

Interactive Employer Transportation Planning Handbook





Introduction

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), is the metropolitan planning organization for the nine-county Bay Area region. MTC plans, invests and coordinates to keep the Bay Area mobile, sustainable and prosperous. At the same time as addressing the needs of a growing population, MTC is committed to preserving the diverse communities and natural beauty that make the Bay Area a desirable place to live and work.

Bay Area employers play a vital role in the commuter experience from home to work. Developing worksite commute programs offers the following return on investment:

- **Attract and retain talent** by making connectivity to the workplace accessible, affordable, and convenient. As housing costs rise and displace Bay Area residents further from job hubs, the work commute is a priority consideration for current and potential employees.
- **Create options for employees** that allow them to choose the best modes for their schedule, lifestyle, and income. Having efficient and effective mode choices can reduce tendency to drive alone, reduce the impact on limited worksite parking, and avoid the additional costs of tolls, gas, public parking permits, and car maintenance.
- **Optimize employee productivity** with commute programs that help employees avoid the traffic faced driving alone. If their commute is less of a burden, employees can arrive with more energy and wrap up work to their satisfaction without rushing to leave to beat traffic.
- **Be competitive with flexible work culture** as remote work policies become more permanently adopted following the trend spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic. It demonstrates trust and empathy to employees and can reduce your company's overhead costs.
- **Establish your corporate citizenship** by meeting the standards set forth by the [Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program](#), U.S. Green Building Council LEED Certification, and [Best Workplaces for Commuters](#). Ensure your company names is associated with these credits.

MTC

This Employer Transportation Planning Handbook helps employers determine how to best serve their employees' commute needs given your worksite and workforce. The guide provides a roadmap for you to identify your unique needs and explore industry best practices to meet those needs.

Jump to any
topic using the
interactive table

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Worksite Typology	4
Geography and Landscape	5
Demographics	7
Explore Commute Programs by Worksite Typology	9
Transit	10
Carpool	13
Remote Work and Flexible Hours	16
Vanpool	19
Bike, Scooter, Walk	22
Get Organized to Deliver Commute Programs	24
Program Staff	25
Program Promotion Plan	26
Program Metrics	27
Transportation Dictionary	29
Resource Index	30

1

Worksite Typology

Geography, Landscape & Demographics

Geography, demographics, and work cultural uniquely shape how your employees access your worksite. Let's start with geography. Your workplace may be urban, suburban, rural or somewhere in-between. Continue reading to learn about the infrastructure that defines each landscape. Once you identify the typology of your workplace, you will understand the commute opportunities and challenges your workplace commute program can meet.



Trey Ratcliff

Step 1

Identify worksite geography and landscape.



URBAN

In the Bay Area, examples of urban landscapes are downtown San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose. The downtowns of some smaller Bay Area cities can also have urban characteristics, like Berkeley or Walnut Creek. This geography is characterized by dense vertical development and is more likely to have transportation options like rail, bus, bike and scooter share, hired ride drivers, car share, carpool, and vanpool. Urban geographies support these modes with infrastructure like rail stations, bus stops, bike lanes and storage, designated curbside for hired ride drivers, density of carshare locations, and more. In these environments, commuters can expect more frequent transit service and have easier pedestrian, bicycle, scooter, and other micro-mobility access to eateries, retail, and other destinations they may go to during the work day.

Employees at urban employment sites commonly need the following support:

- Incentives or subsidies to afford fares and fees
- Flexible hours to accommodate delays in service and transfers (e.g. transit)
- Technology and hardware to work en-route for long distance transit or vanpool riders
- Personal storage and locker room worksite facilities for walk, bike, etc. commuters (also known as “active commuters”).
- Remote work option to reduce days that require travel to work



SUBURBAN

Suburban environments are often in office parks or close by an urban center. In the Bay Area, examples include cities like Fremont and Foster City and office parks like Bishop Ranch in San Ramon, Stanford Research Park in Palo Alto or Hacienda



San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency



Stanford Research Park

Business Park in Pleasanton. This geography is characterized by spaced out horizontal development, employers grouped on shared property or larger employers in general proximity of each other, and ample parking. These areas are likely to have modest rail and bus service for traditional work commute hours, and employer-provided or site-specific options like shuttles, car share, carpool, and vanpool. While the work city may be accessible by BART, there may be limited solutions between the BART station and the workplace. Active commute culture and infrastructure for bikes, scooters, or walking, may be less prevalent. Accessing eateries, retail, and other destinations during the workday may seem to require a car.

Employees at suburban employment sites commonly need the following support:

- Incentives or subsidies to use transit, carpool, vanpool, or active commutes
- Complete and easy trip planning and ridematch information at their fingertips
- Vanpool and carpool formation support and promotion
- Last mile solutions between transit station and worksite
- Flexible hours to accommodate delays in transit service and transfers
- Remote work option to reduce days that require travel to work
- A guaranteed way to return home in the event of an emergency



RURAL

In the Bay Area, examples of rural worksites are in Napa, Petaluma, and other cities. This geography is characterized by a mix of agriculture, production and distribution facilities, low-density residential neighborhoods, and smaller employers. These areas are usually serviced by local rather than regional public transit. There can be opportunity for active commutes like walking and biking on corridors with complete sidewalks, bike lanes, and bike storage, to serve the larger population of employees who live locally. Ample parking supports car commuting and driving to access eateries, retail, and other destinations during the work day.

Employees at rural employment sites commonly need the following support:

- Incentives to use transit, carpool, or active commutes
- Complete and easy trip planning and ridematch information at their fingertips
- Carpool formation support and promotion
- Personal storage and locker room worksite facilities for active commuters



Napa Valley Transportation Authority

Step 2

Identify your workforce typology considerations and opportunities.

Now that you understand the environment your workplace is in, let's explore the demographics and culture of the people who work for your organization. First, the size of the staff body and job types shape the likelihood of commute opportunities and challenges. Then, the diversity of individuals shape their unique needs. Continue reading to learn about the considerations for groups and individuals. As you identify what is representative of your workforce, continue to build the business case for your commute program(s).



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COMPOSITION

CONSIDERATIONS

Mega Staff Size

- More likely to have designated transportation staff or consultant to plan and implement commute programs.
- Increased opportunity for internal ridematching so co-workers can commute together.
- Staff more likely to travel long-distances from home to work, warranting employer-sponsored shuttle or car fleet.
- Intercampus travel more likely, warranting employer-sponsored bike, scooter, and car share.

Large Staff Size

- More likely to have designated transportation staff or consultant to plan and implement commute programs.
- Increased opportunity for internal ridematching so co-workers can commute together.
- May share property resources like parking or shuttle service with other employers.

Medium Staff Size

- Less likely to have a designated transportation coordinator and may need a team of general staff to commit part-time to plan and implement commute programs.
- Staff more likely to have interpersonal relationships to facilitate ridematching organically.
- May share property resources like parking with other employers.

COMPOSITION**CONSIDERATIONS****Small Staff Size**

- Less likely to have a designated transportation coordinator and may need a team of general staff to commit part-time to plan and implement commute programs.
- Staff more likely to have interpersonal relationships to facilitate ridematching organically.
- Staff more likely to travel shorter distances from home to work.
- May share property resources like parking with other employers.

Full-time

- Face peak travel and reduced capacity of roadways and transit.
- Schedule may require the need to run errands during the day.
- Likely to have access to phones during work to access rideshare and carpool apps and coordinate travel.

Shift workers

- More likely to have face off-peak travel and limited transit service.
- Limited access to phones during work to access rideshare and carpool apps and coordinate travel.
- Usually requires working in-person.

Field Staff

- Travel to clients and worksites throughout the day.
- Travel may include carrying cargo.

Upper to Middle Wage Employees

- More likely to have flexible work hours.
- More likely to own hybrid or electric vehicles that require charging.
- More willing to pay tolls and parking prices.

Middle to Lower Wage Employees

- Travel expenses likely to be a larger portion of income.
- May be less likely to have access to a personal vehicle.

DEMOGRAPHICS**CONSIDERATIONS****Parents**

- Need flexibility to leave for unexpected events, more likely to rely on a guaranteed ride home program.
- Need car seats for childcare, more likely to drive than ride in carpools in the ridematching process.
- Need flexibility to work remotely, more likely to leverage remote work policy and portable technology devices.

Non-English Primary Language

- Need translated trip planning and ridematch information.
- More likely to need certainty in their commute routine to accomodate

Age

- Varying levels of technology literacy for app-based real-time info, rideshare and bikeshare.
- Varying levels of acclimation to car culture.
- Varying attitudes toward sharing a ride with a stranger.

2

Explore Commute Programs by Worksite Typology

You have considered the opportunities and challenges of your worksite, and the unique needs of your workforce. Let's continue to build the case for the best commute program(s) for your organization to implement. This section walks through the operational considerations to implement each commute program. You will also learn how commute programs can be modified based on demand to optimize resources. More than one commute program may fit your needs, so we encourage you to read through each option.



San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

Step 3

Select commute program(s) that meet your needs.



AC Transit



Urban



Suburban



Rural



Employer transit program benefits vary. The Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program (CBP) offers multiple options (categories) to register your specific transit benefits. You can register a primary benefit and additional benefits as needed. Review the CBP employer guide to learn about registration options.

TRANSIT COMMUTE PROGRAM

Overview

Worksite transit programs improve access and/or affordability of public transit or create additional commute options for employees with private transit service. Programs that support public transit trips are especially beneficial for worksites located within a half mile of a public transit station or stop, and with limited capacity or expensive parking. Private transit service is ideal for worksites in transit deserts and can provide access to the nearest public transit or roundtrip travel between home and work. Let's explore how you can support your employees' commute on transit with these two program approaches.

OUTCOMES

- ✓ Subsidize public transit and microtransit fare costs
- ✓ Develop roundtrip private shuttle service
- ✓ Develop first-mile/last-mile private shuttle service
- ✓ Provide real-time transit information in communal spaces
- ✓ Provide mobile hardware and technology for staff
- ✓ Leverage or implement a Guaranteed Ride Home program
- ✓ Provide pre-tax commuter benefits to pay for transit costs

Public Transit Support

Public transit includes bus, rail, and emerging microtransit service. The most common way to support public transit riders is to subsidize their fare costs. This can be particularly helpful for those using transit systems that use distanced-based pricing models charging more for a longer trip, or for long-distance commuters who may need to use multiple transit modes to reach work, like taking a bus to a train station. Microtransit usually offers more localized service, is more flexible than fixed-route bus service, and is on-demand service. Where microtransit is available, some employees may be using it as an alternative to traditional transit.

Pre-tax commuter benefits allow an employee to set aside money from their regular paycheck before taxes to pay for qualifying commute costs like transit fare. Human resources software providers like [Wage Works](#) can facilitate this offering. Employers can leverage local programs like Clipper Direct which allow seamless transfer of pre-tax funds onto employee Clipper cards. Employers can also provide pre-loaded Clipper Cards to employees through [Clipper Group Sales](#), which can be a new employee benefit. Clipper cards can be used for bus, rail, and ferry transit like BART, Caltrain, AC Transit, VTA [and more](#). These strategies will work for an employer of any size.



