UCSC Vanpool Rate Increase Questions & Answers

When will vanpool rates go up?
New fares will take effect on February 1st, 2015.

Why are the vanpool rates going up?
Fuel costs, maintenance expenses, and insurance costs have all increased since the last rate increase in 2009 and TAPS is currently subsidizing the vanpool program with parking fees by 63%. The Transportation Advisory Committee has established a goal of keeping that subsidy at 50%. A rate increase is necessary to reach this goal and keep the vanpool program financially sustainable.

What does the monthly vanpool rate cover?
Your vanpool rate covers a portion of the cost of the vehicle, fuel, maintenance, insurance, emergency roadside or vehicle assistance, and support staff.

When was the last vanpool rate increase?
It has been over five years since the last fare increase in July 2009; at that time, fuel cost an average of $2.26 per gallon.

How much are vanpool rates going up?
Depending on which zone your vanpool route is in, the first increase will range from $4 to $25 per month. Rates will be adjusted in 2015-16 and 2016-17 to ensure we reach the 50% subsidy goal. For example, a rider in a vanpool that travels 50 miles round-trip previously paid $40/month. With the fare increase that will raise to $58/month in 2015, to $72/month in 2015-16, and to $87/month in 2016-17. Once the program hits the 50% subsidy target, the final fare is an increase of $2.20/day, or $11/week, over current rates. A chart showing the new fares is online at http://taps.ucsc.edu/commute-options/vanpools/vanpool-fares.html.

Will there be more fare increases in the future?
Once the vanpool program subsidy reaches the 50% target, TAPS will review costs and income annually to determine if additional increases (or decreases) are necessary.

How were the new monthly vanpool rates determined?
Annual vanpool program expenses were based on actual operating costs during 2011-12, with certain costs inflated to reflect anticipated increases: 3% for salaries, 4% for benefits, and 15% for fuel costs. Each vanpool route was assigned to one of four “zones” based on its daily round-trip distance traveled: Zone A for 40 miles or less; Zone B for 41-60 miles Zone C for 61-75 miles; and Zone D for more than 75 miles. Annual vanpool revenue was estimated based on current ridership by route. Together, the expense and revenue estimates allow subsidy levels to be determined for various monthly vanpool rates by zone.

Will I still save money by sharing the ride in a commuter van?
Absolutely! Even with the proposed fare increases, a typical vanpooler (50-mile round trip) can save approximately $650 per month by sharing the ride in a vanpool compared to driving alone. Vanpooling saves fuel, parking, mileage, insurance and maintenance costs.

What can I do to reduce vanpool costs in order to keep fares low?
We currently have 220 people participating in the vanpool program – and there are more on waiting lists. The most effective way to reduce vanpool costs is to add riders to your van. Some vanpools that already have 12 passengers even have additional "conditional" riders which helps keep their costs down.