

VantagePoint

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2010



Pierce Transit in the News

An Update for our Vanpool Customers

Thank you for riding Pierce Transit vanpool. Our road has been up, down, and not without curves as the Agency makes difficult decisions to sustain service in this uncertain time. As you know, Pierce Transit proposed a fare increase for transportation services, including vanpool. On August 30, the Board of Commissioners Finance Committee held a Public Hearing accepting oral and written testimony relevant to the fare revisions. On September 13, the Board of Commissioners will vote on the fare proposal measure. If approved, new fares will take effect November 1, for November vanpool fares, and we will mail revised vanpool fare charts and report forms to volunteer bookkeepers. If the Board does not approve the fare proposal, we will share that decision with you.

In addition to the potential fare increases and recent layoffs, Pierce Transit continues to restructure and consolidate programs and cut expenses wherever possible. In addition, we will continue to look for more efficiencies. Visit pttomorrow.org for more information. In Vanpool, for now, it is business as usual, as we strive to provide top-notch customer service to serve all participants in our 293 vanpools.

Wheel Options Fall Campaign

\$2,500 Windfall

The volunteer members of the [Washington State Ridesharing Organization](http://WashingtonStateRidesharingOrganization.org) (WSRO) collaborated to bring the Wheel Options Fall Campaign promotion to you! Wheel Options promotions support WSRO's mission by encouraging commuters to reduce their driving, which helps reduce air pollution, traffic congestion, and energy consumption. Share the ride (something you vanpoolers already do) between October 17-30, log the shared trips at the appropriate website, and you could win \$2,500 – icing on the cake for savings you already see vanpooling! In addition to fuel savings, minimizing wear and tear on your personal vehicle, and the opportunity to win \$\$\$, there are other great prizes to win. Watch for details at www.WheelOptions.org. Riders who **work outside Pierce County** need to log trips at wheeloptions.org. Riders who **work in Pierce County**, please log trips at www.PierceTrips.org.

Vantage Point is a publication of Pierce Transit.

Editors: Heidi Hunter hhunter@piercetransit.org & Kim Pontsler kpontsler@piercetransit.org

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Driving Tips



Negotiating a Corner

Tools to Use.

First and foremost, **slow before the corner** – whether it's at a city intersection (all of us), on a freeway entrance ramp (most of us), or on a mountain highway (our two groups commuting to Ashford). Slow down by braking or easing off the gas pedal on the straight road **BEFORE** the corner. The vehicle is more stable in a straight line than if you try to brake in the middle of the corner. The objective is to accelerate slightly through all corners giving the vehicle better balance, and you gain more control. You can usually accelerate safely in a corner but you can't always slow down safely, especially in a van.

The second thing to consider is that the less you turn the steering wheel, the more control you have. Negotiate the corner properly by turning the wheel as little and slowly as possible, and unwind, or straighten the vehicle in the same manner, giving you a smooth flowing arc through the corner. Your riders will appreciate smooth cornering, and you will be in a much safer position - unlike the driver in the next article. Read on for an account of a vanpool group's crazy ride one morning.



A Crazy Ride

A June Commute – Shared by Bob Bowen

"The morning started out with a crazy ride in van 7057! We were getting onto the 72nd Street freeway entrance, turning to the right to get on. There was traffic turning left to get on to the entrance as well. When we entered the on ramp, a mini-van turning left sped up quite fast. It was wet and her van did a 180 degree turn, moving in a forward direction right toward us. John, our driver, saw everything and made evasive maneuvers to get us out of her way. And because he had entered the ramp at a reasonable speed, he slowed the traffic behind us helping to avoid not only the mini-van, but others from a possible collision. The woman pulled over on the shoulder, sped up and got in front of us. It appeared that she did not learn from her experience. Thanks to John T., we are not a statistic and we made it to work safely." Way to avoid that collision, John!

Avoiding a Collision

Yes, it may be possible.

Washington Driver Guide's tips to avoid a collision can be found on pages 90 - 91 in the driver guide: www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/driverguide.pdf

BRAKE PROPERLY! Most people slam on their brakes and skid right into the other car. Since our vans have anti-lock brakes system (ABS), press firmly and steadily – do not let up on the brake pedal. The ABS works only with the brake pedal pushed down.

STEER TO AVOID! As defensive drivers, you should be aware of surroundings so you may see an escape route. Keep your eyes open; always look and steer where you want to go. A good grip with both hands on the wheel helps keep the vehicle under control.

