

Give Workers a Ride, Give Employment a Boost

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Metropolitan **Planning** Council



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For more than 85 years, the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) has made the Chicago region a better place to live and work by partnering with businesses, communities, and governments to address the area's toughest planning and development challenges. MPC works to solve today's urgent problems while consistently thinking ahead to prepare the region for the needs of tomorrow. For more information, visit metroplanning.org.

Introduction

Business leaders' familiar refrain about the shortage of qualified workers has led many to conclude that a mismatch in skills is the primary challenge US employers face today. Far fewer people would imagine that transportation is also a major challenge.

Yet it is.

Many Americans are unemployed or underemployed precisely because they lack access to reliable transportation. Those who can't afford a car depend on public transit, but the practicality of that option varies widely. Although the transportation systems of major US cities enable millions of Americans to commute to work, not everyone has equal access. High cost or burdensome routes make it difficult, if not impossible, for many people to get to where the jobs are or to hold down a job for long.

At 234 square miles, Chicago is one of the nation's most sprawling cities. In the Chicago metro area, more than half a million people have no personal vehicle and live more than half a mile from rapid rail transit. Transportation obstacles disproportionately affect people of color in the region, according to reports by the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC). Mobility is one of the toughest urban challenges, and has profound implications for equity and prosperity. Indeed, as many studies have shown, there is a clear link between transportation access and upward mobility.¹ That's why city planners increasingly view mobility as a key to the well-being of individuals and entire cities—"an inseparable component of economic development," as one city's director of mobility and infrastructure called it.

Recently, BCG and MPC joined forces to examine the transportation disconnect between workers and employers in Chicago. (See the sidebar "What Inspired This Study.") We devised a practical approach employers can follow to create viable employer-sponsored solutions to alleviate the commuting difficulties their workers face—expanding access to jobs, while helping their own bottom line.

Five Reasons Employers Should Sponsor Employee Transportation Programs

We see five compelling reasons that Chicago-area companies ought to consider sponsoring a transportation program.

Employer-sponsored transportation programs help companies find and retain qualified workers. Many companies, particularly startups and small to medium-sized businesses on the low-to-middle range of the pay scale have a tough enough time finding and keeping workers. By sponsoring transportation solutions, they can expand the pool of eligible workers, raising their chances of securing a quality workforce and maintaining productivity. Employee retention is financially crucial: less turnover means fewer resources spent on searching, hiring, and training. In short, it is good for the bottom line.

It helps employees stay employed. Many workers face difficult commutes, a situation that can affect their performance in many ways, including: ability to arrive on time, number of absences, morale, and productivity. Transportation programs help workers get to work and hold down a job; and job stability helps people build wealth.

It benefits the company's brand. Sponsorship gets recognized—by employees, government, the press, social media, and the public in general. A transportation program is a sign of a company's good citizenship: proof that it abides by the principle of doing well by doing good. And as numerous studies have shown, customers' and consumers' purchasing decisions are increasingly influenced by the social consciousness and sense of responsibility that businesses demonstrate.

1. Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline, and Emmanuel Saez, "Where is the Land of Opportunity? The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the United States," National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 19843, January 2014; revised June 2014. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w19843>.

It contributes to the region's economic vitality. Apart from the microeconomic benefits of transportation programs, companies that undertake them are building stronger communities and a stronger Chicago region. When individual businesses succeed with their sponsored programs, their example encourages others to take up the practice. Neighboring companies team up, and transportation vendors are inspired to develop more (and more cost-effective) solutions. Successful solutions can encourage entrepreneurs and smaller businesses or companies offering low- to mid-wage jobs to envision a vibrant future in Chicago.

It works. Numerous Chicago-area companies, big and small, regional and global, spanning a broad range of industries, have already instituted programs to ease their workers' transportation difficulties and broaden their appeal to potential employees—with positive results. Among them: Bosch, McDonald's, Method, and CA Ventures.

Even during the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, “essential” workers—those with jobs in health care, grocery stores, food service, and sanitation, for example—needed to commute to work, many via public transit. People we depend on who do not have the option of working from home will continue to need transportation assistance.

The Transportation Disconnect

As in many US urban areas, connecting workers to employment opportunities in the Chicago metro area is a major challenge. Chicago runs the nation's second-largest public transportation system, yet according to the Chicago MPC, more than half a million people—some 6% of the region's households—live more than half a mile from rail transit and do not have a car. But the distance between home and the rail station is only part of the problem: the route to job centers is often long and arduous. A two-hour trip requiring three connections is simply unsustainable.

Chicago's heightened business activity in recent years has not alleviated the situation. The neighborhoods traditionally removed from economic development and opportunity—those mainly on the south and west sides of the city—were largely untouched by recent downtown growth. Changing demographics, along with the city's higher-than-average degree of racial segregation, has created a growing economic divide, exacerbated by the region's geographic expanse. According to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), approximately 2.8 million Chicago area residents live in “economically disconnected areas” (EDAs). These are defined as census areas with a

high proportion of low-income households and populations with a greater-than-regional-average number of minorities or people with limited proficiency in English. Residents of EDAs lag in income, employment level, and educational attainment. Many EDAs lack strong transit service and are cut off from centers of employment, especially employment locations outside of the downtown. (See Exhibit 1.)

In surveys and focus groups we've conducted, people tell us they want to work. But especially for people without access to a car, the long distances involved in getting to a job, combined with the limited number of transit options, result in painfully long, if not impossible, commutes. This is particularly true for residents of Chicago's Southside and Westside. CMAP calculated that on average EDA residents with the longest commutes spend 58 hours a year more than the average Chicagoan commuting to work.² One in ten residents of Cook County live in so-called transit “deserts,” where transportation is either hard to access or woefully infrequent.³ Apart from the lack of available mass transit, some 13% of Chicago-area households lack a car, and 25% have only one vehicle and live more than a half mile from a rail transit station. These statistics are especially striking when we consider that more than 70% of the region's households have more than one adult.⁴

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Workers aren't the only ones disadvantaged by transportation obstacles. Employers have long felt the effects in the form of worker shortages and longer-than-average times to fill positions. Regardless of COVID-19's longer-term impact on the labor supply, employers whose workers struggle with transportation access will continue to experience increased absenteeism and attrition. Absenteeism costs employers in the form of wages for substitute labor, for hiring excess capacity and maintaining productivity. A high attrition rate raises employer costs; on average, for every employee who leaves, an employer spends the equivalent of 20% of that person's salary finding and training a replacement. Worker shortages and the time to hire take their toll on productivity, and morale often suffers as existing employees bear the brunt.

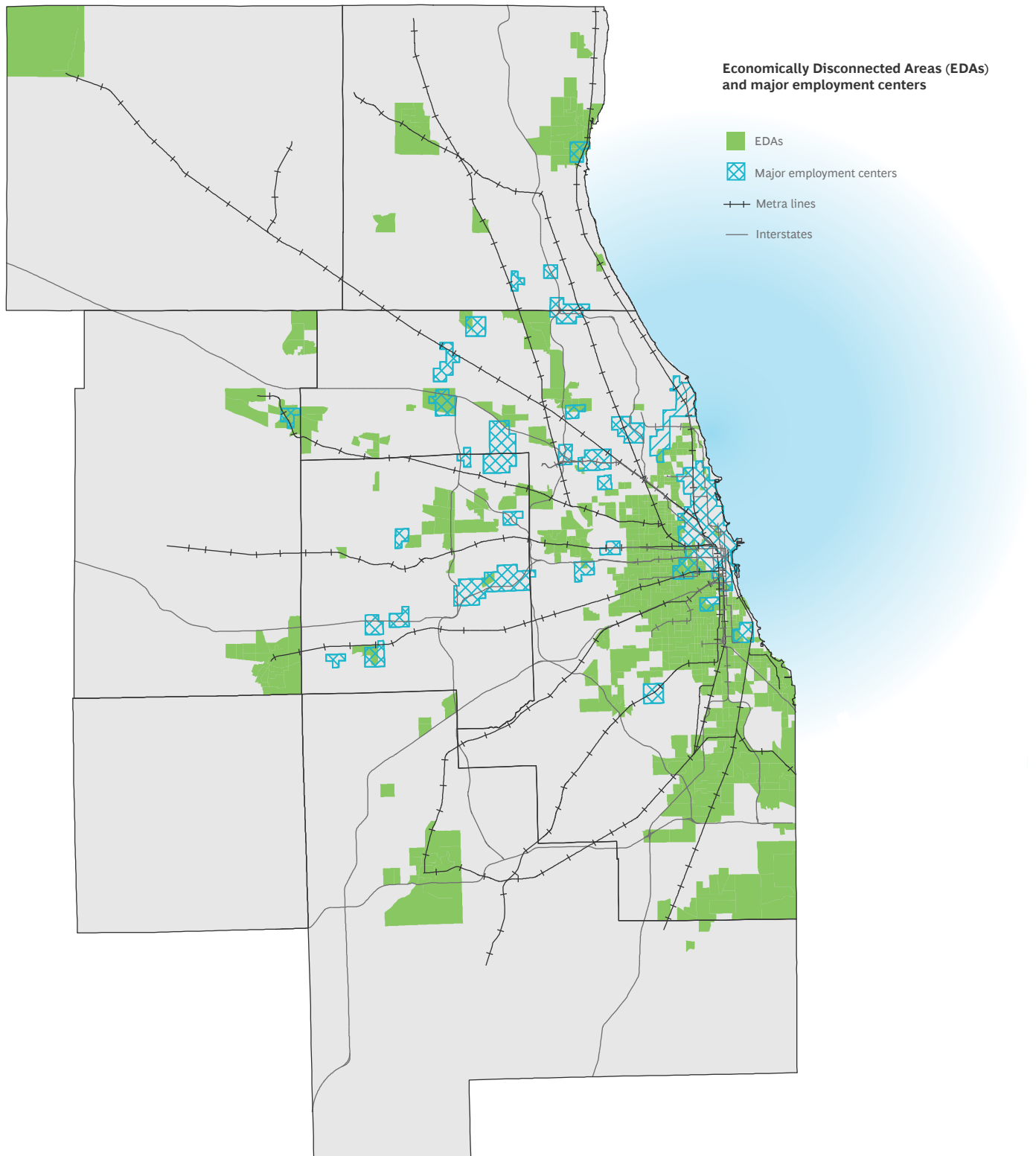
Whether and when large infrastructure projects get under way to expand transit coverage is certainly an important question. But employers and workers cannot wait, and some transportation problems can be solved in creative, incremental ways that don't necessarily require huge capital investments or top-down government interventions.

2. https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/updates/all/-/asset_publisher/UIMfSLnFfMB6/content/travel-patterns-in-economically-disconnected-area-clusters.

3. https://www.cnt.org/sites/default/files/publications/CNT_TransitDesertsCookCounty_0.pdf.

4. <https://www.metroplanning.org/multimedia/publication/897>.

Exhibit 1 - Residents in Metropolitan Chicago's Economically Disconnected Areas Often Lack a Strong Transit Connection to Employment Centers



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; "Transit deserts don't serve workers" (Chicago Tribune); Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning analysis of American Community Survey data, 5 year estimates, 2010-14.



What Inspired this Study

The Chicago Metropolitan Planning Council's roadmap, [Our Equitable Future](#), was the main impetus for this joint project. The roadmap proposed recommendations in many issue areas, including transportation, to improve racial equity in the Chicago region. MPC has a long history of focusing on transportation and mobility problems affecting the metropolitan area. In its [Transit Means Business](#) initiative, MPC brought together businesses leaders, transit providers, and public officials to identify a path toward a more transit-supportive Chicago. MPC's study, [Toward Universal Mobility](#), examined ways to improve mobility, especially for people with disabilities, so they can achieve greater labor force participation.

