

Travel Demand Management

5.1 Introduction

The municipal and business leaders of Norwalk recognize that City stakeholders must work closely together to reduce the number of trips by single occupant modes. We can't build our way out of the problem of traffic congestion, but promoting alternative travel by carpool, vanpool, transit, walking and biking can help make the most efficient use of existing transportation infrastructure and promote mobility for all of Norwalk's citizens.

What is TDM?

Travel Demand Management is a way of influencing individual travel behavior and providing expanded options to reduce the actual demand, or number of vehicles, placed on transportation facilities. The focus is on managing the demand side of the transportation equation rather than increasing supply by widening or building new roads.

5.1.1 Goals and Benefits

Travel Demand Management (TDM) can play an important role in meeting business and community transportation goals by reducing strain on the existing parking and roadway infrastructure. Below are just a few examples of local transportation and related business concerns along with the TDM tools and strategies that may be used to address them.

| | Pedestrian Facilities | Bicycle Facilities | TDM-Friendly Design | Transportation Coordinator | Rideshare Matching | Vanpool Subsidy | Transit | Telecommute Program | Alternative Schedules | Incentives | Commuter Tax Benefit | Guaranteed Ride Home | Managed Parking |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Recruit and Retain Employees | | | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | | ♦ | ♦ | | |
| Increase Parking Availability | ♦ | ♦ | | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | | |
| Livable Streets | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | | | ♦ | | | | | | | ♦ |
| Keep Businesses Open | | | | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | | | | | ♦ |
| Provide Mobility | ♦ | ♦ | ♦ | | | ♦ | | | | | | | |

TDM also offers the benefits of improved air quality, reduced energy consumption, greater employee productivity, access to transit, improved economic growth and more efficient land use. Recognizing the unique goals and concerns of different types of



organizations, this document was created with a modular design. Outlined in each stakeholder section below are the tools and resources necessary to address the specific needs of developers, institutions and employers, helping them to meet their transportation-related goals through the use of TDM.

5.1.1.1 Institutions

Parking is often one of the biggest transportation challenges for institutions. Plans for expansion are dampened when the need to consolidate parking into structured garages proves cost prohibitive, overlapping shifts create temporary parking crunches, and relationships with neighbors become strained when parking spills over onto adjacent lots and residential streets. Creating a comprehensive TDM plan which includes parking management can help lessen the demand for parking and free up valuable land for other uses. Parking cash-out, or offering the option of cash in lieu of a parking space, can encourage employees to take alternative modes. TDM strategies can also help to ease temporary parking crunches, as in the case of Norwalk Hospital. During the 14-month construction of a new parking garage, parking demand was successfully managed by shuttling employees from an off-site parking lot to the hospital.

Pedestrian safety is a concern on many institutional campuses where the competing needs of pedestrians and vehicles must be carefully balanced. Providing parking at the outer regions of the site or off-site and providing a shuttle can reduce the number of vehicle trips in the core of the campus by employees or students. Transit to off-site locations or amenities such as restaurants, shopping, postal services, gyms and dry cleaners can reduce the need for mid-day trips off-campus.

5.1.1.2 Employers

Research has shown that employer-based TDM programs are often the most successful ones. Employers can have a significant impact on the travel choices of their employees by providing the environment, information and support they need to take an alternative mode or travel at off-peak times. At a work site, research indicates that trips are typically reduced by 10-30% with the institution of a comprehensive TDM program.

Creating a company TDM plan can benefit employees by improving their health, saving them money and freeing up time spent driving. It can also encourage a corporate culture of sustainability and boost employee morale. A simple way to provide transportation benefits to employees is by providing a commuter tax benefit. Employees benefit from higher compensation, and employers benefit because the money set aside for transportation expenses is not subject to payroll taxes.

Implementing a TDM plan can also benefit employers by aiding with employee recruitment and retention. When local housing prices are high, workers often choose to commute long distances from less expensive areas. Long commutes can grind down employee morale and reduce productivity. Encouraging and subsidizing the use of

transit can allow employees to take back their commute time, arriving to work relaxed and ready to work rather than stressed out from the daily battle with traffic.

