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## WashURide: Bringing drivers and riders together

Paula Lauris  
Senior Scene Editor

**Published:** Monday, April 20, 2009

**Updated:** Monday, April 20, 2009

You may have seen the questions “Have a ride? Need a ride?” written in chalk all over campus, printed on strips of paper underneath your door or even plastered over that infamous pink scooter. The mystery behind Washington University’s WashURide program, however, isn’t just limited to its slogan; because the organization is funded by the Greater University Service Foundation, its founders must stay anonymous in order to genuinely promote the goals of the project rather than to advance their personal interests.

With all of the mystery surrounding the service, you might be wondering what they actually do. The group created the Web site [carpoolworld.com](http://carpoolworld.com), where students, faculty or staff can register by inputting their origin, destination and time schedule for different trips. With this information, the Web site matches riders with similar plans so that they can carpool to locations together.

The service can be used for anything from going to work, driving to an event off campus or even traveling home for breaks. Currently, several dozen users take advantage of the program at Wash. U., creating more than 100,000 registered trips throughout the United States.

The concept of a rideshare program is not unique to Wash. U., and our model was in fact derived from those of other institutions. WashURide considered following a Zimride system, which uses social networking sites like Facebook to match riders and drivers together. The organization chose not to use such a model, however, because it would exclude other users, like faculty and staff, who aren’t part of these networking sites.

Although the premise behind the organization is simple, it is still an important and necessary tool for members of the Wash. U. community. With budget cuts to the Metro service limiting times and stops, taking public transportation has become a less convenient option for many.

The alternatives that Wash. U. currently offers for those without a car, such as renting from WeCar, require users to pay per hour for the service. “The WeCar is great if maybe you need to jet in the middle of the day to a doctor’s appointment, but it’s not really a viable way to get back and forth to campus. I think the rideshare program addresses that,” junior Brent Rubin said.

Furthermore, the program is great for sustainability, as users with cars can register in order to share rides with others and reduce waste. WashURide is currently working with the creators of [carpoolworld.com](http://carpoolworld.com) in order to expand its site to calculate the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions from the use of the service. “The Wash. U. rideshare program provides a medium for students to get connected with each other and reduce their carbon output. It’s cost effective and environmentally conscious,” freshman Parsa Bastani said.

With partners like Pointers Pizza, Noodles & Company and Jimmy John’s supporting the organization, WashURide is growing to be more of a presence on campus. In fact, these companies are offering many free coupons and discounts to students, faculty and staff who decide to take advantage of the resource. So, if you’re looking for an easier way to consistently get to and from off-campus locations, or even to go home for the semester, try registering for WashURide—with a growing number of users registering daily, you’re sure to find a convenient trip plan.