



Policy Brief #1

Transportation Policies For a More Inclusive Workforce

January 2025

This policy brief is produced by Goodwill of Western New York, in partnership with the University at Buffalo Regional Institute (UBRI). The research is intended to drive informed decision-making in workforce development that benefits underrepresented, underserved populations in the Western New York region. In support of Goodskills Career Builder, this brief is part of a collaborative effort to expand access to higher-paying careers for all individuals. It highlights policies at the local, state, and federal levels that are expanding transportation options for all residents and reducing dependence on vehicles as the only way of getting to work. Funding for the brief is from a Build Back Better Regional Challenge grant from the US Economic Development Administration.

By creating policies that incentivize alternative transportation policies, all levels of government can create a more efficient transportation system. Promoting alternative transportation can benefit everyone. Improving job opportunities for those without a car can foster local business growth, economic development, and sustainability by reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality.

This document identifies federal, state, and local policies to support alternative transportation, with findings organized by level of government, followed by topic. To make this information practical for employers, trainers, policymakers, and the public, we include icons to visually indicate specific actions that can be taken with each policy. **These symbols highlight opportunities to:**



Implement or adapt components of this policy within your workplace



Consider this approach for your community



Advocate for this or similar policies through your elected representatives



Go after funding to implement transportation solutions

Policies enable strategies.

For information related to employer-led strategies to expand transportation options for workers in WNY, please refer to this research brief.

Research Brief #7 Expanding and Retaining Talent: Employer-led Strategies for Transportation and a More Inclusive Workforce | July 2024

This is the 7th brief in a series produced by Goodwill of Western New York, in partnership with the University at Buffalo Regional Institute (UBRI). The research is intended to promote data-driven decision-making in workforce development that benefits underrepresented and underserved populations in the Western New York region. In support of Goodskills Career Builder, this brief is part of a collaborative effort to expand access to higher-paying careers for all individuals. It highlights the challenges faced by workers who do not have a vehicle for traveling to work and presents transportation strategies that employers can implement to help bridge the gap to critical and in-demand jobs. Funding for this brief is from a Build Back Better Regional Challenge grant from the US Economic Development Administration.

Indicator	With Vehicle	Without Vehicle
EMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS	278,646	28,156
# of Workers	278,646	28,156
% of Total Workforce	90%	9%
% Earning \$0/hr	6%	14%
% Earning \$10/hr	10%	24%
% Earning \$15/hr	13%	31%
% Earning \$20/hr	18%	42%
% Earning \$25/hr	24%	48%
% Earning \$30/hr	28%	54%
% Earning \$35/hr	31%	58%
% Earning \$40/hr	34%	62%
% Earning \$45/hr	37%	66%
% Earning \$50/hr	40%	70%
% Earning \$55/hr	43%	74%
% Earning \$60/hr	46%	78%
% Earning \$65/hr	49%	82%
% Earning \$70/hr	52%	86%
% Earning \$75/hr	55%	90%
% Earning \$80/hr	58%	94%
% Earning \$85/hr	61%	98%
% Earning \$90/hr	64%	100%

Context
Not having a vehicle in Western New York can significantly disadvantage job seekers. Those without a vehicle earn \$25,400 less per year, on average, and are 40 times more likely to live in poverty. There are more than 28,000 households in the Buffalo, Niagara and Tonawanda counties that do not have a vehicle. These households are more likely to live in poverty, have lower income, and have less access to a third sector job. This brief explores the transportation barriers faced by individuals who rely on alternative methods of commuting to work, as illustrated by the experiences of three hypothetical individuals. This brief also presents strategies that employers can take to bridge the gap, attract and retain qualified workers, and benefit their bottom line.

Read Online
www.goodwillwny.org/goodskillsresearch




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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The federal government can significantly promote alternative transportation modes through a variety of policy strategies. These include expanding access to public transportation, strengthening infrastructure for micromobility options like bikes and scooters, promoting complete streets that are designed for all users, incentivizing sustainable commuting, and establishing a framework for transportation planning. The following policies are organized by topic, reflecting policies being implemented, as well as those proposed to facilitate transportation options for all Americans.

