

Want a Better Commute? Join the Dash Beta Test

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GPS startup Dash Navigation is offering consumers to test out its traffic-beating network of connected GPS devices.

Having just moved back to the United States after two years of car-free public transportation in England, I realize I've returned to the land of stop-and-go traffic, rude drivers, and annoying morning radio shows. And the worst part is that with one car plus a wife, my commute's essentially doubled.

That's why my ears perked up when I saw this this morning: Dash Navigation, a startup which has designed a traffic-sensing GPS device , is offering consumers the chance to beta-test it. Unlike other GPS receivers, the Dash Express doesn't rely on traffic reports to sense traffic--it creates its own. As you might imagine, however, it requires a critical mass of drivers to start reporting data.

So here's the deal: the company will select 2,000 drivers from those who sign up at www.dash.net and answer a series of questions.

Although the company hasn't specified what it's looking for, it's a reasonable bet that drivers using major metropolitan routes outside California will get priority: New York, Seattle, Atlanta--you get the idea. About 200 drivers have already tested the device in California, to what the company has said has been success.

"We're excited to expand our testing beyond California," added Robert

Acker, Dash senior vice president of marketing, in a statement. "We don't believe that navigation is a one-size-fits-all experience. A driver in Los Angeles has very different needs than a driver in Atlanta. This national road test will enable us to really understand how people use and value our product in different regions across the country."

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