

WIN with Business

RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION



WIN NETWORK

WIN WITH BUSINESS FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE

The work of WIN with Business focuses on the role of business in contributing to thriving people, places, and a just and thriving society. To achieve this, we explore the role of business in creating the “vital conditions” everyone needs to thrive:

- Belonging and civic muscle (including racial equity)
- Thriving natural world
- Reliable transportation
- Humane housing
- Meaningful work and wealth
- Lifelong learning
- Basic needs for health and safety (food, health, and safety)

Connections: This brief focuses on reliable transportation and is connected with humane housing and basic needs for safety. In addition, we will apply a racial justice and equity lens across all the vital conditions in our organizations, our communities, and in society.



RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION

We rely on various modes of transportation every day to travel safely between our homes, work, school, stores, and many more places. In the United States, we predominantly use personal vehicles for our daily travel. Cars, however, produce negative consequences such as pollution, road accidents, and traffic sprawl. Public transportation provides an option for people who cannot or choose not to drive and is more environmentally friendly. Transportation has a strong influence on access to jobs and social mobility, so increased access to public transportation or other forms of personal transportation, such as biking or walking, provides increased access to jobs and other essential services, while minimizing the impact on our natural world.

What does it mean for transportation to be “reliable”?

- ❑ Buses, trains, and boats are available when someone needs them, and one can consistently use them without needing to check a schedule.
- ❑ Fares and tickets are affordable and there are a range of payment methods at kiosks and stations.
- ❑ Patrons do not have to walk too far to stops and stations.
- ❑ There is safe infrastructure for outdoor stops, biking, and walking and women, people of color, and other minorities can feel safe.
- ❑ People with disabilities do not face challenges accessing public transportation.

WHY SHOULD BUSINESS CARE ABOUT RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION?

The benefits for a business that ensures that employees and consumers have reliable transportation cannot be understated. From a financial perspective, transportation benefits save both employees and employers money. Deducting transit benefits from payroll boosts a company’s bottom line as current IRS rules allow employers to save 7.65% on every dollar allocated towards pre-tax commuting expenses for employees. As of 2020, employers can offer a maximum of \$270 pre-tax benefits for parking and for transit and vanpool expenses, totaling a maximum of \$540 per employee in transit benefits per month. For a company that offers the maximum pre-tax benefits for a workforce of 50 employees, they can save almost \$25,000 annually with the 7.65% FICA tax savings. For an

employee in the 25% tax bracket, they can save up to \$1,620 a year since pre-tax transportation benefits are exempted from income tax.

A centrally-located, accessible business attracts more talent and consumers. Location also promotes social mobility as it can connect low-income individuals and support employees who have children by locating near schools or childcare centers. Furthermore, businesses that assist their employees with transportation options outside of driving are more environmentally sustainable and contribute to the surrounding area by reducing congestion.

Attracting and retaining talent depends on an employee's ability to get to work. Providing affordable, consistent, and efficient options for people to get to work allows businesses to consider a more diverse range of talent and to retain that talent. There may be different strata of income levels among employees in the same office from minimum-wage earners to senior-level executives. Cars are not always an option for lower-income individuals and income-earners in the bottom tier in a business are more likely to live outside metropolitan areas. Without personal vehicles, they will rely on public transportation. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that low-income earners and wage workers, such as janitorial and maintenance staff, grocery store workers, and hospital staff are essential to businesses and to our economy, yet may not have adequate protections in place, especially while using public transportation.

There is also a connection between transportation-accessible businesses and healthy, hardworking employees. For example, living and working in a walkable area promotes physical health. A healthier workforce will ultimately lead to lower healthcare and insurance costs for the business. When employees can walk to work and do not have to fight morning traffic or precarious bus and rail schedules, they are more likely to be punctual and put more time into their work.

Businesses should also consider their moral obligation to employees. Employment dictates a large portion of an employee's life outside work including housing, access to healthcare, and family care and planning. Thus, businesses should care about their employees outside their working hours, especially as working from home becomes a new reality. Other daily and essential services such as grocery stores, schools, and hospitals will still require transportation to access them, and businesses should ensure that their employees have reliable transportation. If an employee cannot maintain a sufficient quality of life in the area where they work, they may be at higher risk for physical and mental health problems and ultimately will not want to remain with the company.



