



R egional

V anpool

P rogram



The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority

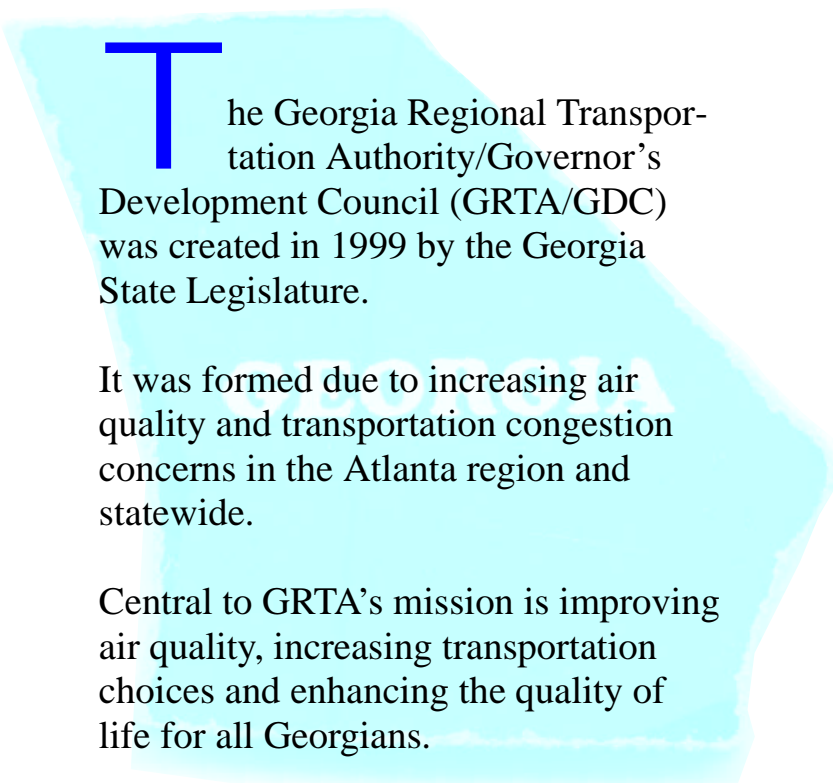
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**T**he Georgia Regional Transportation Authority/Governor's Development Council (GRTA/GDC) was created in 1999 by the Georgia State Legislature.

It was formed due to increasing air quality and transportation congestion concerns in the Atlanta region and statewide.

Central to GRTA's mission is improving air quality, increasing transportation choices and enhancing the quality of life for all Georgians.

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## GRTA Vanpool

**W**orkers everywhere want less stress in their lives and more quality time for their families and themselves.

GRTA has found one possible solution:

Vanpooling!

### What is a Vanpool?

A vanpool is 7 to 15 people who commute together regularly in a van. One member of the group drives and maintains the van, while riders split the expenses.



### Why Should I Vanpool?

Vanpooling is a convenient alternative for commuters. It reduces the number of cars on the road, which reduces auto emissions and the wear and tear on your personal vehicle.

In June 2002, more than 170 vanpools were operating in Metro Atlanta. GRTA is partnering with the Commute Connections program at the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the Clean Air Campaign, and private and public vanpool operators to increase that number to 350 by 2005 and 500 by 2010.

## Vanpool Costs

It is very inexpensive to participate in a GRTA vanpool. Your total monthly cost is based on your number of daily round-trip miles. For the first year, GRTA vanpool fares will be based only on the number of miles traveled.

### Estimated Daily Round-trip Costs

Find your commute's mileage below to determine your round-trip cost:

Daily Round-trip Miles	Vanpool Monthly Cost	Rider Monthly Cost*
20	\$820.63	\$63.13
30	\$852.68	\$65.59
40	\$884.73	\$68.06
50	\$916.78	\$70.52
60	\$948.84	\$72.99
70	\$1,014.43	\$78.03
80	\$1,085.71	\$83.52
90	\$1,154.27	\$88.79
100	\$1,222.89	\$94.07
110	\$1,288.21	\$99.09
120	\$1,360.20	\$104.63

\*Assumes driver and 13 paying customers  
Actual monthly cost will vary based upon commuting mileage.  
Cost includes a 2002 Chevrolet van, gas, maintenance and insurance.

