

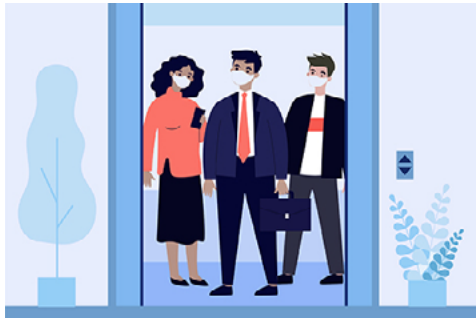
ON THE GO

News for Your Employees

Download English Version

Download Spanish Version

Heading Back to the Workplace



Back in March of 2020, the big question was, “How are employers dealing with setting up employees to work at home?” Recently, that question has shifted to, “How are they handling employees coming back to the office?”

Most likely, it's not going to quickly bounce back to business as usual—and in fact, it may never fully return to the way it used to be.

“Prior to the pandemic, only 40% of U.S. employers had a formal telework program in place,” says Elham Shirazi, principal of e-Planning, a transportation consulting firm. “Employers and workers alike have learned how these programs can boost productivity and employee satisfaction. It's likely many companies will continue to offer telework as an option, at least on a part-time basis.”

Here, we talked to some employers and commuters to see how they're making the transition.



Tameika Hall-Fulton
Princess Cruise Lines

“Our employees have been working from home since last year,” says ETC Tameika Hall-Fulton. “As of July 5,

Continued on page 2 →

Reminder: Employees Will Need Commute Help

Let employees returning to work know about ways to find their best commute option—whether your office can help or by referring them to local rideshare agencies.

Especially for employees that have been teleworking since March 2020, it's possible the way they used to get to work is no longer available. Their transit route may have been canceled or changed. Their carpool partner may not be interested in sharing a ride anymore. Life changes like moving or new work schedules also impact commutes.

Free Commute Assistance

Your Southern California rideshare agencies are here to help. Commuters can get a personalized list of potential transit routes, carpool partners, vanpools, Park & Ride lots and more at ridematch.info (Los Angeles/Orange/Ventura) or IECommuter.org (Riverside/San Bernardino) or by calling 511.



Riding Transit? Mask Up!

Although the State of California lifted its mask mandate on June 15, riders and drivers on public transit must still wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth.

That's because the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has extended its face mask requirement through Sept. 13 across all transportation networks in the U.S. This includes “on over-the-road buses, and on commuter bus and rail systems,” according to TSA guidelines.

Many bus systems throughout Southern California—including Metro and OC Bus—provide free masks aboard buses or at transit stations for those who need them.



Calendar of Events

Download Commuter News

Download this Issue as PDF

Heading Back to the Workplace

continued from page 1

we'll open up our doors to employees here in California and our other corporate office in Seattle on a voluntary basis."

How telework has worked: When employees switched to working at home in March of 2020, Princess Cruise Lines' enhanced ergonomics program provided office items such as chairs, keyboards and standing desks to those who needed them. They also allowed employees to order their own supplies online.

"I think we did a phenomenal job with setting it up without much time to get it done," Hall-Fulton says.



What the office environment will be now: The company has identified desks that can be occupied, allowing for at least six feet between. Employees can reserve these via Outlook on the days they want to come in. "We'll have all the amenities of the office available. The supply room will be open. We will be reducing capacity for conference rooms and restrooms."

Helping employees get to work: "As an ETC, I'm going to be reaching out to folks, asking them if they're going to be coming back. If so, will they be comfortable taking public transit?" According to Hall-Fulton, this will allow the rideshare office to budget for subsidies that the company offers toward transit fares and also identify employees who might need help finding a commute option.

Moving forward: "Personally, I've loved working from home. I've been so much more productive," she says, adding that at this point it's too early to know if

"AS AN ETC, I'M GOING TO BE REACHING OUT TO FOLKS, ASKING THEM IF THEY'RE GOING TO BE COMING BACK. IF SO, WILL THEY BE COMFORTABLE TAKING PUBLIC TRANSIT?"

employees will eventually all return to the office or if Princess Cruise Lines will keep a telework option available.

Julie Penney
Sheppard Mullin
Los Angeles

"We're trying to encourage people to come back in if they are fully vaccinated and/or they are comfortable coming back in," says Julie Penney, office administrator. "We have seen an uptick in people returning, but as of now it's slow in coming."



"WE'RE TRYING TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO COME BACK IN IF THEY ARE FULLY VACCINATED AND/OR THEY ARE COMFORTABLE COMING BACK IN."