WIN with Business Framework - WIN with Business helps businesses contribute to thriving people, places and a just society. As outlined in the WIN with Business Framework, this contribution can best be described in three areas: 1) the well-being of people; 2) the well-being of places; and 3) racial justice and equity.

- 1. Well-being of people** - Businesses can work to align their cultures and environments in support of the well-being of the people they directly or indirectly reach, including employees, families, supply chain workers, and customers. Employee benefits, workplace policies, practices, programs, and for some businesses, even products, can all be aligned to support lifelong learning for employees.
- 2. Well-being of places** - Businesses can go beyond their walls to embrace their role as community stewards to enhance the **well-being of places** (communities). They can do this by engaging in cross-sector partnerships with schools, colleges, and vocational institutes, that can advance lifelong learning in whole communities, interrupt and the school to prison pipeline, while contributing to the wider community, society, and the natural ecosystem.
- 3. Racial justice and equity** - Businesses can apply a strategic focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion in all their work, with a focus on creating the underlying conditions for racial and economic justice. This means creating equitable products, programs, policies and systems to sustainably advance the well-being of people and places that experience inequitable outcomes.



WHAT ARE INNOVATORS CURRENTLY DOING?

Everyone needs access to the economy for it to be equitable, beginning with the ability to access jobs. Business's role in reliable transportation is crucial for creating an equitable economy. There are many things businesses can do to enhance the reliability of transportation; they can provide solutions directly to the **people** in their organizations, they can work to improve the experience of moving around in communities to improve the experience of **place**, and they can advocate for **equitable policies and systems** that overhaul the local and national transportation systems.

Well-being of People

(Employees, families, supply chain workers, customers)

Ensuring reliable transportation extends beyond building subway lines or adding bike lanes to roads. While those solutions are valid, they do not address the pervasive inequity in transportation across the United States. Although the cost of housing in metropolitan areas is increasing, salaries and wages are not. More people have moved away from cities, resulting in “super commutes” that can last between 90 minutes and two hours each way.

A 2011 study from the Brookings Institution estimates that only 30% of jobs in metropolitan areas are reachable within 90 minutes via public transit. Disparities exist based on employment type; only one-fourth of low- and middle-skill industries are accessible via transportation within 90 minutes compared to one-third of high-skilled jobs. Commuting times also vary based on income level. While higher-income earning individuals can afford personal vehicles or paying for rideshares out-of-pocket, low-income individuals are much more dependent on public transportation, which can become costly after daily use. Commutes will take even longer when buses and trains do not run on time, during traffic, or as a result of inclement weather. Hourly workers may lose wages if their already long commutes take any longer. There are a range of transportation solutions that address these issues. In addition to implementing these solutions, businesses also need to ensure that employees can easily access transportation information.

Actions

- ❑ Offer pre-tax transit benefits up to \$270 per month for parking and \$270 for transit and vanpool per employee
- ❑ Provide discounted or free transit passes
- ❑ Accommodate cyclists and pedestrians by providing secure bike storage, lockers, and showers
- ❑ Utilize corporate rideshare accounts to allow employees to charge rides to the company account
- ❑ Coordinate vanpools
- ❑ Offer a parking cash-out program
- ❑ Provide a [Guaranteed Ride Home](#) option so that employees who do not drive to work can have a ride home if needed
- ❑ Host on-site transportation fairs or commuting information days
- ❑ Send biweekly or monthly newsletters reminding employees about transportation benefits and options
- ❑ Designate a member of Human Resources to serve as Employee Mobility Coordinator
- ❑ Allow teleworking or compressed working schedules, and ensure that employees have quality WiFi and equipment to work from home

Well-being of Places

(Workplaces, communities, and societies)

The ability to access a business makes it more attractive to both employees and customers. Thus, it is in a business’s best interest to locate near public transportation stops and near other businesses. A business that is only accessible by car and is not near other shops, restaurants, grocery stores, healthcare centers, and schools will face challenges in attracting clientele and talent. It is also essential for businesses to consider their location relative to affordable housing. If employees cannot live near a business, they will have long commutes

that are costly and time-consuming, which will increase their chances of leaving the business to find work elsewhere.

