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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Los Angeles Metro Launches New Metro Vanpool Program to Save Commuters Money, Improve Regional Mobility

- Program saves up to 30 percent in vanpool leasing costs, targets major employment centers in Los Angeles County

Video

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) today joined vanpool leasing agencies, employee transportation groups and TV journalist Huell Howser to announce a new five-year, \$19 million Metro Vanpool Program that provides substantial savings to vanpool commuters.

Commuters on new or existing vanpools can receive a \$400 per month subsidy to lower the leasing cost of a vanpool vehicle and the fare to each rider. The program is self-sustaining, and is funded through special state and federal rideshare grants that reimburse Metro based on the number of vanpool riders and vanpool vehicle miles driven.



Vanpool vehicle breaks through program banner.
Vanpool leasing agencies participating in the program are:
Enterprise Rideshare, Midway Rideshare and VPSI, Inc.



Huell Howser (left) joins vanpool participants, Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor and Metro CEO Roger Snoble in official launch of the Metro Vanpool Program.

A 70-mile roundtrip distance commute for the solo commuter can cost as much as \$785 per month in car ownership, fuel, and maintenance costs. The same vanpool trip without Metro is about \$224 person per month, but with the Metro Vanpool Program, the vanpool commute is further reduced to a \$170 fare. The new \$400 subsidy makes vanpooling even more affordable by saving an additional 20 to 30 percent off the monthly cost to each member.

"Sharing the ride by joining a vanpool has always been a convenient, reliable and economical way to get to and from work," said Pam O'Connor, Santa Monica City Councilmember and Metro Board Chair. "Now it's even more cost-effective for many of today's commuters whose budgets are being continually depleted by persistently high gasoline prices. Not only will commuters save money, but they will save time by gaining access to the county's extensive network of carpool lanes."

Vanpoolers can shave an average of 20 minutes off of their commute time by using carpool lanes, and lower the stress and expense of driving alone. Currently, 70 percent of commute trips on the region's roadways are made by solo drivers.

"While much of Metro's efforts are centered on improving bus and rail services for our transit customers, this new program aims at the very heart of the commute problem in our county: daily solo drivers," said Roger Snoble, Metro CEO. "We are confident that more L.A. commuters will make a simple dollars and cents decision to let Metro help defray vanpool leasing costs. The amount of funding and resources we are providing for this program is substantial, and underscores our long-term commitment to making vanpooling even more economical and accessible in L.A. County."

The \$400 monthly lease subsidy is accepted by Metro's partner leasing agencies, cannot exceed 50 percent of the lease costs, and is available to qualified commuter vanpool groups of 5-15 passengers that have a destination to a L.A. County worksite.

Under a board motion presented by L.A County Supervisor and Metro Board Member Zev Yaroslavsky, the Metro Vanpool Program specifically targets the formation of vanpools to major employment centers throughout Los Angeles County.

"Vanpooling offers a terrific commuting alternative when people are traveling to and from the same work site," Yaroslavsky said. "Major employment centers throughout our county will be able to offer their workers the opportunity to leave more of their cars at home, which helps reduce congestion for everyone."

Vanpool leasing companies that participate in the program are Enterprise Rideshare, Midway Rideshare and VPSI, Inc. Private transit, private shuttles, private vanpools and owner-operated vanpools are not eligible to enroll in the program.

Both new and existing vanpool groups with a valid vanpool lease agreement with a partner agency are eligible. Vanpools must end at a work site located within Los Angeles County and begin service with at least 70 percent of vehicle seats occupied. Open seats will be advertised as available and are open to the public.

Vanpool participants may also take advantage of the agency's Guaranteed Ride Home Program should they be required to miss their vanpool trip. This program offers a free taxi ride or rental car ride home in case of illness, emergency, or if the workers must work late due to unexpected overtime. Workers that rideshare can receive this safety net benefit once their employer enrolls in the program. The program is sponsored by Metro, Orange County Transportation Authority, Riverside County Transportation Commission, and San Bernardino Associated Governments.

Rideshare Week is an annual promotion designed to increase awareness about the benefits of using sustainable transportation such as vanpooling, riding the bus or train, carpooling, bicycling, walking, and telecommuting. Commuters are asked to make a commitment to use a sustainable form of transportation at least one day during Rideshare Week to help relieve L.A.'s congested streets and highways, improve air quality, and save energy and commute costs.

For additional Metro Vanpool Program details and requirements, visit www.metro.net/vanpool, or call 1.800.COMMUTE (option #3).

Editors Note: Metro is the proper name in referring to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority of Los Angeles County. For the past three years Metro has been changing all its signage and other materials to reflect the name change. If you need a current Metro Logo, please call Metro Media Relations at (213) 922-2700.

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