Rideshare News for Southern California Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs)

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2026

ONTHEGO

News for Your Employees

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El Niño Storms May Be on the Way

Handy Resources to Help Employees Find Alternative Commutes



A record-breaking El Niño is being predicted for this winter. It could increase the likelihood of heavy rainfall, flash floods and debris flows that would disrupt traffic and road conditions.

Here, we offer resources you can use to keep informed and help employees find alternatives if their usual commute is affected:

Caltrans QuickMap—quickmap.dot.ca.gov
QuickMap displays real-time traffic information layered on a Google Map that includes traffic speeds, lane and full closures and camera snapshots.
To look up road hazards by freeway number, visit **Caltrans' Road Information site.**

SoCal 511—socal511.org or dial 511
The regional transportation network offers updated alerts and advisories on road closures and traffic hazard warnings, any impacted transit services, evacuation notices, alternative transportation options and more.

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Free and Discount Rides



Veterans Day: Ventura County and Riverside Transit Agency buses will offer free rides for veterans and active military on Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

Thanksgiving: Ride Metrolink for **$12 all day** on Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving. Trains will run on their Sunday schedule.



Calendar of Events

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El Niño Storms

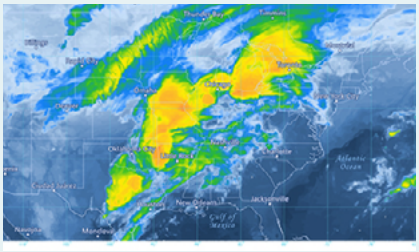
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Regional Rideshare Sites
Employees seeking an alternative if their usual route is unavailable can find carpool partners, potential vanpools, transit routing, generate instant RideGuides and more at **ridematch.info** (Los Angeles/Orange/Ventura) and **IECommuter.org** (Riverside/San Bernardino).

You'll also find the latest rideshare news, details on special promotions and more.

National Weather Service (NWS)—weather.gov
Follow your local NWS branches on social media or their websites for flash flood warnings and other weather-related news affecting roads.



My Hazards (Cal OES)—ocpsc.ca.gov
Input your home or work address on the California Governor's Office of Emergency Service "My Hazards" tool to check if your regular commute crosses active flood zones.

"Stuff a Bus" with Toys for Kids



Transit agencies are partnering with KABC7 and the Southern California Firefighters for the annual Spark of Love Toy Drive. You're asked to help "stuff a bus" full of new toys for underserved families.

For details on upcoming dates and locations, visit **abc7.com/sparkoflove.**

Metrolink News...

Metrolink Fare Adjustments Now in Effect

Metrolink raised some of its fares slightly last month. One-way tickets increased about 14%. The SoCal Day Pass went from $15 to $19 on weekdays and $10 to $12 on weekends and holidays.

Nearly 80% of one-way purchases saw an increase of up to $1, and less than 1% increased by more than $2. The price of multi-day pass options—including the 5-Day Flex Pass and Monthly Passes—shifted slightly, with some fares increasing and others dropping.

Metrolink's everyday discounts will remain. Metrolink offers special discounts for seniors (65 and older), students, disabled and veterans.

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

Introducing the Safe Ride App



Metrolink recently launched **Metrolink Safe Ride,** a new mobile app that gives riders a quick, discreet way to report safety and security concerns at stations and onboard trains.

You can use it to alert the agency's security center about suspicious activity, unsafe conditions and other non-emergency issues. (In emergency situations, you should call 911.)

It allows you to identify the type and location of an incident, provide details and, when safe and appropriate, include photos. You can also report safety concerns by calling or texting 866.640.5190.

For details and to download the app, visit **metrolinktrains.com.**

Commuter Tax Benefits Get a Boost



Employees can receive transit and vanpool benefits tax-free up to $350 a month in 2027, 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.

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.

Rideshare Week Roundup

Southern California commuters celebrated Rideshare Week last month. Throughout the week of Oct 5-9, ridesharers had the chance to win prizes and participate in worksite events from rideshare fairs to rallies to contests and more.

Thank you to the thousands of commuters who chose an alternative to driving alone—whether carpooling, vanpooling, bus/rail, biking, walking or teleworking.

Thank You to the 2026 Rideshare Week Top Level Sponsors:

Los Angeles County
Brighton Collectibles
Commute with Enterprise
Macy's
Metrolink
The Beverly Hilton
The Bloc DTLA

Orange County
Commute with Enterprise
Spectrumotion

San Bernardino/Riverside Counties
Big Bear Mountain Resort
Commute with Enterprise
Monster Energy
Omnitrans
Dana Wharf Sportfishing & Whale Watching
Hyatt Regency Indian Wells Resort & Spa



A Year in Review — Changes in Transportation You May Have Missed



In case you missed the news, here are some of the big happenings this year...