Parking can often be a challenge for employers trying to balance the parking needs of employees and customers. Particularly in downtown areas like SoNo and Uptown, businesses can work together to manage parking so that paying customers have access to prime parking close to the businesses. The Norwalk Parking Authority (NPA) has made great strides in providing appropriate parking options in South Norwalk, making transit use easier for commuters and adding to SoNo's growth and vitality as a regional destination. More information on the NPA's initiatives and successes is provided in Section 5.1.2.3.

For individual employers, offering the option of cash in lieu of a parking space can encourage employees to take alternative modes and reduce the overhead costs of parking. Larger employers may be able to locate parking off-site and provide a shuttle for employees. Other employer tools such as alternate work hours, telecommute programs, education, vanpools, etc. are discussed in more detail in Section 5.2 – TDM Toolbox.

5.1.1.3 Commuters

As a commuter, walking, biking, carpooling, vanpooling, telecommuting or taking transit can help you save money on your weekly commute. Using an alternative mode can also give you the benefit of better health and mental wellness and free up time for hobbies you may enjoy like reading, writing, crafting, puzzles or games, or watching a favorite show on your way to work. Vanpooling or carpooling can also be a great way to get to know your coworkers better or to debrief and unwind from your day before coming home to family responsibilities.

The City of Norwalk should encourage commuters to use the tools outlined in this document to plan a different way of getting to work, appointments or other activities. Connecticut Commuter Services can assist commuters in planning their trip and can also provide information which they may use to encourage their employer to participate in commuter benefit programs such as telecommuting and tax incentives. Even taking an alternative mode one day a week can pay dividends in terms of health and money saved.

5.1.2 Local Successes

TDM strategies have already been used successfully by local businesses and institutions within the City of Norwalk. Among these successes are the parking management and transit connections at Norwalk Hospital, the transit service and on-site amenities at Merritt 7 Corporate Park and the parking management in South Norwalk.



5.1.2.1 Norwalk Hospital

Norwalk Hospital faces a common challenge in providing enough parking for employees, patients and visitors. The hospital closed its parking garage in January of 2011, allowing for construction of a new parking garage to expand campus parking capacity by 200 vehicles and improve access for patients and visitors. During the 14 months of construction, parking was successfully managed by shuttling 400-450 passengers per day from an off-site parking lot to the hospital.



In addition to expanding its parking facilities, the hospital has employed a commuter incentive program to alleviate parking demand on its campus. Norwalk Transit provides a Commuter Connection shuttle that brings employees from the train station in South Norwalk to Norwalk Hospital. The hospital provides commuters living outside of the Norwalk area with a \$60 commuter allowance for traveling by bus or train. In addition to the commuter allowance, the hospital subsidizes transit passes by offering employees the option of three, 10-ride shuttle passes at a cost of \$2 each or one free Uniticket (combined rail/bus pass) per month. Each of these options is valued at about \$27 per month for a total of \$87 per month in commuter incentives for using public transit.

5.1.2.2 Merritt 7 Corporate Park

Despite the economic downturn of the “Great Recession,” the Merritt 7 Corporate Park had a vacancy rate of only 3% and continued to sign new and existing tenants.

The Merritt 7 Corporate Park was designed as a transportation hub to provide commuters with a variety of transportation options. By car, the site is easily accessible from the Merritt Parkway (Route 15) and the Route 7 connector to I-95. Commuters also have the option of taking a train directly to Merritt 7 to Grand Central Terminal in New York City. The Merritt 7 Metro-North Railroad Station, adjacent to the complex, is located approximately 45 miles from Grand Central Terminal with an average travel time of 74 minutes. The Merritt 7 Station offers direct service to Danbury and South Norwalk with connections in South Norwalk to New Haven and Grand Central Station.



The Norwalk Transit District provides a Norwalk Commuter Shuttle which offers direct service between Merritt 7 and the South Norwalk Train Station. This commuter service also links with the local bus service. In addition to the Norwalk Transit service, an on-site shuttle is provided by the property management to pick up passengers in front of each building and transport them to the Merritt 7 train station. Passengers are allowed to wait on board the shuttle until their train arrives, providing a comfortable transit experience.



Merritt 7 also has a comprehensive on-site amenities and services package, allowing employees to accomplish everyday tasks and errands without having to leave the corporate park. Amenities include banking facilities, a barber shop, two full-service cafeterias, a fitness center, car detailing, a news stand, shoe shine and repair, and car rental service on site.