San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

Private Transit Service

Private transit service is employer-funded and exclusive to your employees, or service can be extended to all employees in a business park. This program approach requires sourcing a fleet, operators, and human capital to manage operations like scheduling, routing, and more. Employers pursuing this program approach often choose to procure a full-service vendor. Whether in-house or through a vendor, providing private transit requires significant resources to launch and sustain. Private transit service is most appropriate for large and mega employers who are more likely to have the volume of participation to support the program. Service can be roundtrip from various origin points in the region to worksite campuses, or last-mile service from the nearest transit station to worksite campuses. Providing a private transit program requires more resources, research, planning, and program evaluation in comparison to strategies that support public transit use. Be prepared to make data-driven decisions about where service is most needed, and to regularly review program performance to make adjustments based on demand. We also encourage you to prepare an emergency or modified service plan in the event of a natural disaster, widespread health pandemic, remote work policy trends, and other influences.



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Program Enhancements

Readily available real-time transit information can encourage transit use by eliminating the guess work of when to leave the office to catch the bus or train. Companies like [TransitScreen](#) provide the technology to capture and present real-time local transit information on screens in communal spaces. For example, featuring a screen in breakrooms and lobbies can help employees plan their commute at a glance.

Employees accustomed to driving alone may be concerned about agility if the event of a change in plans. A [Guaranteed Ride Home \(GRH\) Program](#) is a safety net for commuters who take transit (or other alternative modes) to work but need to use other transportation to return home due to an unexpected event like a disruption in transit service. Let's say a transit rider had to coordinate an Uber ride home. They will submit a receipt for the cost of the Uber ride to the GRH program for reimbursement. GRH programs are often offered by counties but can also be sponsored by an employer – the latter more common with large companies with the resources and operations to facilitate their own GRH program.

Employers can support productivity for long-distance commuters by providing mobile hardware and technology. For example, long-distance transit riders with access to a work laptop and wi-fi can choose to respond to work emails or work on deliverables on their ride. Smartphones can also be utilized for mobile productivity. Some employers offer a monthly stipend toward an employee's phone bill to compensate their off-site availability.

Providing rewards can spur program enrollment, recognize the good choice of single drivers who transition to a greener commute like transit, or to create healthy competition between employees or departments to sustain green commute behavior. Employers can provide digital rewards like an e-gift card or tangible rewards. Reward structures can be per trip, monthly drawing, or sweepstakes. Commute management software companies like [RideAmigos](#), [Luum](#), and [RideShark](#) offer turnkey technology to help you administer your commute program. These platforms offer different modules, including trip rewards, parking management and more.



TransitScreen

A transit program can be paired with a carpool, vanpool, remote work and flexible hours, or active commutes program for comprehensive commuter benefits. For example, carpoolers and vanpoolers may be accessing public transit stations like BART. A carpool or vanpool program could support the first leg of that employees' trip. A remote work and flexible hours program can support public transit riders who may face service delays or other no-fault circumstances in their commute or help reduce the number of days a long-distance commuter needs to travel to work in-person. And transit riders may be biking or walking to access transit and need storage and hygiene facilities upon their arrival. Review the carpool, vanpool, and remote work and flexible hours programs explained in this guide to determine how they can complement your transit program.



Solano Mobility



Employer commuter program benefits vary. The Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program (CBP) offers multiple options (categories) to register your specific commuter program benefits. You can register a primary benefit and additional benefits as needed. Review the CBP employer guide to learn about registration options.

CARPPOOL PROGRAM

Overview

A carpool carries 2 or more occupants in a private vehicle, including a voluntary driver who is heading to the same or nearby destination as the rider(s). Carpools bring employees to work destinations or to public transit stations. Carpools mostly serve moderate to long distance trips. Worksites with limited parking availability can benefit from a carpool program, which can reduce the demand for parking. There are three key ways to approach your carpool program: free carpool ridematching via Merge, carpool app-employer partnerships, or licensed ridematch software.

OUTCOMES

- ✓ Leverage carpool ridematching through a Merge employer network
- ✓ Explore partnership with carpool apps Scoop or Waze Carpool
- ✓ Subsidize parking fees
- ✓ Subsidize carpool app trips
- ✓ License software to create a private ridematch platform
- ✓ Provide carpool trip rewards
- ✓ Provide priority carpool parking
- ✓ Leverage or implement a Guaranteed Ride Home program

Free Carpool Ridematching Via Merge

The [Bay Area Carpool Program](#) facilitates regional carpool ridematching on the free ridematch platform [Merge](#), allowing employees to join a carpool as a rider or driver and form an ongoing carpool partnership with the same person. No payment from the rider to the driver is required when carpools are formed in Merge. Merge coordinates carpools between occupants with similar origin and destination points. To ensure program success, employers need to commit to regular and ongoing promotion of Merge to employees who will need to create their own Merge accounts. Employers have an option to use Merge to create an employer network on Merge allowing the employer to track participating employees' carpool trips and administer employer-funded trip rewards. Merge account using their work email to participate in the employer network and generate data on the employer dashboard. Employees can customize their account settings to match with other co-workers in addition to, or instead of, the general public. We recommend employers incentivize employees to setups accounts and continuously log their trips. This program approach is cost-effective for the employer and employee. Merge offers all users carpool rewards via points earned per logged carpool trip. Each trip earns 10 points, and 250 points earns a \$25 e-gift card. Eligible users earn one reward per month.

Interested in creating a free employer network on Merge? Email your request to support@merge.511.org.

Carpool App-Employer Partnerships

Scoop and Waze Carpool are the leading carpool apps in the Bay Area. Both apps automate ride matches on a daily basis, and carpool drivers are compensated by a trip fee charged to carpool riders. Similar to Merge, Scoop and Waze Carpool match occupants based on similar origin and destination points, but differently from Merge, they match users with a different person upon each scheduling of a carpool. Employees must

request a new match each time they want to carpool. Employers can partner with [Scoop](#) or [Waze Carpool](#) to administer subsidies for the cost of the carpool ride and access a dashboard of employee trip data.

This program approach works well for larger employers who are more likely to have a volume of program participation and resources to support this business-to-business partnership. Alternatively, the carpool program can extend to all employees in a business park. We recommend employers talk to Scoop or Waze Carpool representatives and confirm if the employer location is well represented in the app customer base and how a partnership could meet your employees' commute needs.

And finally, while there is an exchange of payment on Scoop and Waze Carpool, it is important to make the distinction between carpool apps and hired-ride apps Uber and Lyft. Uber and UberPool, and Lyft and Lyft Line are not carpools because all occupants do not have the same destination and the driver makes multiple trips for the purpose of earning money. Employer partnerships with carpool apps reduce the impact of cars on roadways and the environment by reducing vehicle trips, but partnerships with hired-ride apps do not.

Interested in a partnership with Scoop? Visit their [website](#) for more information.

Interested in a partnership Waze Carpool? Visit their [website](#) for more information.



Bay Area FasTrak

Program Enhancements

Employees accustomed to driving alone may be concerned about agility if the event of a change plans. A [Guaranteed Ride Home](#) (GRH) Program is a safety net for commuters who carpool to work but need to use other transportation to return home due to an unexpected event or cancellation of their carpool. Let's say a carpooler had to coordinate an Uber ride home. They will submit a receipt for the cost of the Uber ride to the GRH program for reimbursement. GRH programs are often offered by counties but can also be sponsored by an employer – the latter more common with large companies with the resources and operations to facilitate its own GRH program.

Employers who offer their own private parking can reserve preferred carpool parking spaces as a perk for employees who carpool. This is most likely to be effective if there is limited or first-come-first-served parking.

Providing rewards can spur program enrollment, recognize the good choice of single drivers who transition to a greener commute like carpooling, or to create healthy competition between employees or departments to sustain green commute behavior. Employers can provide digital rewards like an e-gift card or tangible rewards like priority parking or parking fee subsidies. Reward structures can be per logged trip, monthly drawing, or sweepstakes.

A carpool program can be paired with a transit program for comprehensive commuter benefits. For example, carpools may be accessing public transit stations like BART. A transit program could support the second leg of that employees' trip. We recommend you review the transit program to determine how it can complement your carpool program.

Commute management software companies like [RideAmigos](#), [Luum](#), and [RideShark](#) offer turnkey technology to help you administer each of your programs, including trip rewards, parking management and more. The platforms also offer private in-company ridematch systems to match co-workers into carpools. Private ridematching is most appropriate for large and mega employers with 3,000+ employees, but public ridematching always offers your employees the best chance of finding matches. The software includes a data dashboard and built-in email messaging that give employers full administrative and operational ownership of their commute programs. We recommend employers set up live demonstrations with various software vendors to understand the difference in program features, and how they can meet your needs.

Provide your employees with information to improve their carpool commutes. For example, let your employees know about [carpool parking options at BART](#). Inform them that they need to get a FasTrak Flex toll tag to carpool toll-free or at a reduced toll on [Bay Area Express Lanes](#). Provide your employees with information about [park 'n ride lots](#).



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Urban



Suburban



Rural



Employer remote work and flexibility hours policy program benefits vary. The Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program (CBP) offers multiple options (categories) to register your specific remote work and flexibility hours policy benefits. You can register a primary benefit and additional benefits as needed. Review the CBP employer guide to learn about registration options.

REMOTE WORK & FLEXIBLE HOURS POLICY

Overview

Work culture is trending toward empowering employees with flexibility in their work schedules. Remote work and flexible hours are two approaches to flexible schedules that can demonstrate confidence in employee productivity, reduce the stress of daily work commutes, and recognize the flexibility employees need to accommodate life's demands. These options can work with custom modifications for any size company and may even influence the real estate footprint or office layout with reduced demand on the workplace. [The Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program](#) and [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#) offer additional resources and guidance for remote work and flexible hours programs.

No matter which program approach you choose, it's important to consider applicability to hourly wage and salaried, full-time and part-time, office and field work, and union and non-union employees. We encourage employers to review and align with [California labor laws](#) created and enforced by the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement to ensure managers continue to follow applicable conditions like work breaks, and [federal guidance on telework policy](#) provided by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Some employers, due to the nature of their work, may be less inclined to offer remote work or flexible hours as evergreen policies. However, we recommend employers develop a remote work and flexible hour policy to be ready for emergencies like disruption to electricity, natural disasters, widespread health pandemics, and other unexpected events. Let's explore the differences between remote work and flexible hours to determine how these policies can meet your needs.

OUTCOMES

- ✓ Develop a policy to set rules for flexible schedule options
- ✓ Update employee handbook with policy
- ✓ Host a training for managers
- ✓ Provide mobile hardware and technology for staff
- ✓ Develop remote work tips for employees



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Remote Work

Remote work allows employees to work from home or other offsite locations. Employees are expected to complete their usual responsibilities via email and phone and video meetings. We recommend providing team and task organization guidance to your managers. Platforms like [Slack](#), [Basecamp](#), [Asana](#) or similar platforms are marketed to support team workplans and task management, in complement to phone and video meeting platforms like [Microsoft Teams](#), [Zoom](#), [WebEx](#), and others.

