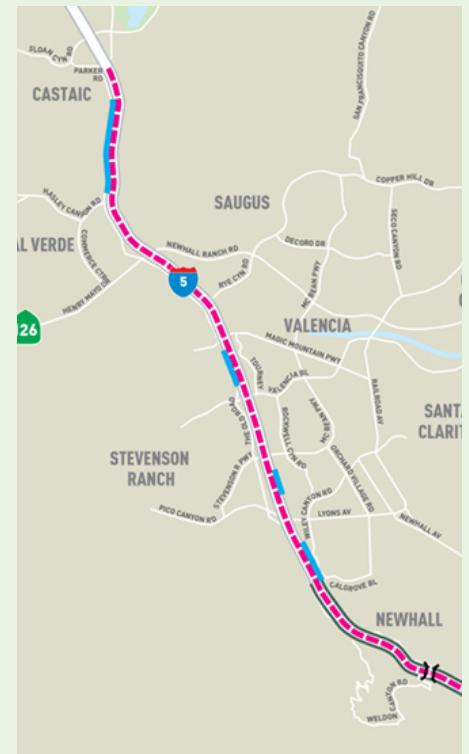


Construction Begins on the North I-5

Metro recently broke ground on an improvement project on the North I-5 Freeway.

The project will add one carpool lane in each direction along with other improvements on the 14-mile corridor between State Route 14 in Santa Clarita and Parker Road in Castaic.

Keep up to date on construction at metro.net/projects/i-5-enhancements/.



ORANGE COUNTY

Get Tips for Telework from OCTA

Learn how to get the most out of your telework program—whether it's a permanent part of your business' culture or a temporary option for workers during the pandemic.

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) has updated its [on-line telework resource guide](#) for ETCs and commuters.

It guides ETCs through the process of creating a telework policy, setting up employee guidelines and troubleshooting a program. It also links to articles, books, webinars and more.

A special [section for commuters](#) offers advice on how to stay productive, motivated and connected when working at home.

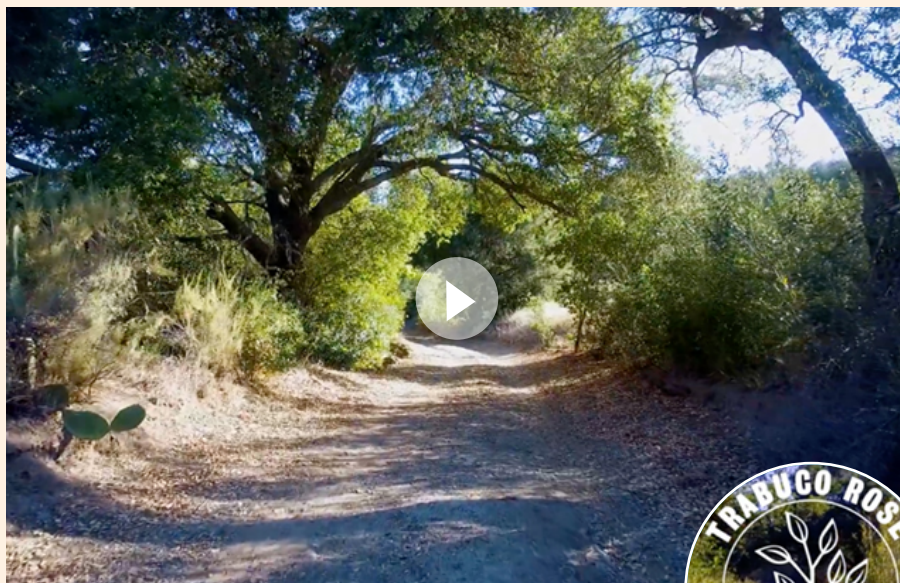


Enjoy Orange County—Free Virtual and In-Person Hikes

OCTA isn't just in the business of buses. The agency has also allocated funds to protecting the environment—including setting aside land for wildlife.

Throughout the year, OCTA offers a chance for you to experience these preserves through in-person hikes and equestrian rides as well as [virtual tours](#).

Look for the 2022 event calendar at preservingoutlegacy.org.



RIVERSIDE/SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

Ready for the Spotlight?

People who rideshare in the Inland Empire—even if not every day—can qualify to win a monthly prize of \$100 and a chance to share their story. The IE Commuter Rideshare Spotlight features commuters who “go the extra mile” to use alternatives to driving alone.