HOW TO ACT ON EACH POLICY:

-  Implement or adapt components of this policy within your workplace
-  Consider this approach for your community
-  Advocate for this or similar policies through your elected representatives
-  Go after funding to implement transportation solutions




EXPANDING PUBLIC TRANSIT ACCESS

Freedom to Move Act

The Freedom to Move Act would have expanded access to public transportation by supporting fare-free systems. It would have authorized the U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT) to award competitive grants to states, local governments, transit agencies, and non-profit organizations in both rural and urban communities for a period of five years. The funding would have helped cover lost fare revenues from implementing fare-free public transit, while also allowing for improvements to existing services.

STATUS: Introduced 2023. Did not become law.

www.congress.gov/118/bills/s1282/BILLS-118s1282is.pdf




People Over Parking Act

This bill would have eliminated parking minimums across the nation, which could make new housing more affordable, encourage public transit ridership, and make neighborhoods more walkable by promoting transit-oriented development.

STATUS: Introduced 2023. Did not become law.

robertgarcia.house.gov/media/press-releases/congressman-robert-garcia-introduces-people-over-parking-act-make-housing-more




STRENGTHENING MICROMOBILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Safe Charging Electrical Bikes and Scooters Act

Safe Charging Electrical Bikes and Scooters Act authorized funding grants to local governments to purchase or install lithium-ion battery power stations and storage for electric bicycles and scooters in public places, including those managed by private entities. Investments would have created the infrastructure communities need for e-bikes and e-scooters.

STATUS: Introduced 2023. Did not become law.

www.congress.gov/118/bills/hr1665/BILLS-118hr1665ih.pdf




E-Bike Share Act

This bill directed US DOT leadership to develop a grant program that facilitates electric bicycle sharing services in disadvantaged communities across the US. Grants would have supported the purchase of e-bikes, e-bike infrastructure, community education and outreach, use incentives for residents, subsidized memberships, and more.

STATUS: Introduced 2023. Did not become law.

www.congress.gov/118/bills/hr6659/BILLS-118hr6659ih.pdf




CREATING COMPLETE STREETS

Complete Streets Act of 2024

This bill would have required all states to have a complete streets programs, making public roadways safe and accessible for various modes of travel such as walking, bicycling, transit, mobility devices, autos, expanding accessibility for individuals of all abilities.

STATUS: Introduced 2024. Did not become law.

www.congress.gov/118/bills/s3670/BILLS-118s3670is.pdf




INCENTIVIZING COMMUTING OPTIONS

IRS Commuter Benefits

This program allows pre-tax deductions for qualified transportation expenses, including transit passes and commuter vehicles that accommodate six or more passengers, not including the driver. This makes public transportation and carpooling more affordable.

STATUS: Became law in 1993.

www.irs.gov/publications/p15b




Bicycle Commuter Act of 2023

This bill would have reinstated and expanded the tax exclusion for employer-provided fringe benefits for bicycle commuting. It would have allowed employees a bicycle commuting benefit equal to 30% of parking fringe benefits. Employers could have provided up to \$24.30 (30% of the current \$81 parking benefit) in pre-tax dollars for bicycle commuting expenses. This reduces a worker's taxable income and incentivizes bicycling as a way to get to work. It also revised definitions applicable to bicycle commuting benefits to make electric bicycles and certain scooters eligible for tax exclusion.

STATUS: Introduced 2023. Did not become law.

www.congress.gov/118/bills/hr3473/BILLS-118hr3473ih.pdf




Parking Cash Out

This bill stipulated that an employer-provided parking benefit is not a "qualified benefit" for purposes of tax exemption until employees are offered the option to receive a cash equivalent benefit in lieu of parking.

