

Each morning that I have to fight traffic on my commute into the city from the suburbs of Atlanta, I think about how nice it would be to utilize the hour-long drive for something other than focusing completely on the endless string of cars in front of me. Well to my luck, Midtown Transportation Solutions granted my wish with their “Personalized Commute Planning” service. If you have ever considered carpooling, vanpooling, or taking public transportation to work/school/etc. then you need to get in touch with this department of the Midtown Alliance.

The stress of the hour long commute from Gwinnett County to Midtown Atlanta during rush hour had taken its toll on me. I wanted to be able to enjoy my coffee in the morning again, and I hated being forced to listen to traffic updates in the car—which only upped my anxiety level. I decided to try the service by emailing Kelly, a representative of the Personalized Commute Planning service. After submitting to her the necessary information, such as where I would be commuting to and from, times of day, and how flexible my schedule is, Kelly set up an appointment with me to present the most ideal commuting options according to my specific needs. In the meeting, I received my commuting plan which would entail driving to a park-and-ride lot only 5 minutes away from my house and taking an express bus that would deposit me within a 5 minute walk from my office building...perfect! The cost of the bus would only offset the cost of parking in Midtown, I would be saving gas, giving back to the environment, and getting back two hours of life each day. Kelly also reminded me that on average we spend 50 cents for each mile we commute including the cost of gas and car maintenance. Based on mileage this meant I was spending \$40/day just to drive to work. The bus would cost only \$8 roundtrip so this was the economic alternative for me. On the way out she handed me a brochure highlighting all the incentives of a greener commute—money and gas cards being a couple of them.

The very next day I followed Kelly’s directions to the park-and-ride lot, boarded my bus, and opened up the book that I had been too busy to read for the last week. The bus was at about half capacity when its doors closed so there was plenty of room for myself and the rest of the commuters to spread out and get comfortable. The peace and quiet on the bus felt like heaven in comparison with the hectic traffic, car horns, and talk radio I was dealing with the previous day. The friendly bus driver and considerate commuters (no cell phones, eating, nor loud talking) motivated me to continue using this option for my daily travels in and out of the city. The bus was right on schedule, so I didn’t have to worry about arriving late to work or waiting on the bus when I was ready to go home.

I highly recommend that you try out the Personalized Commute Planning service for yourself. I have started logging my commute through the MTS website, and as a result am eligible to win monthly gift cards as well as up to \$100 just for switching from driving alone! Don’t continue to pass up this opportunity. The feeling of accomplishment that comes with utilizing the time wasted driving for anything else feels

productive, and there is this rewarding sense of community from travelling with your fellow Atlantans.

Visit http://www.midtownalliance.org/MTS_commute.html to get started or directly contact Kelly the Outreach Coordinator by email at Kelly@midtownalliance.org.

- Jaclyn, Gwinnett County