To participate, just sign up for the Rideshare Spotlight, then log your daily trips at IECommuter.org. Two winners will be selected monthly.



Arrow Is on Track

The Redlands Passenger Rail Project—commonly known as The Arrow—is set to roll this summer, with the first of three train cars recently arriving.

The Arrow will run a 9-mile route between the San Bernardino Transit Center in downtown San Bernardino and the University of Redlands. Riders will be able to connect with Metrolink, sbX bus rapid transit as well as Omnitrans, Mountain Transit, Pass Transit, Riverside Transit Agency and VVTA.

Arrow train cars will be Diesel Multiple Units, self-propelled units designed to give faster service for suburban areas where traffic density is high.

Find out more at gosbcta.com.



MBTA Partners with Token Transit

Morongo Basin Transit Authority (MBTA) now allows riders to buy fare on their mobile device using the **Token Transit app**.

Users can select any fare type, from a single ride to a monthly pass. They simply tap the mobile device on the bus's pass validator when boarding.

MBTA will still accept paper passes and cash fares (exact change only).



Better Biking and Walking Access Coming to Riverside Metrolink Stations

Work is now underway installing walkways, a bike path, bike lockers and other improvements at Riverside Metrolink stations. It's part of ongoing efforts by Riverside County Transportation Commission and Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Committee to make environmentally-friendly travel options safer and easier to use.

Construction has begun at the Riverside-Downtown, Corona-West, and South-Perris stations and is expected to be completed at the end of January.



VENTURA COUNTY



VCTC Intercity Fares 50% Off

Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) recently announced it will continue to offer half-price fares on all VCTC Intercity Buses through June. Standard cash fare is currently 80 cents (vs. \$1.75) and \$2 (vs. \$4) for lines that travel out of county.

Get schedule information at goventura.org.

PER-TRIP FARES
ARE
HALF OFF
THROUGH
JUNE 30, 2022

VCTC

The Art of Transit



VCTC partnered with all the local Boys & Girls Clubs in Ventura County for an art contest. Kids were encouraged to hand draw a picture of the place in Ventura County they would most like to visit by bus.

The winning artwork is now proudly displayed on six VCTC Intercity buses.

Keep an eye out for these special buses, or [click here to get a virtual glimpse](#).

What Would Improve Transportation in Ventura County?

You'll have a chance to join a [discussion about transit needs in Ventura County in a series of online community meetings](#), as well as join a public hearing where you can give feedback on unmet transportation needs.

VCTC will use the input to develop future plans and programs.

Community meetings are Jan. 12 and 25 and Feb. 3. The public hearing is Feb. 4. Visit goventura.org for details on how to log in.

Can't make the meetings? Take the VCTC Unmet Transit Needs [survey](#).

CALENDAR

Events

Ventura County online community meetings to identify unmet needs in transportation are Jan. 12 and 25 and Feb. 3, and a public hearing is Feb. 4. Get log in information at goventura.org/unmet-needs.

Network Opportunities

Please note: Due to COVID-19 concerns, network meetings may be canceled or conducted via online platform—please contact organizers for more information.

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

Compass at Playa Vista meets regularly; call Aaron Gaul, 310.929.5946, aaron@playavistacompass.com.

Go Glendale meets regularly; call 818.543.7641.

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, email steve@spectrumotion.com.

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

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

Santa Monica TMO meets regularly; contact Puja Thomas Patel, 424.330.4298.

Torrance Transportation Network meets regularly; call Kim Fuentes at 310.784.7902.

Continued on page 8 ➔

Training

IE Commuter Office Hours—monthly online, interactive workshops on topics of interest to ETCs in Riverside and San Bernardino counties—are Jan. 12 and Feb. 9, 10-11 a.m. To sign up, email info@iecommuter.org.

Metro Rideshare/Shared Mobility 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 sign up, send an email to SharedMobility@metro.net;

you will be sent a link with a password to log into the meeting. If you can't make that meeting, email Metro to set up a one-on-one virtual meeting. Upcoming ETC Briefings are Jan. 12, Feb. 9 and March 9, 9:30- 11:30 a.m.

South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) offers two-day ETC training via Zoom for \$198.27. For more information, contact the South Coast AQMD's training program at etctraining@aqmd.gov or visit aqmd.gov.



ON THE GO

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Riverside/San Bernardino Rideshare Program

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