STATUS: Introduced 2023. Did not become law.

www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/6660/text




PROMOTING WORK FLEXIBILITY

Telework Enhancement Act

This act promotes telework for federal agencies and federal workers. The policy reduces reliance on personal vehicles for daily commutes and expands work opportunities for individuals that face transportation barriers.

STATUS: Introduced 2009. Became law in 2010.

www.opm.gov/telework/training/employee-telework-fundamentals/Course/documents/telework-guide.pdf




PLANNING FOR EQUITABLE TRANSPORTATION

U.S. Department of Transportation Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026

This plan provides a framework and roadmap for leveraging investments to creating a transportation system for all Americans that is safe, clean and equitable.

www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2022-04/US_DOT_FY2022-26_Strategic_Plan.pdf




MANAGING TRANSPORTATION DEMAND

Mobility Options, Resiliency, and Efficiently (MORE) through Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

This bill would have codified a definition for "transportation demand management (TDM) and related strategies. It would have developed a new TDM program and created a university-based transportation center focused on TDM research and strategies. It would have established a national advisory committee under the FHA to direct federal resources and policies in support of TDM objectives, and it would have required each state to establish an advisory committee.

STATUS: Introduced 2023. Did not become law.

www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/2514/all-info



HOW TO ACT ON EACH POLICY:


-  **Implement or adapt components of this policy within your workplace**
-  **Advocate for this or similar policies through your elected representatives**
-  **Consider this approach for your community**
-  **Go after funding to implement transportation solutions**



FUNDING FOR TRANSPORTATION

US DOT Transportation Grants
STATUS: Ongoing.


The US Department of Transportation (DOT) offers grants to states and localities for developing and improving transportation systems with a focus on all forms of transportation including bike, pedestrian, transit and rail. Equity is a new strategic DOT goal, with the recognition that transportation is an opportunity enabler that connects people to jobs, training and resources. For instance, the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program has \$44.5 million for projects that enable people to walk, bike, and ride public transit to get to work and other destinations.



www.transportation.gov/

Inflation Reduction Act of 2022
STATUS: Became law in 2022.


This legislation represented a significant federal investment in combatting climate change. It also provided over \$3 billion in funding for a Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program to be used on projects that improve affordable transportation access, neighborhood walkability and safety.



www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/5376/text
www.fhwa.dot.gov/inflation-reduction-act/fact_sheets/nae_grant_program.cfm

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
STATUS: Became law in 2012.

This is a federal grant program providing flexible funding from the Federal Highway Administration for projects that promote safe, reliable, and convenient non-motorized transportation. This includes pedestrian and bike paths, improved public transit access, and community enhancements for transportation. In June 2024, Governor Hochul announced nearly \$100 million in TAP funding for New York State, with projects awarded to places in WNY that include South Buffalo, Lancaster, and the Seneca Nation.




www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/
www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-977-million-support-enhancement-alternative-transportation-options

INTEGRATING TRANSPORTATION INTO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
STATUS: Became law in 2014.


WIOA was enacted to bolster the national workforce system with funding and guidelines for state and local workforce systems. It aims to help job seekers access jobs, education, training and support services, and its programs help employers hire and retain skilled workers. WIOA streamlined a complex network of federal programs under the umbrella of local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). Four WDBs offer services across the five counties of WNY. With federal funding, WDBs can provide training through eligible training providers to unemployed adults, dislocated workers, and other qualified individuals. Federal regulations allow limited support services to facilitate participation in training and work. This includes transportation assistance such as bus passes and gas cards.



rochesterworks.org/images/Policy_103_WIOA_Supportive_Services_6-21-2022.pdf
apps.labor.ny.gov/ETPL_V2/WIOAOverview.xhtml

The WIOA Reauthorization Act
STATUS: Introduced 2023. Passed House. Has not become law.


