

May 2022 Commuter Van Bulletin



Happy Spring, Vanpoolers!

Whether you are a longtime vanpooler, someone who is just returning to the office, or new to the vanpool program, please find some important updates about mask recommendations, 3+ minimum ridership, the new ORCA system and ways to share your vanpool story or provide valuable feedback about our program. As always, your participation in our program is appreciated!

Included in this bulletin:

- [Masks Recommended; Not Required](#)
- [Minimum 3+ Ridership; Increases Flexibility](#)
- [New ORCA System](#)
- [Calling for Volunteers: Vanpool Improvement Project & Vanpool Profiles](#)

Masks Recommended; Not Required – The federal mask mandate has been lifted and King County Metro no longer requires customers to wear masks on Vanpools/Vanshares, buses, and other modes.

We thank our riders and our volunteer drivers for your high mask usage throughout the mask mandate. Although mask wearing is not required, Public Health – Seattle & King County still recommends wearing a high-quality, well-fitting face mask on transit and in crowded, indoor settings. In other indoor public settings, individuals also may choose to wear a mask out of consideration for those who may be at high risk or if they want to further reduce their own risk for any reason.

Per Public Health guidance, the best way to protect yourself from coronavirus is to get vaccinated and, when eligible, receive a booster.

Minimum 3+ Ridership; Increases Flexibility – Starting June 1, 2022, the King County Metro Vanpool/Vanshare program is requiring van groups to increase their minimum ridership to three or more participants.

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Our intent with increasing ridership to three or more participants is to help build sustainable groups – maintaining at least two participants during all commutes even when one participant is on leave or teleworking and allowing back-fill for driver, bookkeeper and other group roles and responsibilities.

Share the vanpool benefits with co-workers, friends or neighbors and let them try out your vanpool or vanshare to see if it's a good fit. Metro's [Ticket-2-Ride](#) [external link, DocuSign] allows commuters to ride and try out your vanpool for free – and now, the form is an online DocuSign form so it's easy to send to potential riders and even easier for them to fill out and try vanpooling for FREE!

Find this form in our vanpool resources page for [finding and recruiting riders](#).

New ORCA System – The new and improved ORCA system is coming next month! It builds on the existing network and offers transit riders new ways to pay their fare and manage their account. Some features of the new system include:

- Instantly load value and products to your ORCA card
- Manage your account on the new website or mobile app
- Buy and load ORCA cards at more retail locations

Vanpoolers will also see changes when making online payments or purchasing vanpool passes. We'll provide a detailed guide on how to pay online with the new ORCA system soon. In the meantime, here are some initial questions and answers.

- **Will I need to replace my card?** – No, your current card will continue to work with the new system. You will only need a new card starting in July if using the retail network to load E-purse. Stores will no longer sell passes starting in May.
- **Will I need to create a new account?** – Yes, if you want to continue managing your card or paying for vanpool online, you will need to create a new account on myORCA.com using your email address when the new system launches.
- **How do I pay for my vanpool fare online?** – Paying online for vanpool will be made on the new myORCA.com website or myORCA mobile app beginning mid-May. Until then, continue using the current website for online payments. More details will be provided closer to the launch date next month.

Please visit the [myORCA](#) website for more information on the new ORCA system.

Calling for Volunteers: Vanpool Improvement Project & Vanpool Profiles – Here are some opportunities to help shape our program or highlight your vanpool story.

1. **Vanpool Profiles:** We are looking for volunteers who would like to share their vanpool story so we may continue to develop marketing campaigns to promote vanpooling. Your vanpool experience could be featured in printed

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promotional materials, included in digital campaigns or we might write-up a commuter spotlight featuring your vanpool commute.

2. **Vanpool Improvement Project:** We are gathering information to help evolve our program and inform multiple efforts including how to better serve current, new, rural, urban, and low-income commuters with additional program features, benefits and improved innovation. As a current vanpool or vanshipare participant your insights and feedback are very important and could help guide our efforts in growing our program and building a better customer experience.

Your time and insights into our Metro Commuter Van program are valuable and appreciated. We will provide a \$50 gift card to selected participants sharing their story or participating in a focus group.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please email vanpool@kingcounty.gov with the following subject line: Calling for Volunteers, your name, group number and whether you are interested in the Vanpool Profiles and/or the Vanpool Improvement Project. For example:

Subject: Calling for Volunteers - Van Pooler, 1234, Vanpool Profiles

Archived Bulletins - If you have missed any bulletins, we have archived them [here](#).

Thank you and Happy Vanpooling!

King County Metro Commuter Van Services



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Send us an [e-mail](#).

Or give us a call at 206-625-4500 during business hours (8-5, M-F).
