

DEPARTING WORDS

Together with employers, transit agencies, nonprofits, and cities across the US, we see a future where transportation is more accessible, enjoyable, and aligned with the needs of today's workforce.

We'd like to thank the individuals who were generous enough to speak with us for this project. Thank you for being part of the conversation.

We'll see you again in 2026!



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Read the full digital version for a deeper dive into these topics

A WORD SEARCH FOR THE RIDE HOME

How many transportation-related words and acronyms can you find?

Y H H Z E U V M I K Z F Y P A Y F I R N
T R A N S F E R E F U T R O L L E Y V N
A X B D H E O X P T Q W E O D Z L U A F
X M W Y W N H M I R W M B T A Y J Q A N
P D T A Z Y P N N B D E N G J A Z D G S
R P T R D E H S O Y E O D Y L G U M B P
E R E K A J Z S V M Y P G K V D A C L A
T D G N Z K D E D G M R H G G W H P Z R
O F B Z P Z Y D Q V L I G H T R A I L K
O H N I O P E N L O O P S T A T I O N A
C O P F K A H C J R F L K J S G L N G N
S O N T L E M I C R O M O B I L I T Y D
A M R N F M S L N S N L O S V M D B I R
B A D X I E C H C W M O S E P T A I B I
B S F R S T U L A S L O L P Z P I G I D
I N J Y M R V B Z R Y P Q G F P U M D E
M A R T A O N C J C E R S H U T T L E T
E V B P C Y E L H J E A T R I M E T P B
I U U X I K S J S Y L C B L B U S A I V
Q V D F B D K S X F O B D F A R E B O X

STATION
BUS
AMTRAK
SHUTTLE
TRIMET
METRO
MARTA
TRANSFER
TROLLEY
SCOOTER
BART
RTA
PARKANDRIDE
LIGHTRAIL
SEPTA
FAREBOX
MICROMOBILITY
OPENLOOP
CARPOOL
BIKESHARE
OMNY
MBTA

Answers:

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~~Stops~~ 7 STEPS TO BETTER COMMUTER BENEFITS

Hi! We're Jawnt, and our mission is to connect people to their cities by making transportation available to everyone.

We believe commuter benefits are a powerful tool to improve employee wellbeing, attract and retain top talent, support sustainability goals, and keep cities thriving.

But in 2025, we also know many people aren't traveling to work every day, the legal and technological landscape is changing, and existing commuter benefits are often overlooked or underused.

We've talked with 450+ HR and transportation leaders to understand their unique challenges and approaches, and compiled our top takeaways for you here.

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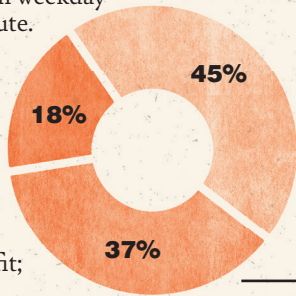
LET'S GO!



A DATA-DRIVEN WAY TO ASSESS COMMUTER NEEDS

Good Shepherd, a Philadelphia-based hospital system, wanted to understand which commuters would most likely use a transit benefit vs. parking. Using home ZIP codes for nearly 1,000 employees, they compared driving and travel times during a typical weekday morning rush hour commute.

For **18%** of commuters, the trip is faster by transit than driving. For these folks, it makes sense to promote a transit benefit; there's a good chance they'll enroll!



For **45%**, transit alone takes more time than driving alone, but they can save time and money by driving to a transit station near their home.

For **37%**, it's never worth taking transit. This group could still benefit from setting aside pre-tax dollars for parking at the office.



Know your team's commuting habits

1

An effective benefits program doesn't bucket employees into just drivers or transit riders; it acknowledges that people need day-to-day flexibility. The first step is understanding how people are moving.

USING SURVEYS TO DESIGN SMARTER BENEFITS

"Our workforce survey tells us how many employees are coming in at different times of the day so we can gauge fluctuations in employee commute traffic. It's been really eye opening. The airport is committed to putting employees first and making it easier for them to work here. Now that we have [commuter data], we're asking, 'How can we improve the employee experience from a commute perspective?'"

Melissa Molina

Rideshare Program Administrator,
Los Angeles World Airports

QUICK STAT

As of Q2 2025, 43% of US employers are working on a "structured hybrid" work schedule, requiring employees to come in certain days, certain times, or both. Almost 2/3 do not require employees to work full time from the office.