Employers can also consider how employees will access sensitive information remotely and discuss technology solutions like a VPN or password-protected file storage. Productivity will also require mobile hardware and technology including laptops, headsets, cables to connect to printers and monitors, and more. Smartphones can also be utilized for mobile productivity. Some employers offer a monthly stipend toward an employee's phone bill to compensate their off-site availability. With increased reliance on digital communication, we encourage employers to ensure their IT resources can support an increase in troubleshooting requests from remote employees and their managers.

Remote work requires policies to minimize disruption to the workplace and productivity, and support participation consistency. Consider the following scenarios to shape your policy:

Scheduling Scenario: An eligible employee wants to work remotely and is coordinating with their manager to develop a schedule. Your company policy may state that employees can choose their weekly schedule but must maintain that fixed schedule every week, instead of different days of their choice week to week.

Flexible Hours Scenario: An eligible employee wants to know if the time they start or end work can be flexible day-to-day to accommodate family needs. Your company policy may establish a range of core work hours, and expectations of employees and managers to respect that window of availability, as well as requirements for communicating availability to colleagues.

Management Scenario: A manager of a remote team wants guidance on how to check-in with employees. Your company policy may establish cadence and best practices for managers to be more intentional about employee engagement than they may be used to in an in-person environment.

Conflict Scenario: A manager is struggling with an employee that was responsible and productive in-person but isn't meeting the standard of performance working remotely. Your company policy can establish a process for a manager to take, such as documenting challenges and when and how to coordinate with senior managers and Human Resources for support.

These baseline considerations will prompt important conversations that may reveal additional factors unique to your work operations like remote coordination with vendors and deliveries, sending bulk mail remotely, and more.

*Stock Photo*

Alternate Hours

Flexible hours can give employees more control over their work time and personal time. Employees will work longer days in exchange for a weekday off. For example, a 4/40 schedule allows an employee to work 10-hour days 4 days a week with one day off every week, and a 9/80 schedule allows an employee to work 9-hour days with one day off every two weeks. With earlier start times and later end times, employees may have less stressful commutes by avoiding the height of rush hour. Alternate hours can work for in-person and remote work.

Program Enhancements

Once you determine your flexible work policy, you will need to update your employee handbook to detail the policy, share the update with employees, and have a process for employees to confirm they have read and understand the policy. Employers can also host a training with managers to ensure they understand how to implement the policy with their teams and provide an opportunity for them to ask questions about the nuances of productivity for their work type.

The employee handbook and training will also help managers develop talking points to lead their teams and respond to employee concerns. Some employers find it helpful to provide their employees guidance about appropriate dress, lighting and backgrounds for video meetings, care for mental and physical wellness, DIY ergonomic workspaces, and more.

A remote work and flexible hours program can be paired with carpool, vanpool, or transit commute program for comprehensive commuter benefits. These enhancements create equitable commuter benefits for employees who have to perform their work in-person, usually shift, field, and low-wage staff. For employees who are eligible, program enhancements create flexibility for commuters who experience no-fault delays, or long-distance commuters may prefer to reduce the number of days they need to travel to work in-person.



Enterprise



Urban



Suburban



Employer vanpool program benefits vary. The Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program (CBP) offers multiple options (categories) to register your specific vanpool program benefits. You can register a primary benefit and additional benefits as needed. Review the CBP employer guide to learn about registration options.

VANPOOL PROGRAM

Overview

Vanpools are vehicles that carry 7-15 passengers traveling 30+ miles between home and work. Usually vanpools originate in bedroom communities and travel to job hubs or public transit hubs. Vanpools can work well for work sites in transit deserts where most employees would otherwise be inclined to drive alone. Worksites with limited parking availability can also benefit from a vanpool program, which can reduce the demand for parking. Continue to explore how to leverage public or private vanpool service for your vanpool program.

OUTCOMES

- ✓ Coordinate private service with Commute with Enterprise
- ✓ Leverage public vanpools
- ✓ Provide rewards for vanpool trips
- ✓ Provide mobile hardware and technology for staff
- ✓ Leverage or implement a Guaranteed Ride Home program

*Solano Mobility*

Public Vanpools

The [Bay Area Vanpool Program](#) facilitates a regional public vanpool network allowing employees to find a seat in existing vanpools or suggest new vanpools on the ridematch platform [Merge](#). Public vanpools on Merge include owner-operated vanpools that are personally owned family vehicles open to riders with a similar route to the driver, and vendor vanpools that are rented from and maintained by Commute with Enterprise. Employers who leverage public vanpools for their vanpool program can create an employer network on Merge to access a data dashboard to track participating employees' vanpool trips and administer employer-funded trip rewards.

This approach is cost-effective for employers and a good fit for small and medium sized companies where there are fewer participants to coordinate internal ridematching for private vanpool service. Employees in public Commute with Enterprise vanpools will pay a monthly fee for their vanpool seat. This cost varies based on the size and type of the van, vanpool distance, and number of van occupants to divide the monthly operational costs among. Public vanpools rented from Commute with Enterprise can also often take advantage of [regional and county government agency-provided subsidies](#). Employers can opt to provide additional subsidies to cover their employee's monthly fees. Employers can also work directly with Commute with Enterprise to create new public vanpools that serve their worksite. As long as the vanpool is open to employees of any company, the van is a "public vanpool," even if the seats are occupied

only by employees of a single employer. Or, employers in business parks or employers located in an area with a density of other nearby employers may start public vanpools with some seats filled by employees from neighboring employers.

