Vanpools are a type of ride-sharing, similar to carpooling, but typically involving more people and a shared, provided vehicle. In most cases, vans are owned or leased by a sponsoring organization and riders share the cost of operating the vehicle to and from work. Vanpools have had the most success where employees travel longer distances along corridors with limited or no existing transit service. **Vanpool services can reduce traffic and parking demand by up to 5%.**

**How it works**

Vanpools typically consist of a group of 5 to 15 commuters who rideshare to and from work in vans either leased from an outside operator or are self-supporting. If the van is leased, the operator owns the vehicle and is responsible for maintenance and insurance. If the van is self-supported, the van is owned by an individual and costs are divided among individual riders.

**Drivers**

In most cases, one of the vanpool participants serves as the primary driver and another as a backup driver. Vanpool drivers usually ride free in exchange for their driving and coordination responsibilities. The driver may also receive a certain number of personal miles in commuter van.

**Expenses**

Vanpool expenses (fuel, insurance, maintenance and repairs) are typically covered by the fares paid by vanpool members. In some cases, a separate entity and/or sponsoring agency may help cover eligible low income vanpool members’ fare. The cost for participants depends on the size of the van, the length of the commute trip, the number of participants, and the availability of employer or government subsidies.

**Best Practice**

**Utah Transit Authority (UTA)** in Salt Lake City, manages a vanpool program with a program manager and support specialists as well as marketing, accounting and maintenance support staff. UTA does not subsidize individual vanpools; however, the majority (80-90%) of the riders have access to the federal transit subsidy. In 2010, UTA managed 525 vanpool programs.

UTA’s vanpool fleet includes combination of minivans and vans (12-15 passengers). To sign up for a vanpool, individuals call UTA, tell them about their needs and UTA will either place them in an existing vanpool or, if no vanpool is operating and there is a sufficient number of riders, a new vanpool will be formed.

The average mileage for a vanpool is 1,700 miles per month, or about 40 miles per one-way trip.

Each vanpool has two drivers, plus a bookkeeper. Drivers are allowed 50 personal miles per month. Fares include fuel, maintenance, and insurance. They are based on mileage, not passengers, so fares may fluctuate as membership changes.
Application to Mid-South

Millington

Ingram Micro is a major employer in Millington, located north of Memphis. The company employs some 150 workers, about 110 of which are paid an hourly wage of between $8 and $12 per hour. Hourly employees work in one of two shifts; 4:00am-1:00pm (strict start and end time) and 10am-up to 10pm (flexible and changes with demand).

Ingram Micro is located 15 miles north of downtown Memphis, or about 29 miles from Southaven and 26 miles from West Memphis. There is no transit service in the area, and given the location is outside of the MATA service area, no service is planned at this time. Workers traveling from these locations could spend as much as $25 per day on transportation. Including gasoline alone, a 50 mile round trip would require two gallons of gasoline, or about $7, which is roughly one hour of paid work time.

Memphis has an active vanpool provider, vRide, with one active vanpool bringing people from Southaven Mississippi to the Veteran’s Administration Hospital in Memphis. Contact Michael Devry at Michael.devry@vride.com for more information on vRide’s services.

See also federal employer subsidy for complementary strategy.

Other Potential Bike Commuter Benefit Sites:
Tunica County Casinos | Brother International | Wal-Mart Stores, Bartlett | Carrier Corporation | Target, Collierville | Southland Park Gaming and Racing | Family Dollar | Hino Motors

Average vehicle gets 24.6 miles per gallon (U.S. Energy, April 16, 2012).
Cost per gallon of gasoline is $3.57 (MemphisGasPrices.com)

Largest Employers

the 100 top employers in greater Memphis

Employees

430

30,000

MATA Weekday Transit Service Level

low

high