



WHITEPAPER

Calculating the Return On Investment (ROI) for commute programs



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About

Liftango offers insights and solutions to some of the most challenging transit and commuting problems facing global organisations and cities.

Since launching in 2015, we have been committed to helping our partners evolve into smarter cities. We help them: create better public transit systems, digitise their bus operations, reduce vehicle emissions, remove parking problems, and design sites with less parking.

In the Public Transport sector, we are motivated to shake up current operations. We improve the experience of the passenger as well as the Transit Authorities and Fleet Operators. We solve parking, congestion, and zoning problems by facilitating sustainable, efficient, and shared transport services.



01 Introduction

A commuter program's main goals revolve around expanding transportation options, decreasing the number of single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs), and reducing overall emissions.

These programs can commonly seem charitable, or be marketed as “the right thing to do,” rather than providing calculable benefits to users and organizations that invest in them. But commuter programs, when done correctly, can create impactful financial benefits for your organization. Supporting complex organizational changes such as return to office (RTO), and provide lasting impacts on personnel.

This paper takes a business-first perspective, focusing on the savings and financial impact of these programs to evaluate how they can positively affect business profitability.

Along with the accompanying calculator, we review how commuter programs can positively impact:



Job access



Productivity



Retention



Parking assets



Employee experience

ROI Calculator

Assessing these holistic cost implications, we help you understand the true ROI of commute programs on your organization.

The calculator uses standardized assumptions to provide a directional ROI estimate. For companies exploring tailored commute strategies — such as modeling across multiple offices, employee types, or adoption scenarios — we invite you to contact the authors who can help you run the numbers for your unique context.

[Get your ROI estimate here](#)



Why Commute Programs Matter Today



In today's uncertain and volatile job market, leveraging commute programs to better support employees can be a smart move, especially amid return-to-office (RTO) mandates. Friction between RTO policies and employees is leading to productivity losses, parking asset inefficiencies, and staff attrition. Commute programs can bridge this gap, demonstrating a genuine effort to assist employees' return to the office, rather than using RTO as a workforce reduction tool.

Real-World Examples

Employee Turnover

Corporate shuttle provision to a hospital is enabling an average of 400 employees per day to take a shuttle to and from work, ensuring employees arrive safely and in the right mindset, with the added benefit for employees of not having to pay road usage fees on personal vehicles. We estimate **approximate savings from parking alone at \$2M and an estimated \$4M in savings from reduced employee turnover** based on average parking rates of \$10 a day, and average turnover of staff at 10%-15%.

Parking Savings

A major healthcare employer facing a severe parking shortage—with 98% of stalls in use and no capital funding for new structures—used Commutifi's platform to assess the viability of shifting employees to off-site park-and-ride hubs connected by high-frequency shuttles. Identified Impact:

- Potential 15% reduction in single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips.
- Up to 1,200 parking stalls offset, correlating to a \$141 million capital cost avoidance.
- Estimated annual operating cost of \$3 million, suggesting a far more efficient investment than new garage development.

Planning

A recent Journey project in Texas shaped the mobility strategy of a densifying employment district near a university. By avoiding building 6,000 new parking spaces through a TDM package headlined by transit pass provision, the district plan saves \$250M in parking costs.

Challenges facing businesses and real estate owners

Businesses and real estate owners face a range of significant challenges in today's evolving work landscape. These challenges span various aspects of operations, from managing physical spaces and assets to ensuring employee well-being and satisfaction.

Within this several key areas demand attention:

1. Underutilized Space and High Fixed Costs

Employers and Real Estate owners are sitting on expensive real estate, with hybrid schedules making traditional office planning inefficient. Increased vacancy rates and increased demand for flexible, accessible workspaces make it more difficult to manage real estate assets within a portfolio, particularly with ballooning maintenance costs. Proactively providing commute programs can help owners reduce capital spend on less optimal space and could increase tenant utilization in the building.

2. Employee Retention and Satisfaction

Long or unreliable commutes are a major driver of employee dissatisfaction and turnover. Commuting stress is apparent, particularly as people are mandated to return to offices and see the commute as unnecessary, affecting well being, punctuality and productivity.

3. Access to Jobs

Not all employees have access to personal vehicles — especially in lower-income roles. Lack of transportation options can lead to missed opportunities for work, education, or career advancement. Improving the mobility of the workforce through commute programs is a method of improving access and reducing recruitment costs.





4. Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) Pressures

ESG reporting is becoming standard in some regions globally, as well as becoming more prevalent across US states, and with certain activist investors. In particular the addition of Scope 3 emissions reporting is nudging businesses to think about their end-to-end impact. Offering low-emission commuting options (e.g., shuttles, carpooling, micromobility) supports sustainability goals and could lead to future savings against fines or offset costs.

5. Absenteeism and Tardiness

Long, unreliable, or costly commutes often lead to late arrivals, no-shows, or last-minute callouts — especially in shift-based or hourly work environments. This becomes even more impactful when thinking about second and third shift workers who often do not have access to public transit options.

6. Mindset and Readiness on Arrival

A stressful commute leads to “arrival fatigue,” where employees start their day already mentally taxed. A smoother, more predictable journey enables employees to begin work in a better headspace — more focused, positive, and collaborative. This means the hours spent at work are more impactful and less likely to include Health and Safety incidents. Access to active or shared modes (bike, walk, shuttle) can also contribute to physical and mental wellness.

What's next?

Facing these challenges amongst an uncertain macro outlook, we need to have robust information to advocate for improved commuting programs and move beyond selling to the business that “it is the right thing to do”.

An evidence-based business case that calculates Return On Investment for such programs is a missing piece of the puzzle for many teams.

[Click here to get your ROI Calculation now.](#)

Calculating the ROI of Your Commute Program



Understanding the return on investment (ROI) of a commute program is crucial for demonstrating its value. While you can use our dedicated ROI calculator to simplify this process, here's a guide on how you would calculate the ROI for a commute program, taking into account various factors and potential benefits.

To begin, you'll need to gather some basic company information: your average employee salary, the total number of employees, and your company's location type (Suburban, Semi-Urban, or Central Business District). This information will form the foundation for estimating potential benefits.

For each commute option you're considering (e.g., corporate shuttle, carpooling, transit passes), you'll need to assess its potential effectiveness, using

the calculations explained next, in achieving specific benefits for your organization. For example, a corporate shuttle program is generally more effective at reducing parking assignments compared to a carpool program due to its inherent reliability. Similarly, the impact of a transit pass program on generating benefits will vary significantly based on transit availability in suburban, semi-urban, or central business district locations.

Once you've estimated the savings from each potential benefit, you'll total these figures to determine your annual savings. These annual savings are then compared against the estimated annual costs of implementing and maintaining the commute program. This comparison will yield a net savings figure and, ultimately, a percentage return on investment.

Understanding Your Benefit Line Items

Here's a breakdown of the potential benefits your commute program can deliver, along with the assumptions you can use for your calculations:

Reduced Parking Costs

To calculate savings here, you'll first identify your location type: Suburban, Semi-Urban, or Central Business District. Then, for each commute program you're considering, estimate the percentage of employees who would forgo a parking spot if that option were available. You can use the following average annual parking costs: \$1,086 for Suburban, \$3,251 for Semi-Urban, and \$5,125 for Central Business District.

Lower Employee Turnover

Employee turnover carries a significant cost, estimated at 60% of an annual salary. Commute programs can enhance employee retention by alleviating commute-related stress. To calculate potential savings, you'll need to estimate the varying retention improvements for each different commute program you're evaluating.

Increased Productivity

It can be assumed that commuter stress can lead to a productivity loss of approximately 15 to 20 minutes per day due to frustration or arriving at the office in a negative mindset. Commute options can mitigate this by reducing stress and ensuring employees arrive ready to work. You'll need to determine the level of improvement each specific commute program would enable in terms of daily regained productivity.

Lower Absenteeism & Tardiness

Absenteeism and tardiness are significant issues for employers, with absenteeism costing an average of \$3,600 per employee per year and employees averaging 35 minutes of lateness per week. These costs accumulate rapidly for businesses. Commute programs can help employees be on time and reduce unplanned absences. You'll need to estimate the reduction in these incidents for each program.

Lower Carbon Footprint

To quantify the environmental benefit, you can estimate the carbon emissions of an average commute (e.g., 16 miles each way). Then, use the average cost of a carbon offset, which we've estimated at \$8 per ton. While this value can fluctuate, this figure is supported by. Multiply the estimated carbon reduction by this cost to determine a monetary saving.