In a similar vein, Boston Consulting Group has worked with other cities on public-private mobility initiatives to benefit workers. In Detroit, BCG and city officials and planners

joined forces in an unprecedented private-public partnership to address the city's most pressing mobility issues. This project yielded six data-driven transportation initiatives geared toward improving neighborhood mobility, accessibility to the downtown, electric vehicle use, and traffic safety. All are currently being pursued. In Pittsburgh, BCG's Center for Public Impact hosted Mobiliti, a transportation conference to connect employers and residents in order for them to work together developing an employer-funded workforce transportation program. BCG has also worked with the city of Boston (in conjunction with the World Economic Forum, as part of our [long-term urban mobility initiative](#)) on a real-life pilot program testing autonomous vehicles in the city.

Our two organizations were brought together while participating on the Chicago mayor's Mobility Taskforce.

The Payoff for Both Sides

Employer-sponsored transportation programs are viable, quicker-to-implement solutions that can yield mutually beneficial results. Research shows that when transportation services are available to low-wage workers, these workers report that they not only enjoy greater access to jobs, but that they can also boost their earning potential. In addition, simulations suggest that employees gain long-term benefits in both work and life. Consistent employment and job stability give them access to benefits such as health insurance, retirement savings, and paid sick days, along with general financial security. These benefits enable workers to build and preserve wealth. Their transition to stable employment produces broader societal benefits for taxpayers and other low-wage workers in local markets.

Employers stand to gain as well. Beyond getting access to a larger pool of potential employees, companies can realize a tangible financial benefit from sponsoring transportation programs. As our ROI calculator shows, offering a mobility solution can be less expensive than the cost of attrition and the costs associated with constant rehiring.

The experience of a Chicago-area call center illustrates these mutual benefits well. Because of the company's location, employees who live on the south and west sides of the city had long and trying commutes. Those with cars had difficulties too; onsite parking was limited, and drivers risked getting ticketed and fined for parking on side streets. Arriving at work on time is especially important at a call center, and being late just a few times can lead to employee termination. After analyzing the main transportation obstacles its workers faced, the company invested in a pilot program. Every week, employees receive ride-hail credits to use for daily commuting or whenever they need backup transportation to reach the job site. Both employee satisfaction and job retention rose as a result. "Having this pilot made it feel like they care," said one worker. "The program helps me as a way to sustain my job," noted another.

Where the Need Is Greatest

A significant proportion of the Chicago area workforce relies on public transit to get to work. And the obstacles affect workers across the job spectrum, from low- to mid-level and high-paying jobs. The problems are most acute for employers not centrally located within the transit systems—such as those in the suburbs and on the far north side—as well as those whose employees live in areas disconnected from mass transit.

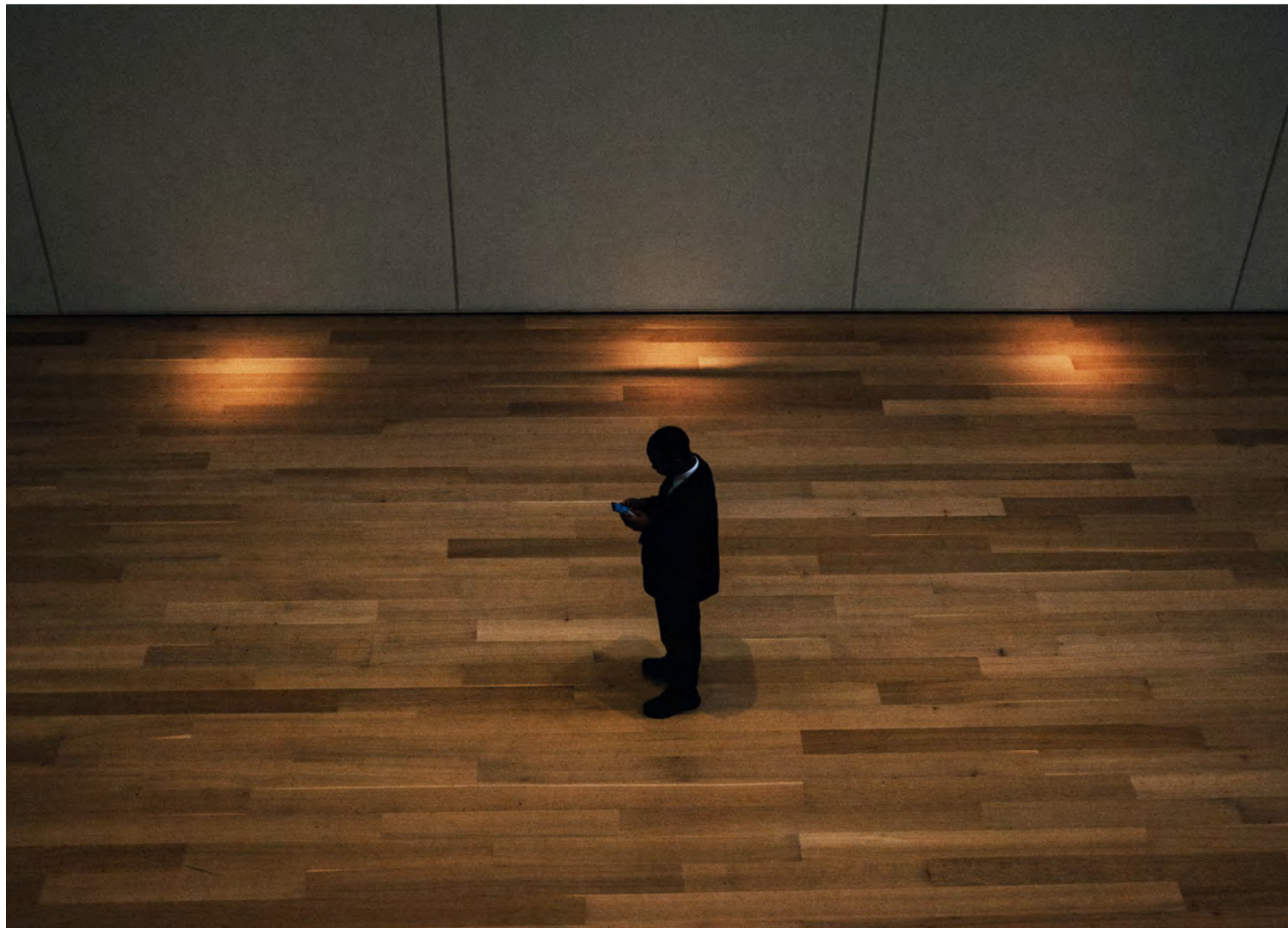
Throughout the US, employers whose workers lack access to reliable transportation experience higher-than-average