Metro Rail Extension to Beverly Hills opened. The first section of the D (Purple) Line Extension opened in May. The 3.9-mile corridor includes three new stations along Wilshire Boulevard, serving Los Angeles' Miracle Mile district to La Cienega Boulevard in Beverly Hills.

This is the first time that rail transit has ever reached Wilshire Boulevard west of Western Avenue, previously the end of the D Line.

Travel times between Union Station in downtown L.A. and the Wilshire/La Cienega station is about 20 minutes.

California's first "Smart Freeway" launched. A pilot project on the I-15 Freeway uses sensors and "smart" technology to monitor real-time traffic conditions to better manage traffic. It covers 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.

It aims to improve overall traffic flow by maintaining steadier travel speeds. Adaptive ramp meters are set to allow more or fewer vehicles to enter I-15 at any given time based on current traffic conditions.

New South Coast AQMD fees went into effect. In 2026, South Coast AQMD recently slightly increased filing fees for employers complying with the agency's Rule 2202 mandate. New rates went into effect July 1.

The annual fee for employers with 500 or more employees submitting a Rule 2202 Commute Reduction Program (ECRP) went up roughly 3%—from $1,453.87 to $1,500.39. ETC Training now costs $245.42 for the two half-day online classes.

Fees are based on employee counts and are lower for employers with 250–499 employees. For a complete summary, visit **aqmd.gov.**

Foothill Transit added express bus service to Cal Poly and Mt. SAC. It runs between the San Dimas Metro A Line station and Cal Poly Pomona and Mt. San Antonio College.

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A Year in Review

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OC Bus switched to Wave App. The former OC Bus mobile app was discontinued this year. It has been replaced with the Wave app, which riders can use to manage their OC Bus account and purchase fares.

Coastal Express added service. The Coastal Express connects riders along the Ventura-Santa Barbara corridor. It now offers service to the Santa Barbara Airport and expanded its service to Camarillo, Oxnard and University of California, Santa Barbara.

The bus route also added more weekday and express trips during peak commute times, including to and from the Metrolink Camarillo Station.

Metro riders can now TAP to ride. Riders can now pay fare simply by tapping a credit or debit card—plastic or digital—at TAP validators on buses and at Metro Rail stations. This includes 25 local transit agencies that participate in TAP.

Fare capping—which helps riders earn free rides when they reach the 1-day ($5) or 7-day fare limit ($18)—remains in place. You must use the same TAP card or credit/debit card to get the fare capping benefit.



The Inland Empire opened its first "diverging diamond" interchange. This new, efficient type of interchange is at the intersection of I-215 and University Parkway, near Cal State San Bernardino.

A diverging diamond interchange enhances traffic flow and improves safety. It allows more cars to pass through during a green light cycle. Vehicles turning or merging left onto I-215 no longer have to cross oncoming traffic, reducing the risk of collisions.

Seniors (65+) and Medicare cardholders and U.S. military veterans can now get reduced fares when using a debit or credit card. To qualify, they must register their card at **benefits.calitp.org/vctc.**

Reduced fares are 80 cents for Zone 1 and $2 for Zone 2 on VCTC Intercity (other operators' fares may vary).

North America's first self-powered, zero-emission train car began service on Arrow passenger rail service between San Bernardino and Redlands. This Zero-Emission Multiple Unit (ZEMU) uses technology that only produces water vapor as emissions. An innovative clean transit alternative, it is helping to improve air quality and providing a cleaner, quieter ride.



Metro made it easier to get around with the launch of a new mobile app.
The LA Metro app delivers real-time information straight from Metro's operational systems. Features include trip planning and routing for Metro and other regional transit providers, real-time bus arrival times, service alerts and more.

Southern California Vanpool Resources

Metro Vanpool
Visit **metro.net/vanpool** for helpful "how to" guides, leasing information, sign up forms and more.

OC Vanpool
Visit **octa.net/vanpool** for program guidelines or contact Kristopher Hewkin at 714.560.5331, **khewkin@octa.net.**

VanClub
A service of Riverside County Transportation Commission, visit **vanclub.net** for more information.

SB Loop
Visit **ridetheloop.com** for details on vanpools serving San Bernardino County.

Ventura County Vanpools
Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) offers help for employers and commuters interested in vanpooling at **goventura.org.**

VVTA Vanpool
Visit **iVanpool.org** to apply for a subsidy, learn more about vanpool benefits or find an existing vanpool.



LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Better Bus Service is on the way for Vermont Avenue

Metro recently broke ground on the **Vermont Corridor Bus Rapid Transit Project,** which will bring 12.4 miles of dedicated bus lanes, faster service and upgraded stations to Vermont Avenue between Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood and 120th Street in the Athens area of L.A.

