

IN SEATTLE, REAL-TIME RIDE-SHARING WITH REWARDS FOR PARTICIPANTS



Numerous ride-sharing programs have graced our virtual pages in recent years, including examples such as [Ridekicks](#) that reward participants for sharing. What sets Seattle's [go520](#) program apart, however, is that rides need not be arranged in advance; rather, they can be shared in real-time. Launched late last month by transportation technology firm Avego, the go520 program is currently being tested as a way to reduce congestion on Seattle's busy SR 520 highway. Through the state-funded pilot, 250 drivers with GPS-enabled iPhones can now offer the empty seats in their vehicles to 750 riders along the SR 520 highway, in real-time, as they travel. Passengers and drivers are matched up through an easy-to-use system using drivers' iPhones — equipped with the free Avego ride-sharing app — and riders' mobile devices. Once a match is made, Avego manages the journey from pick-up to drop-off, providing real-time status updates, automated security features, and electronic micro-payments that allow riders and drivers to share the cost of the journey. Drivers who participate in the program 20 or more times each month are rewarded with a monthly USD 30 gas card along with travel reimbursements. Riders, meanwhile, receive up to USD 30 per month in Avego credit to use towards real-time ride-sharing journeys. Then, too, there are the speedier commutes thanks to participants' ability to use the highway's high occupancy vehicle (HOV) ramps and lanes. Avego's real-time ride-sharing technology is already used by thousands of commuters in more than 65 countries around the world, the company says. A [video](#) on YouTube demonstrates the concept in action. Cities around the globe: one to test out as a complement to your own public transportation? (Related: [City dwellers enlisted & rewarded for delivering DHL packages — In New Delhi](#), [carpooling system rewards members for giving rides](#).) Spotted by: R.P.

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