Studies consistently show that vanpool commutes cost significantly less than not only driving alone in your car to work, but also commuting in a carpool.

## Vanpool Costs

### Estimated Monthly Cost Comparisons

The chart below contrasts estimates of driving alone with carpooling and vanpooling. Note that as the travel distance increases, the vanpool savings also increase.

<u>Round-trip</u>	<u>Drive Alone*</u>	<u>Carpool (3 riders)*</u>	<u>GRTA Vanpool*</u>
30 miles	\$204.12	\$102.06	\$48.14
40 miles	\$272.16	\$136.08	\$53.54
50 miles	\$340.20	\$170.10	\$58.93
60 miles	\$408.24	\$204.12	\$64.33
70 miles	\$476.28	\$238.14	\$71.92
80 miles	\$544.32	\$272.16	\$80.69

\*Monthly estimates

The “Drive Alone” figures are based on a mid-sized car, 21 commuting days per month, an average cost of 39.7 cents per mile and include all operating and ownership expenses.

The “Vanpool” figures are based on 14 passengers and 21 commuting days per month. The individual cost to participate in a vanpool is based on the number of miles traveled and the number of vanpool members. The more members in the vanpool, the more money each rider saves.

■ **Contact your local American Automobile Association (AAA) for *Your Driving Costs*, its annual publication about vehicle cost comparisons. AAA also has more about determining the cost of driving alone in your own vehicle.**

## Vanpool Benefits

**H**ere's how you, your community and workplace can benefit from vanpooling:

### Individual Benefits

- **Saving on personal expenses**

By reducing the number of miles you drive in your personal car every day, your car experiences less wear and tear and reduced expenses such as gas purchases, regular maintenance and insurance. Your employer also might subsidize your vanpooling cost.

- **Guaranteed Ride Home program**

This program provides transportation home when you have an emergency or unplanned overtime. You are eligible for this program if you commute to work via carpool, vanpool or other transit alternative.

Visit [www.commuterconnections.com](http://www.commuterconnections.com) for more details.

- **Reduced stress**

Passengers can relax during the commute, spending time reading, talking or preparing for the day.

- **Social opportunities**

Socialize with old friends or make new ones.

## Vanpool Benefits

### Community Benefits

- **Conservation of energy and resources**

The American Public Transportation Association estimates that for every full van on the road, 12 cars are removed.

- **Clean air**

Auto emissions are the primary source of smog. Fewer cars on the road mean fewer airborne pollutants, leading to better air quality.

- **Land/space**

Fewer single-occupant cars on the expressways lead to smoother traffic flow. It also means fewer parking spaces are needed. This allows for better land use.

### Workplace Benefits

- Workers who have a stress-free commute arrive with a more pleasant and productive demeanor.
- Employers who want to support vanpooling and other transit alternatives could receive significant tax breaks.
- By offering employees a partially subsidized transit option with regular wages, employee payroll and income taxes are reduced. Employers can deduct this cost from their business income taxes.



## Vanpool Benefits

- Another incentive for employees to use transit, carpools or vanpools is the pre-tax option. Employees can opt to have up to \$65 per month deducted from their wages before taxes to cover their commuting costs. This money is not subject to federal income or payroll taxes.
- Prospective employees often view companies who support transit choices as being more socially responsible and therefore more inviting places to work. Commuting to work becomes more affordable and more viable for many in today's highly competitive workplace.

### HOV Lanes

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes were introduced in 1994 in Metro Atlanta. Identified by diamond-shaped pavement markings and overhead signs, these 90 miles of lanes help reduce air pollution, improve traffic congestion and offer substantial time savings for commuters who rideshare (two or more occupants per vehicle).



