

## 5. carpooling, rideshare, and ride matching

Carpooling is the shared use of a car by the driver—usually the owner of the vehicle—and one or more passengers. When carpooling, people either get a ride or offer a ride to others instead of each driving separately. Carpooling arrangements and schemes involve varying degrees of formality and regularity. Carpools may be formal - arranged through an employer, public website, etc. - or casual, where the driver and passenger might not know each other or have agreed upon arrangements.

### How it works

One of the greatest impediments to carpool and vanpool formation can be finding suitable partners with similar work schedules, origins, and destinations. Facilitated rideshare matching can overcome this by matching interested commuters. Commuters enter their travel preferences into a database and receive a list of potential rideshare partners. The success of these programs is largely determined by the number of participants and, in turn, the number of potential matches that can be made.

*Experience indicates that ridesharing programs can attract as much as 5-15% of commute trips if they offer only information and encouragement, and double that success (10-30%) if linked with financial incentives such as parking cash out or vanpool subsidies<sup>1</sup>.*

Rideshare programs may be administered through individual employers, but are often most effective when coordinated through a transportation management association or other larger scale program. When coupled with a Parking cash-out or other incentive program, ridesharing can be a powerful incentive to reducing parking and auto travel demand, even where no other transportation options exist.

Additionally, providing well-signed priority spaces near the most convenient walking entries of a parking facility for carpools is an easy yet attractive TDM program.



### Best Practice

**North Central Texas Council of Governments.** Tryparkingit.com is an online carpool/vanpool initiative through the North Central Texas Council of Governments for the Dallas/Fort Worth metro area. Tryparkingit allows commuters to create an online account and log on to find and connect with people with similar commutes. It also allows users to track their contributions to clean air and congestion reduction and receive an estimate of miles and money saved. Try-parkingit users have saved more than 5 million miles through the program.

### Application to Mid-South

The Memphis Area RideShare Program (MAR) is an initiative through the Shelby County Health Department to encourage area commuters to consider alternative options to driving single occupancy vehicles to work. MAR partners with vRide to provide a web-based ride matching service and incentive system that allows commuters to search for other people with similar commuting patterns.

Ridesharing can be most successful in areas of high employment density or when linked in a geographic area over multiple employers. Single large employers may already see informal car-sharing happen, or can easily implement their own programs. Areas with high density from multiple employers have great potential to link commuters through ridesharing. These areas include:

- Poplar Avenue
- Collierville
- I-40 corridor outside I-240 Loop
- Distribution Centers in Olive Branch, MS

1 Bryon York and David Fabricatore (2001), Puget Sound Vanpool Market Assessment, [www.wsdot.wa.gov](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov).