Researchers at the University of South Florida have developed a software algorithm with an online webpage implementation that matches individuals in an online community, with others they can potentially car pool with, based on preferences entered by the users and the similarities in their planned trips.

Traditional ride sharing algorithms are based on simple weekly (Monday—Friday) schedules, thus scoring low on versatility and utility to occasional and one time users. The invention addresses this issue by its unique ability to accept trips with schedules which cannot be expressed in terms of a simple recurrence pattern. This invention also distinguishes itself by using the shortest path solver, increasing its accuracy over algorithms using straight line path solvers. The invention also lays emphasis on all points in a route, thereby accommodating smaller trips within an existing trip, increasing efficiency of the system.

A working prototype of this algorithm has been tested.

Advantages:
- Addresses wider range of recurrence patterns amongst users
- Uses actual street distances, ensuring accuracy
- Focus on all points rather than on end points alone
- Handles one time and occasional trips

Tech ID# 06A064