rates of employee absenteeism, tardiness, and attrition, as well as a longer-than-average time to hire new employees. As a result, they often suffer reduced productivity and lower employee satisfaction. This is true of companies across the pay scale spectrum. Some companies with primarily high-wage employees have already taken action to streamline commutes for their employees. In California, Apple and Google have implemented transportation initiatives to better connect talent, especially younger professionals, with their employment centers. In Chicago, Bosch (among others) subsidizes Pace bus lines so that they make several stops at its locations during the morning and evening commutes, a measure that proved to be important in attracting young talent. A more extreme example is McDonald's, which relocated its headquarters to the West Loop area after 40 years in suburban Oakbrook. Transportation was at the root of the move. The company discovered it was having trouble attracting talent from the broader labor pool that live in the city or can easily commute downtown on transit. At the same time, McDonald's was struggling to retain many lower-wage workers whose commute required two or more separate bus rides each way.

Offering a mobility solution can be less expensive than the cost of attrition and the costs associated with constant rehiring.

Highly paid employees can manage without employer-sponsored transportation programs because they have more disposable income to increase their transportation resilience and can spend on alternatives to mass transit. Lower-paid workers, in contrast, have fewer choices. Economically disconnected individuals may not be able to afford housing near dependable transit; their options are an onerous commute or unemployment. Holding down a job thus represents a huge challenge. These workers are most in need of transportation solutions, so companies offering low- to medium-wage jobs have the most to gain in developing solutions. Yet so far they have not been as proactive in developing solutions. (See the sidebar "Job Connections" for a sample approach to matching these two needs.)

What options do employers have that are affordable and practicable, and would address the needs of their workers? The BCG team, in conjunction with MPC, has developed a toolkit that helps employers assess their needs and those of their employees, weigh their options and the potential costs, compare providers, design solutions that will have maximum impact, and develop an implementation plan. As with any important initiative, it's a good idea to develop metrics to establish a baseline and track results. This will help employers understand employee uptake, satisfaction, and attrition rates, and provide important data to make any needed changes.



Job Connections

To get an idea of how the transportation disconnect in Chicago could be bridged, we mapped the destination zones of commuters from South and West Chicago EDAs. Then we identified three zones with clusters of jobs suitable for the target demographic: Schaumburg, O'Hare Airport, and the I-55 corridor. (See the exhibit.) At present, few of those target workers are currently employed in these zones, owing to transportation barriers.

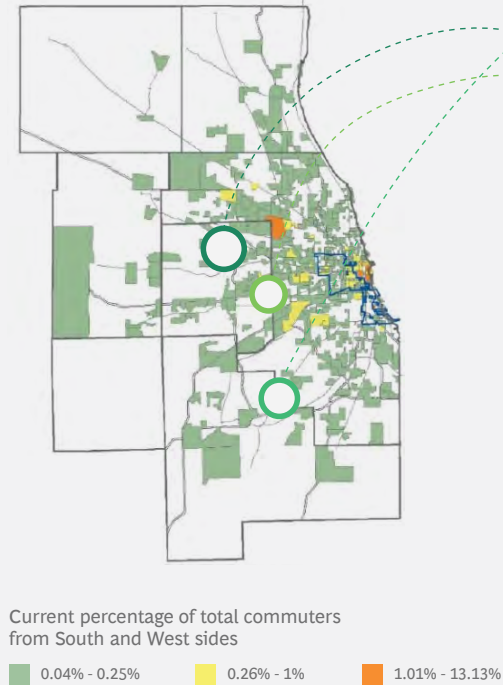
In Schaumburg, we identified eight major employers in lower-paying industries (retail, manufacturing, distribution, and health care) that have a total of roughly 7,000 workers. These employers could be potential partners for an EDA pilot program. At O'Hare, which currently has one of the largest concentrations of workers from the south and west

sides (slightly more than 13%), the logistics, wholesale trade, and hospitality industries predominate, and the average company employs more than 50 people. Transportation programs for these companies' workers would most need last-mile solutions. In the surrounding areas of Elk Grove Village and Bensenville, where the predominant employers for lower-wage workers are small manufacturers, any pilot program would involve coordinating a carpool among the companies in order to be economically feasible. In the I-55 corridor, where Midway Airport is the heart of economic activity, a mix of industries (such as logistics, wholesale, manufacturing, hospitality) could be served through pilots drawing on workers from DuPage and Will County EDAs.

Matching Worker Pools to Three Employment Zones

Key industries, existing transportation solutions

Destinations for workers commuting from South and West Chicago EDAs¹



Source: Inclusive Growth Strategy Paper by Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)

¹Covering approximately 175 hourly workers who commute from South and West side Chicago (~85% of workers)

Take Stock of the Company's Situation and Employees' Needs

The potential solutions available to employers are varied, and include subsidizing dedicated bus stops during commuting periods, sponsoring ride-hailing, organizing car pools or shared rides, and even coordinating with neighboring employers to sponsor transportation service. To choose the solution with the greatest impact, the company must first understand the transportation context: its own as well as its employees'. Doing so involves the following steps.

