

# BUILDING A BETTER COMMUTE

Your Field Guide to Navigating Construction



PERIMETER  
**CONNECTS**  
options @ the center



# LET US INTRODUCE OURSELVES

As you excitedly read this construction field guide for the first time and refer back to its contents time and again, we suspect you will eventually wonder aloud "...who are the brains behind this source of valuable programs, insights, and advice?" We felt it fitting to introduce ourselves.



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The **Perimeter Community Improvement Districts (PCIDs)**, representing both the Central (DeKalb) and Fulton Perimeter CIDs, are self-taxing districts that use additional property taxes to help accelerate needed transportation and infrastructure improvement projects.

**Perimeter Connects** is a key program of the PCIDs and provides commuter consultation, advisory services and program support to employers and property managers in the Perimeter district. Our employer and property manager partners have implemented robust and effective commuter benefits programs to enhance the transportation options available to their employees and tenants. Through these partnerships, Perimeter businesses and properties recruit and retain top talent in their industries.

While construction is merely temporary, please know our team is permanently here for you. Feel free to contact us at 770.390.1788 or [info@PerimeterConnects.com](mailto:info@PerimeterConnects.com).



# SAME GREAT PERIMETER, NEW AND IMPROVED INTERCHANGE

As an employer in the Perimeter area, you likely already realize just how valuable our area transportation network is to your company's bottom line. That's why the I-285 at GA 400 interchange is undergoing a major upgrade that will add roadway capacity, improve traffic flow and safety, increase access to your worksite, and generate opportunity for new investment in the Perimeter area. This is occurring over a 4-year coordinated construction period. While these improvements are made, the Central Perimeter market will remain open for business and this field guide provides easy strategies for your company to do so too.



Looking for the most up-to-date construction updates?  
Bookmark [285at400.org](https://www.285at400.org) for the latest and greatest info.

# HOW TO USE THE FIELD GUIDE

This field guide provides simple steps, easy-to-understand strategies and commute support services. When combined with your unique understanding of employees and company culture, the field guide equips Perimeter employers to remain leaders... in their field (who doesn't love a pun?).

Changing workforce demographics are resulting in newfound demand for employer provided transportation options that improve the commute experience. The timing could not be better to leverage construction to start your own program or enhance an existing one. The field guide walks you through simple steps to create a custom commute options program which provides employees with access to more travel choices as they navigate their daily commute.

An effective commute options program starts with selecting strategies that are applicable to your workplace. We won't beat around the bush, the plan itself does not make the difference. Sufficient resources must also be available to implement the desired program and the field guide helps ensure you create a program that is reasonable and realistic to implement.

The process is broken down into three easy sections: **Think, Plan** and **Act**. Within each section, we identify simple steps and key decision points to assist with the creation of a successful commute options program..



## THINK

- ▶ Identify your internal Employee Transportation Coordinator or "Connector"
- ▶ Assess your company needs



## PLAN

- ▶ Select commute options strategies that will work for your workplace



## ACT

- ▶ Get started at your worksite
- ▶ Promote your program



## Identify an Employee Transportation Coordinator

A commute options program would just collect dust on a shelf if it wasn't for the people behind them. That is why the first and most important step is to identify an employee that will be the point person for the program. All great deeds should be recognized - which is why these staff people get the designation on their resumes as the company Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC). While the point person is vital, we also know it might take a collection of departments and roles to make the magic happen. That is why the ETC can also create an internal group or small committee. At Perimeter Connects, we call this collection of wonderful people "Connectors".

Connectors are employees who are responsible for leading the creation and implementation of the commute options program. This may include leading and coordinating with appropriate departments to implement commute programming and benefits for employees. Connectors can be in human resources, sustainability/green team participants, or passionate employees who have experience with cross-departmental projects.

