For the 4,000 employees of Berkeley Lab, the journey to a sustainable energy future often begins early in the morning, on their commute to work. Almost half the employees at the Lab get to their jobs using mass transit, shuttle buses, carpools, bicycles, or a brisk walk — alternatives to driving to work alone.

Berkeley Lab has instituted several measures to add convenience for commuters who choose not to drive. A fleet of shuttle buses has long been at work taking scientists and support staffs to their labs and offices. The buses serve both the main Berkeley Lab campus and satellite facilities and make frequent and regular stops at transit hubs for train, bus, and BART service throughout the Bay Area. Lab employees can pay for mass-transit using pre-tax dollars through a payroll deduction plan. A Web and phone-based GPS tracking system gives riders live updates on shuttle arrival and departure times. For employees who work late, a free taxi service is available for trips to mass transit sites and satellite facilities after the shuttle bus system shuts down.

Since 2010, an outside contractor has provided shuttle bus service. After bus stop waiting times were reduced to 10 minutes during the workday, ridership increased 15 percent, to approximately 58,500 rides per month. The new fleet of shuttles includes 13 buses powered by biodiesel and four vans powered by E-85 ethanol (85 percent ethanol), an alternative fuel.

Bike racks on the shuttles encourage riders who might otherwise be discouraged by the steep climb leading up to Berkeley Lab’s hilltop campus. More than 3,250 bicycles are transported by the shuttles and vans each month. Bike racks are provided throughout the campus, and several facilities have showers for employees who bike to work.

To promote carpooling among Berkeley Lab employees, Berkeley Lab offers a Web- and phone-based ride sharing system to link up drivers with riders in neighborhoods throughout the Bay Area. More than 800 employees have signed up with the service, which is also linked to employees at the UC Berkeley campus. Under a pilot program, carpools of three or more get preferred parking privileges.