Establish your situation. There are five key considerations or factors that define your company's transportation profile—and that go into the solution design (see Exhibit 2):

- **Location:** Where is your company located in relation to transit? If transit is accessible, the solution or solutions could involve making it easier to connect employees

with the current transit. If it's not accessible, the options might include ways to make it accessible or use modes outside of the public transit system.

- **Number of locations:** Does your organization have more than one site? If so, what is their proximity to one another? This will affect how many end points are involved and even whether to reassign employees to more convenient locations.
- **Employee clusters:** Are employees' homes concentrated in certain neighborhoods or areas? Do they work similar hours? Depending on their addresses and shift schedules, a shuttle or individual solution (such as a ride-hailing app) might be most cost effective.
- **Number of nearby employers:** How many other employers are located in your vicinity that could also benefit from a transportation program? With a sufficient baseline number, there may be an opportunity to develop shared solutions.

Exhibit 2 - Define Employer Context With Five Primary Factors



Source: BCG and MPC analysis.

**Numerous Chicago-area companies,
big and small, have already instituted
programs to ease their workers'
transportation difficulties and
broaden their appeal to potential
employees—with positive results.**



- **Special labor requirements:** What contractual obligations—for example, to unions, third-party outsourcing providers, or public or private agencies sponsoring a workforce program—are you under? These might affect the design of a transportation solution or even how you position it. For example, to avoid complicating union negotiations, you might need to steer clear of calling sponsored transportation a benefit.

To define the employee context, companies should understand that in general, employees seek affordable, convenient, reliable, and safe transportation. The obstacles they face can vary, of course, and call for different solutions.

Identify employee needs. We defined three crucial employee pain points that need to be considered in developing transportation solutions tailored to your workforce, encompassing employees concerns for convenience, reliability, and safety.

Using surveys, interviews, and focus groups, you can identify the specific pain points of your workforce. You will need to consider these factors for each applicable employee; the granular information will help you develop needs segments and prioritize solutions capable of achieving the greatest impact.

- **Distance from a mass transit station or stop:** How close (or far away) does the employee live to a train or bus stop?
- **Complexity of commute:** What is the actual travel time and method? How many transfers? How much wait time?
- **Safety:** Does the employee worry about safety en route to or from work? Consider shift times: if waiting at a particular station or walking in a certain area doesn't feel safe, people will avoid it.

In analyzing these considerations to develop robust solutions, you can rely on existing employees' pain points and regard them as a proxy for those of potential employees; the information you gather will yield more general insights that can be factored into your thinking when seeking new hires.

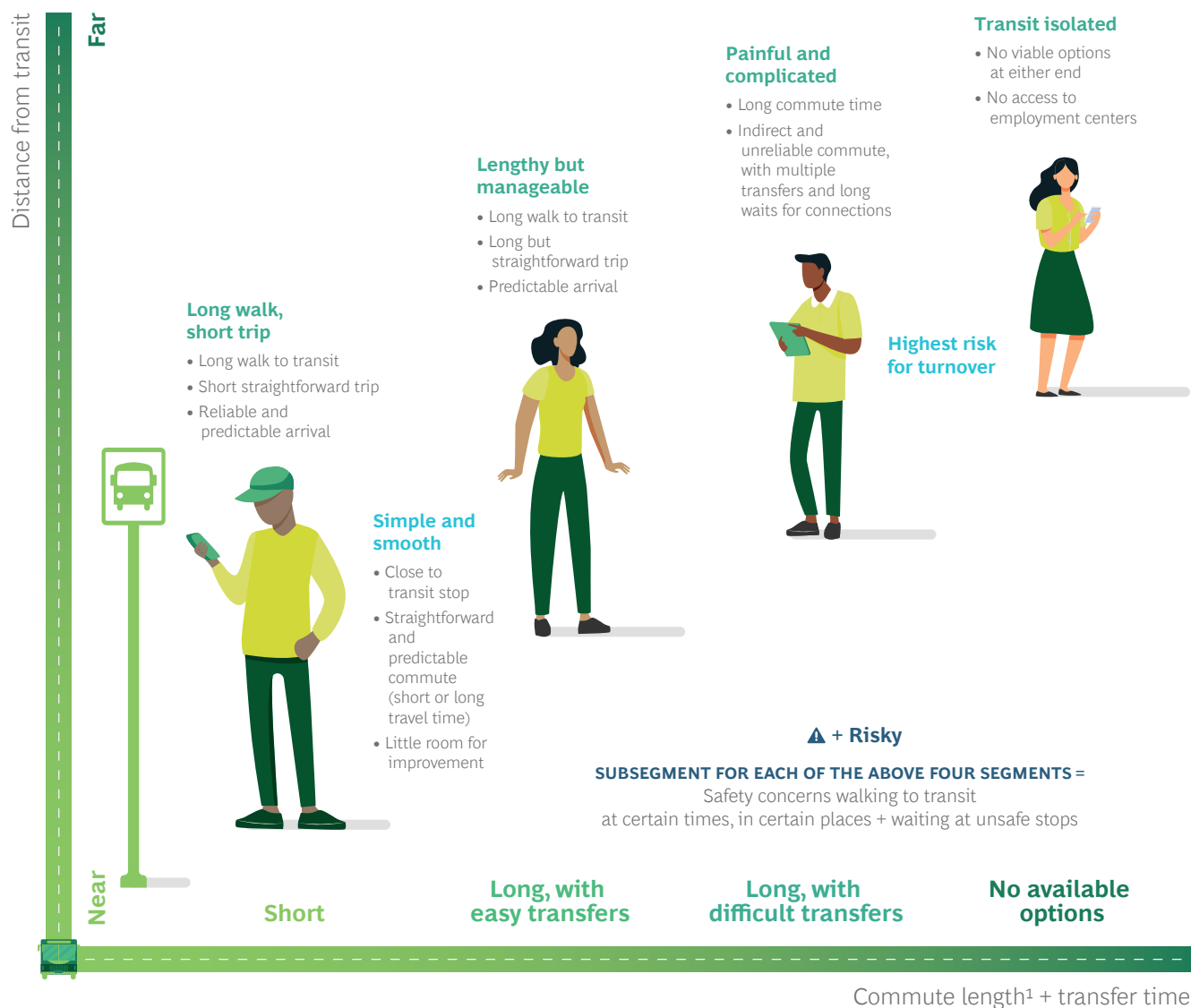
Segment employees by needs. With individual employee survey results in hand, you can now segment employees according to the nature of their commuting experience, based on a matrix of the key criteria: distance from transit, length of commute, ease of transfers, and safety en route

to the transit stop or while waiting. By segmenting your workforce, you can readily identify the areas of greatest need and target the most appropriate solutions. (See [Exhibit 3.](#))