## Assess Your Needs

With the right people identified, it's time to think about what your company really needs. Don't worry, it's not as daunting as it sounds. Assessing what makes your worksite unique is necessary to quickly harness the infrastructure, culture, and policy considerations that will impact and inform the commute program. For example, you may discover during your worksite assessment that your company already offers a commuter benefit that is not widely used and that could be leveraged in all future program development.

Utilize our Worksite Assessment to evaluate considerations, such as proximity to nearby transportation infrastructure, inventory of onsite amenities that reduce the need for a car, and internal communication tools that can be used to promote commuter programs.



Download the online Worksite Assessment at  
[PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors](https://PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors)

# PLAN



## Understand the commute options strategies that will support your workplace

Here comes the fun part: browsing all the great programs that you will want to match your worksite's needs. In this section, you will find effective commute options, strategies and programs. What makes this process successful is understanding that there is not a "one size fits all" approach, as internal and external variables will dictate the strategies that make the most sense and yield the biggest impact for your worksite.

The potential strategies center around commute mode-specific opportunities, including:



**TRANSIT:** rail and bus (pg 8-10)



**RIDESHARE:** carpool and vanpool (pg 11-13)



**FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS:** telework, compressed work week, and alternate shift schedules (pg. 14)



**ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION:** bike and walk (pg. 15)



# TRANSIT



Central Perimeter is anchored by 3 MARTA stations: Medical Center, Dunwoody, and Sandy Springs. Each station is also serviced by SRTA Xpress buses and 12 employer/property shuttles providing last mile connectivity to nearby worksites.

## Benefits

MARTA trains won't be delayed by traffic, so your employees won't be either! SRTA will be responding to the latest construction updates to ensure that Xpress buses also stay on track. Transit provides a cost savings from driving and allows commuters to avoid the stress of traffic. Giving your employees the gift of extra time in their day is an invaluable benefit. Your employees can track the next bus or train by downloading their favorite real-time arrival apps on

iOS or Android:

- ▶ OneBusAway : real-time locations for MARTA and SRTA Xpress
- ▶ myXpress: locations and bus schedules for SRTA Xpress
- ▶ Marta On the Go: locations and bus/train schedules for MARTA

**28%** of Perimeter employees said they would leave their cars at home if offered a discounted or free transit pass.





## What can you as an employer do?

**Subsidize or discount transit passes.** While transit is not expensive when compared to driving alone to work, programs that reduce the perceived cost of trying transit are more successful at creating and maintaining transit commuters. A few ways to accomplish this include:

- ▶ Offer pre-tax purchasing of transit passes through payroll deduction. The IRS allows employees to set aside up to \$255/month of pre-tax funds for transit.
- ▶ Take advantage of existing transit pass discounts offered by MARTA. This can be accessed through Perimeter Connects or a third-party benefits company.
- ▶ Subsidize the cost of a monthly pass for staff who take transit to work.

**Provide a shuttle.** Is your worksite over a 10-minute walk from the MARTA station? Partner with nearby properties and employers to share the cost of a shuttle to the MARTA stations during peak commute times. See the current map of last-mile shuttles in the Perimeter market at

[PerimeterConnects.com/Shuttles](https://PerimeterConnects.com/Shuttles)

**Create a transit culture.** Work with management to condense meetings to the middle of the day, allowing transit riders the flexibility to arrive and leave based on the train or bus schedule. Include transit benefits in your employee handbook and encourage employees to consider these as health and financial benefits. Present transit information to new hires at the same time as parking instructions.

**Transit trip planning.** Encourage staff to plan their transit trip by visiting [ATLTransit.org](https://ATLTransit.org), an online resource that provides transit rider guides, trip planning across multiple transit agencies, and easy fare purchasing.



