

M Metro News Pressroom

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Commuters Who Take Public Transportation or Rideshare Can Save More Than \$4,000 Per Year

- **Metro transit and rideshare options help commuters beat high cost of gasoline**

Daily Los Angeles county commuters who switch from solo driving to public transportation, carpools or vanpools can save more than \$4,000 per year in commuting costs, according to a cost comparison conducted by Metro.

L.A. City Councilman and MTA Board member Tom LaBonge today detailed these cost savings, and called upon Angelenos to begin taking public transit at least a couple days per week.

"I challenge the people of Los Angeles County to 'Take Transit Tuesday and Thursday,'" said LaBonge. "If you want to significantly cut your driving costs as well as traffic and pollution, take Tom's challenge."

Commuters can typically pay almost \$20 per day to drive alone when all costs associated with operating, fueling and maintaining their vehicles are included. Costs jump to \$408 per month and \$4,896 per year for commuting alone.

Commuting via public transportation, on the other hand, costs just \$3 per day using the Metro Day Pass, and \$3.38 per day for joining a carpool or vanpool. Yearly, commuting via public transportation costs just \$624, ridesharing \$852.

Projected costs are based on a commuter driving alone 30 miles per day 21 days per month. The average cost of gasoline is projected at \$2.20 per gallon, with an average vehicle mileage rating of 21 mpg. Other vehicle driving costs include parking, repairs, registration, maintenance, taxes, financing, insurance and depreciation.

"With gasoline prices north of \$2.20 per gallon, there is no better time to share the ride," said LaBonge. "Metro offers a wealth of services and programs which make it easy to save money for daily commuting. In some cases, Metro will even pay to facilitate ridesharing."

Metro is offering a \$100 rebate to the first 1,000 commuters who join a vanpool as a new rider from July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004. In addition, every month a new rider qualifies, that van will automatically be entered into a monthly \$500 drawing to be used toward the cost of the van.

Other incentives such as tax breaks and gift cards are also available for ridersharers and their companies.

Public interest in ridesharing has risen dramatically since gasoline prices spiked in recent weeks. Metro's 1-800-COMMUTE line has recently experienced a 51 percent increase in calls seeking additional information on the agency's numerous rideshare programs and incentives.

PHOTO: LAURA WOODWARD



Flanked by transit officials and commuters who bike, rideshare and take public transportation on a daily basis, Los Angeles City Councilman Tom LaBonge, left center, joined by Councilman Antonio Villaraigosa, challenges Los Angeles County residents to 'Take Transit Tuesday and Thursday,' in order to significantly cut driving costs as well as traffic and pollution.

People interested in finding rideshare partners and park and ride locations throughout Southern California can visit www.ridematch.info. Those registering on the web site receive a matchlist of potential car or vanpool partners that have similar commuting patterns. The database contains 190,000 registrants, and has a high success rate in matching rideshare users.

Personal assistance with ridesharing strategies is available via Metro's telephone support line at 1-800-COMMUTE, option #3.

For additional information on these and other Metro programs and incentives, please visit www.metro.net.

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