

News Release

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Carma Carpooling Launches in Austin

City's transportation future placed in the hands of residents

AUSTIN, TX - February 25th, 2014 - Austinites now have a new way to get around town thanks to Carma Carpooling, the breakthrough real-time smartphone app that launched in Austin as part of a pilot project with the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority. Carma matches drivers and riders as they travel, enabling them to set up carpools and share the cost of driving through automatic in-app payments. The overall goal is to put commuters' empty seats to good use and reduce traffic congestion throughout the city. To launch the service, Carma and Mobility Authority held a ribbon-cutting ceremony today on the 183A toll road, where the orange Carma Tesla broke through a ribbon at the Park Street toll gantry and took its first trip with ceremonial Carmapoolers on board.

Carma is participating in a federally-funded pilot program that provides additional rewards for users who carpool along certain Austin-area toll roads. Working partnership with the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority and TxTAG, drivers will receive rebates on toll fees when they carpool with Carma along Mobility Authority's 183A and Manor Expressway/Hwy 290 toll roads. The pilot was funded with a Value Pricing Grant from the Federal Transit Administration administered by TxDOT and Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority. Texas A&M Transportation Institute is providing independent oversight to evaluate automated vehicle occupancy verification and toll reimbursements for HOV users along toll roads.

"We are pleased Carma is participating with us in this pilot project," said Mobility Authority Executive Director Mike Heiligenstein. "This technology allows us to test the impact of specialty pricing as an incentive to drivers to use a toll Expressway, and may provide a way to verify the number of passengers in a qualifying carpool."

Approved by Austin City Council, Carma is the only legal ridesharing network available in the city. It is unique compared to other illegitimate 'rideshare' apps (peer-to-peer taxi services) because it matches everyday commuters to share rides. "Carmapoolers" are not 'for hire' drivers, and therefore their participation is protected by Federal, State and local laws.

"Austin has always been a city of strong community ties, and this program allows neighbors to find each other by leveraging mobile and social media technologies," says Paul Steinberg, VP

Business Development for Carma. “There are more than 900,000 empty seats commuting around Austin daily. We can help the congestion problem if drivers offer up just one empty seat every week. By getting there together, we can all enjoy extra time at home with our families, instead of sitting in traffic.”

How it Works

Carma is free to join. Riders pay just \$0.20 per mile to contribute towards drivers’ costs.

1. Download the Carma Carpooling app for iPhone or Android
2. Set up your profile and input your normal commute schedule & route
3. Carma shows your nearby matches. View profiles and message them to get in touch
4. Tap ‘Start Trip’ - Carma starts recording trip distance
5. Tap ‘End Trip’ - payment is transferred from Rider to Driver

183A and Manor Expressway Toll Reimbursements

Carmapoolers can also receive toll rebates along the 183A and Manor Expressway toll roads in North Austin. 2-person carpools get a 50% toll rebate, and 3+ person carpools get 100% of the toll back. Users must first download the Carma app at www.car.ma/austin, and then register their TxTag and License Plate info via their Profile screen. Once complete, any Carma Carpooling trip on these toll roads will be eligible for reimbursements.

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About Carma

Founded in 2007 and formerly known as Avego, Carma is a world-leading company in real-time carpooling technology, enabling people team up to improve their commute.

Headquartered in Cork, Ireland and with offices in San Jose, CA, and Austin, TX, Carma’s customers include cities, governments, public transport operators and tens of thousands of individual consumers and private transport operators. For more information visit www.car.ma or download the Carma Carpooling app.

About the Mobility Authority

The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority is a local, independent government agency created to improve the regional transportation system. Our mission is to implement innovative solutions that reduce congestion and create transportation choices that enhance quality of life and economic vitality. The Mobility Authority is the state’s first regional mobility authority, created in January 2003 to serve Travis and Williamson counties. The Mobility Authority currently operates the 183A toll road in Williamson county and is currently working to construct phase two of the US 290 East (Manor Expressway) project and construct new Express Lanes on MoPac (Loop 1). Learn more at www.mobilityauthority.com.