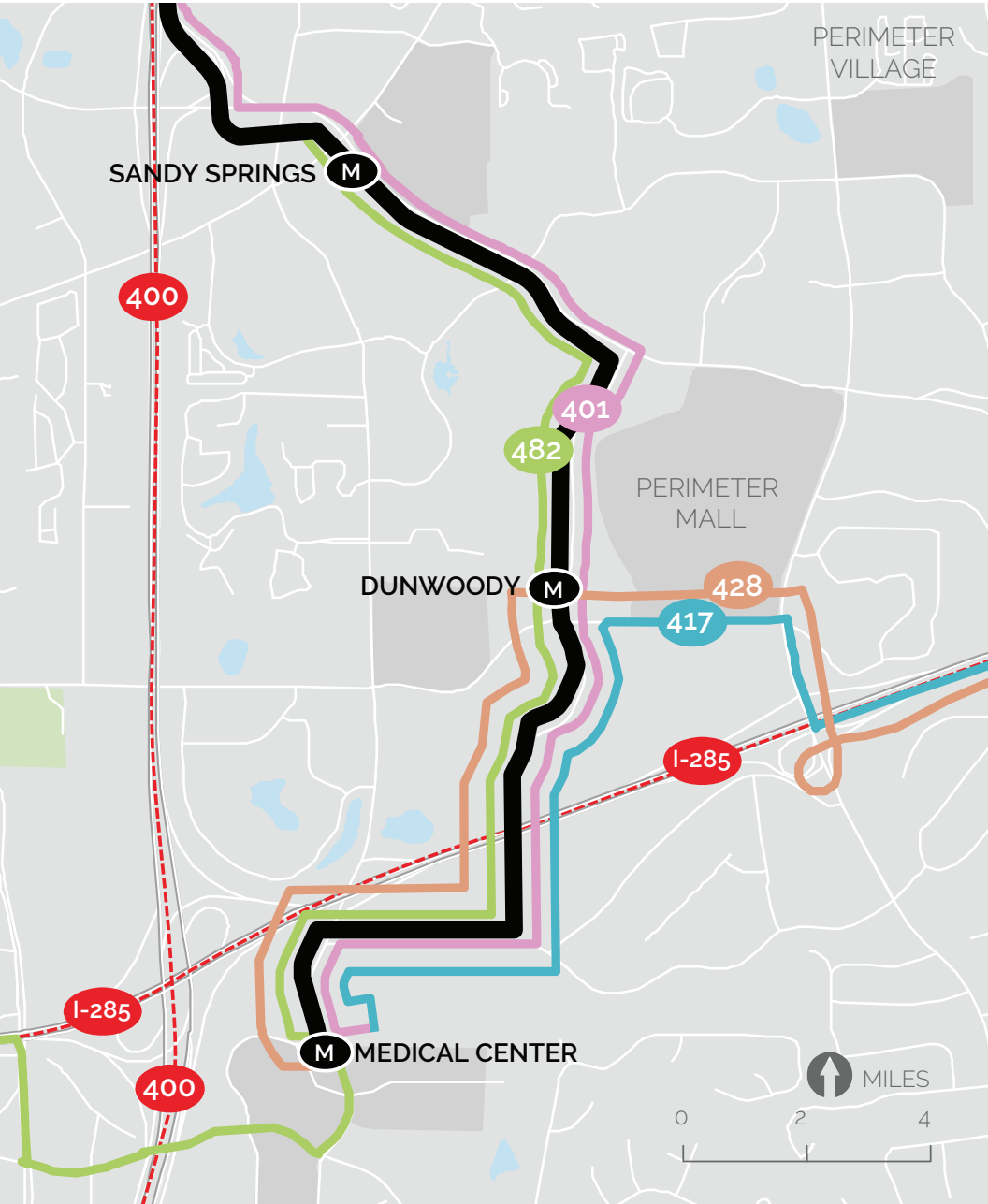
Check out additional resources in our online portal at [PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors](https://PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors)

- ▶ Setting up pre-tax transportation benefits
- ▶ How to establish a transit pass program
- ▶ How to start a shuttle for your worksite

# Perimeter Center transit routes

- 428 SRTA Xpress – Conyers
- 401 SRTA Xpress – Cumming
- 482 SRTA Xpress – Town Center

- 417 SRTA Xpress – Sugarloaf Mills
- M MARTA Rail Stop



# SHARE THE RIDE



It happens – you see one of your colleagues at the grocery store and realize they live just around the corner. Once you realize there are convenient options to share the ride to work, the idea of it becomes much more tangible. **Carpools** can be as simple as 2 people sharing the ride to work. A **vanpool** is a group of 4-15 passengers who live in the same area, work similar schedules, and share the ride.

