



Did You Know...?

A few “fun facts” in honor of Earth Day on April 22:

- A typical passenger vehicle emits about 4.7 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year.
- The pounds of CO₂ per passenger mile emitted for someone driving alone is .96—or nearly a pound of pollutants per mile.
- Transit on average is roughly half that, at .45 pounds/mile per person. Vanpooling is only .22.



“Clean Cars” to Get More Time in the Carpool Lanes

The decals that allow solo drivers of electric, plug-in hybrid and hydrogen-powered cars to use carpool lanes will expire Jan. 1 of next year. Under a new California law, however, drivers who have a green or white decal that was issued in 2017 or 2018 can reapply for a new one that will give them access for four more years. [More >](#)



The New Tax Plan & Your **Rideshare Program**

When the tax plan was signed into law at the end of last year, many ETCs worried how it would affect their rideshare programs. “Will it cost more to offer rideshare benefits?” “Will my employees lose out on tax breaks?” “What’s different under the new law?”

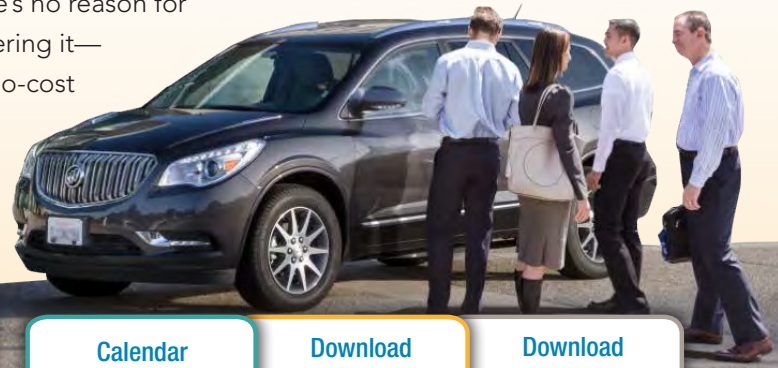
Here, we give a brief roundup of the tax code changes that you need to know, as well as provide resources to find out more.

(Note: this is an interpretation of the law and not legal advice—always consult your tax professional.)

If you allow employees to pay for transit/vanpool fares using pre-tax dollars...

No change here. Your employees can still pay for transit and vanpool fares (and parking) using pre-tax dollars—usually done through a payroll deduction. By doing so, their overall taxable income is reduced up to the IRS cap, which bumped up from \$255 to \$260 per month.

The good news for overall rideshare rates: This is by far the most common form of providing commute tax benefits at U.S. worksites. Since this tax break remains in effect, there’s no reason for employers to stop offering it—especially since it’s a no-cost benefit they can give workers that also reduces payroll tax amounts. [More >](#)



[Calendar of Events](#)

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Breaking Ground on the I-405

Construction will soon be underway on a 16-mile section of the I-405 Freeway between State Route 73 in Costa Mesa and I-605 near the L.A. County line.

It's part of a 5-year project that Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is calling "the largest in its history" and aims to ease traffic on one of the nation's busiest freeways. When complete, the project will add express lanes and four new lanes in total, as well as other improvements.

OCTA starts work as early as this month, with more significant construction activities—such as the first paving operations and bridge demolition—expected to begin late summer.

Look for construction updates at octa.net/405improvement.



A Whole New Ballgame

Baseball season is back—and so are ways to get to the ballgame without the stress of traffic.

- **The Dodger Stadium Express** shuttles game-goers from Union Station and the South Bay for all home games—and your Dodger ticket is good for the fare.
- **Metrolink Angels Express** is only \$7 dropping riders off steps from Angel Stadium at the Anaheim ARTIC station.

The New Tax Plan... *(continued from page 1)*

If your company pays for employee transit/vanpool fares and writes off the cost...

Under the new law, employers can no longer write off subsidized transit, vanpool (and parking) costs.

So how will this affect your rideshare program?

According to a release from the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT), most likely, if your company subsidizes these costs, it does so as part of a larger employee benefits program designed to recruit and retain employees.

While there's no longer a specific write-off for transit and vanpool expenses, the tax law does reduce the tax rate for these types of programs from 35% to 21%.

If your company provides a mix of subsidizing some transit/vanpool costs and letting employees pay the rest pre-tax...

The law applies as described above—the subsidized portion cannot be written off, but employees may pay for their own expenses tax-free up to the IRS cap.

What about bicycling benefits?

The tax reform package does eliminate the bicycle benefit (which was separate from the qualified transportation fringe benefit and had its own rules and benefit levels).

However, bicycling benefits—while no longer qualifying for a tax write-off—can be claimed as a business expense. The value of the benefit would be taxable to the employee.



Want to learn more?