Expanded Talent Pool

Offering commute benefits can broaden your talent pool by making your company accessible to individuals who lack private transportation or cannot afford public transport. To calculate the benefit, assume a slight reduction in recruitment costs for new employees as the talent pool expands due to increased commute options.

Costs

When calculating your ROI, it's essential to account for all program costs. We have included ballpark figures in our calculator to provide an indicative view of the magnitude of investment required to achieve an actual ROI. Each cost is intended to be a complete cost for operating the program and includes all elements to run a program, such as internal FTEs, incentives, marketing, technology, and contracting costs.

Limitations

It's important to note that these assumptions may vary for each business and can differ largely between states or regions. The intention here is to provide an indicative view of the potential benefits and costs of commute programs. Further, case-specific information and detailed analysis may be required prior to launching services at your organization.

Remember: While this guide outlines the process, our dedicated [ROI calculator](#) can help you input your specific data and generate these calculations much more easily.

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Our ROI Framework

Within our ROI calculator, we've considered:

- Reduced Parking Costs
- Lower Employee Turnover
- Increased Productivity
- Lower Absenteeism & Tardiness
- Lower Carbon Footprint
- Expanded Talent Pool

There are a number of elements not considered within the calculations for ROI in relation to commute programs. To get a full understanding of the framework used within the calculator, please refer to the attached breakdown.

While built to work from the employer perspective, this ROI framework and accompanying calculator also works by proxy, for commercial real estate owners. Allowing them to calculate the benefit of providing these programs to tenants as an amenity and capture the value or pass it on to their tenant businesses.

Ready to calculate your ROI?



Now that we've outlined how to assess the ROI of commute programs—and the potential financial and operational benefits—they can offer, it's time to apply those insights to your own organization.

To help you get started, we've developed a simple, easy-to-use ROI calculator. It guides you through the key inputs described above and generates a tailored, directional estimate of the savings and return your organization could see from implementing a commute program.

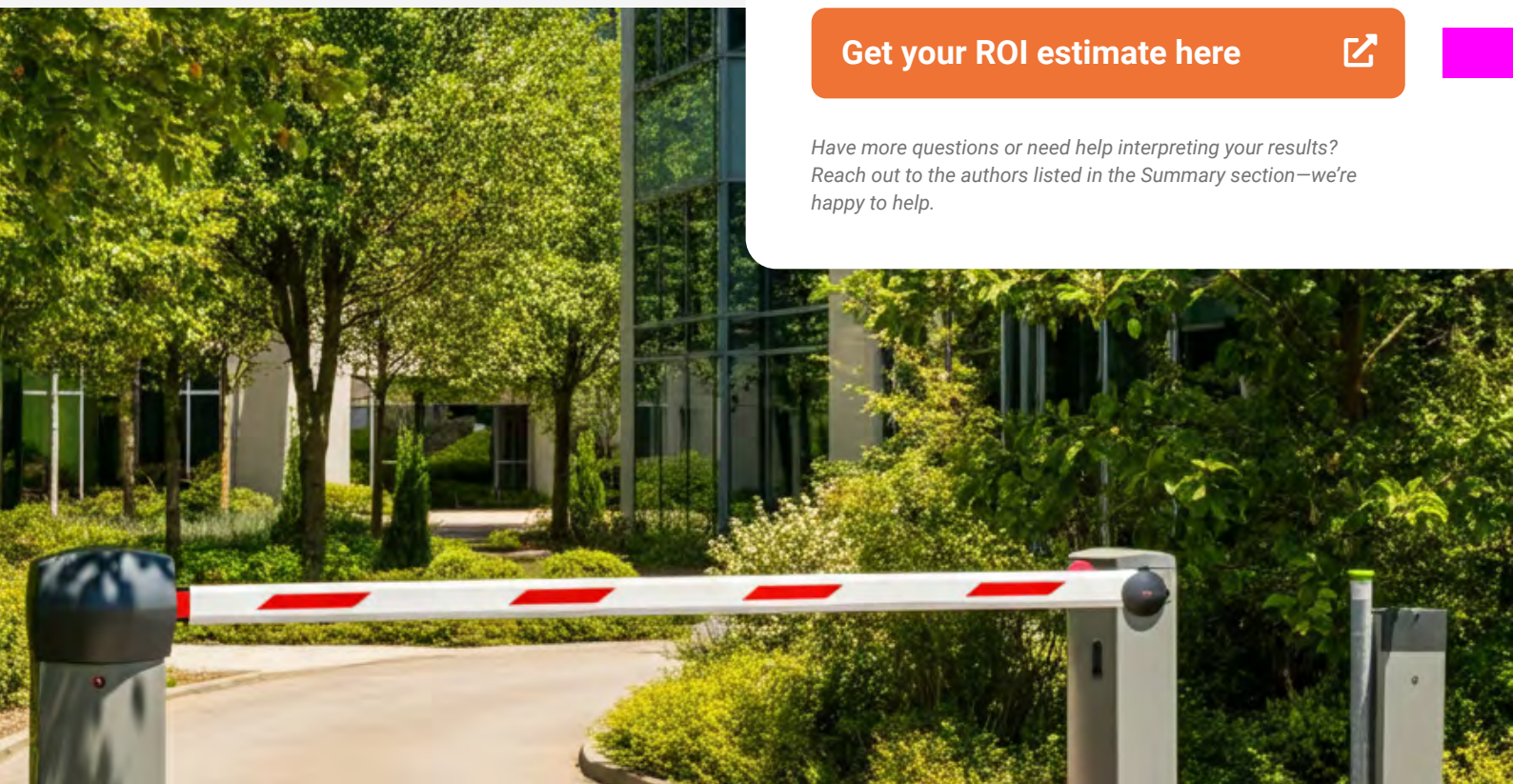
Use the calculator to:

- Build a data-driven business case for commute investments
- Translate benefits into relatable metrics for stakeholders
- Explore the impact of various program types on your bottom line

Get your ROI estimate here



Have more questions or need help interpreting your results? Reach out to the authors listed in the Summary section—we're happy to help.



Interpreting the Results

Once you have a clear idea of the ROI for a commute program, you'll be well-equipped to secure the internal buy-in needed to make it a reality, but this can sometimes be a tricky process. There are likely many competing priorities in your business. However, some people you may want to get involved early include (you may be one of these yourself):

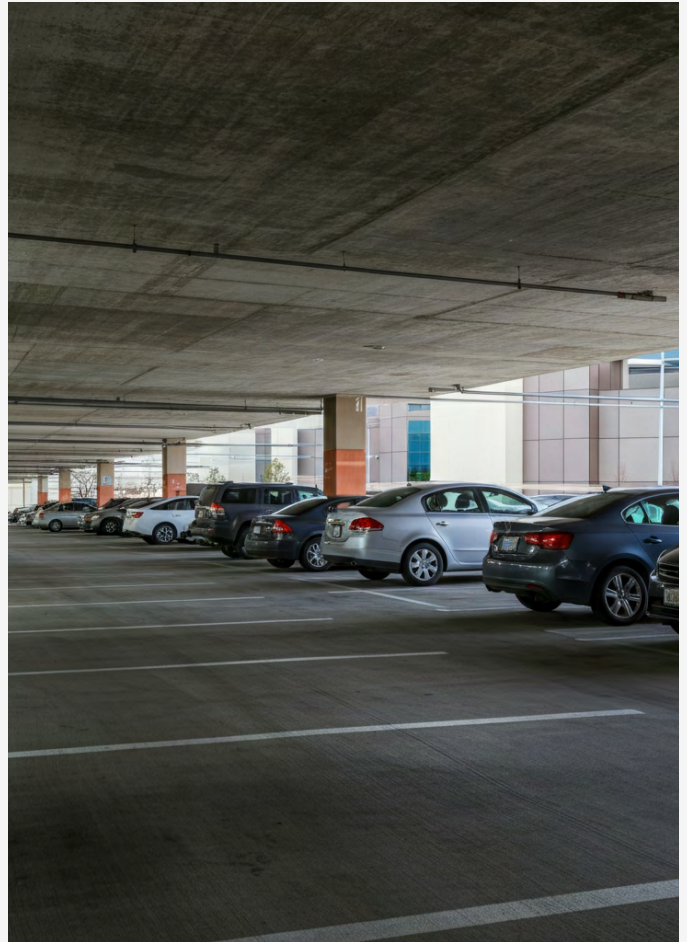
HR Teams - predominantly concerned with improving or enhancing employee experience, improving retention and increasing productivity.

Facilities Managers - concerned with operations and maintenance of the building or campus, often these teams are involved if parking incentives are utilized.

Internal IT - concerned with checking any new technology purchases for security.

Procurement - ensuring company procedures are followed throughout the process.

