The Smart Moves Regional Transit and Mobility Plan envisions a region with viable mobility solutions for empowered residents and successful businesses. The lack of alternatives to driving alone is detrimental to both employers and workers alike. Businesses in light industrial areas report difficulties with employee recruitment and retention because of transportation challenges, and job seekers have trouble finding and keeping a job if they do not have reliable transportation.

In order to benefit both job seekers with transportation barriers and the employers wishing to hire them, the Mid-America Regional Council, along with a coalition of regional partners, distributed a survey to employers in five industrial areas, and another survey to individuals actively seeking employment.

**WORKFORCE TRANSPORTATION SURVEY**

This survey was distributed to 112 employers and asked questions about factors that can help or hinder employees’ transportation choices such as shift times, flexibility and overtime. It also asked about negative business impacts resulting from employee transportation challenges, and which solutions the employers are most likely to support.

Of the 33 employers that completed the survey, most reported that they sometimes or frequently had problems with recruitment and retention because of transportation challenges. The most significant problem was getting candidates to apply for open positions. But bringing candidates to an interview, new hires quitting and workers arriving late or missing work were also reported as frequent problems.

However, when asked about possible solutions, most employers gave a tepid response to adjusting shift times and very few were likely to provide transportation incentives or subsidies to employees or to contribute financially to collective solutions such as an employer shuttle. The only solution that got a strong positive response was to promote existing transportation options to employees.

There is a disconnect between the urgency of workforce transportation problems and a willingness to implement solutions.
JOB SEEKER SURVEY

The Job Seeker Transportation Survey asked people looking for work how they planned to get to a job, what transportation challenges they have experienced, how those challenges affected their employment and how willing they are to share rides.

Of the 1,065 respondents, 31 percent do not own a vehicle. The survey results clearly show a much higher level of difficulty for these individuals in finding and keeping a job.

### Job seekes with a vehicle versus those without a vehicle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are your transportation challenges?</th>
<th>With a vehicle</th>
<th>Without a vehicle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choices: Lost access to vehicle, breakdowns, issues with shared vehicle, no bus route, too long a bus route, unable to bike or walk, could not leave early or stay late, ride provider was unreliable</td>
<td>29% reported at least one challenge. “My vehicle broke down” was the most common response.</td>
<td>67% reported at least one challenge. “I lost access to my vehicle” was most common response.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How have these challenges had negative job impacts?</th>
<th>With a vehicle</th>
<th>Without a vehicle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choices: Did not apply for a job, missed an interview, was late for work, missed work, unable to continue working a new job or lost a steady job</td>
<td>20% reported one or more negative job impacts. “Did not apply for a job” was the most common response.</td>
<td>58% reported one or more negative job impacts. “Did not apply for a job” was the most common response.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bus riders**

Only seven percent of respondents were “contented bus riders”. They chose riding the bus as their first option, had no transportation-related challenges and very few negative job impacts. Almost all lived in Wyandotte and Jackson counties.

**Car dependence**

For many workers — especially those in outlying areas — driving may be their best or only option. But vehicle ownership is expensive. Car dependence can have serious consequences. 77 percent of the respondents who lost access to their vehicle also reported one or more negative job impacts, including one-fourth who lost a steady job as a result.

**Willingness to share a ride**

On a positive note, 70 percent of all respondents said they were willing or very willing to share a ride. Empty seats and willing drivers can be an abundant and flexible solution for employee transportation.

**NEXT STEPS**

MARC and community partners will use the survey results to create a toolkit of options that are most likely to provide solutions to workforce transportation challenges for both employers and workers. But existing options alone are unlikely to improve jobs access without innovative solutions, coordinated efforts and financial support from employers.

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