In addition to the on-site amenities, the corporate park is surrounded by apartments and condos, hotel accommodations, dining and personal services, child care and pet care facilities, and a host of retail services – all within walking distance.

5.1.2.3 Norwalk Parking Authority

The Norwalk Parking Authority (NPA) is an organization responsible for managing and operating the municipal parking in the City of Norwalk. It is a self-sustaining organization that is not supported by taxpayer money.





In particular, the NPA has had notable success in the South Norwalk (SoNo) area. The SoNo train station garage, the Webster Lot, the North Water Street Lot, Maritime Garage and the Haviland Lot are all managed by the NPA. Solar-powered pay-by-space machines which accept both cash and credit cards were installed in the lots and free 15-minute street parking is provided in some areas. This ensures that the most valuable spaces directly adjacent to the shops, restaurants and other local businesses are available for customer use while more long-term parking occurs in the managed parking lots and garages. The NPA also made improvements to the Haviland Parking Deck which provides parking for patrons of local businesses.

The NPA promotes use of the SoNo Metro-North train station by making it easier for commuters to find parking. Traveler information is provided through the use of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), namely a parking count system to inform commuters of parking availability in the train station parking garage, and real-time parking and train information provided on the Parking Authority website.

5.2 TDM Toolbox

The following provides a discussion on TDM approaches and how they can be implemented and/or applied to developments and/or employers within the City. Section 2, Chapter 4 provides more details on developing specific programs.

5.2.1 Pedestrian Facilities

Walking can serve as a connection between other modes of transportation, such as transit, carpool and vanpool. Providing a convenient and safe environment for pedestrians increases the number of employees, students and residents walking to offices, schools and stores during the day within an area or development. In addition to the transportation benefits, increasing the walkability of an area can promote economic development, preserve small-town character and increase property values. For businesses, promoting walking can often result in lower insurance premiums and credits toward LEED building certification.

Most people will only consider walking to destinations that are five to ten minutes away, or less than about half a mile. The longest distance most people are willing to walk on a regular basis is about one mile. Mapping out



the areas that are within this radius from a destination such as a town center, neighborhood or corporate development can help to prioritize areas for improvements. A review of pedestrian facilities within this radius can reveal “missing links” such as areas without sidewalk, large parking fields and unsafe intersections. These types of obstacles may be relatively easy to fix but prevent a majority of people from walking to a destination.

5.2.2 Bicycle Facilities

Biking serves as an excellent alternative for shorter trips, and is also a perfect complement to transit and other alternative modes for longer trips. Bicycles are allowed on Metro North trains with a bicycle permit, and CT Transit buses have bicycle racks for those transferring from bicycle to transit. It should be noted that some additional restrictions on bicycle usage exist for Metro North trains including prohibition of bicycles during peak periods as well as discretion given to the conductors to exclude bicycles as they see fit.



One problem bicycling can help to address is limited parking. About 10 to 15 bikes can be stored in the same space as one parked automobile. Employers who promote bicycling to work can benefit from cost savings from reducing the size of their parking lots or opening up parking spaces to paying customers. They may also benefit from lower costs for insurance premiums and credits toward LEED certification for their buildings.

As with walking, consideration must be given to the distance people are willing to travel by bicycle. As a rule of thumb, most riders will be willing to travel approximately 10 to 15 minutes by bike. Bicycling represents a significant benefit to employees as they save money on fuel, vehicle maintenance, auto insurance and parking fees. The employee health benefits of riding a bicycle to and from work have been shown to translate into benefits for the employer, including reduced absenteeism, increased worker productivity, and fewer on-the-job injuries.

One of the big concerns employees may have when considering bicycling is arriving to the workplace sweaty and inappropriately dressed. Medium to large sized companies and owners or managers of properties may consider installing lockers and shower facilities for bicyclists to use. Another major concern is safety. Installing bicycle racks in a convenient and visible location provides a secure place





for bicycle storage.