To ensure success of a vanpool program that leverages public vanpools, employers can commit to regular and ongoing promotion of Merge to employees who will need to create their own Merge account using their work email to match into a public vanpool and log their trips, which will generate data on the employer dashboard. We recommend employers incentivize employees to engage them in the account set-up process and ongoing trip logging. Employers can encourage employees to visit the vanpool empty seats list at vanpool.511.org. Employers can also engage directly with Commute with Enterprise.

Interested in creating an employer network on Merge? Email your request to support@merge.511.org. Interested in working with Commute with Enterprise to start new public vanpools to your worksite or tap into existing vans? Email your request to commutesupport@ehi.com.

Private Vanpools

Employers can establish private vanpool service with Commute with Enterprise, the region's predominant vendor, or other fleet providers. Private vanpools are exclusively available to your employees. Like public vanpools, private vanpool service will be based on demand for certain routes. Large or mega employers

are more likely to have the volume of participation to support private vanpool service. Depending on employer resources, private vanpool service can be fully subsidized and provided at no cost to participating employees, or partially subsidized so employees can participate at a reduced rate. If employees are required to pay partial or total costs to ride in the private vanpool, employers often make payment seamless by deducting the cost from an employee's check. Private vanpools offer the opportunity to customize vanpool service for both traditional full-time employees, and part-time or nontraditional shift employees. Some employers may be weighing whether vanpool or shuttle service is a better fit. Let's note some key differences. Vanpools require volunteer drivers while shuttles require hired drivers; employees can pay for vanpool service but employers absorb all costs of shuttle service; shuttle vehicles may carry more passengers than a vanpool; and shuttles usually offer a service schedule for multiple trips a day while vanpools make one arrival and one return trip. Interested in Commute with Enterprise to start private vanpool service? Email your request to commutesupport@ehi.com.

Program Enhancements

Employees accustomed to driving alone may be concerned about agility if the event of a change plans. A [Guaranteed Ride Home \(GRH\) Program](#) is a safety net for commuters who vanpool to work but need to use other transportation to return home due to an unexpected event or interruption in vanpool service. Let's say a vanpooler had to coordinate an Uber ride home. They will submit a receipt for the cost of the Uber ride to the GRH program for reimbursement. GRH programs are often offered by counties but can also be sponsored by an employer – the latter more common with large companies with the resources and operations to facilitate its own GRH program.

Employers can support productivity for long-distance commuters by providing mobile hardware and technology. For example, vanpoolers with access to a work laptop and wi-fi can choose to respond to work emails or work on deliverables on their ride. Smartphones can also be utilized for mobile productivity. Some employers offer a monthly stipend toward an employee's phone bill to compensate their off-site availability.



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Providing rewards can spur program enrollment, recognize the good choice of single drivers who transition to a greener commute like vanpooling, or to create healthy competition between employees or departments to sustain green commute behavior. Employers can provide digital rewards like an e-gift card or tangible rewards. Reward structures can be per logged trip, monthly drawing, or sweepstakes. Rewards programs can be managed using internal processes or with the support of a platform that automates reward design and fulfillment like [RideAmigos](#), [Luum](#), [RideShark](#) and others.

A vanpool program can be paired with a transit program or remote work and flexible hours program for comprehensive commuter benefits. For example, some public vanpool service connects riders to public transit stations like BART. A transit program could support the second leg of that employees' trip. A remote work and flexible hours program can support vanpoolers who may face traffic delays or other no-fault circumstances in their commute or help reduce the number of days a long-distance commuter needs to make a 30+ mile trip to work in-person. We recommend you review these programs to determine if they complement your vanpool program.

*City of Oakland*

Urban



Suburban



Employer active commutes program benefits vary. The Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program (CBP) offers multiple options (categories) to register your specific active commutes program benefits. You can register a primary benefit and additional benefits as needed. Review the CBP employer guide to learn about registration options.

ACTIVE COMMUTES PROGRAM

Overview

Employees are most likely to bike, scooter, or walk short distances, such as a short trip from home to work or from a public transit station or stop to work. Landscape and infrastructure conditions can also encourage or discourage use of these modes, like dense versus sprawling landscapes, and continuous sidewalk and bike lane infrastructure. Active commute programs can benefit employers of any size and can work for employers in urban, suburban and rural areas depending on the employment site's immediate surroundings. For some employees, biking, walking, or scooting may not be a daily routine like taking transit or vanpooling but can be used when desired or needed to diversify their transportation options. Let's explore how you can support your employees' active commutes.

OUTCOMES

- ✓ Provide facilities for personal storage
- ✓ Provide facilities for personal hygiene
- ✓ Provide rewards for bike, scooter, and walking trips
- ✓ Subsidize paid bike and scooter share
- ✓ Provide campus bike and scooter fleet
- ✓ Provide safety guidelines and repair resources



San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

Facility Amenities

The physicality of active commutes and facing weather elements on the trip can warrant the need for private space to change clothes and refresh. Those who own a bike or scooter need safe storage space for these items. If your workplace is in a shared building, you may need to coordinate with the property manager to identify space for locker rooms or indoor bike storage. Within your office, you can add personal lockers so employees can conceal personal items they tow to transition from a bike ride or walk into a professional environment.

Access to Shared Fleets

The Bay Area hosts a number of shared bike and scooter fleets, providers varying in different cities. If you're located in a city with a density of shared bikes and scooters, consider subsidizing the cost of rental to encourage use of these modes and invite non-riders to test the experience of biking or scooting to work. For mega employers with employees traveling between office buildings or campuses throughout the day, it may be worth investing in private bike and scooter share fleets that employees can use for free around campus.