## Benefits

Ridesharing is a quick win for saving on expenses, accessing HOV (high-occupancy vehicle) lanes, and reducing traffic congestion. Carpooling can be regimented (i.e. traveling 5 days a week at the same times) or flexible (i.e. traveling 1-2 times a week at variable times); it's all up to the preference of the carpool group. Ridesharing is an important commute strategy for employees not supported by transit.

## What can you as an employer do?

**Promote ridematches.** Help your employees connect with potential carpool partners through informal ride matching events. Ready to go high-tech? Encourage employees to create a profile on [MyGaCommuteOptions.com](https://www.mygacommuteroptions.com) to connect with carpool partners in real-time and view vanpool options, or by downloading the GaCommuter app for iPhone or Android.



**Provide preferential parking.** Designate upfront preferred parking spots for carpools and vanpools. Spots can be labeled with signage or paint, and you can use vehicle decals or hang-tags for easy monitoring. Employees will save time by skipping the hunt for the perfect spot.

**Promote rideshare culture.** Carpools and vanpools work best when schedules are predictable. Allow employees to stick to their schedule every day and let carpool partners rotate shift schedules together. Include any rideshare benefits in your employee handbook and as part of the onboarding process.

**Set-up a corporate vanpool account.** Enterprise Rideshare can work with your company or property to establish a vanpool program. They will assist with rider coordination, provide and maintain the vehicles, and will provide central invoicing to your company for pre-tax deduction. **Contact Shawn Cook:** [shawn.m.cook1@ehi.com](mailto:shawn.m.cook1@ehi.com)

**Offer pre-tax vanpool fare purchasing through payroll deduction.** The IRS allows employees to set aside \$255/month of pre-tax funds for vanpool.



Ready for more? Find these resources online at [PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors](https://PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors)