How many employees are in the office: A core group of about 20 essential staff—including Penney—have been coming in since the beginning. This June, approximately 22% of our employees assigned to this office come in each day. "As state and city rules have lifted some

restrictions, and with more people getting vaccinations, more are coming in for a day or two as needed," Penney says.

How it has impacted the commute: Prior to COVID, Sheppard Mullin had about 120 bus riders. That number is significantly lower due to employees' concerns about riding in a shared vehicle.

The company has been providing parking for people who currently prefer to drive to the office.

For those still riding transit, they provide a transportation stipend toward fares. "That may even go up to be more of a lure to get people to use it."

In-office policies: Employees are still required to wear masks when walking about in the office. They must also view a safety video before they return. Sheppard Mullin provides masks, gloves and sanitizer.

Going forward: "We follow all safety guidelines and protocols," Penney says. "And we do everything to the letter (in following those COVID safety policies and guidelines)."





Shannon Capaldi
University of La Verne

"In general, over the past 15 months, all of our administrative staff has been operating remotely, and all of our courses

have been fully online," says Shannon Capaldi, director of the Office of the President & Board Affairs. "There are a few exceptions. Our campus safety office, for example, still reported in."

The next step: The university will continue remote instruction for summer courses. "Beginning in the fall, we are prioritizing returning to our face-to-face learning, of course only as allowed by L.A. County guidelines."

A new way of working: "We realized that much can be maintained and accomplished in a remote setting," says Capaldi, adding that, on the other hand, they also want a return to the connectivity that in-office work allows.

"WE'RE PLANNING TO CONTINUE A HYBRID PROGRAM FOR MOST ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, DEPENDING ON THEIR JOB ROLES. THERE ARE MANY UNITS ON CAMPUS THAT CAN CONTINUE TO WORK HYBRID OR EVEN FULLY REMOTE."

"We're planning to continue a hybrid program for most administrative staff, depending on their job roles. There are many units on campus that can continue to work hybrid or even fully remote."

How they developed the plan: The university established some general

guidelines and then left it up to individual departments to work out an approach with their teams to decide if, and how often, employees could work at home.

Says Capaldi, "It would be impossible for university leadership to have a blanket 'this is how it's going to work' approach to telework. They instead allowed each unit team to figure out what works for them so we're ready for students to come back in fall."

An added benefit: The University of La Verne has always promoted rideshare options to employees. "One of the reasons we are looking to maintain this hybrid plan is to shorten employees' commutes and also reduce our carbon footprint."



Russell Plummer
USCIS, Dept. of
Homeland Security
Pasadena

In his position as an operations support specialist, Plummer was able to telework

full time when California's shelter in place order went into effect last year. These days, he splits his workweek between home and the office.

Making the shift to telework: USCIS already had a formal telework program in place, enabling employees whose jobs allowed it to work at home regularly or on occasion. When the pandemic hit, rather than start from scratch, management was therefore able to expand on an already existing set of policies and procedures to allow for at-home work.

"Before COVID, I'd go through periods where I'd work at home fairly regularly. Other times only once every few months," says Plummer. "In the past 15 months or so, I really learned to get the most out of it. I'm able to be more productive, and I've

"I LIKE THE BALANCE. IT'S GREAT TO WORK AT HOME SOME DAYS, BUT THERE ARE OTHER DAYS I REALLY DO NEED TO COME INTO THE OFFICE."

learned aspects of how to utilize the computer and get things done better than I have in the past."

Is it back to "business as usual?"

According to Plummer, there is as yet no official company statement as to when—or if—employees will return to the worksite at pre-COVID levels. He, like many of the employees there, has been slowly phasing in office days over the past months.



Moving forward: "USCIS is being as flexible as they can to help employees work out their schedules," Plummer says, adding, "I like the balance. It's great to work at home some days, but there are other days I really do need to come into the office. I hope to keep working this type of schedule even when things get back to normal." ■

Get in on the ACTion



The 35th annual Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) International Conference is

Aug. 1-4 at Walt Disney World Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

The event will include keynote addresses on the challenges facing ETCs in today's workplace, the ACT National Awards Ceremony and more than 30 sessions on topics ranging from telework to vanpooling to rideshare marketing strategies and more.

For the health and safety of staff and attendees, ACT will require the use of masks, limit seating capacity and provide hand sanitizer, among other measures.

For more information on the conference, including sessions and speakers being updated regularly, visit actweb.org/conference.