HOV lanes are restricted only to motorcycles and ride-share, certified alternative fuel and emergency vehicles.

■ **For more about potential tax breaks and benefits, contact the GRTA Transportation Demand Manager at 404-463-3053 or ARC's Commute Connections at 1-877-RIDEFIND (1-877-433-3463) or [www.commuterconnections.com](http://www.commuterconnections.com).**

## Vanpool Requirements

**B**efore joining a vanpool, all drivers and riders must meet the following GRTA requirements:

### Driver Criteria

Primary and backup drivers must:

- Possess a valid Georgia driver's license and pass a credit check.
- Possess a good credit history.
- Have no moving violations within the last two years.
- Have at least five years of driving experience.
- Not use the GRTA van for personal business.

Vanpool drivers ride for free.

### Rider Criteria

All riders must:

- Abide by membership-established rules.
- Pay their monthly fees at the beginning of each month.



## Managing Your Vanpool

The GRTA vanpool program lets commuters choose how they travel to work. Participants also decide their vanpool's rules and procedures such as pickup, drop-off, and arrival and departure times and places.

While these factors are important, vanpoolers' safety is GRTA's No. 1 concern. The following precautions help to ensure a safer, smoother ride:

### Safety Tips

- Follow all traffic laws.
- Pay full attention at all times.
- Use seat belts. Post signs inside the van stating that seat belt use is mandatory.
- If your van becomes disabled, exit and walk a safe distance away.
- Do not tailgate. Keep a safe distance in front of the van.
- Allow more commuting time during bad weather.
- Avoid confrontations if you are cut off in traffic.
- Check your emergency kit often and replace its items when necessary.
- Refrain from using a cell phone while driving.
- If the group allows radio music, it should not interfere with outside noises.



## Managing Your Vanpool

### Operating Tips

- Decide basic operating rules (*see the "Sample Road Rules List," Page 18*) and review them with your group periodically. Some rules vary among different vanpools.
- Select your vanpool routes, parking and schedule (*see "Park and Ride Lots," Page 13*). If members agree to drive to a specific location to meet the van, it must be a safe and legal parking area (e.g., community centers, churches and shopping centers).



However, you must submit a letter to the property manager asking permission to use the space. Making official arrangements will prevent any complications.

- Develop and keep good communication with your group.
- Use a telephone tree to efficiently communicate schedule changes, illnesses and emergencies (*see the "Sample Vanpool Telephone Tree," Page 17 and "Emergency Planning Tips," Page 13*).
- Keep your van well maintained. Perform daily, weekly and monthly safety inspections. If you find a problem, handle it immediately (*see "Maintaining Your Van," Page 14*).
- Rotate using backup drivers to lessen driver fatigue and increase safety.

## Managing Your Vanpool

### Emergency Planning Tips

- Coordinate backup carpools if the van isn't available during an emergency.
- Appoint three or four people to coordinate carpools, so you can call on them if necessary.
- Arrange backup for accidents, breakdowns, severe weather conditions, vacations, illnesses or emergencies to lessen problems associated with last-minute changes.
- Determine which regular participants or early arrivals can call others in the group about any change in plans.
- Keep emergency flashlights and flares, and have a plan if an accident occurs.
- Assign specific jobs to vanpoolers such as setting out emergency triangles and checking on other passengers.

### Park and Ride Lots

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and other local transit agencies provide free Park and Ride lots, especially for vanpoolers, carpoolers and others using transit options. There are more than 80 well-lit and -maintained lots strategically placed statewide. More are expected soon.

■ **To find the Park and Ride lot nearest you, visit [www.ItsMARTA.com](http://www.ItsMARTA.com) and [www.georgia-navigator.com](http://www.georgia-navigator.com). Or dial “\*DOT” on your cell phone for the GDOT Navigator Hotline.**

## Maintaining Your Van

**M**aintaining a GRTA vanpool vehicle is quick and convenient because GRTA has created a routine maintenance schedule.

When a van needs servicing, a GRTA fleet employee picks up the van and leaves a substitute van in its place. Usually the work will be performed during the work day without inconveniencing commuters.