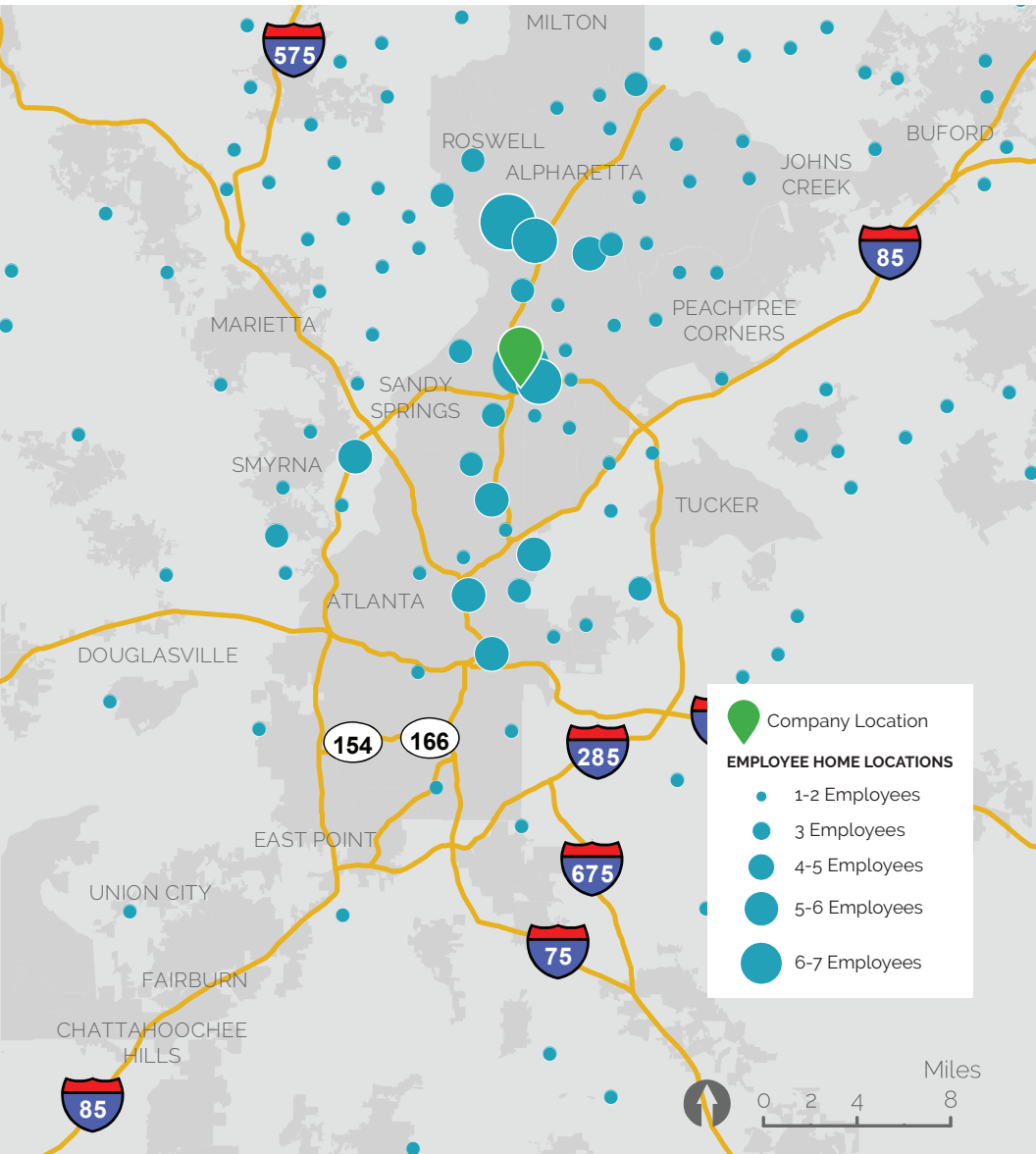
- ▶ Preferential Parking Guide
- ▶ Setting up pre-tax transportation benefits





## Employee location map

As an employer offering ridesharing solutions to your employees, an employee location map can be a valuable tool to illustrate potential rideshare matches. Below is an example of a workplace's employee home locations plotted across the region in context with the workplace location. These maps can be customized by department or shift schedule to further identify all commute options available to employees to reduce drive alone commutes.



# FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS



Timing is everything. After all, they don't call it "rush hour" for nothing. Sadly, it's not as simple as just one specific hour anymore. That is where flexible work arrangements come into play. Employees can avoid the peak commute altogether when programs are offered by employers. Options include compressed work week, flexible shifts, and teleworking.

## Benefits

By providing telework and flexible work hours, your company is implementing a key workplace strategy towards business continuity. Why is that important? Just think about the next time the Perimeter area experiences an inch of snow just before morning rush hour. Business continuity is what keeps your company operating and your employees working.

Companies that offer flexible work arrangements can expect to see increased employee productivity, improved employee job satisfaction, expanded core business hours, and reduced employee stress and absenteeism.

## What can you as an employer do?

**Implement or expand current telework program.** Allow employees to work from home at least one day per week. Stagger days across staff members and departments. Having a telework policy that works for your company is the first step.

**Allow employees to flex their shift start and end times.** Flexible work schedules enable employees to adjust their work day to better match the schedules of transit or rideshare partners, or to skip the peak commute.