Need to Convince Your Employer You Should Go?

ACT provides an online **Justification Toolkit** with tips, a sample letter to give to management and calculations for a return on investment for your attendance.

5 Fun Metrolink Facts



1. For the first time in Metrolink's history, it now offers Saturday service on its Ventura County line.

2. It's only \$10 to ride all day, anywhere Metrolink goes, on Saturdays and Sundays. Kids under 18 ride free (up to three per paying adult). Participating providers also offer free transfers.

3. Check out the **How Full Is My Train? tool** to see recent ridership of the train you plan to take and be assured there will be plenty of space for physical distancing.

4. A new **5-Day Flex Pass** saves riders 10% over the cost of buying five individual day passes—ideal for teleworkers only coming into the office occasionally.

5. Join Metrolink's **SoCal Explorer loyalty program** and every time you ride, you earn points toward a free ticket—plus get access to deals and discounts at area retailers.

LOS ANGELES

New Schedules Now Underway

Metro now offers more frequent service on many of its routes—in particular in the San Fernando and San Gabriel valleys.

Many of the trips recently added are on Metro's busiest bus lines. Metro is also improving weekday rail service frequencies during peak times on the A Line (Blue), E Line (Expo), C Line (Green) and L Line (Gold).

Dozens of Metro lines added trips on weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays. See the full list in the **June 27 Service Changes brochure**.

Riders can also check for changes to their bus line with Metro's online tool at metro.net/mybus.



New schedules start June 27, 2021.



ORANGE COUNTY

COUNTY

Metro Launches Adopt-a-Bike Program



Metro last month launched its Adopt-a-Bike program. Working with community groups, Metro will distribute used bikes to L.A. County residents who need them to access jobs, recreation and other opportunities.

The bikes are those that have been left behind on the bus and rail system. Every month, Metro collects hundreds of these bikes. As per state law, the bikes are held in Metro's lost and found facilities for 90 days.

Less than 25% are claimed by their owners—and the rest are now being “adopted out” in this new program.

Get Deals and Discounts with “Eat Shop Play”

Sign up to get deals and discounts at Santa Ana restaurants, shopping, entertainment and more at octa.net/EatShopPlay.

You'll also receive coupons and learn about unique one-of-a-kind events.

The Eat Shop Play program supports local businesses impacted by construction along the path of the OC Streetcar.



Join the 405 Forward Facebook group!

If You Drive the 405...

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is partnering with the cities of Fountain Valley, Westminster and Huntington Beach on a free program that highlights and promotes local businesses near the I-405 Improvement Project.

Know of a local business that can benefit from this program? Have them check out octa.net/405Forward to sign up.

You can also share your favorite local restaurants and retailer and learn about specials, discounts and offers by joining the **405 Forward Facebook group**.

RIVERSIDE/ SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

Omnitrans Fares Now on Moovit

Tickets for **Omnitrans** buses can now be purchased on the Moovit app. After a short, one-time registration process, with a few clicks, your tickets will be in your hand.

For details and to buy Omnitrans fares, visit moovitapp.com.



Lyft Discount to the Ontario Airport



Travelers can take up to \$35 off Lyft rides between the Ontario International Airport and Metrolink stations in Ontario-East, Montclair, Upland and Rancho Cucamonga.

The discount is thanks to the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA) in partnership with Metrolink, Omnitrans and Lyft.

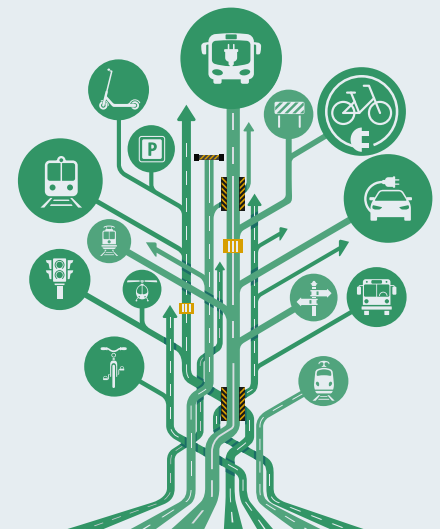
Use code **GOSBCTA** and the discount will automatically be applied to any eligible ride throughout the life of the program.

