

# Shuttles and Route Extensions: Easy and Effective Strategies for Improving Business

Savvy employers recognize that the benefits of supporting public transit route extensions and shuttles that increase access to their facilities far outweigh the costs. Supporting such options helps:

- Save on costs related to employee parking
- Improve employee recruitment and retention
- Improve employee punctuality
- Enhance a company's image as environmentally conscious
- Ensure you can maintain a preferred location
- Make your company more accessible to customers and business partners

Businesses around the country are adopting innovative approaches to support the implementation of shuttles and extended bus routes. Here's what you can do to advance this trend:

1. Partner with transit agencies to improve access to regional bus or rail service – By sharing data on employee transit needs, such as where workers travel from and the different shifts they work, you can encourage local transit agencies to adapt services to meet those needs. Providing such information can help increase ridership and make existing services more efficient.

For example, Humana, Inc., a Fortune 500 company located in Louisville, Kentucky, worked with the Transit Authority of River City (TARC) to implement its successful subsidized employee bus pass program. As a result, employee parking needs significantly decreased as upwards of 600 employees ride TARC on a regular basis. This transit partnership played a major role in easing downtown traffic congestion. (Review additional information about Humana's efforts in the Profiles of Employer-Sponsored Transportation Programs.)

2. Partner with transit agencies to provide transit service to a business hub – Other employers in Louisville also partnered with TARC to develop an express route and local circulator to transport workers to an industrial park. Establishing the bus route simplified the commute for industrial park employees, eliminating the need to make bus transfers. When commuting patterns began to change, and workers needed better alternatives to reach the industrial park, employers again partnered with TARC, to expand options for commuters traveling mid-day, late at night, and during weekend hours.

3. Partner with transit agencies to support private transit services – In Oregon, the Swan Island Evening Shuttle provides transit connections for swing and graveyard shift employees by supplementing services provided by TriMet, the public transportation provider. Swan Island is a major corporate center and hub for distribution, warehousing, and manufacturing activities, with work shifts occurring around the clock. Understanding the importance of getting their employees to work, Swan Island employers partnered with TriMet, gained union approval, and contracted with a private company to operate the shuttle. The resulting service allows second and third shift workers access to the island during times when TriMet does not operate. [<http://www.swanislandtma.org>].

In Texas, the Brazos Transit District contracts with a private bus service to transport nearly 1,500 workers daily, traveling from Liberty to the Beaumont/Port Arthur area for training provided by refineries. The project, operating in conjunction the Amalgamated Chemical Workers Union, is supported by a combination of fare box revenues and subsidies from major employers. (Review additional information in the Profiles of Employer-Sponsored Transportation Programs.)

The "Transportation Toolkit for the Business Community" gives businesses the information they need now to assist their employees in achieving a timely, cost-efficient commute that promotes their productivity and job satisfaction. View other fact sheets and resources at [www.ctaa.org/transportation\\_to\\_work](http://www.ctaa.org/transportation_to_work) for information on how to access transportation-related tax benefits, partner with local providers to find answers to employees' and customers' transportation needs, become part of a transportation management association, and more.

This toolkit was created by the Community Transportation Association of America's Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative—serving communities since 1993 in solving employment transportation issues.



4. Provide program matching funds – In Davenport, Iowa, a large office furniture manufacturer partnered with River Bend Transit to provide shuttle service for employees traveling more than 35 miles each way to work. The program is supported with federal Job Access and Reverse Commute funds, with the employer providing the required 50 percent local match. Prior to providing this travel option, the company experienced difficulties with retention, particularly in the face of rising gas prices. Since the program's implementation, the attrition rate has fallen significantly. [<http://www.riverbendtransit.org>]

5. Implement a company-supported shuttle program – Larger companies such as Google and Apple Computers have developed company-sponsored free shuttles for their employees. Google shuttles nearly one-fourth of the company's San Francisco area employees to and from its Mountain View and San Bruno campuses daily, significantly decreasing the need for employee parking. A team of transportation specialists at company headquarters monitors regional traffic patterns, maps out the residences of new hires, and plots new shuttle routes. Apple Computers' shuttle service incorporates a number of drop-off and pick-up points between the San Francisco area and the company's Cupertino campus. (Additional information about both companies can be reviewed in the Profiles of Employer-Sponsored Transportation Programs.)

### Small Businesses

Smaller businesses without the resources to implement their own shuttle program may consider partnering with neighboring employers to implement one. This type of arrangement works well if your business is located in a mall or industrial center and/or if employees traveling

to work live in close proximity and work similar shifts. If considering this option, services must be coordinated around the work shifts and travel needs of all partners.

A number of determining factors will influence your decision to implement a company-sponsored shuttle. Among these are costs related to:

- Administration and overhead
- Driver recruitment and training
- Drug and alcohol testing
- Insurance and regulations
- Vehicle maintenance and upkeep
- Fuel and oil fees
- Vehicle purchase/lease and storage
- Vehicle depreciation and capital reserves
- Equipment and supplies
- Facility rental

If your company decides to contract with a transit provider, keep in mind that most provide services based on cost per trip, per hour, or per mile. Before finalizing any agreement, be sure the provider can operate during the times and in the locations that meet your employees' needs. Review prior performance records and include performance measures such as on-time performance and ride time in any contract or memorandum of understanding. Documents should also address any service exceptions, payment information, and service expectations.

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