- **Simple and smooth:** This group of employees lives close to a transit stop and enjoys a straightforward and reliable commute. Whether short or long, their commute is easy and there is little that could be done to substantially improve it. But you should consider offering a pre-tax transit benefit or otherwise subsidizing transit fares to reduce commuting costs for this segment.
- **Long walk, short trip:** Individuals in this segment have a long walk to the nearest transit station, but once on board, their commute is short and predictable in length of time. These employees need a first- and/or last-mile solution.
- **Lengthy but manageable:** For this segment, the walk to a rail stop is long, as is the ride. But the trip is straightforward and arrival time is predictable. Like those in the "long walk, short trip" group, these employees need a first- and last-mile solution, and possibly also a solution that would reduce travel time.
- **Painful and complicated:** Individuals in this segment face a number of commuting difficulties, such as a long walk to the nearest transit stop, unreliable transfers, and a long trip to get to work. Our research suggests this segment of workers has the highest risk of attrition. These employees are the ones who most need an end-to-end solution that makes their commute more manageable—for example, van or bus service, a carpool, or an employer shuttle.
- **Isolated:** These individuals have no access to transit, either at their starting point or at the employer end point. Without transit options, this segment has no access to employment centers. They most need either a connection to public transit or an employer-sponsored solution, such as van or bus service, carpools, or an employer shuttle. The solution will depend on the geographic concentration of employees and the number of destination points.

On top of these challenges, many individuals in each of these segments also face real or perceived safety risks, either en route to or while waiting at transit stops. Thus, solutions must also include appropriate safety considerations.

Exhibit 3 - Define Employer Context With Five Primary Factors



Source: Inclusive Growth Strategy Paper by Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), July 2017.

Note: Though excluded from segmentation, in select cases there may also be employees with car access but significant parking obstacles

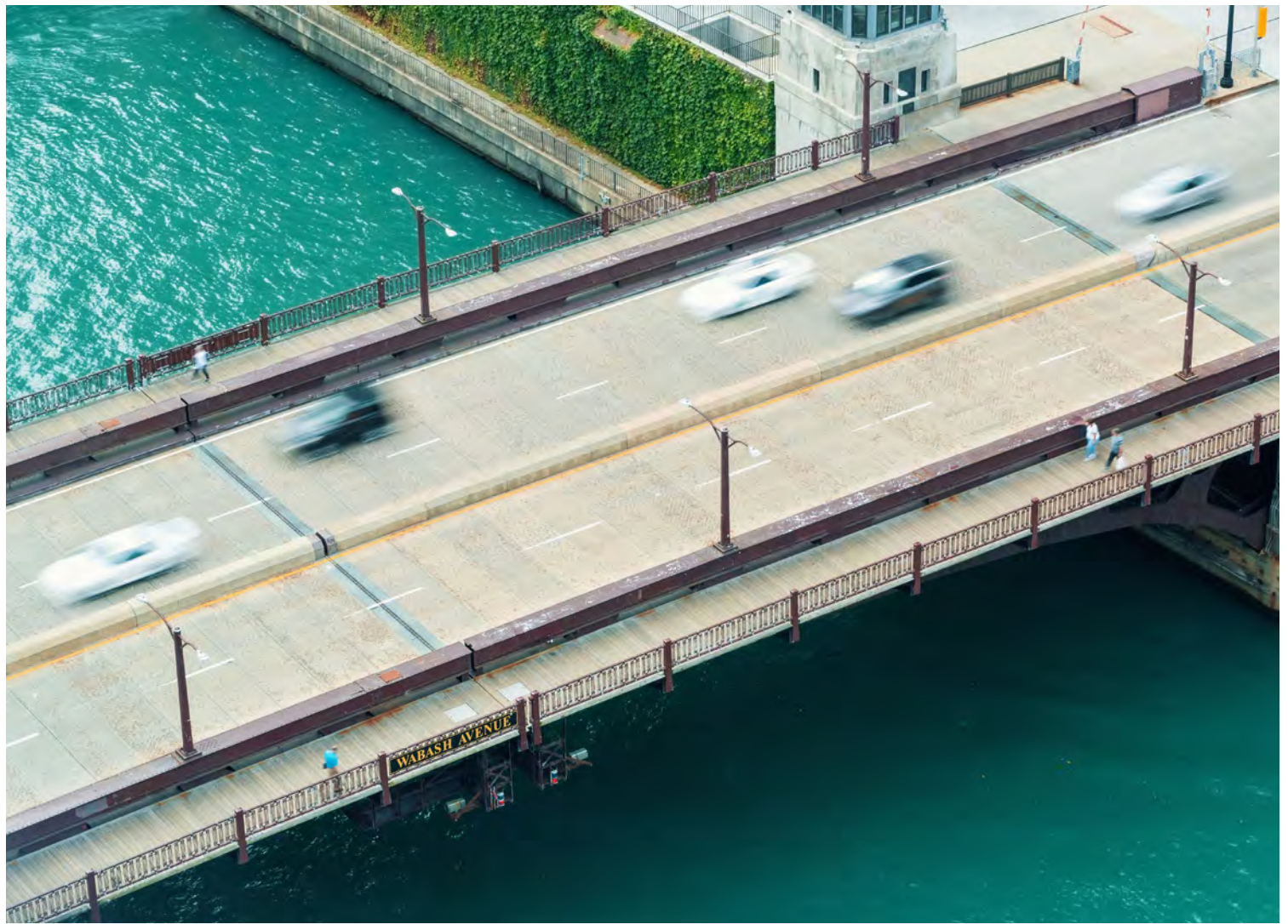
¹ Long commute signifies transit route significantly longer than driving route