Employers can help to ease the concerns of employees by offering a guaranteed ride home program and variable work hours as described in the Support Services section of this Toolbox. A guaranteed ride home can address the common concern of being stranded at work in the event of inclement weather, illness, bicycle equipment malfunctions such as flat tires, and mid-day emergencies. Variable work hours allow bicyclists to arrive at work during non-peak-hour times to avoid traffic congestion and fumes.

5.2.3 TDM-Friendly Design

Providing parking at the rear or side of buildings reduces the front yard setback, providing more direct access to the site for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users. Buildings should be clustered to promote pedestrian activity, and the front entrance of buildings should be oriented toward transit facilities rather than parking lots.

Pedestrian and bicycle routes should be direct, safe and inviting with marked pedestrian crossings and continuous sidewalks. Sidewalks in high-activity areas should be at least 10 feet wide, and residential sidewalks should be at least 5 feet wide. Off-Street bicycle paths should be 8 to 12 feet wide. Pedestrian-vehicle conflicts can be minimized by separating the roads and parking areas from pedestrian walkways. Pedestrian areas and walkways should be buffered from adjacent roadways by landscaping, trees, or on-street parking. Painted crosswalks should be provided at all crossing locations, and pedestrian signals should be provided at signalized intersections. Adequate lighting should be provided for safety.



Bicycle parking should be provided in the form of bike racks for short-term storage or lockers for more protective long-term storage. Showers, lockers and changing rooms also contribute to the convenience of bicycling and may encourage the use of bicycle facilities.

Bus stops should be provided approximately 500 to 1,000 feet from the building entrance and, if possible,



they should be located on-site. Providing a stop in close proximity to the building entrance reduces travel time for transit users and makes transit more visible as a travel option. At bus stops, amenities such as bus shelters, trash receptacles, bike racks and seating should be provided. Metro-North has New Haven Line stations at Rowayton, South Norwalk, East Norwalk and a Danbury Branch Line stop at Merritt 7. Connections to these and other transit stops should be provided where possible.

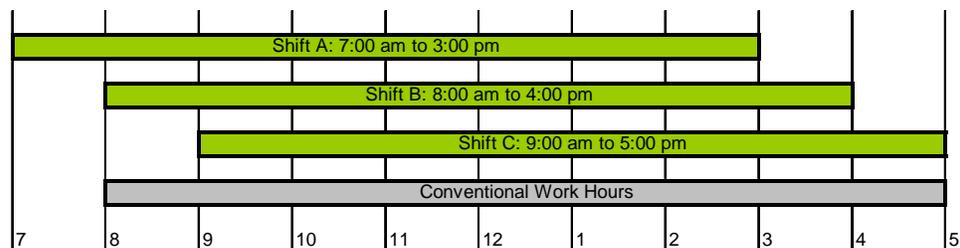
Providing access to services and amenities on-site can make public areas more vibrant while reducing trips off-site. People may commute to work using alternative modes if they know they can walk to the post office during lunch, or they may drive to work alone but walk to nearby destinations during lunch. Either way, fewer trips are placed on the roads around the site. Additionally, revenue generated from these amenities stays on the property rather than down the street at other locations that may have attracted the business of tenants. Some services and amenities that may be provided include restaurants, child care facilities, banking facilities, postal services, convenience stores, dry cleaners, fitness centers, and concierge services.



The Merritt 7 Corporate Park is a great local example for providing on-site amenities. A courtesy shuttle transports tenants to and from the Metro-North Merritt 7 train station, and many services, including a fitness center, car rental, dining facilities, car wash, barber shop, banking, and concierge services are provided on-site. More information on the Merritt 7 Corporate Park may be found in Section 5.1.2.2.

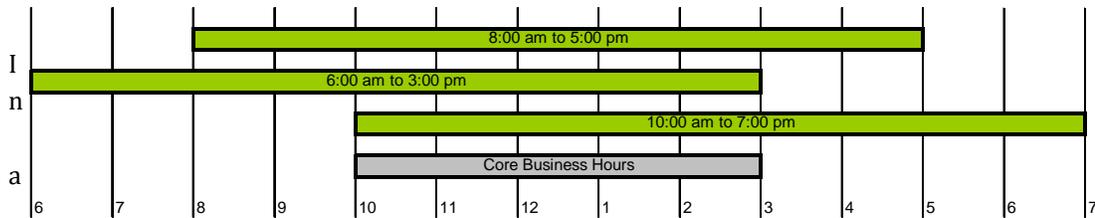
5.2.4 Alternative Work Schedules

Staggered Work Hours involve spreading out the employee arrival and departure times to avoid peak travel times and reduce the congestion of local streets and parking lots. Typically, arrival and departure times are staggered by anywhere between 15 minutes to two hours.