Transportation teams - some companies have commute teams that would lead this work and can support in realizing the benefits of your new commute program.



Working with these stakeholders early is an important step to a successful commute program.

We hope the outputs of this [ROI calculator](#) help aid early conversations in relatable metrics for these teams.

For companies that have looked through the calculator and are interested in learning more, the authors of this report outlined in the Summary would be happy to discuss your situation in more detail.

07 Conclusion

Employer-led commute programs have the potential to boost a company's bottom line. They help in many ways, like making it easier for people to get to work, keeping employees happy and productive and utilizing parking spaces more effectively.

Businesses often struggle with managing parking assets, unhappy employees, and pressure to be more environmentally friendly – and commute programs can help address these issues.

We have shown a return on investment through commute programs by reducing turnover, better worker output, less absenteeism, and a smaller carbon footprint. We've explored different options for commuting in various settings including carpooling, company shuttles, and transit passes in suburban, semi-urban and CBD locales.

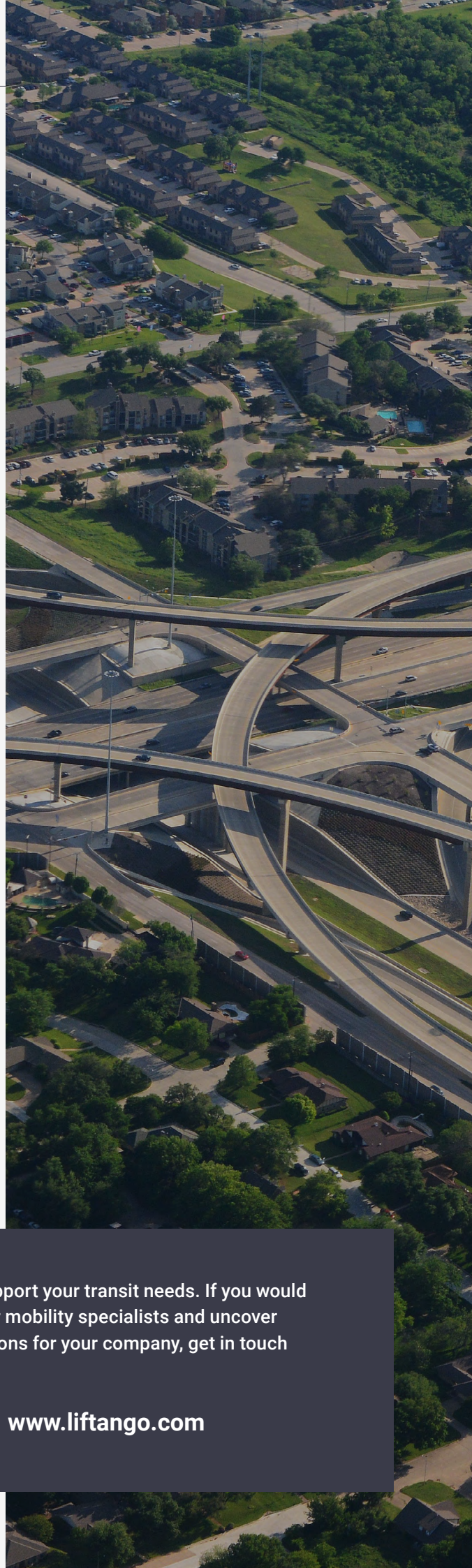
While the calculations are provided at a summary level in the calculator, they show how valuable commute programs can be. To get these programs off the ground, it's important to get everyone on board internally, from HR and Facilities to IT, Purchasing, and Transportation.

If you have more questions, please feel free to reach out to the authors of this paper.

GET IN TOUCH

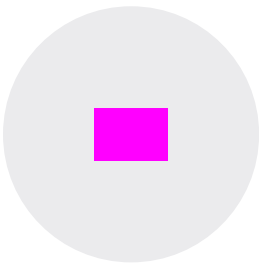
We can work with you to support your transit needs. If you would like to speak with one of our mobility specialists and uncover sustainable transport solutions for your company, get in touch using the details below.

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08 Appendix

About the Authors



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About Commutifi

Commutifi is centralized software for commuting at scale. Enterprise businesses, universities, and hospitals use Commutifi to design and manage programs, as well as procure commute technology and services. Commutifi's approach centers on commuter programs that cost less and do more. We believe that when organizations understand their full commuting landscape, they can make decisions and take action with confidence. And they can do it all through Commutifi.