Weigh the Options

There are many potential solutions you can offer. They include end-to-end transportation, such as ride-hailing (door-to-door or to the nearest corner), car-sharing or vanpool, carpooling with routes open to the public, employer-organized routes for employee carpools (where an employee driver uses his or her personal car to drive co-workers), or a dedicated corner-to-door shuttle. Solutions to address first- and last-mile issues include ride-hailing or employer-provided shuttles that transport the employee either from their home to a nearby transit stop or from the

company's door to a nearby stop. (See the sidebar "Three Promising Transportation Solutions Already in Testing.")

Take, for example, employees in the "long walk, short trip" segment. For them, getting to work is especially uncomfortable in bad weather. But their commute is short and predictable, and without transfers. The perceived lack of safety could be overcome with a solution that helps connect them to transit: for example, a company shuttle that runs routes to transit stations, or a ride-hail service, such as Uber or Lyft, that transports employees in this segment to the nearest transit stop.



Three Promising Transportation Solutions Already in Testing

A number of innovative transportation support projects that could inform design solutions for Chicago employers are already being tested in several US cities. In Detroit, two of five mobility pilots that BCG and BCG Digital Ventures have helped shape are providing affordable and convenient shuttles to worksites and on-demand vehicle access. At its global hub in Memphis, FedEx is fully funding bus transportation for employees throughout Memphis and neighboring rural areas and across the state line. In South Bend, Indiana, a group of employers is providing free transit

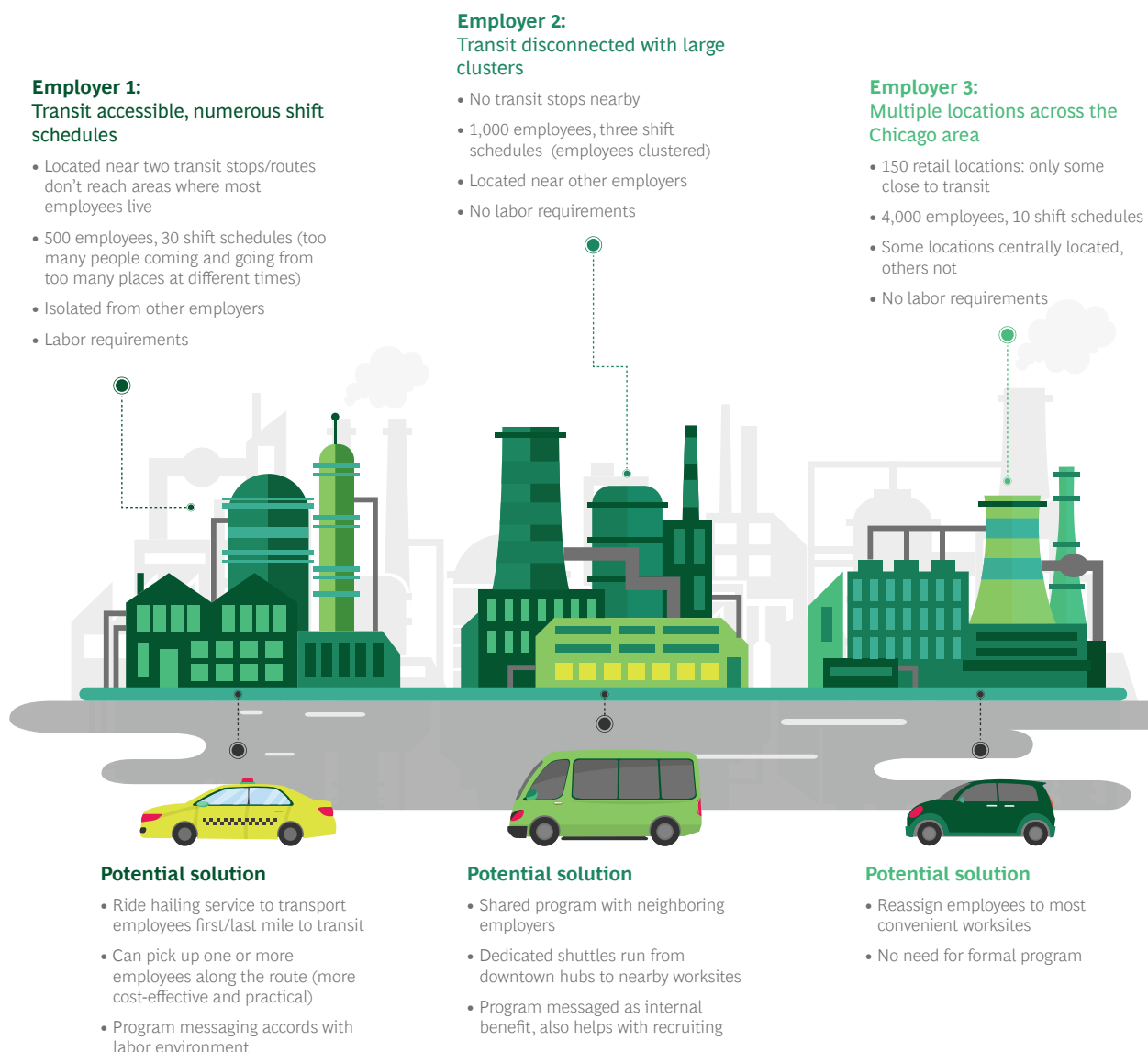
passes and discounted ride-shares to boost job access for residents. Cleveland, Ohio's novel Paradox Prize competition announced five winning ideas to solve the "no car, no job; no job, no car" paradox. One solution includes using church vans for shared and on-demand van service to job sites. Some of these micro-transit options are being developed by cities, others by non-profits that are connecting private businesses with transportation solutions through grants and other initiatives.