Flex-Time is a type of alternative schedule in which employees work five, eight-hour days each week and are allowed to choose their arrival, departure and break times. There is typically a core business time in which employees are required to be present. This time allows for meetings and company-wide events to be scheduled. For example, with core hours of 10:00 am to 3pm, employees could begin their day at 6am and work until 3pm, or they could begin work at 10:00am and leave at 7:00pm.



Compressed Work Week arrangement, employees work longer hours but for fewer days per week or per pay period. This may be done in a number of different ways, but the two more common schedules are the 4/40 program and the 9/80 program.

In the 4/40 program, employees work four 10-hour days per week. To ensure business continuity, many companies have half the employees work Monday through Thursday and the other half work Tuesday through Friday.

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Group A | Off | 10 Hrs | 10 Hrs | 10 Hrs | 10 Hrs |
| Group B | 10 Hrs | 10 Hrs | 10 Hrs | 10 Hrs | Off |

The 9/80 program consists of eight 9-hour days and one 8-hour day per pay period. This translates to one day off every other week. Similar to the 4/40 program, employers may have employees stagger their Fridays off to ensure coverage of the five-day work week.

| | | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--------|---------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Week 1 | Group A | 9 Hrs | 9 Hrs | 9 Hrs | 9 Hrs | 8 Hrs |
| | Group B | 9 Hrs | 9 Hrs | 9 Hrs | 9 Hrs | Off |
| Week 2 | Group A | 9 Hrs | 9 Hrs | 9 Hrs | 9 Hrs | Off |
| | Group B | 9 Hrs | 9 Hrs | 9 Hrs | 9 Hrs | 8 Hrs |

One of the more common applications of the compressed work week schedule is in government agencies and education institutions. By closing the government office or school one day per week or per pay period, operating costs are lowered. An added bonus is that the longer days extend customer service hours.

5.2.5 Telecommute Programs

Many businesses allow employees to work from home or another off-site location part-time or full-time. This is due in part to the fact that jobs are more portable than they once were. Employees are often able to work over a company's network and in some

cases all that's required is a telephone. More and more, families are using telecommuting to provide flexibility in their modern-day schedules as they juggle the demands of work, children in daycare, and the care of elderly parents. Businesses are embracing telecommuting as a way to recruit a skilled workforce and minimize business disruptions. The following is a list of some of the key benefits of telecommuting for employers:

- Minimize business interruption in the event of a storm or natural disaster
- Offer greater flexibility for employees
- Increase productivity and morale
- Save on facilities costs
- Reduce absenteeism
- Help recruit and retain skilled workers
- Reduce traffic congestion

Businesses are often concerned about how a telecommuting program will affect employee accountability. With a good telecommuting policy in place which includes agreements on responsibilities, obligations and requirements for communication and reporting, businesses can provide their employees with freedom and flexibility while ensuring they are held accountable. In deciding whether a telecommute program for some or all of your employees would be beneficial, it is crucial to examine the type of work that is being done and the appropriateness of telecommuting to each type of position.

A common scenario for businesses in Norwalk is that many employees commute long distances because it is financially infeasible for them to live within Fairfield County. Faced with a long commute, some employees may search for a new job closer to their place of residence. With a telecommuting program, employers can allow employees to work from home one or more days a week, alleviating some of the stress of commuting and improving morale.

One local resource is Telecommute Connecticut, a program sponsored by ConnDOT, provides assistance to Connecticut employers in designing, developing and implementing a telecommuting program.



5.2.6 Education

Education and internal marketing can increase awareness of alternative transportation and the commuting services offered by organizations, property managers, the City of Norwalk, and ConnDOT. It can also convince people to try an alternative mode or encourage those who already participate to continue.

One way to maximize the effectiveness of internal education and marketing campaigns is to designate an Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC). An ETC is a person within



an organization who assists and encourages employees using alternative transportation. While developments and large companies may have a full-time ETC, in most cases it is a part-time role. Often, a member an organization’s human resources or administration staff serves as ETC.

