

Jon Polaha
Aerojet



Three years ago, Jon Polaha was so frustrated with the daily 520 commute, he was nearly ready to change jobs. He had tried biking to work, but 25 miles around the top of Lake Washington was a bit far. He had looked into bus options, but nothing was convenient. He attended a commute fair and decided to spearhead the creation of a vanpool to Aerojet.

Jon was worried that he wouldn't find the 5 necessary riders that are a minimum to start a vanpool, but he quickly found 7 other Aerojet employees that were commuting to the Green Lake area. Seven people equally frustrated with the 520 commute.

One of the reservations people have about being in a vanpool is having to leave work at a specific time—sometimes there's still too much work at the end of the day to leave at a specific time. Jon's vanpool gets around this by running only 4 days a week, and allowing people to stay late on Fridays to get unfinished work done.

To keep people arriving at the van on time, Jon's vanpool has established a \$1 fine for showing up after the 5-minute grace period. The riders use the money collected is spent at the social gatherings the vanpool arranges for themselves on a regular basis.

Jon thinks that people join vanpools for four main reasons: reduced stress, cost savings, time savings, and environmental impact. Jon is focused on the fourth reason, and he's proud of the environmental impact keeping the van going has, and that is why Jon is one of this year's Commute Champions.