Drivers should check the:

- Oil, coolant and windshield cleaner levels at every fueling.
- Tires biweekly for imbedded objects and proper tire pressure. Early detection of air leaks can prevent on-road problems.
- Vehicle's exterior for scratches and blemishes, as well as all mirrors, seat belts, brake lights, and front and rear lights daily.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How much does it cost to participate in the vanpool?**

Costs vary per route and are based on the round-trip distance traveled and the number of participants (*see Pages 5 and 6 for estimated rates*).

### **What if I have an emergency during the day and have to go home early?**

GRTA vanpoolers are eligible for the Guaranteed Ride Home program. This ensures you transportation home when there is an emergency (*see Page 7*).

### **Do my vanpool responsibilities require me to be a backup or substitute driver?**

No. Vanpooling does not require you to share in the driving.

### **I've only had minor driving offenses: speeding and driving without my seat belt. Can I still be a driver?**

Primary and backup drivers must have no moving violations on their record within the last two years. They also must participate in GRTA's one-day driver training course.

### **Can I just pay for the days I ride?**

Vanpool fees are charged and must be paid in full at the beginning of each month.

### **As a driver, where do I park the van when I arrive at work? Will I have to pay the parking fees?**

When parking vans at work, follow your employer's parking guidelines. After work, park vans on secure residential streets, at pre-approved pickup locations, or on paved lots or driveways to avoid vandalism or damage from loose gravel.

The driver and riders are responsible for paying parking fees.

## Signing Up for Vanpooling

**G**RTA has made it very easy to join or form a vanpool. Contact Commute Connections at 1-87 RIDEFIND (1-877-433-3463) or visit [www.commutecconnections.com](http://www.commutecconnections.com) or [www.187ridefind.com](http://www.187ridefind.com).

Not only can you find out everything you need to know about vanpooling, there also are details about other commute alternatives throughout the region — including the Guaranteed Ride Home program.

In addition, Commute Connections and the Clean Air Campaign provide information for employers interested in sponsoring a vanpool.

Vanpooling is quick, easy, and by working together and reducing the numbers of cars on the road, we all might breathe a little easier.

Become a vanpool member. Join hundreds of others who have joined the movement and are sharing the ride!



## Sample Vanpool Rider Roster

Start Date	Leave Date	Rider	Route/Pickup Info.
		Name: Address: Home #: Work #: E-mail:	
		Name: Address: Home #: Work #: E-mail:	
		Name: Address: Home #: Work #: E-mail:	
		Name: Address: Home #: Work #: E-mail:	

## Sample Vanpool Telephone Tree

	Work Phone	Home Phone
Driver:		
Rider:		
Rider:		
Rider:		
Rider:		
Rider:		
Rider:		
Rider:		
Rider:		
Rider:		



## Sample Road Rules List

- √ Smoking will/will not be allowed.  
*(circle one)*
- √ Seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis.
- √ The maximum waiting time at each pickup point is \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.
- √ Vanpoolers must call the driver a day in advance, if possible, about absences.
- √ The radio will/will not be played. If played, it will be set on \_\_\_\_\_ station by a majority vote and not interfere with outside noises.
- √ Pickup points and times in commute order:  
  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- √ The group will review rules every \_\_\_\_\_ and change them by majority vote.







## **Vision Statement**

The Authority will:

- Work to plan and implement a transportation system that is multi-modal, seamless and accessible to all citizens.
- Encourage land use policies that promote efficient use of infrastructure investments.
- Operate within a decision-making framework that values public participation transportation choices, land use and the overall quality of life.
- Serve the best interests of the region by working in cooperation with other agencies and governments that are involved in planning and transportation.
- Measure its effectiveness in improving air quality, traffic, accessibility and land use.

## **Mission Statement**

GRTA/GDC works to provide Georgia citizens with transportation choices, improved air quality and better land use to enhance their quality of life and promote growth that future generations can sustain.