As WIOA celebrates its 10-year anniversary, the act’s reauthorization process offers an opportunity to enhance national workforce policy and the effective allocation of federal funding for workforce development. In April 2024, the US House passed the Stronger Workforce for America Act. It prioritizes upskilling workers, employer-led skill-building initiatives, greater accountability for eligible training providers, career pathways, and work-based learning for youth. While updated legislation could recognize the critical role of wraparound services, groups such as the National Skills Coalition believe the bill does not go far enough, suggesting that funding for wraparound services could be inadvertently reduced under this bill’s required allocation for training without consideration of wraparound service needs.



democrats-edworkforce.house.gov/imo/media/doc/a_stronger_workforce_for_america_act_fact_sheet1.pdf

Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act
STATUS: Became law in 2018.


Known as Perkins V, this bill is designed to improve career and technical education (CTE) with funding to states and local school districts to support curriculum development, training, equipment purchases and support services for students. Wraparound services are a component, providing students with the services they need to be successful. While transportation is not explicitly mentioned, a major tenant of the updated legislation is data-driven decision making on local spending that meets local needs.



careertech.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/PerkinsV_One-Pager_082418.pdf

National Apprenticeship Act
STATUS: Introduced 2023. Did not become law.


This bill would have expanded apprenticeship opportunities in nontraditional occupations such as manufacturing and tech. Spending on wraparound services such as transportation and childcare would have been an eligible use of funds.



www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/2851/text

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
STATUS: Became law in 1996.


TANF provides block grants to states to help fund workforce development initiatives for low-income individuals. Funds can be used to provide transportation assistance. Some local departments of social services have used other State funding sources, such as the NYS Transportation Initiative, to expand services to TANF participants including driver education, auto loans, auto insurance, gas card, and car repairs.



otda.ny.gov/policy/tanf/TANF-State-Plan-2024-2026.pdf
otda.ny.gov/resources/accountability/2023-2024-WHEELS.asp

Jumpstart Our Businesses by Supporting Students Act of 2023
STATUS: Introduced 2023. Did not become law.

By expanding eligibility for federal Pell grants, this bill would have expanded access to training and economic opportunity for students who are not college-bound. While not directly addressing transportation, this legislation would have indirectly expanded access to transportation options by increasing the number of individuals with the skills and qualifications needed for higher-paying, in-demand jobs.




www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/161

NEW YORK STATE GOVERNMENT

State policy can significantly impact transportation commuting options and reduce barriers to employment. By implementing policies that support infrastructure development and improvements, such as public transit lines and bike lanes, states can increase accessibility to jobs. Additionally, policies that improve job access can reduce the need for long commutes. State policy can also incentivize employers to offer flexible work arrangements and help workers find jobs closer to home. To make alternative transportation options more affordable, states can provide tax advantages for employers and workers who utilize alternative modes of travel.

HOW TO ACT ON EACH POLICY:

-  **Implement or adapt components of this policy within your workplace**
-  **Consider this approach for your community**
-  **Advocate for this or similar policies through your elected representatives**
-  **Go after funding to implement transportation solutions**



EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGHER-WAGE EMPLOYMENT

Clean Slate Act
STATUS: Become law in 2024.
 The Clean Slate Act offers individuals with certain misdemeanor and felony convictions a fresh start. By sealing eligible criminal records after a specified waiting period (3 years for misdemeanors and 8 years for felonies), this legislation aims to reduce the stigma associated with past convictions and expand job opportunities. This will have a direct impact on transportation by enabling individuals to find jobs closer to home, reducing their reliance on public transportation or long commutes. By reducing transportation barriers, the Clean Slate Act will create more equitable transportation options for individuals who have faced employment challenges due to a past criminal record.
nyassembly.gov/cleanslate/



One-Time Six-Month Earned Income Disregard
STATUS: Reintroduced 2023-24. Passed Senate.
 This bill aims to ease the transition from training to work by providing a six-month earned income exemption for heads of households in WNY who participate in certain qualifying job training or adult education programs. The exemption would help individuals work towards becoming self-sufficient by maintaining social services and mitigating benefit cliffs as these individuals transition into higher-wage employment. Congressman Tim Kennedy from WNY is a sponsor of the bill, which builds upon a similar one-time income disregard enacted as part of the 2023-24 state budget.
www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2023/S2144