Source:

Flex Index Q2 2025 Report

"MAKE IT LOOK COOL"

"We spend a lot of time making sure [our collateral materials] look aesthetically pleasing, that they're interesting, that they're up with the times, that we use the right language, that they're translated into Spanish, that we post them widely. Those types of things really help."



Hannah Heavenrich

Rideshare Program Coordinator,
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments

Tap into new tech to expand commuter options

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It can be hard to believe, but bikeshare didn't exist in the US before 2008. Technologies emerge, cities build, and habits evolve. Stay in the loop (we can help!) to take advantage of the latest and greatest options for your employees.

COMING SOON TO A CITY NEAR YOU

Every month, new transit agencies across the US are launching Tap to Pay. In Chicago, New York City, and likely a city near you soon, riders can simply tap their personal bank card (or their mobile phone or smart watch) directly on the fare validator to pay.

A GROWING LIST OF CITIES WITH TAP TO PAY FOR TRANSIT:



Coming soon: Austin, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Seattle

THE ADVANTAGES OF TAP TO PAY:

- ✓ Easier access to deploying bike, scooter, and other broader forms of commuter benefits
- ✓ Hybrid commuters no longer have to commit to costly monthly passes, making subsidies more cost-effective
- ✓ Commuter debit cards provide more insight into how employees commute

At Jawnt, we work closely with transit agencies and civic groups to stay on top of technology and policy updates in cities across the US. We're always happy to share the latest or connect you with a

local resource who can help improve your employees' commutes. We've seen great things happen when organizations, transit agencies, and cities work together.

ON-DEMAND BIKE REPAIR AS A POST-TAX BENEFIT

NEMO

Boston, MA

One Boston-based company has partnered with employers like Harvard University and Boston Children's Hospital to offer on-demand mobile bike repair to people who cycle to work.

The opportunity

Traditional commuter benefits often overlook the needs of frequent cyclists, offering little beyond bikeshare memberships or basic bike parking. For riders who rely on their own bikes, there's a growing need for practical, on-the-go support. NEMO appeals to anyone too busy to drop off their bike at a traditional repair shop.

"Embrace every mode of transportation. Help each of your employees enjoy how they get to work...having those benefits, no matter how small they may be, will definitely help you retain employees but also be a better competitor against other employers who aren't providing them."

Claudine Schneider

Regional Program Manager,
TDM Specialists



The solution

NEMO mechanics travel by electric cargo bike, cutting through Boston's notorious traffic to reach riders wherever they are. Members can request immediate service if their bike breaks down during their commute, though most simply schedule convenient routine maintenance at their home or office.

Promote and communicate your benefits

Commuting needs can shift over time, often more frequently than other benefits like healthcare or retirement. It's important to promote benefits from the start, and on an ongoing basis to ensure employees don't miss out on savings or support as their commute changes.

Driving enrollment from day one

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania recently launched a new commuter benefits program for its employees, combining digital and print materials to ensure employees across all offices knew about their new perk.

By creating a Commuter Benefits 101 video, a dedicated enrollment webpage with FAQs, and printed flyers with local transit connections, the Commonwealth saw hundreds of enrollments immediately after launching the new benefit.

CREATIVE METHODS FOR CONTINUED PROMOTION

- Post location-specific flyers in kitchens and breakrooms
- Promote bicycle benefits during Bike Month in May
- Encourage public transit during Transit Month in September
- Announce new benefits on a company-wide screensaver
- Send a good old-fashioned mailer (We love mail)

Create champions throughout your organization

2

Commuter benefits live in a nebulous space, with administration and data often owned by HR, and planning and research owned by transportation and sustainability teams. But these aren't the only teams that have an interest in improving employee commutes.



Walter Kolis
Assistant Director Parking
& Transportation Services

Emory University
Atlanta, GA

WORKING TOGETHER AT EMORY UNIVERSITY: A MINI CASE STUDY

The challenge

Walter's team needs to advocate for the commuter populations he works with—including employees, undergrad students, and grad students—while working within the constraints of university budgets, local transit options, and the goals of leadership.

The approach

For Walter, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is about much more than planning bus routes and fare passes. It's about helping decision makers understand the benefit of each transportation option and using language that resonates with them the most.

"We can talk about **financial well-being** and how you could potentially save money. We could talk about **physical well-being**, because you're biking to work or walking to work. Or **social well-being**: when you're part of a vanpool or carpool and you get to talk to people, it can help with **mental well-being**, because you're not stressed driving in a vehicle."

