



# Want to Ride to Work With Strangers, North Texas? There Will Soon Be An App For That.

By Eric Nicholson

Published Fri., Jul. 20 2012 at 8:00 AM

Slugging, aka commuting to work in random strangers' cars, has long been a thing in Houston and a handful of other cities across the country but [never in Dallas](#). Maybe it's that use of our HOV lanes requires only two people per vehicle or that Dallas doesn't have enough pockets of density. Maybe it's an innate aversion to locking oneself in a box with a stranger who, for all you know, wants to rape and murder you.

The thing is, slugging is very efficient. It takes cars off the road, keeps greenhouse gases out of the air, and represents an extremely efficient use of existing transportation infrastructure. In short, it's something transportation planners want to encourage. More specifically, it's something the transportation planners at the North Central Texas Council of Governments want to encourage, which is why the regional planning organization is developing a mobile app that ["supports real-time casual carpooling."](#)

NCTCOG launched a ride-sharing function on its website about 18 months ago that has led to 1,400 carpool matches between strangers, but the app is something that principal transportation planner Sonya Landrum said hasn't really been tried.

"As far as I know, we're the first to try to develop the app," Landrum said. "We did a little research to figure out what was out there. There were a couple of casual carpooling type websites, but it was a pay-for kind of thing."

Development of the app is being funded using a federal grant. Details about how exactly it will function are sketchy, since the deadline for developers to submit proposals is still a week away. But it will allow users to find a carpool buddy on the fly as well as lock-in toll rates on the managed lanes that will soon be piloted by NCTCOG. So if you know when you'll be driving along a certain stretch of road, you can check in with the app to avoid being surprised by changing prices.

Whether commuters will use the slugging app remains an open question. NCTCOG currently has no projections, and Mark Burris, a Texas A&M transportation researcher I spoke with last month, said sluggers he spoke with were skeptical of the idea of app-assisted carpooling. We'll see soon enough.

**Showing 0 comments**



Sluggers in Washington D.C.