2023-24 NYS Budget
STATUS: Enacted in 2023.
 The state budget authorized a one-time six-month earned income disregard, designed to help public assistance recipients work and increase their earnings without losing access to public assistance and other important supportive services. By increasing the earnings of individuals, this policy can enhance an individual's ability to afford reliable transportation.
otda.ny.gov/policy/directives/2023/ADM/23-ADM-10.pdf



Fiscal Cliff Task Force
STATUS: Introduced 2023. Did not become law. Vetoed by Governor in 2024.
 This bill aimed to address the challenges related to benefit cliffs, where individuals can lose significant public benefits due to small increases in their income. This loss of valuable benefits can create unintended barriers to economic mobility, which makes it more difficult to meet basic needs like transportation. The bill would have established a task force to identify potential solutions.
www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2023/S7830/amendment/A



PROMOTING WORK FLEXIBILITY

New York City Teleworking Expansion Act
STATUS: Introduced 2023. Has not become law.
 This State bill requires agencies in New York City to establish policies and programs allowing employees to work remotely whenever possible without negatively impacting job performance to significantly reduce the need to commute to and from a place of employment. The proposed legislation notes how telework increases productivity and retention and reduces absenteeism. It also notes how the federal government and many states have successful telework programs.
www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2023/S4580/amendment/A



MAKING ALTERNATIVE COMMUTING OPTIONS MORE AFFORDABLE

Qualified Transportation Fringe Benefit Program
STATUS: Introduced 2024. Has not become law.
 This commuter benefits bill aims to ease the financial burden of commuting to work. It would allow employers to offer pre-tax transportation benefits, reducing workers' taxable income. Participating employers would also receive a tax deduction. Eligible expenses include transit passes, commuter vans, ridesharing, bicycle expenses and bikesharing memberships. Supported by Assemblymember Jonathan Rivera from WNY, the bill is designed to support commuter transportation needs, boost employee retention, foster a more inclusive and equitable workforce, and align Upstate New York with the progressive transportation policies found in other places in the country.
nyassembly.gov/leg/?bn=A09116&leg_video=



Tax Exemption for Car-Sharing Companies
STATUS: Introduced 2023-24. Has not become law.
 This bill exempts certain car sharing organizations in NYS from the supplemental tax on passenger car rentals, increasing the affordability of the service. The bill specifically mentions Ithaca Car Share and Capital Car Share in Albany, both non-profit organizations that service low-income residents and expand travel options in underserved communities.
www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2023/S7848



Captive Insurance Plan for Commuter Vehicles
STATUS: Introduced 2023-24. Vetoed by Governor in 2024.
 The NYS Senate and Assembly signed legislation that will establish a captive insurance plan for commuter vans, paratransit and small school buses. The goal of this policy is to make insurance on commuter vans and other forms of travel more affordable. The legislation is waiting for the Governor's signature.
www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2023/A9099



Example from Washington State

PROMOTING ALTERNATIVE COMMUTER OPTIONS





Washington State Commute Trip Reduction Law
STATUS: Became law in 1991.
 Enacted in 1991 as part of the Washington Clean Air Act, the Commute Trip Reduction Law requires large employers with 100 or more employees to proactively work with their employees to reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles on the road. As a key component of the state's Climate Action Plan, the law aims to mitigate traffic congestion, improve air quality, and increase utilization of transportation alternatives. To achieve this, employers must implement various strategies, and make workers aware of alternatives like public transit and ride sharing, appoint a transportation coordinator, track worker commute habits, and monitor progress.
wsdot.wa.gov/business-wsdot/commute-trip-reduction-program



LOCAL GOVERNMENT





Local governments can significantly impact transportation options by implementing strategies such as free public transit days, educational campaigns, car-free zones, commuter trip planning tools, bike-to-work initiatives, and carpooling resources. These are described below with policy examples drawing from what’s being done in Western New York and beyond, including across the United States and in other countries.