Program Enhancements

Create enthusiasm for active commutes by promoting Bike to Work Week in May and create rewards for participation. To learn more about how to be a bike-friendly business, we recommend consulting [The League of American Cyclists](#). Providing rewards can also spur program enrollment, recognize the good choice of single drivers who transition to a greener commute like biking or walking, or to create healthy competition between employees or departments to

sustain green commute behavior. Employers can provide digital rewards like an e-gift card or tangible rewards. Reward structures can be per reported trip, monthly drawing, or sweepstakes. Rewards programs can be managed using internal processes or with the support of a platform that automates reward design and fulfillment like RideAmigos, Luum, RideShark and others.

Encourage your employees to travel safely by creating a fact sheet of safety tips from gear to using hand signals and obeying right of way, and a directory of local resources for bike repair. Create a brainstorm wall in communal spaces like breakrooms to crowd source additional tips like favorite routes, bike brands, tricks for DIY bike maintenance, best walking shoes, and the like. [511](#) offers considerations for employees biking to work, how to navigate safely on bike, and how to access shared bikes.

An active commute program can be paired with a transit or remote work and flexible hours program to provide comprehensive commuter benefits. For example, active commuters may be accessing public transit so transit program features like worksite real-time transit information or pre-tax benefits can support that part of their commute. A remote work and flexible hours program can support active commuters who may face delays due to bike or scooter disfunction or availability, or accidents on their way to work. In these cases, flexible hours can forgive these delays. We recommend you review the transit and remote work programs to determine how they can complement your active commute program.

3

Get Organized to Deliver Commute Programs

Using your workplace and workforce typologies, you have now identified the best commute program(s) to explore or implement to meet your needs. You will need adequate resources to deliver your commute program(s), most importantly staff resources committed to program development and management over the lifecycle of the program. In the previous section, you gained an understanding of operational considerations to start your commute program(s). This section will build on that knowledge with program management activities post-launch like promoting your programs(s) and assessing program performance.



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Step 4

Organize Your Staff Resources



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To identify those best suited to coordinate and manage your commute program(s), consider the coordination that will be needed across groups such as Human Resources (HR), Operations, Maintenance and Facilities, Communications, Information Technology (IT), and even Employer Resource Groups (ERGs).

Small to midsize employers often leverage existing staff to deliver commute program(s), and form a Commute Program Task Force to share the add-on responsibility across a group of staff who each have other primary roles. Use this group structure as an opportunity to solicit participation across job types, secure team buy-in and streamline coordination efforts. In addition to the job types critical to delivering the commute program, leverage staff volunteers who are enthusiastic about influencing work culture to be part of the Commute Program Task Force, to be the voice of staff needs and preferences, and advise on program enrollment strategies.

We recommend the Commute Task Force have a leadership or executive sponsor, someone who is a senior-level decision maker the task force will report to who can capture information for further discussion or approval with their leadership peers.

Some large and mega employers hire a dedicated Transportation Coordinator, a full-time role for the purpose of developing and managing worksite commute programs. This person has transportation planning education and work experience and will coordinate across groups to deliver commute programs. This staff role is more common at large employers, employers with large or multiple campuses throughout the Bay Area, or large business parks,

which are more likely to implement complex solutions like multiple commute programs, private transportation service, or intercampus and intracampus travel solutions.

Scope of Work

However you choose to establish human capital, it is a critical step in being efficient and effective, and keeping momentum over the program lifecycle. Your Commute Program Task Force or Transportation Coordinator will lead efforts that may include but not be limited to:

- Survey staff to learn commute patterns and transportation preferences.
- Develop commute program goals.
- Research and interview vendors that provide technology or services.
- Identify siting recommendations for physical infrastructure.
- Draft budgets, workplans and staffing plans to guide commute program launch and ongoing operation.
- Draft communication to inform employees and manage continued program promotion.
- Serve as point(s) of contact for employee inquiries.
- Design and administer rewards for program participation.
- Monitor and report program metrics.

We recommend you use this list as a starting point to set your staff up for success. The Task Force can break down the above efforts into phases and action items to start program planning and set up future program management.

Step 5

Develop a Commute Program Promotion Plan

Awareness, participation, and access to your commute program will be key to its success. When you launch your commute program, employees will need clear and concise information available digitally, in print, and through events.

Repetition of information across these categories can increase accessibility of the program. We also recommend considering how to leverage physical spaces at your worksite, like lobbies, breakrooms, elevators, restrooms and locker rooms, and courtyards to place information in print or on large screens.

Different commute programs will have different needs. For example, if an employer offers vanpool or shuttle service, you may offer employees a map that identifies pick-up and drop-off points. An employer offering remote work or flexible hours programs will need to document that policy in the employee handbook. A rewards program based on a record of trip logs, or an employer-provided guaranteed ride home program that requires processing receipts to issue reimbursement may warrant video tutorials.



DIGITAL

- Company Intranet
- Employee Handbook
- Video Tutorials
- Emails
- Webinars



PRINT

- Posters
- FAQ Sheets
- Maps



EVENTS

- All Staff Meetings
- Employee Competitions
- New Employee Onboarding

Consider some of these commonly asked questions from employees when creating talking points and writing copy for promotional materials.

Is there a connection between the commute program and my employee benefits?

How do I enroll or confirm my participation?

What is offered in the commute program(s) and am I eligible?

Do any services require me to pay, and how do I pay?

Are there rewards for participating and how do I qualify?

Step 6

Measure Success of Your Commute Program

Businesses are accustomed to calculating return on investment (ROI) to justify expenses and commitment of resources for execution. When it comes to implementing commute programs, the ROI is more qualitative than quantitative. As mentioned in the introduction, [work commutes correlate to employee retention](#) and commute programs are a strategy to offer commuter benefits required to comply with the [Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program](#). In addition, your Commute Program Task Force or Transportation Coordinator can identify key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the progress and success of your commute program(s). KPIs are metrics that can be measured over time and are the best way to capture quantitative data to understand your ROI. Let's walk through sample KPIs and ways to collect this information.