Providing traveler information is one of the main ways to increase awareness of travel options and aid travelers in finding the fastest and easiest mode and route for their trip. This information can be static, as in the case of transit route information displayed on brochures, schedules, bulletin boards and websites. Traveler information can also be dynamic, providing real-time traffic or transit service information through the use of GPS or other networking devices. Travelers may access this information from their computers or in many cases from their cell phones.

New employee orientation is a perfect time to educate employees on the benefits of alternative commuting. Providing information on travel options and helping an employee to establish a routine of using transit, walking or biking can be more effective than trying to “convert” someone who consistently drives a single occupant vehicle to work. Information can also be provided using a table display at a company event.

Another opportunity for education is a “lunch & learn” or “share & learn” presentation. Providing a short presentation during lunch time several times a year can provide encouragement and remind employees of their travel options. Having those who already commute alternatively share their experiences with the group can often make for an interesting presentation.

Special events, such as National Bike to Work Week, which occurs annually in May, or a Commuter Challenge can encourage commuters to try a different mode. A trial use allows employees to determine if the alternative mode or schedule will fit with their lifestyle. If the employee has a positive experience, they will likely continue the alternative commuting behavior.

Along with the commuting resources outlined in this TDM Toolbox, ConnDOT features an interactive travel map on their website. This map provides information about the hundreds of park and ride lots located throughout the site, as well as construction and traffic incident information.

5.2.7 Rideshare Matching

Carpooling is an easy can convenient way for commuters to share a ride. It is best done by co-workers or those living in the same neighborhood and traveling to a similar work location. Carpooling can be more flexible than inter-city transit, and riding with people who live or work in close proximity reduces the amount of lost time at one or both ends of the journey.



People who live or work close to each other are more likely to share a ride. Rideshare matching is a service that identifies people living within the same area who work at the same location, or those who live near a park and ride lot or child care facility who work near each other. Ride matching is typically done through a computer program, and increasingly these programs are hosted online.

Successful carpooling arrangements are built on trust and convenience. Carpoolers must be able to rely on their ride showing up every morning on time and know that they will have a pleasant trip.

One of the main motivations to carpool is reduced travel expenses. Carpooling with family members may eliminate the need for a second car, and traveling with another commuter saves money on gas and vehicle wear and tear. Some who carpool ride in the same vehicle every day with the passenger pitching in for gas and parking expenses, while others rotate driving responsibilities to avoid the need for a financial transaction. A significant reduction in travel expenses can outweigh the negative impacts to travel time or convenience.

One of the keys to a successful carpooling program is providing support for carpoolers through ride matching programs, preferred parking and other services.

Local Resources in Connecticut include Connecticut Commuter Services and MetroPool offer rideshare matching services.



5.2.8 Incentives

Incentives can be used to encourage people to start or continue alternative transportation behaviors. Commuters can earn cash or any number of different rewards for their travel choices, some of which may be used to help offset the costs of their chosen travel modes.

One option for employees who participate in a TDM program is entry into a drawing for a prize when they use alternative transportation. Prizes can be cash, transit passes or gift certificates to local businesses and drawings can be done monthly, quarterly or annually. Another useful benefit is mode-specific rewards, such as a bicycle repair certificate for those who bicycle to work, transit passes for those who take the bus, or a gift certificate to a fitness store for those who walk to work.

Recognition is also a motivator, and employees can be honored for their travel choices in the company newsletter. Local businesses can be recognized in the local newspaper for being a good neighbor and benefiting the community by reducing traffic congestion.



Businesses can give employees extra vacation time for using alternative transportation. Those who use alternative transportation a certain number of times per month or per quarter can earn additional hours of vacation, typically amounting to one to two extra days per year.

5.2.9 Tax Benefits

The federal tax code includes several financial incentives from employers and employees to promote alternative modes of transportation. For all of these options the employer must participate in the tax program before employees are allowed to participate. The tax incentive options are outlined below:

Employer-Paid Transportation Benefit

Employers may pay up to \$230 per month per employee for transit or vanpool expenses. Employees get a tax-free transportation benefit and employers may take a tax deduction for the expense.