HOW TO ACT ON EACH POLICY:



-  **Implement or adapt components of this policy within your workplace**
-  **Consider this approach for your community**
-  **Advocate for this or similar policies through your elected representatives**
-  **Go after funding to implement transportation solutions**





ENCOURAGING TRANSIT RIDERSHIP

- ZeroFare KC** Since 2020, Kansas City, Missouri has offered zero fares on bus rides, as well as the Kansas City Streetcar. It’s described as the most expansive program in the country. ridekc.org/fares/passes 
- Chapel Hill Transit** In 2022, Chapel Hill Transit marked its 20th anniversary of providing free fare through a partnership between the Town of Chapel Hill, the Town of Carrboro and the University of North Carolina. www.townofchapelhill.org/government/departments-services/transit 
- Portland, Oregon** Portland, Oregon actively champions alternative modes of transportation. Through initiatives that celebrate World Car-Free Day, Portland encourages residents to embrace walking, biking, and public transit. The city’s Sunday Parkways programs transforms streets into pedestrian- and bike-friendly zones. These efforts contribute to a community with a smaller carbon footprint and expanded options for traveling for those without a vehicle. www.portland.gov/transportation 
- Orca Lift in King County, WA** Orca Lift in King County, Washington offers reduced public transit fares to low-income households. To qualify, household income must be under 200% of the federal poverty level, or under \$5,200 per month for a household of four. kingcounty.gov/en/dept/metro/fares-and-payment/discounted-fares/orca-lift 


MAKING ALTERNATIVES EASIER

- Portland’s Transportation Wallet** This new program is designed to provide low-income Portland residents with free or low-cost transportation options. The program offers a variety of packages for residents to choose from, including unlimited transit passes, e-bike and e-scooter access, ride-sharing credits, and prepaid transportation cards. Individuals can choose a package that suits their needs and travel preferences. In 2023 the wallet offered about \$800 in annual benefits. 
- The Transportation Wallet officially launched in 2023, following a successful two-phase pilot that was implemented between 2019 and 2022. Since the program began, 8,400 transportation wallets have been distributed.
- This program is made possible by funding approved by the Portland City Council and the implementation of the Parking Climate and Equitable Mobility Transaction Fee, which imposes a \$0.20 parking meter fee, which has been used to fund this program and other initiatives that advance equity and sustainability. 
- www.portland.gov/transportation/wallet


PRIORITIZING ALTERNATIVES

- Mackinac Island, Michigan** Village leaders have banned cars on the island since 1898, and the 8-mile M-185 highway that runs along the Mackinac shoreline is the only car-less highway in the US. The island’s success demonstrates that a thriving community can exist without cars, offering insights for areas in WNY exploring expanded alternative transportation options. www.mackinacisland.org/blog/post/why-there-are-no-cars-on-mackinac-island/ 
- Oslo, Norway** Between 2017 and 2019, in an effort to enhance local quality of life and economic activity, Oslo made its downtown nearly car-free, adding bike lanes, bike sharing, parks and pedestrian amenities where parking spaces used to exist. www.fastcompany.com/90294948/what-happened-when-oslo-decided-to-make-its-downtown-basically-car-free 


PROMOTING TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

- Buffalo Green Code** In 2017, Buffalo’s Green Code ended a decades long history of prescribed parking requirements with new development, allowing developers to meet transportation needs in more innovative ways with a larger focus on transit-oriented development or development in transit-accessible areas. A follow-up study found that the policy reduced parking associated with mixed-use development by 50% in the two years that followed this policy change. bufgreencode.com/access-parking/vehicle-access-and-parking 