Vermont Avenue is one of the busiest and longest streets in Los Angeles, as well as one of the busiest bus corridors in the county.

Project highlights include 26 upgraded stations at 13 major intersections, faster service and easy transfers to Metro's B, C, D and E rail lines and more than 13 east-west bus routes.



Ride, Shop and Save with Big Blue Bus

Riders on Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus can get discounts and special promotions at area restaurants, shops and events with Ride, Shop, Save. To find out more and sign up, go to **bigbluebus.com.** The promotion runs through Dec. 31.



ORANGE COUNTY

Youth Ride Free Applications Extended to Dec. 31

If you haven't yet done so, you now have until Dec. 31 to submit an application for OC Bus's Youth Ride Free program.



The program allows youths ages 6 to 18 to ride OC Bus for free.

In response to community feedback, Orange County Transportation Authority has simplified the application process. Students ages 13 and older can now apply independently with parental consent, use student IDs to verify eligibility and choose between a physical Wave card or a virtual card on their phone, once approved.

Learn more and apply at **octa.net.**

San Clemente Beach Trail Now Open

A popular stretch of the San Clemente Beach Trail is now open. A January 2024 landslide had damaged the railroad and destroyed a pedestrian trail bridge, interrupting rail service and public access.

Transit agencies built an initial protective wall, allowing regular passenger service to resume in March 2024.

The newly completed project provides more extensive protection and restores the beach trail, with portions elevated roughly 10 feet to enhance ocean views.



RIVERSIDE/ SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

Last Chance for Non-Residents to Earn Up to $125 in Gift Card Rewards

If you live outside of Riverside or San Bernardino County but commute to work in either county, now may be your last opportunity to take advantage of IE Commuter's $5/Day Rideshare Incentive Program. Until Dec. 31, eligible out-of-county commuters can earn up to $125 in gift cards simply by sharing their commute, taking transit, biking or walking and logging eligible trips.

To participate, commuters must register with IE Commuter, qualify for the program and log at least five rideshare trips per month for three consecutive months. The incentive is available to commuters who work in Riverside or San Bernardino counties and have not previously completed the $5/Day program. To qualify, both the commuter and their employer must be registered with IE Commuter.

Find out more at **IECommuter.org/5Day.**

Are Your Employees Missing Out on Another Great Incentive...?

With the **Experience Metrolink Program,** commuters who live in Riverside and San Bernardino counties are eligible for up to 90 days of free Metrolink train tickets from IE Commuter.

Your employees who use Metrolink to get to/from work and already enrolled in the $5/Day incentive can sign up for the Experience Metrolink program to receive free tickets while also earning $5/Day benefits.

(If they're not enrolled in $5/Day incentive when they sign up for free Metrolink tickets, they must wait until their 90-day participation is over before applying for the incentive.)



VENTURA COUNTY

Tell VCTC About Your Transit Needs



Where do you need transit to take you? **Ventura County Transportation Commission** (VCTC) wants to know. The agency is hosting a series of community outreach meetings in January and February. You're invited to weigh in on where and when transit service could better meet your needs.

Meetings are being held:
Jan. 4 at 6 p.m., Fillmore Active Adult Center
Jan. 6 at 12: p.m. (Virtual)
Jan. 14 at 6 p.m., Goebel Adult Community Center, Thousand Oaks
Jan. 19 at 6 p.m., Camarillo Public Library
Feb. 5 at 9 a.m., Camarillo City Hall

You can also submit comments anytime to **ridercomments@goventura.org.**

Get Ready for VCTC's Quarterly Rideshare Challenge

VCTC is preparing to launch its first quarterly rideshare challenge this fall. Log your rideshare trips at **ridematch.info** for a chance to win a prize. Visit **goventura.org** for launch details and participation guidelines.



CALENDAR

Events

Ventura County buses will offer free rides for veterans and active military on Veterans Day, Nov. 11. For a list of participating providers, visit **goventura.org/free.**

Fill the Bus/Rider Appreciation Day: **Basin Transit**—serving the Morongo Basin—will celebrate its riders with free rides and promotional giveaways on Nov. 22.

Ride Metrolink for $12 all day on Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Trains will run on their Sunday schedule.

Help "stuff a bus" full of new toys for underserved families. For times and locations, visit **abc7.com/sparkoflove.**

Go Metro to the Rose Bowl on Jan. 1. Details and special event hours will be available at **metro.net.**

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 Nov. 4 and Dec. 2 from 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) offers two-day ETC training via Zoom for $245.42. The next scheduled sessions are Nov. 3 and 5 and Dec. 8 and 10. 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 **tdm@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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