Exhibit 4 depicts a range of scenarios and possible solutions.

To find the optimal solution for your organization, you must first evaluate the various available choices and estimate their cost and return on investment. Next, you'll need to compare them to determine which one best fits your needs. Then you'll be ready to assess the service providers who can deliver those solutions. The toolkit we developed features templates to help employers analyze and rank the solutions and calculate their costs.

For example, a solution scorecard allows you to evaluate potential solutions according to each employee segment using red/yellow/green color-coding. This template provides a way to assess the financial criteria (such as daily cost-per-employee and the initial investment needed to launch the program), the percentage of employees aided by the program, and strategic criteria (such as convenience and reliability, flexibility, and employee well-being and fit). The ideal solution should be flexible enough to accommodate varying needs—different shift starting times, for instance—and be accessible to all. From these rankings, you can create an overall assessment. You can then examine each given solution, noting the percentage of each employee segment whose needs the solution addresses.

Exhibit 4 - Three Different Employers, Three Possible Solutions



Source: BCG Analysis.

The solution you choose must fit the company's budget and enable you to serve the most employees at the lowest cost. The ROI calculator we've developed helps companies estimate the cost of individual solutions and compare the different solutions. It allows you to compare the solution cost against the total savings you would expect from the reduction in absenteeism and turnover and the associated reduction in search, hiring, and training costs—in other words, you can determine the return on investment of your program. You can also estimate the cost to employees, if you decide to offer a subsidy to employees instead of paying for the program outright. Finally, the ROI calculator gives you the ability to determine the break-even cost—the subsidy amount you can manage without hurting the bottom line.

The ROI calculator gives you the ability to determine the break-even cost—the subsidy amount you can manage without hurting the bottom line.

The cost data can then be plugged into the solution scorecard you develop for each prospective provider. You can compare and prioritize scores, looking at their relative scores across all potential solutions in terms of cost-per-employee served and strategic criteria.

Design and Launch the Program

You may find that no one solution will do the job adequately given the different pain points and varying circumstances of your employees, so you may need to assemble multiple solutions. At this point, it makes sense to review these ideas with employees before moving ahead to implement a program, to ensure you don't overlook any important considerations, and to avoid any unforeseen roadblocks. This can be done through focus groups, surveys and comment boxes, and email communications.

Once you've identified one or more viable solutions, the next steps are fairly straightforward. The process can be as simple as working with a transportation provider that can develop service and cost scenarios for your company.

- **Research and evaluate providers.** The best provider would offer features most needed by your employees; for example, route-tracking (so employees needn't stand outside and wait in dangerous areas) or opt-in/opt-out features (facilitates changes for those with varying shift schedules). It would also match your conditions, including your budget, as well as contractual needs and requests. Finally, the provider should have experience partnering with employers for transportation solutions and ideally have a solid history of operating in Chicago, including your target areas.

- **If appropriate for your location, offer transit subsidies.** This approach could be transformative to low-wage workers, and would require only one step for your business.
- **Determine program scope.** How many employees will you cover? Would it make sense to run a pilot program first, or should you just proceed with a full rollout?
- **Secure approvals and buy-in.** Be sure to get internal approval, including from those providing funding and your legal team. Then communicate the program to employees and enroll participants. (Later, consider creating external communications to help raise brand awareness and support your recruitment efforts.)
- **Track results.** As with any initiative, you'll want to evaluate its effectiveness and the cost/benefit of your investment. Create key metrics, such as employee attrition rates and employee satisfaction, and track them pre- and post-implementation. This data can guide you over time in refining the program so both the company and your employees get the most out of it.

As cities grow, their transportation systems must meet growing demand. Improving transit infrastructure—providing equal access to transit across populations—is an obvious solution. But large capital projects require taxpayer disposition, and time. Investing to create transit-accessible jobs closer to where eligible workers live is another important solution, but it, too, can take time. In the meantime, employers need workers, and workers need access to jobs.

Our analysis demonstrates that employer-sponsored transportation programs are an important near-term solution, and one that can be good for the community as well as for employers' bottom lines. The benefits to employers are many: increased retention, reduced turnover, higher employee satisfaction, greater productivity. An employer-sponsored transportation program expands the potential hiring pool and bolsters brand image and awareness. It can also unleash network effects, sparking similar efforts by companies in similar circumstances and incentivizing transportation providers to create even more solutions.

On a macro level, employer-sponsored transportation initiatives can help stabilize economically disconnected regions and break the cycle of inequity and reduce the wealth gap. In this way, they help cities remain vibrant places that continue to attract new people and new ventures and offer residents and business the promise of a brighter future. Taking action is straightforward, and the payoff can be swift—and significant.

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About the Center for Illinois' Future

BCG's Center for Illinois' Future works to improve wellbeing in Illinois by investing BCG's teams and resources in collaboration with organizations that share our passion for driving breakthrough change in our community. We invest over \$10 million annually to place pro and low bono consulting teams with social impact and public sector leaders to drive change in their organizations and change in the world. Together we unlock transformative solutions to our city and state's biggest challenges and help improve education, accelerate innovative, inclusive economic development, and restore neighborhood vitality. We dig deep to understand the underlying causes of complex societal challenges, develop innovative, sustainable solutions, and roll up our sleeves to translate recommendations into impact. Our teams have helped to design an equitable state school funding formula; improve educational outcomes; create innovative programs to reduce youth violence; promote new approaches to inclusive economic development; develop strategies for high impact institutions; and incubate transformative social impact organizations.

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For Further Contact

Boston Consulting Group and the Metropolitan Planning Council would be happy to partner with interested companies to help them create or improve their employer-sponsored transportation program. For more information, please contact one of the authors.