When making the case for improved commuter benefits to HR, Walter has emphasized the impact on the bottom line. "When HR sees that the bottom line is impacted, that gets more buy-in. We can

"Relationships are one of the most important things that you can have, whether with people within your own organization, partners at public transit agencies, other organizations, advocacy groups, stakeholders, people that are engaged in this space."

speak the language that they're trying to speak with their leadership: [that] it all comes down to funding. The more we can get connected, the more we can be a partner with HR in the language that they're thinking, the better we're going to be."

The takeaway:

Consider how you can illuminate the benefits of commuter benefits at your organization by getting to know your counterparts in other departments and speaking the right language to them.

The more overlap you have with decision-makers → the tighter the feedback loop → the more effective the benefits program becomes!

“Take advantage of a TMA or TMO or organization that’s offering help. I think companies get a little spooked—‘how can this be free?’” TMAs receive funding! We have staff time and resources to contribute. Just agree to participate! People just always think, what’s the catch? In this situation I really don’t know that there is one.”

Nikki Washington
Program Manager,
Perimeter Connects



Connect with local TDM-focused organizations

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You don’t have to go it alone! Plenty of organizations exist to support your commuter program, including Transportation Management Associations (TMAs), Transportation Management Organizations (TMOs), and regional councils.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT YOUR TMA CAN DO FOR YOU:

Coordinate local events and festivals around transportation, such as bike repair clinics
Provide carpool matching services and Guaranteed Ride Home (usually for free)
Conduct commuter surveys
Assist with promoting benefits to employees
Advise on local requirements and programs

Subsidize your employees’ commutes

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Paying for your employee’s commuting costs (like covering a monthly transit pass or parking near work), is the most effective way to shape commuter behavior and increase participation—but subsidies may drive up program costs. Clear priorities and thoughtful pilots keep subsidies cost-effective.

Some concrete examples

Subsidies aren’t one-size-fits-all, but here are a few of the ways we’ve seen them work:

Dynatrace moved from a suburban office with unlimited parking to a new transit-accessible office in downtown Boston. Timed with the move, they introduced a 100% subsidy on transit passes for all employees. 78% of employees enrolled in the first month.

HealthVerity fully covered its employees’ transit passes through the SEPTA Key Advantage program, leading to 92% of employees signing up for the perk.

When the University of Pennsylvania began offering partially subsidized transit passes, they saw a 2.5x increase in enrollment across their university and health system.

“We saw huge growth in our vanpool program once we went to 100% subsidy because folks weren’t having to pay out of pocket for anything... It just kept growing and growing and growing. We saw so much growth, and it’s able to accommodate a lot of different types of commuters.”

Tim Hams
Employee Transportation
Program Manager,
King County Metro Transit



TERMINOLOGY CHECK

Let’s be honest—the term “benefit” can be confusing. In the eyes of the IRS, “benefits” refers only to privileges or gains offered by an employer that affect employees’ tax liability. In practice, “benefits” may also refer to other services, arrangements, privileges or rewards offered by an employer that make working easier or more pleasant, whether they affect taxes or not.

Pre-tax commuter benefits let employees set aside money from their paycheck (up to a monthly cap set by the IRS) to pay for eligible transit, vanpool, and commuter parking expenses. Because the money is set aside before federal taxes are applied, they’re taxed on a smaller portion of their income and can take home more of the money they earn. (It’s a good deal for employers too, who reduce their payroll tax).

Post-tax commuter benefits are any other program or service with monetary value that help employees get to work. These are considered income by the IRS and thus add to an employee’s taxable income. For instance, if an employer pays for something like a bikeshare membership, employees pay tax on its value but still get a good deal on the service.

Don’t limit yourself to pre-tax benefits

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Commuters have more ways to get to work than ever before. Go beyond transit and parking by giving employees flexible options to bike, scoot, carpool, and more.

PRE- VS. POST-TAX BENEFITS: A HANDY REFERENCE TABLE

	Pre-Tax Commuter Benefits	Post-Tax Commuter Benefits	Other Commuter Benefits
Employees save on their commute	✓	✓	✓
Employees save on their taxes	✓	✗	✗
Can be subsidized by employers	✓	✓	✓
Employers save on payroll taxes	✓	✗	✗
Can go beyond IRS limits	✗	✓	✓
Examples:	Monthly transit passes, commuter debit cards, park’n’ride passes, vanpool expenses, parking near work	Bikeshare membership, long-term scooter rentals, Uber or Lyft expenses, carpool incentives	Transit or commute planning services, guaranteed ride home, carpool EV charging