Read: [Tax Reform—Changes to the Transit Benefit—Myths & Realities](#)

Tune In: ACT is hosting a Webinar, "Tax Reform and Transit Benefits: Separating Myth from Reality and How Your Organization Can Benefit," March 13, 11 a.m. – 12 Noon. Register at actweb.org.

Participate: Contact your county rideshare office to find out how your company can benefit from tax advantages.

"Clean Cars" *(continued from page 1)*

Decals issued prior to 2017 are not eligible for an extension.

New cars sold in 2019 may still qualify for a decal, but the expiration date will vary depending on when it was purchased.

The goal is to continue to encourage people to buy EVs, but at the same time avoid overcrowding of carpool lanes.

5 Ways to Recruit New Cyclists

Bike to Work Week—part of Bike Month—is coming up May 14-18. While contests and activities throughout the month are sure to appeal to avid cyclists, here we offer ways to get new riders geared up to participate as well:

- 1. Teach employees how to bring their bikes on board transit.** Knowing the basics of how to bring a bike on board can boost an employee's confidence to give it a try. **Metro, OC Bus, Metrolink, Omnitrans, Riverside Transit Agency** and **VCTC Intercity Transit** all offer detailed guides or videos you can pass along.
- 2. Let them know about low-cost or free resources**—such as the **Bicycle Hubitat** at the San Bernardino Transit Center, **Bikrowave** in Los Angeles or the **Long Beach Bikestation**—where riders can get assistance with do-it-yourself tune-ups and repairs.
- 3. Make the ride safer.** Show riders how they can locate bike-friendly routes that give preference to bike lanes and wider streets using **ridematch.info's** trip planning feature, **mapmyride.com** or your favorite bike routing app.
- 4. Don't make them fly solo.** In the same way you match up carpoolers, help cyclists find someone who lives near them who may want to ride side by side. Even better, pair your seasoned cyclists with new riders so they can show them the ropes.
- 5. Give rewards.** Make sure employees understand if your company's "rideshare" incentives also include bicycling—people often assume they're just for carpools or transit. Bicyclists can also qualify for rewards through county-sponsored programs, such as the **\$2-a-day rideshare and Rideshare Plus** discount programs in the Inland Empire or gift card giveaways as part of **Metro Rewards** in Los Angeles County.



On the Go in the COUNTY

Los Angeles

The Party Continues...

L.A. Metro marked its 25th anniversary in February—and the celebration continues with special events in the works all year long. Check Metro's **The Source**, or join them on **Twitter, Instagram** and **Facebook** to find out about upcoming events.



More All-Door Boarding on Buses

Metro is moving forward on its plan to expand all-door boarding to two of its busiest bus lines—the 754 Rapid on Vermont Avenue and the 720 Rapid on Wilshire Boulevard.

All-door boarding speeds up transit trips by allowing riders to board at any door of a bus—front, middle or rear. They pay the fare by tapping their TAP card on a fare validator that will be installed by each door.

As part of all-door boarding, only TAP cards will be accepted. There will be no more cash payments.

The goal is to have all-door boarding on the 754 in June and 720 after that.





Green Line Stations to Reopen April 7

The five stations on Metro's Green Line that closed due to construction will reopen April 7, with service resuming at 3 a.m. In the meantime, shuttles will continue to serve affected riders. Thank you for your patience!

Orange



\$2 Waze Rides to/from Irvine

As a special introductory offer until April 30, Waze Carpool rides to or from Irvine are just \$2 per rider—regardless of how long the trip is.

To catch a ride, download the Waze App, then input where you live and your destination. The app will match you with others going your way and will automatically transfer money to the driver to cover the cost of gas and other expenses.

The special offer is designed to encourage people to try ridesharing. To find out more, visit Orange County Transportation Authority at octa.net/waze.

Coming Soon... OCTA Wants to Hear What Employers Need

OCTA will soon launch a program that surveys its employer clients about their needs.

The Employer Participation Levels program will help OCTA to shape rideshare programs, services and materials to best suit employers' needs.

It will also help identify which employers would qualify for the national Best Workplaces for Commuters list (and perhaps need a nudge or bit of help to apply).

If you're an Orange County employer, look for an email from OCTA with details, or contact them at sharetheride@octa.net.

Huell Howser Exhibit Now Open

Star of PBS's *California's Gold* and local icon Huell Howser made many contributions to the state's environment, including being a long-time spokesperson for ridesharing. His legacy is being highlighted in an exhibition, **Golden Parks: Huell Howser** that runs March 4 to May 13 in the Great Park Gallery in Irvine. It is free to the public.

Riverside/ San Bernardino

Green Up Your Commute

IE Commuter—a service of the Riverside County Transportation Commission and San Bernardino County Transportation Authority—is helping employers spread the word about ridesharing and clean air. Campaign materials will be emailed in time for Earth Day, April 22, or download them at IECommuter.org.