**Offer compressed work week options.** Allow employees to work longer schedules and earn an extra day or half day off each week. For example, instead of the typical 8-hour workday for 5 days per week, employees work 10 hours for 4 days per week and have 1 extra day off.

**Bring in an expert.** Perimeter Connects has partnered with Georgia Commute Options to provide free flexible work arrangement consulting. Whether building a program from scratch, or expanding a current program for the construction period, we can help. Contact [info@perimeterconnects.com](mailto:info@perimeterconnects.com) to get started.



See more at [PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors](https://PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors)

- ▶ Download telework and flexible work implementation documents

# BIKE OR WALK



Adopting an active commute is an ideal way to arrive to work stress-free. Not to mention healthier. Last mile connections from transit can easily be supplemented by biking or walking in Perimeter. The Central Perimeter area has over 10 miles of bike lanes and counting!

## Benefits

Bicycles aren't just for recreation anymore—they have recently become one of Atlanta's most popular forms of transportation and a great way to get to work. Encouraging employees to bike and/or walk to work helps reduce worksite parking demand while supporting a healthy lifestyle. Employees will also benefit from cost savings ranging from gasoline to wear and tear on their vehicles.

## What can you as an employer do?

**Provide secure bike parking.** Whether a bike rack or an entire bike room, allow employees easy and secure storage for their bike. Easy storage ensures quick access to the front door, while still maintaining that the bike is secure. Even better? Let them bring the bike in the office with them.

**Provide access to showers.** Active commuters appreciate a place to freshen up and store clean clothes for the workday ahead. If there are gym/locker facilities on-site, provide free access to cyclists/walkers. If not, partner with a local gym for shower passes to provide to employees.

**Offer pre-tax subsidies for bike commuters.** The Bicycle Commuter Act provides a tax-benefited reimbursement for the expenses of bicycle commuting (helmets, bike supplies, gym expenses, etc.). Employers may provide a reimbursement of up to \$20 per month tax-free to employees.

**Provide onsite bike repair kit:** Flat tires can happen to cyclists too. Provide a fix-it station nearby the bike racks for convenient tune-ups, or sell mini-kits onsite.

**Allow bike commuters to have flexible work hours.** The ideal time for cyclists to commute is when traffic is the lightest. Ensure the safest ride for your cyclists by allowing them to shift their commute hours outside of the peak commute time.



See more at [PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors](https://PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors)

▶ Setting up pre-tax transportation benefits

# ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYEES

## Commuter incentives

Perimeter Connects is partnered with Georgia Commute Options to provide your employees access to financial incentives for their alternative commute.

- ▶ **\$5 A Day:** Currently driving alone? Earn \$5 a day, up to \$150 for making the switch from driving alone to transit, carpooling, vanpooling, teleworking, or biking/walking to work.
- ▶ **\$25 prizes:** Heading into Perimeter without your car? You could win \$25 gift cards every month.
- ▶ **Gas cards:** Carpoolers receive an additional monthly incentive for sharing the ride, monthly \$40/\$60 gas cards are given to eligible carpools.

Employees can log their commutes at [MyGaCommuteOptions.com](https://MyGaCommuteOptions.com) or the GACommuter app for access to these incentives.

## Employer-provided incentives

- ▶ **Offer parking cash-out incentive.** Pay employees to give up their parking spot completely. Provide a cash bonus or even additional PTO hours.
- ▶ **Host commute challenges.** Engage and encourage employees with commuter challenges. Incentivize employees to take the most trips without a vehicle or log the most steps during the challenge.