REMOVING HIGHWAYS TO RECONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS

- Rochester’s 490 Inner Loop** A 2.7-mile loop of highway encircled downtown Rochester, providing convenient access to the city center but increasing car dependency and creating a physical barrier between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. To address this issue, city leaders and local policymakers sought federal funding that allowed them to transform a portion of the Inner Loop in 2017, replacing it with a two-lane boulevard that is pedestrian and bike-friendly on both sides of the street. The city reported walking and bike-friendly increased by at least 50%. The initiative is part of a growing movement to reconnect neighborhoods and promote sustainable transportation.  www.fhwa.dot.gov/ipd/project_profiles/ny_freeway_to_boulevard_rochester.aspx www.cnu.org/highways-boulevards/campaign-cities/buffalo-inner-loop-north www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/05/27/climate/us-cities-highway-removal.html

SUPPORTING TRANSPORTATION WITHIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Buffalo Billion** This substantial state investment in WNY recognized workforce development as a pillar of regional economic development. It supported the launch and implementation of Northland Workforce Training Center, which has become a model for preparing underserved individuals for higher-paying career pathways through industry-driven training and robust wraparound services including transportation assistance.  northlandwrtc.org/about/ regional-institute.buffalo.edu/work/buffalo-billion/

The Atlanta Beltline

A Case Study of Policy in Action

The Atlanta Beltline is an urban revitalization project transforming the city and expanding transportation options for residents, workers, and visitors. Initially conceived as an urban planning student's thesis, the Beltline transformed an abandoned railroad into a 22-mile transportation corridor connecting neighboring communities and a growing population. The success of this project can be attributed to a number of policies, initiatives and strategies that have come together to create a more sustainable, equitable and pedestrian-friendly environment, and a city that is more appealing to both employers and workers. The Beltline case study can reveal opportunities for our region as we pursue major transportation infrastructure projects. Some of these strategies include:

Transit-Oriented Development: Transit-oriented development builds compact vibrant communities around public transit, leveraging public infrastructure to create places that are connected and accessible for all. Zoned as a transportation corridor, development along the Atlanta Beltline includes job centers, restaurants, shops, and housing, including thousands of affordable housing units. The project is also making significant investments in public transit, expanding connecting routes and light rail in a way that makes it easier for residents to use public transit to travel.

Complete Streets: Complete streets are designed to support safe use by drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit riders. With light rail, trails and connecting routes, the Beltline offers a comprehensive alternative to driving.

Economic Development Incentives: Policies offering grants, incentives and other services have attracted the development of businesses of all sizes along the Beltline, with a framework that emphasizes workforce development, commercial corridor activation, digital inclusion and innovation, affordability, and small business support. A projected 50,000 jobs will be created around the Beltline loop when it is completed in 2030.

Public-Private Partnerships: Partnerships with shared responsibility for funding and implementation have been critical in moving the beltline forward efficiently and effectively. The Atlanta Beltline Partnership is one example, formed in 2005 with business and civic leadership. Today, this non-profit organization is dedicated to raising awareness of the Beltline and its vision, fundraising for the work, and fostering community engagement and connections through events, activities, tools, and resources.

Learn more:

beltline.org/learn/

library.municode.com/ga/atlasnta/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIIICOORANDECO_PT16ZO_CH36BEOVDIRE

The Atlanta Beltline: Key Policies

2005 – Atlanta City Council, Fulton County and Atlanta Public Schools approve the Beltline Redevelopment Plan.

2005 – Beltline Tax Allocation District is created. It imposes regulations related to access, parking, provision of bicycle parking, trail access and more.

2005 – Atlanta Beltline Inc. is created to oversee Beltline planning.

2010 – Atlanta was awarded a \$47 million US DOT grant for a streetcar system, including the Beltline.

2015 – Beltline Overlay Zoning District is created to incentivize transit-oriented development.

2016 – Voters approve a sales tax allocation for the Beltline via Public Referendum.

2024 – Atlanta City Council bans parking minimums within ½ mile of the Beltline.

2024 – Atlanta City Council allocates \$1 million for an e-bike rebate program to expand mobility options for lower-income households.