Mountain Bus Route

Mountain Transit will launch Route 13 on March 1, providing service between Big Bear, the Victor Valley Transit Center and the Mitsubishi plant in Lucerne Valley.





Agency Offers Training to Ride the Bus or Train

Beaumont's Pass Transit Training is back, helping to overcome resistance and allay fears about riding the bus or train by offering educational group trips at low cost.

Upcoming training sessions start this month. Participants can learn to use the new **RTA Commuter Link 200** express service to Disneyland or ride Metrolink to Los Angeles Union Station.

For information or to RSVP, call 951.769.8530 or visit passtransit.com.

Catch the Road Runner

The **Road Runner shuttle** offers service to Joshua Tree National Park from Palm Springs and Twentynine Palms for visitors with a National Park Pass. It runs until April 30 and makes stops throughout the park.

Express Lanes Underway on the I-15

Express Lanes are coming to the I-15. The project, now underway, is adding two tolled express lanes in each direction along I-15—between Cajalco Road and the I-15/SR-60 interchange, near the Riverside County Line. The lanes are expected to open in 2020. Find out more at 15project.info.

Ventura

Keeping Essential Services Going in a Crisis

During the recent 2-week closure of the 101 Freeway after the devastating mudslides in Montecito, transportation agencies worked together to make sure that essential workers could still get to their jobs.

Buses were dedicated to carry medical personnel, educators and other vital workers from Ventura across the mudslide zone to Santa Barbara and back daily. Local shuttles delivered them from drop-off points to their worksites.

Thank you to the partnership of agencies that kept needed services going during a crisis: Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), Caltrans and the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit Agency.



Get to School Hassle-Free

VCTC's East-West Connector is making it easier to get to the region's colleges and universities.

The new bus line connects Simi Valley/Moorpark with Camarillo, Oxnard and Ventura. For the first time, east county students, faculty and staff can reach west county campuses without having to transfer in Thousand Oaks.

[More >](#)



On the Go in the COUNTY

Ventura

(continued from page 5)

Riders enjoy direct service to Moorpark and Ventura College and an easy connection to Cal State Channel Islands and Oxnard College.

For route and schedule information, visit goventura.org.



Peace of Mind for Ridesharers

Take the worry out of ridesharing for your employees by signing up for VCTC's **Guaranteed Ride Home program**. It provides free taxi or rental car rides to ridesharers who need to get home in an emergency, or miss their usual ride due to unexpected overtime. GRH is offered at no cost to Ventura County employers.



Calendar

Events...



Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) Webinar "Tax Reform and Transit Benefits: Separating myth from reality and how your organization can benefit," is March 13, 11 a.m. – 12 Noon; register at actweb.org.

IE Commuter ETC marketing workshop is March 28, 8:30 a.m. at DoubleTree Hotel in Ontario (breakfast and check-in at 7:30 a.m.); look for your invitation by email from IE Commuter, or call 1.866.RIDESHARE (866.743.3742) for more information. Attendees will get a head start on Earth Day, Bike to Work and Dump the pump campaigns, receiving guidance and materials to create "rideshare boards" for these spring events.



April is Earthquake

Preparedness Month. Get your employees ready for commuting in crisis conditions; contact caloes.ca.gov or your local Red Cross office.

Earth Day Fair at Grand Park in Los Angeles is April 19, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. with performances, tours, plant giveaways and the latest in green technology, grandparkla.org.

Earth Day is April 22, earthday.org.



[More >](#)

Calendar



The next **CicLAvia open streets event** is April 22, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and will take place in “the Heart of the Foothills,” connecting the cities of San Dimas and Claremont, with access via Metrolink, ciclavia.org.

Save the Date...

Bike to Work Week is May 14-18—look for event information in the next issue of *On the Go*.



Metro ETC marketing certificate workshop

is May 31 at Metro offices in downtown L.A.; invitations will be sent out by May 1 to Los Angeles County employers.

Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT)

International Conference is July 29-Aug. 1 in Anaheim, CA, a chance to network and get new ideas for your rideshare program, actweb.org.

Network Opportunities

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

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 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 (free) upcoming briefings—where Los Angeles area employers can learn about the transportation survey process and services Metro has to offer—are March 21, April 18 and May 23 at 9:30–11:30 a.m. To reserve your space, email rideshare@metro.net. For details, visit metro.net.

South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) offers one-day ETC training for \$177.29. Upcoming sessions are March 8, April 12 and May 9 at SCAQMD offices in Diamond Bar, March 21 in Orange, and April 26 in Santa Monica. Contact the SCAQMD's training program at etctraining@aqmd.gov or visit aqmd.gov.



On the Go

Rideshare News for Southern California Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs)

Get the latest news for... [Los Angeles County](#) • [Orange County](#) • [Riverside/San Bernardino Counties](#) • [Ventura County](#)



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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

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