Employee-Paid, Pre-Tax Transportation Benefit

Employees can set aside \$230 per month tax-free for transit or vanpool expenses. Employers benefit from this arrangement because the money set aside for transportation expenses is not subject to payroll taxes.

ConnDOT promotes the Commuter Tax Benefit program to help commuters and businesses understand the federal tax law. For information, visit www.commutertaxbenefit.org. Exhibit 5-2 presents a general example of how the Commuter Tax Benefit works.



Exhibit 5-2 Example Transportation Benefit

| | Without Program | With Program |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| | \$1,200 raise | \$1,200 transportation benefit |
| Cost to Business | \$1,300 (salary + FICA) | \$792 (benefit less federal tax deductions) |
| Net Salary Increase for Employee | \$700 (after taxes) | \$1,200 (tax-free benefit) |

Shared-Cost Transportation Benefits

Employers and employees share the cost of transit or vanpool. A portion of the transportation cost is paid for tax-free by employers, and the employee pays the remainder of the cost by setting aside a portion of their salary tax-free.

Parking Cash-Out

Employees have the option of “cashing out” their parking space for taxable salary or a tax-free transportation benefit to help pay transit or vanpool expenses. This option has

the added benefit of reducing parking demand and reducing parking costs for those employers who themselves pay for parking.

5.2.10 Transit Passes

Connecticut is rich in well-established, interconnected transit systems due to its commuter culture. Workers commute long distances to their places of business in Norwalk, Stamford, and New York City. Many people use the convenience of transit as a way to take back their commute time, reading a book or working on the train rather than waiting in traffic.

The Metro-North New Haven Line provides direct routes from Norwalk south to New York City and north to New Haven. The Danbury Branch of the New Haven Line provides service from the South Norwalk Station to the Merritt 7 Corporate Park on East Street then continues north to Danbury. The Metro-North railroad connects with state-wide bus transit service from CT Transit Stamford, with further connections to local Norwalk Transit District services.

Many people think of transit only for commuting, but Norwalk has excellent local transit services as well. These local services provide mobility to those without personal transportation. The local fixed route bus service in Norwalk is called WHEELS. Norwalk's WHEELS service operates on a pulse system, where one bus from each route meets at a pulse point, the WHEELS Hub, at Burnell Boulevard for free transfers. Regional buses to Milford, Danbury and Stamford also meet at the WHEELS Hub.

As an example of how transit can work for business, the Merritt 7 Corporate Park is located adjacent to the Danbury Branch of the Metro-North New Haven Line. A door-to-door courtesy shuttle transports tenants and employees from the train to their place of business. For more information on Merritt 7 Corporate Park, see Section 5.1.2.2.

5.2.11 Vanpool Subsidies

One of the best applications for a vanpool is at a company that is trying to attract or retain employees from outlying areas. This is a common consideration in Norwalk because although the City has instituted zoning

regulations providing for affordable housing, many workers who commute to Fairfield County choose to live in more affordable areas of the state. A successful vanpool is arranged around employees who work near each other and live in the same outlying region.





There are several options for financing, insuring and maintaining a fleet of vanpool vehicles:

Employer-Sponsored

The company purchases or leases the vans, provides insurance and maintains the fleet. Costs may be recovered through passenger fares, improved employee productivity and a reduced need for parking.

Owner-Operated

An individual purchases a van and charges passengers. The owner of the van is responsible for insurance and maintenance costs.

Third-Party

A public agency, ridesharing program, or public-private partnership leases vans to commuter groups or employers. In Connecticut, the largest third-party vanpool system is EasyStreet. The program is sponsored by ConnDOT and operated by The Rideshare Company. Each passenger pays a fare every month to ride in one of the vans. There are currently over 300 established routes across the state of Connecticut.

Employers may offer a subsidy to pay for all or part of the cost of a vanpool fare. Another option is an empty seat subsidy in which the employer pays the fare for an empty seat in order to keep a vanpool operational for the rest of the participants.

An example of a successful rideshare program is the Autumn Harp Company which closed its Bristol, Vermont office location. The company formed a vanpool agreement with the State of Vermont and paid for employee transportation to the Essex Junction, Vermont location. Through the use of a vanpool, Autumn Harp retained 32 employees. Similar successes have been experienced with the EasyStreet vanpool service.