Commutifi customers include Fortune 500 companies with operations around the world.

About Journey

We tailor mobility strategies to your unique location, infrastructure, and workplace culture. With deep expertise in transit planning, multimodal systems, new mobility tools, and parking management, we find solutions that actually work—and align with your goals. Think of us as your strategic co-pilots for commute programs.

About Liftango

Liftango was founded to improve shared mobility systems and reduce transport-related emissions through on-demand, fixed route and carpool services. It is our ambition to unlock all the good that comes from shared transport by providing convenient, affordable, and sustainable transportation for all.

Appendix

Attachment 1 - The Complete ROI Framework

The authors considered a long list of potential benefits of well designed and managed commute programs that fell into different categories. Other benefits were excluded, deemed to be too subjective or variable between businesses. The full list of benefits and which made it into the framework are included below.

Potential Benefit	Notes if left out
Included in Analysis	
Reduced Parking Costs	
Lower Employee Turnover	
Increased Productivity	
Lower Absenteeism & Tardiness	
Lower Carbon Footprint	
Expanded Talent Pool	
Not Included in Analysis	
Stronger Corporate Reputation	Too subjective for calculation
Tax Incentives & Credits	State specific and subject to change
Improved Compliance	Left out as variation would be wide based on state reporting requirements
Positive Community Impact	Too subjective for calculation
Stronger Employee Engagement	Too subjective for calculation
Reduced Stress & Health Costs	Not immediately direct to the employer so left out of this analysis
Enhanced Work-Life Balance	Too subjective for calculation
Increased Office Attendance	Unproven to date and likely too subjective
Better Use of Corporate Real Estate	Parking costs are the predominant lever here, and it would be duplicative.

We have built assumptions around each of the remaining benefits and, based on simple company information, can calculate an indicative ROI for numerous commute programs. The assumptions are explained in the following section.

Our initial target commute programs include, Carpool, Corporate Shuttles and Transit Pass programs. We acknowledge, at this stage, that important commute options are not included, notably Vanpool and Micromobility. The authors may consider including this in future iterations of the calculator.

Appendix

Attachment 2 - How to use the calculator

This calculator is designed to give you a high-level, indicative view of the potential return on investment (ROI) of implementing a commute program at your organization. It is structured to be simple to use, while still providing actionable insights that can be refined through deeper consultation.

Each input field plays a role in helping the model estimate potential savings and costs. Below is a guide to completing each section:

Company is Located in

Select one of the three options that best describes the location of your workplace:

- **Central Business District (CBD):** Typically dense urban cores with high transit access and expensive parking.
- **Semi-Urban:** Areas with moderate population density, some transit options, and medium parking costs.
- **Suburban:** Lower-density areas, often with limited public transit and lower parking expenses.

This input helps determine parking cost assumptions and the likely effectiveness of various commute modes.

Average Salary

Input the average salary for employees at the location or within the business unit you're evaluating.

- If you're assessing a single site, use the average for that specific workforce.
- If evaluating across multiple sites or making a general business case, use a global or blended average salary.

The salary figure is used to estimate the costs associated with turnover, absenteeism, and productivity improvements.

Number of Employees

Enter the number of employees you are considering for this commute program. This could be your entire company or a specific site, team, or shift depending on your scope.

This figure multiplies the savings and cost estimates across the group to determine overall ROI.

Workforce Turnover Rate

This input reflects your organization's current annual employee turnover rate.

- If you're unsure, use the typical industry benchmark of 13%.
- If you have more precise internal data, enter that figure for a more tailored result.

This number is used to calculate the cost of turnover and how much savings your commute program could help unlock by improving retention.

Commute Investment

Choose the type of commute program you're considering:

- **Transit Pass:** Typically offers reduced or subsidized access to public transportation.
- **Carpool:** Incentivizes or coordinates shared vehicle rides among employees.

- **Corporate Shuttle:** Operated by the company or contracted provider, often with fixed routes and schedules.

Each program type has different effectiveness across various benefits (e.g., shuttles often reduce parking needs more significantly than carpools) and different cost profiles.

Output

Once these fields are completed, the calculator will provide an estimate of:

- Potential annual savings across different benefit categories.
- Total estimated costs to implement the program.
- Net savings and a calculated ROI percentage.

For more tailored insights, including program design, internal communications, or integration with facility or ESG goals, we recommend speaking with one of the authors.