Help Shape Clean Transportation

Take the Community Transportation Needs Assessment survey, and weigh in on what transportation options are needed in Western Riverside County (focusing on Corona, San Jacinto, Moreno Valley, and local Native American tribes in the area) to provide better access to jobs, school, food and medical appointments while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

You can also attend online workshops July 7 and 10 to learn more about clean transportation plans being considered, such as electric vehicle carsharing, vanpooling, scooter-sharing and bikesharing.

Take the survey (until mid-July) and sign up for workshops at wrcog.us.





VENTURA COUNTY

Half-Price Fares through Dec 31

Effective July 1, Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) is resuming fare collection on Intercity buses. As a special promotion, prices will be half off the regular per-trip fare through Dec. 31.

Full Fare-Zone 1 tickets are now 80 cents per trip. Full Fare-Zone 2 ticket are now \$2. Special reduced fares for Seniors 65 and older, Medicare or ADA/Disabled are also half price.

Get details and fare options at goventura.org or call 1.800.438.1112.



Introducing...the New Contactless Bus Pass

Now bus riders in Ventura County can purchase fares and board buses using contactless payment with **VCbuspass**.

To use it, simply purchase a reloadable card from one of Ventura County transit's sales locations or online. Add a pass or stored value to your card when you first buy it.

When you board the bus, hold up your card to the reader. The fare will be automatically deducted from your account.

VCbuspass is accepted by these transit operators:

- Camarillo Area Transit and Dial-a-Ride
- Gold Coast Transit
- Moorpark Transit
- Ojai Trolley
- Simi Valley Transit
- Thousand Oaks Transit
- Valley Express Transit and Dial-a-Ride
- VCTC Intercity Transit



CALENDAR

Events

The 35th Annual ACT International Conference is Aug. 1-4 at Walt Disney World Resort in Lake Buena Vista, FL. Due to the uncertainty of the times, ACT has adopted more lenient cancelation and refund policies. Get details and register at conference.actweb.org.

Metro offers free bike classes on an ongoing basis throughout the county on topics such as bike safety and maintenance, how to change a flat tire and rules of the road. For a list of upcoming classes and to register, visit metro.net/riding/go-bike/.

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.

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

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

Continued on page 8 ➔

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.

Training

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 July 13, Aug. 17 and Sept. 14, 9:30-11:30 a.m.; contact Metro for information on how to participate on these dates.

South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) offers two-day ETC training via Zoom for \$198.27. The next scheduled sessions are July 6 and 8, July 20 and 22, Aug. 10 and 12 and Aug. 24 and 26. For more information, contact the South Coast AQMD's training program at etctraining@aqmd.gov or visit aqmd.gov.



ON THE GO

Editor/Writer: Jill Smolinski

Design: Lentini Design & Marketing, Inc
Hilary Lentini, Leanna Hanson

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

Riverside/San Bernardino Rideshare Program

IE Commuter Business: 1.866.RIDESHARE (866.743.3742)
Twitter: [@IECommuter](https://twitter.com/IECommuter), [@TheRCTC](https://twitter.com/TheRCTC), [@goSBCTA](https://twitter.com/goSBCTA)
Facebook: [@IECommuter](https://facebook.com/IECommuter), [@TheRCTC](https://facebook.com/TheRCTC), [@goSBCTA](https://facebook.com/goSBCTA)
Instagram: [@iecommuter](https://instagram.com/iecommuter), [@therctc](https://instagram.com/therctc), [@gosbcta](https://instagram.com/gosbcta)
Blog: <http://www.rctc.org/the-point/>

Metro Regional Rideshare/Shared Mobility

One Gateway Plaza
MS 99-19-06
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952
Business: 213.922.2811
SharedMobility@metro.net
<http://thesource.metro.net/>
Twitter: [@MetroLosAngeles](https://twitter.com/MetroLosAngeles)
Facebook: [LosAngelesMetro](https://facebook.com/LosAngelesMetro)

Ventura County Transportation Commission Commuter Services

751 E. Daily Dr., Ste. 420
Camarillo, CA 93010
Business: 951.352.8006
goventura.org/rideshare
Twitter: [@GoVCTC](https://twitter.com/GoVCTC)
Facebook: [GoVCTC](https://facebook.com/GoVCTC)
Instagram: [@goVCTC](https://instagram.com/goVCTC)

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
Twitter: [@GoOCTA](https://twitter.com/GoOCTA)
Facebook: [OCTASharetheRide](https://facebook.com/OCTASharetheRide)

Commuter Information 511

Go511.com
Los Angeles/Orange/Ventura counties
IE511.org
Riverside/San Bernardino counties



- Download Commuter News
- Download this Issue as PDF