Key Performance Indicators

Think of your commute program(s) as live rather than static. Commute programs are rarely self-sustaining, so they require ongoing management and promotion. Understanding the performance of your program will allow you to identify fluctuations that present opportunities to support, grow, or pivot your programming based on worksite goals and workforce needs.

Basic KPIs fall into two key categories: 1) People 2) Trips. Below is a list of sample metrics in these categories that are relevant to all commute programs discussed in Section 2.

People

- Total Program Participants per Period
- Number New Participants per Period
- Rate of Program Satisfaction

Trips

- Total Participant Trips Taken
- Average Trip Frequency of Participants
- Car Trips Reduced
- Volume of Trips by Origin

These sample KPIs are not an exhaustive list of metrics to evaluate your program but are a start to facilitate data-driven decision making. We encourage you to use this table to start a discussion about the metrics most important to your company. Consider the intersection of People and Trips data. For example, you may have a moderate group of participants but learn that they use your commute program every weekday. In this case, this dependency may warrant continued provision of resources to sustain the commute program that may otherwise have been discontinued based on the number of program participants alone. Also consider the nature of your commute program. For example, if your transit commute program includes shuttle service, you want to understand how to optimize service based on demand at certain origin points like an employee's home city or nearby rail stations. But this is less relevant if your program is simply subsidizing public transit fare costs.

Some KPIs can be a value used for cost-benefits analysis. The direct expenses to deliver your commute program can be divided by the number of total program participants to determine the cost per head, which can support future budget planning. If your worksite location faces the challenge of limited parking, car trips reduced can be used to calculate increased parking capacity or money saved by employees on parking costs. Leveraging KPIs in this way can help you build a big picture narrative of your commute program to support communication with executive leadership.

Data Collection

Your Commute Program Task Force or Transportation Coordinator will be charged with data collection and analysis. Commute program data is usually collected using these three methods: 1) commute software dashboard, 2) commute service vendor data reports, and 3) internal surveys.

If you're facilitating your commute program through a software or service provider, we recommend providing them a list of metrics you want to capture



Stock Photo

and discussing what your commute program goals are. In return, they will share what data they are able to capture and help you understand how to navigate their data dashboard or data reports. If your provider only offers data reports in spreadsheets, agree on a cadence for them to deliver that data to you, for example, monthly or quarterly based on your internal reporting needs.

You can also source data through internal surveys. This is a great way to understand reception of your commute program and how well it meets staff needs. See [this useful guidance](#) from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to help you conduct your survey. Surveys can also be used to gauge interest in program enhancements as outlined in Section 2. We recommend surveys be brief with 10 or fewer clear and concise questions and use various response options (multiple choice, short answer, scale, and ranking). Survey deployment can be turnkey using platforms like Google Forms, Survey Monkey, Survey Legend and others.

TRANSPORTATION DICTIONARY

TERM

DEFINITION

Micro-mobility

A category of light-weight transportation designed for individual use, usually for short trips of five miles or less. Examples include electronic scooters and e-bikes, traditional bicycles and scooters, Segways, electric skateboards, and hoverboards.

Active Commutes

Traditionally biking or walking – using physical activity to move from origin to destination.

Last Mile Solutions

Transportation services and modes that help a commuter make the final leg of their trip, usually from a public transit stop to their workplace, covering a distance of one mile or more.

First Mile Solutions

Transportation services and modes that help a commuter make the first leg of their trip, usually from home to a public transit stop, covering a distance of one mile or more.

Guaranteed Ride Home

A commuter benefit that reimburses the trip cost for a commuter who traveled one way using an alternative mode like transit, carpool, or vanpool and, due to an unexpected personal event or disruption in service, need a different ride home.

Microtransit

Flexible on-demand transit service facilitated through a ridematch platform, offering pick-up and drop-off where needed instead of following a fixed route at fixed times like traditional bus and rail transit.

Transit Desert

An area with infrequent or no public transit service.

RESOURCE INDEX

511 Website

511 is a commuter information program of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) serving the nine-county Bay Area. The website [511.org](#) offers resources for commuters taking [transit](#), [biking](#), [carpooling](#), and [vanpooling](#), and provides [employer resources](#) including information on county-specific employer programs and case studies from the Best Workplaces Bay Area list.

Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program

The [Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program](#) is an initiative of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District that requires Bay Area employers with 50 or more employees to provide commuter benefits to employees and report the type of benefits offered annually. Read the [Commuter Benefits Program Guide](#) to learn more and make sure your company is [registered and compliant](#).

Spare the Air Employer Program

The [Spare the Air Employer Program](#) helps employees participate in air quality improvement efforts year round. The day before a Spare the Air Alert is in effect, employers receive a notice to forward to their employees. With this advance notice, employees have the opportunity to arrange carpools, plan to bike or take transit, or make arrangements to telecommute. All of these efforts reduce the number of vehicle trips taken and help lower emissions on a critical air quality day. [Join the program](#) and become one of the 2,000+ employer participants.

Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT)

The [Association for Commuter Transportation](#) is the premier organization and leading advocate for commuter transportation and transportation demand management (TDM) professionals. The organization offers an [Employer Council](#), an employer-only space for networking, sharing employee commute program best practices, ideas, questions, resources, and real-world experience among peers. ACT also provides guidance resources employers can leverage, like how to help commuters return to work following the 2020-21 Covid-19 health pandemic.