

New Traffic App Uses Incentive Program to Help Drivers Avoid Congestion

Metropia Mobile App Being Tested in Cities Known for Traffic Congestion

A new app is being billed as a “crystal ball” to help drivers “avoid traffic congestion before you’re in it.”

The Metropia Mobile app (formerly known as Smartrek) was created by Yi-Chang Chiu, an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of Arizona, and is designed to help commuters recognize that they are a part of a city’s traffic congestion problems and can be a part of the solution. It offers incentives for drivers to travel during certain times of the day and along routes that will help ease congestion.

A driver can open the app and find a list of future departure times and route options, expected travel times, and the credits to be earned for each time and route offered. The driver then makes a reservation for their desired time and route, essentially booking their spot on the highway. By knowing when and where drivers will be, the app uses a predictive algorithm and draws on historical traffic patterns and real-time congestion data to encourage users to choose less-congested times and routes.

The app is now in an approximately three-month beta-testing phase in Austin, Texas, that is slated to run through early January. Metropia Mobile is then expected to be available in the Google Play Store, followed by the iTunes store. Chiu says Austin was a natural choice for testing because “Austin is the fourth most congested city in the United States and is growing quickly. If we can make an improvement in Austin, it bodes well for

Metropia’s success in other metropolitan areas.”

Metropia says it has already met its goal

of recruiting 400 beta testers, and more than half of them have taken more than one trip. In two months of testing, the users

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Glasgow Using Bus Gates to Ease Traffic Congestion, Pollution

Major Reductions in Local Traffic Credited to Gate Restrictions

The city of Glasgow, Scotland, is considering adding two more bus gates to its city center to cut personal vehicle travel in the downtown area. Three such gates already in place are credited with reducing localized traffic by 60 to 70 percent and improving air quality, reducing noise and improving the general local environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

Glasgow’s bus gates are not physical restrictions. Andrew Brown, the Glasgow City Council’s Projects Manager for Land and Environmental Services, says the gates are “effectively a full arterial road access restriction backed up by a Traffic Regulation Order and the appropriate regulatory and directional signage and road markings.

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A Glasgow bus gate indicated by red pavement markings and blue roundels. (Photo: Courtesy of Glasgow City Council)

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