SPEED UP. Sometimes, it's best or necessary to speed up a bit to avoid a collision – if you are about to be hit from the side or from behind and there is room to the front of you to get out of the way. Slow down after passing the danger.

Letters to VP Staff



We are pleased to share these great comments received from customers the past year. We welcome comments and vanpool stories any time – good or bad. The less flattering ones give us an opportunity to work on areas that may need improvement. We value your feedback and thank you for sharing.

Leslie I., volunteer vanpool rider

"I will be retiring...and will be leaving the van. I have truly enjoyed being able to participate in being a van rider during the past several years and have become an avid spokesperson for vanpooling in general."



Pam M., volunteer vanpool primary driver

"The van is such a blessing. I can't believe we've had it over a year now. I know that the whole group is so appreciative of the service. We get home quicker, everyone loves that they don't have to drive and can leave the driving to me (most days), don't have to fuss looking for parking, oh the list goes on and on! Like my husband says, it's like a big raise/bonus every week."

"Vanpooling is a cosmic experience" according to TPU vanpool 7194.



Steven F., volunteer vanpool primary driver

"I just wanted to thank you (Lynne) and the Pierce Transit staff for upgrading us to a new van. It's very nice and appreciated by all very much. From the side curtain airbags, convex side mirrors, convex rear window with defrost, smoother ride and side mirror turn signals...it's definitely an improved and safer vehicle. I personally have been very pleased by your customer support. In this era where genuine customer service seems to be a rarity...I find it refreshing and a positive experience, working with you and Pierce Transit."

Bruce Carithers, volunteer vanpool primary driver

"Thanks again Brenda! You ladies down there are sure a pleasure to deal with. Quite obvious that many of you really do love your work and truly believe in dedicated customer support and service. I consider it a great privilege and important responsibility to be a primary volunteer driver. Personable and professional people like you most assuredly make it easier for those of us who routinely volunteer to take on the responsibility of driving for other people. Simply wanted you to know that all of you are very much appreciated out here in the field. Hopefully someone will inform your "bosses" and let them know that you're doing an excellent job taking care of us. Please feel free to forward."



Brad Schultz and Leon Kosch

Brad Schultz, volunteer vanpool backup driver

"The greatest blessing of my day is to ride to work and back with this great bunch of guys."



VANPOOL

24/7 Emergency
253.381.3762

Direct Line
253.983.3377
7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Fleet Supervision
253.905.5306
7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Vanpool Fax
253.984.8227

Vanpool@piercetransit.org

RIDESHARE

1.888.814.1300
RideshareOnline.com

PIERCE TRANSIT

Customer Services
253.581.8000

Toll Free
1.800.562.8109

TDD Customer Service
253.582.7951

Piercetransit.org

Back to School

School Zone Reminders and DOL Rules of the Road

Slow down! Speed limits, unless otherwise posted, are 20 mph in school zones. Obey directions from school crossing guards and school zone signs. Automated traffic safety cameras monitor many areas for safety – citations are costly.

Stop! You must stop for a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing whether it is on your side of the road, the opposite side of the road or at an intersection you are approaching. You are not required to stop for a school bus with red lights flashing when the stopped school bus is traveling in the opposite direction and the roadway:

- has three or more marked traffic lanes,
- is separated by a median, or
- is separated by a physical barrier.

After the school bus red lights have stopped flashing, watch for children along the side of the road and do not proceed until they have completely left the roadway.

Vanpool Driver Application

New and Improved Forms

We revised the Volunteer Vanpool Driver Application form and added Appendix C to the driver application packet. The completed Appendix satisfies American Driving Records/Core Logic who acts on behalf of Pierce Transit to obtain the abstract of driver records for each applicant. Please recycle any old driver applications. You can print a new supply from piercetransit.org/rideshare/pdfs/vpapplicat.pdf or request hard copy applications from your Pierce Transit vanpool coordinator.

Transponders and Shields

Care and Use

When you swap vans, check the shield before driving off our lot. Have the person sitting shotgun double check the shield BEFORE the daily commute. Additionally, we are placing reminders on the shields in our fleet: "Attention: Do not remove shield unless crossing the Narrows Bridge." Help us avoid needless toll charges.

MVR Surprises – Gotcha!

Something you would rather just forget, perhaps?

Not! We need to know when you receive a citation or are involved in an accident – even in your personal vehicle! The incident may not disqualify you from driving the vanpool, but we need to manage our risk. Thank you.



*Vantage*Point