

# CommuteSmart News

February 2013

GET TO WORK FASTER, CHEAPER AND WITH LESS STRESS



## What U.S. City Has the Worst Traffic?

If sitting on a packed freeway day after day isn't enough to convince you Los Angeles's traffic is the worst in the nation, new data confirms it.

Motorists here have a 34% longer commute time than the average American on the road, according to a TomTom report based on GPS data. During evening rush hour, L.A. motorists have a 76% longer commute.

Other California cities in the top 10 for worst traffic are San Francisco (at #3) and San Jose (#8).

Want to skip the traffic? For help finding an alternative to driving in Southern California, as well as current freeway travel times, visit [Go511.com](http://Go511.com) or [IE511.org](http://IE511.org) or call 511.

## A Tax Break for Ridesharers

Good news for commuters who use pre-tax dollars for transit and vanpool costs: Congress last month passed legislation that increases the allowable cap to \$245 per month—up from \$125 per month. It is now equal to the parking benefit and retroactive to Jan. 1, 2012.

"With this new legislation, transit riders and vanpoolers now enjoy the same tax benefits as those who drive to work," says Association for Commuter Transportation Southern California President Devon Deming. "The federal tax code

no longer unfairly rewards driving over alternative commutes."

Check with your employer to see if you qualify to claim these tax benefits.



## In Brief

### OCTA deals take sting out of increased fares



To help Orange County Transportation Authority riders cope with new fares that start Feb. 10—with regular fares going from \$1.50 to \$2—OCTA is also offering some cost-saving deals. These include a new Five Rides Pass for \$9 (so \$1.80 per ride); a 10% discount on pre-paid day passes purchased off the bus and a 5% discount for qualified non-profit agencies. For more information, go to [octa.net](http://octa.net).

### More ExpressLanes opening

Metro ExpressLanes on the 10 Freeway—between I-605 and Alameda Street in downtown Los Angeles—will open

Feb. 23. Solo drivers with a FasTrak transponder will have the choice to pay a toll to use the ExpressLanes.

All carpools that meet occupancy requirements can travel toll-free but must have a switchable FasTrak transponder. For details, go to [metroexpresslanes.net](http://metroexpresslanes.net).

### When will your bus arrive?

Omnitrans—the San Bernardino Valley's transit agency—joins a growing list of Southern California agencies offering NexTrip, a free service that provides real-time bus information via mobile web browser, desktop computer, SMS/text or by calling 1.800.9.OMNIBUS and selecting the NexTrip option. For details, go to [omnitrans.org](http://omnitrans.org).

