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► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)  
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/ Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

#### Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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**Vote for Rideshare:** Candidates from the all the major alternative transportation parties campaigned in the Metro Board Room on Tuesday. From left, Senator Van Pool (Valerie Rader), Senator Carpool (Sarah Zadok) and Senator Transit (Arthur Mason). *Photos by Gayle Anderson*

## Candidates Debate Alternative Transportation Issues at Metro Commute Services Workshop

- [Video:](#) Scenes from 'The Rideshare Debates' videotaped by Roving Rideshare Reporter Blythe Linsey.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Oct. 30, 2008) Urging a confab of Employment Transportation Coordinators (ETC) from Los Angeles County to market their particular brand of alternative transportation, candidates from the major alternative transportation parties made a campaign stop in the Metro Board Room Tuesday.

The candidates may have been preaching to the choir, but some of the ETCs were undecided about which alternative transportation platform to choose. That was about to change.

### Live from the Board Room, it's ....

Roving Rideshare Reporter Blythe Linsey went undercover to videotape the media-banned debate on Tuesday.

Plug in your headphones (you may

need to adjust the volume) and click on the play button to view.

^ CLICK TO PLAY

^ ADJUST SLIDER FOR SOUND

Coordinator Donna Blanchard, apparently filling in for Saturday Night Live's Lorne Michaels, ushered the candidates into a transformed board room draped in red, white, and blue banners.

One by one the candidates made their pitch: a slightly annoyed but even-tempered Senator Carpool (Sarah Zadok), the spunky, overly confident Senator Van Pool (Valerie Rader) and the hip, urban elitist Senator Transit (Arthur Mason).

The candidates' pitch was followed by a lesson in guerilla marketing, presented by Communications Manager Fran Curbello, and a break-out session for ETCs to develop a marketing campaign of their own.



Moderator Donna Blanchard drills the candidates on their rideshare policies.



Metro Commute Services holds four workshops a year. The marketing workshop on Tuesday drew more 120 ETCs, which represents some 150,000 employees of companies and organizations throughout Los Angeles County.

"It's a way for ETCs to come in, network, and find ways to market their rideshare programs," said Blanchard. "The workshops are a way to draw out creative ideas."

The SNL-styled spoof on elections and the great fake debate are a different way to present the ridesharing options of carpools vanpools, transit and bicycles, she said.

But you don't have to get elected to be a great ETC.

In a spirited and patriotic warm-up to the main event, Metro Commute Services Director David Sutton told the group exactly what it takes.

We leave you with these words, which will ring true long after Nov. 4:



## **Metro Commute Services' Top Ten Rideshare Programs for Employee Transportation Coordinators**

- Offer Transit Passes to Employees and cover at least half the cost
- Encourage your employees to enroll in Metro's Vanpool Program. It can save vanpoolers up to \$400 per van per month!
- Enroll in our Guaranteed Ride Home program so your ridesharing employees won't ever be stranded
- Offer your ridesharing employees a Metro Rewards gift card of \$15 to Starbucks, Ralphs, Best Buy or Target every year
- Enroll in Commuter Tax Benefits so that your company and/or ridesharing employees can use pretax dollars to pay for transit passes, vanpool costs or bike maintenance
- Survey with Metro and provide your employees with car and vanpool ride matches
- Use Metro's Rideshare PlanMaker a complete CD resource that helps you develop a successful rideshare program and comply with air quality regulations.
- Sign up for CommuteSmart News, an e-newsletter that will keep you informed on the latest rideshare information and it provides a mini-newsletter that you can send to your employees to keep them motivated to start or continue ridesharing.
- Frequent metro.net and CommuteSmart.info to access trip planning, traffic conditions, ridematching by worksite, the Commute Cost Calculator and useful links to other related sites
- Provide your new hires with a free weekly pass courtesy of Metro. New hires are experiencing dramatic change and they are more likely to consider changing their commute too.

And take advantage of Metro's brochures, posters, schedules, events and quarterly workshops to help make your rideshare program a success!