Actions

- ❑ Engage with community stakeholders to obtain their input and ideas that will work in each unique community
- ❑ Locate offices near transit stops
- ❑ Aim to locate within a ten-minute walk of schools, grocery stores, healthcare centers, and retail options
- ❑ Avoid transit-deserts
- ❑ Provide shuttles between nearby transit stops and railway stations to the office building
- ❑ Ensure that employees working from home have access to the Internet

Covington & Burling, LLP, Washington, DC

Covington & Burling, LLP, in Washington, DC offers amenities that encourage employees to use public transportation, while also offering opportunities to work outside the office as needed.

Bike racks, showers, and lockers encourage employees to walk and bike to work without worrying about cleanliness or storage. Offering more teleworking opportunities, compressed work week schedules, and flex time helps employees who may struggle with transportation or have family or childcare obligations. These solutions have helped to retain talent, reduce the company’s carbon footprint, and save employees money on gas.



Racial Justice and Equity

(Supporting the bottom 20% of employees and communities in poverty)

As transportation infrastructure in the United States has aged, government spending on transportation has decreased while the demand for safe, efficient, reliable transportation has increased. As

of 2015, the United States ranked 16th for Quality of Overall Infrastructure. Investment in our country's transportation infrastructure peaked in the mid-20th century, but has since declined. A public recommitment to transportation is essential for economic growth.

Equitable policies, systems, and practices are deeply intertwined with the wellbeing of people and places. As previously noted, low-income earners are disproportionately dependent on public transportation, and suffer the most when transportation does not meet their needs. Women and people of color are targeted in public spaces, requiring measures to be taken to ensure their safety. Businesses are also affected as deteriorating highways, roads, and bridges translate into higher production and shipping costs. Outdated transportation infrastructure also makes a business less accessible, which results in struggles for employees, customers, and business owners.

Businesses can take action to support policies and systems in the greater community and contribute to community economic development goals by encouraging employees to use public transportation. They can also take a public stance in support of public transportation improvements in their cities. For example, big businesses and civic groups supported a public transit ballot referendum in Indianapolis that resulted in a small tax hike to increase bus service. When more people utilize public transportation, walking, and vanpools rather than driving, they contribute to a community's environmental sustainability and safety goals.

Businesses can also address the connection between reliable transportation and housing by promoting Live Near Your Work programs, which offer employees funds to put towards a down-payment on a home. This program is currently operating in Baltimore and is offered by the Baltimore City Office of Homeownership in conjunction more than 100 universities, law offices, medical centers, and other businesses. The incentive value varies based on the institution and is matched by the Baltimore City Office of Homeownership. Washington, D.C. is also initiating a pilot Live Near Your Work program. By assisting employees with finding and funding houses near their work in major cities, employers can help eliminate long commutes and unreliable transportation as a barrier to work.

Actions

- ❑ Support public transportation improvements in the community through public support, contacting government officials, and voting
- ❑ Advocate for increased public spending on public transportation infrastructure
- ❑ Align your business with community leaders and governments officials who have action plans for improving transportation infrastructure
- ❑ Become a participating institution in a Live Near Your Work Program

Lyft, United States

The LyftUp Access Alliance was created to provide access to basic needs to underserved black communities to help people who are disproportionately suffering as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Lyft has partnered with organizations already in action including *My Brother's Keeper Alliance*, *The National Urban League*, *Black Women's Roundtable*, *United Negro College Fund*, *NAACP*, *US Black Chamber of Commerce*, *Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights under Law*, and *The National Action Network*. Lyft will provide 1.5 million rides to connect people with these organizations that provide services including COVID testing, food delivery, and mental health services.



For more case studies, see [Employers→ Commuting Solutions→ Case Studies.](#)



For additional information on public investment into transportation infrastructure, see [The Road to Growth: The Case for Investing in America's Transportation Infrastructure.](#)

WELL BEING IN THE NATION AND WIN WITH BUSINESS

The Well Being In the Nation (WIN) Network is a strategic network of more than 100 communities, national organizations, and federal agencies that work together to advance intergenerational wellbeing and equity.

WIN with Business is a collaborative within the WIN Network designed to help extend the positive impact of business on the wellbeing of people and places, and equity. This effort is achieved through cross-sector community impact and broader community system change.

The founding partners of WIN with Business include the [Business Group on Health](#), [Health Enhancement Research Organization \(HERO\)](#), the [National Alliance of Healthcare Benefit Purchaser Coalitions \(The National Alliance\)](#), and [Wellness Councils of America \(WELCOA\)](#).