5.2.12 Guaranteed Ride Home

Employees who use alternative modes to get to work often worry that they will be stranded without a vehicle if an emergency should arise in the middle of the day or if they have to work late. Providing a guaranteed ride home program can give employees peace of mind in their decision to bike to work, carpool, vanpool or use transit. Guaranteed Ride Home programs are very rarely used and so the implementation costs are minimal. Several of the organizations listed in the resources section of this toolbox offer guaranteed ride home programs that employers or employees may participate in.

In Connecticut, a guaranteed ride home program is administered by Connecticut Commuter Services.

5.2.13 Parking Management

Space for parking is often limited, and even when creating new spaces is possible, it can come at a premium. Creating a new parking areas can cost anywhere from \$500 to well over \$10,000 per space and can be more expensive, depending on the location and the value of the land it sits on. Managing parking can limit the demand and encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation.

One strategy to manage parking is to create preferred parking spaces. These spaces are reserved for the employees who carpool or vanpool to work instead of driving alone. These preferred parking spaces are often located near the building entrance, on the first floor of a multi-level parking garage, or in an area protected by the weather.

Parking pricing is another way of managing parking. Companies can save a lot of money on parking expenses by pricing parking so that more employees carpool or use alternative modes of travel to get to work. By charging users based on vehicle occupancy, employees are more likely to share a ride. Care must be taken in implementing a parking pricing program to prevent spill over into other parking lots, which may cause discord with other area property owners. It is also essential to price the parking appropriately so that employees don't simply park in a less expensive lot rather than take advantage of ridesharing.

In downtown business districts, parking pricing can be a way of increasing parking turnover and allowing more customers to use the parking spaces. In addition, these spaces are less likely to be occupied by employees if priced appropriately. The Norwalk Parking Agency manages and operates the municipal parking in the City of Norwalk. More information on the Norwalk Parking agency may be found in Section 5.1.2.3.



The following table illustrates some of the strategies that may be used to price parking:

| Parking Pricing Strategies | |
|---|--|
| Parking Transportation Allowance | Provides employees with a monetary credit towards purchasing commuting related transportation goods and services. Employees use credits (i.e., 'transportation allowance') to purchase their own transportation or pay for their own parking. Other versions of a transportation allowance program might allow employees to select from a menu of transportation goods and services that take advantage of tax incentives and business deductions. |
| Unbundled Parking Leases | A lease is unbundled when the charge for building or office space is separate from charges for parking spaces and there is the flexibility to vary the number of parking spaces rented. By unbundling parking leases, employers can use parking pricing strategies to reduce parking demand and reduce company parking expenses. Employers who are aware of parking costs may have the ability to reduce parking expenses and better use existing parking resources. |
| Parking Fees or Charges | Parking rates can be based on time, day, or month. Parking charges target on-street or off-street parking. It can include pricing strategies to discourage all-day single occupant vehicle (SOV) parking. This can reduce parking demand in an area or free up parking for other short-term uses such as customer parking. |
| Tax Incentives and Disincentives | Federal, state, regional, and local tax rules may impact the types of parking management incentives that employers wish to offer. For example, some cities place a tax on parking. This tax can increase the cost of parking, thus serving as a disincentive to drive. |
| Peak Hour Pricing | Increasing parking charges during peak periods (i.e., during a major entertainment event) can influence how and when drivers use parking facilities. Peak hour pricing can thereby reduce demand for parking spaces during these periods. |
| In-Lieu Parking Fees or Assessment Districts | Involves the collection of parking fees from a group of building owners and/or employers. The funds are used for parking improvements in the specific area. This can encourage shared-use of parking facilities. |
| Parking Enforcement | Local jurisdictions can step up enforcement of parking regulations as a means to ensure that changes in parking management policies do not create negative 'spillover' impacts to adjacent neighborhoods. Increased enforcement can enhance local jurisdiction revenues and create an incentive to obey parking restrictions. |
| Parking Cash-Out | Allows employees the opportunity to choose a parking space or receive cash equivalent of the space (based on the 'out-of-pocket costs to the employer'). The employee can determine whether to use the cash for alternative modes of transportation or keep the funds. |