See more at [PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors](https://PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors)

- ▶ Incentivize employees to give up their parking





## Support services for your employees

- ▶ **Personalized commute planning service:** Encourage employees to request a personalized commute plan tailored to their specific travel including home/worksite location, work hours, and amenities available at the worksite. This service can be accessed for free by visiting [PerimeterConnects.com/CommutePlan](https://PerimeterConnects.com/CommutePlan)
- ▶ **Guaranteed Ride Home:** The biggest obstacle to giving up your car keys is the "what if" question. Things like "what if my child gets sick and needs to leave school?" or "what if I need to work late to meet a deadline?". That is where Guaranteed Ride Home takes away all your fears. Any commuter that did not drive into work alone is eligible for up to 5 free rides home, via taxi or rental car, per year. The Guaranteed Ride Home application can be found at: [GACommuteOptions.com/GRH](https://GACommuteOptions.com/GRH)

## Support services for you

- ▶ **Construction information.** You can encourage your commute options program team, employees and colleagues to register for email updates on the construction project. Up-to-date construction project scheduling, design drawings, and traffic alerts can be accessed at [285at400.org](https://285at400.org).
- ▶ **Resource Page.** Additional resources including how-to guides, and marketing materials are updated regularly and included in the Perimeter Connects Resource Page at [PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors](https://PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors). Also be sure to sign up for our newsletter at [PerimeterConnects.com](https://PerimeterConnects.com).





## Getting started at your worksite

See that didn't hurt did it? And look how much you've accomplished! You've selected your Connector, completed the worksite assessment, identified all the great programs that you can implement and have made the decision to move forward with a commute options program. Now what? See below for our recommended next steps:

1. Review your Worksite Assessment Form. Consider responses to:
  - a. **Transit access** – How long is the walk to the nearest transit station? Do you have access to an existing shuttle to supplement the trip?
  - b. **Rideshare opportunity** – Are there clusters of employees who live in similar areas? Would a vanpool or carpool be viable with their work hours?
  - c. **Telework feasibility** – Are there positions whose job responsibilities could be completed remotely?
2. Choose your program(s):
  - a. **Transit**

<input type="radio"/> Pre-tax passes	<input type="radio"/> Shuttle access
<input type="radio"/> Discounted fare	<input type="radio"/> Other _____
<input type="radio"/> Incentives for non-parking days	
  - b. **Rideshare**

<input type="radio"/> Vanpool Program > Contact Enterprise Rideshare	
<input type="radio"/> Carpool Program	<input type="radio"/> Preferential Parking
<input type="radio"/> Incentives	<input type="radio"/> Other _____
  - c. **Bike/Walk**

<input type="radio"/> Infrastructure improvement	<input type="radio"/> Other _____
<input type="radio"/> Bike Reimbursement stipend	

d. **Flexible Work Arrangements**

- Telework
  - Shift schedules
  - Compressed work week
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. Seek senior management approval to provide financial subsidies or programs based on previous steps.
  4. Coordinate with appropriate departments for implementation. Identify a point of contact in HR, Payroll/Accounting, IT, Sustainability/Green Team, or more.
  5. Create a timeline for the launch of your new commute options program. Review Worksite Assessment Form for overview of communication channels.

## Promote your program

You're almost there. A well-rounded commute options program is supported by a robust marketing and promotion effort to increase awareness of commute choices in the Atlanta area, and the new/updated programs implemented at your worksite. As an employer you have more impact on your employees' behavior than you likely realize. By showcasing your commitment and encouragement of these custom programs, your employees will take note.

Here is a quick and super effective strategy to launch the new program or reinvigorate your existing one: show commitment from the executive level by distributing an all-company communication from the CEO or another top level employee announcing the new program and/or showcasing executives participating.

Review our [Connectors Resource Page](#). Access a communications tool bank at [PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors](https://PerimeterConnects.com/Connectors) for poster templates, intranet content, and draft email announcements.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Project Overview: [285at400.org](https://285at400.org)

Perimeter Connects: [PerimeterConnects.com](https://PerimeterConnects.com) or 770-390-1788

MARTA: [itsmarta.com](https://itsmarta.com)

SRTA Xpress: [xpressga.com](https://xpressga.com)

Georgia Department Of Transportation: [dot.ga.gov](https://dot.ga.gov)

