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Atlantic Station wants you to go carless

By CHRISTIAN BOONE
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
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There's two types of people you don't expect to meet in Atlanta: native Atlantans and commuters without cars.

Laurel Paget-Seekins is among the latter minority and, as part of Atlantic Station's new initiative to have employees and residents ditch their vehicles, she's testifying to the skeptical that one can navigate the city without an automobile.



Jessica McGowan/Special (ENLARGE)

Kathleen Arnold (left) of Colorado and niece Jessica Fairchild of Atlanta register for the online rewards program to log your commute at the new Atlantic Station commuter cafe.

Your Turn

Would you be likely to use a "commuter cafe"?

- Sure. It can't be worse than traffic.
- No way. I love my car.
- Maybe -- if they paid me

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"Obviously there are the environmental benefits," said Paget-Seekins, a graduate student at Georgia Tech studying transportation. She lives in East Lake. "It's good for your health and your social life. You meet a lot more people traveling by train or bus than you do sitting in your car."

Atlantic Station this week opened what they say is the nation's first "commuter cafe," designed as a clearinghouse for transportation alternatives aimed at the approximately 11,000 people who live and work within the mixed-use development.

"Atlanta is a city where we're conditioned to drive," said Brian Leary, vice president of AIG Global Investment Real Estate, which developed Atlantic Station. "We want a community where you're conditioned to walk."

Atlantic Station offers a "free ride" shuttle, with stops at the MARTA Arts Center Station and Georgia Tech. Residents and employees also can register for a car check-out service.

In what they say is a burgeoning trend, employment service organizations are taking a more aggressive approach to recruiting commuter converts.

"You just can't expect to build it and people will come," said Joddie Gray, program manager for the Atlantic Station Access and Mobility Program (ASAP+ for short). "Everyone has a million excuses — our job is to eliminate those excuses."

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