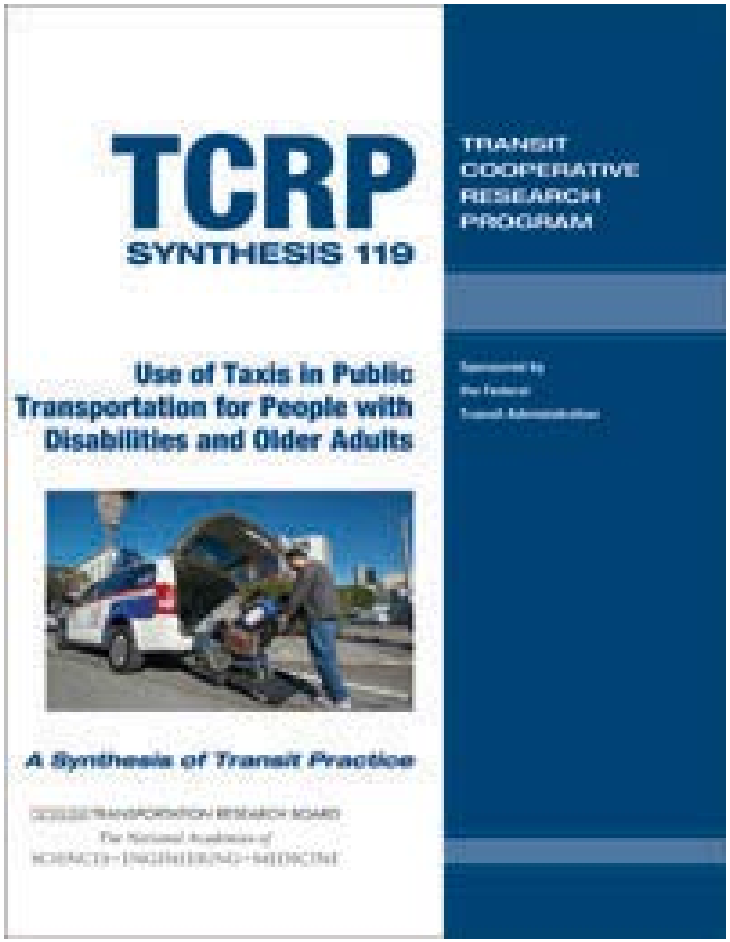
Use of Taxis in Public Transportation for People with Disabilities and Older Adults



TCRP Synthesis 119

Public Transit Forum

Private Providers Task Force

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

June 29, 2016

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Background

- **TCRP = Transit Cooperative Research Program**
- **Established in 1992, cooperative effort of three organizations:**
  - **the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the National Academies/Transportation Research Board (TRB), and the Transit Development Corporation, Inc. (TDC), a nonprofit educational and research organization of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA).sponsored and**
  - **funded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)**
- **Objective: Undertake research to develop near-term, practical solutions to problems facing *transit* agencies**
- **TCRP Research Products**
  - **Reports – often written as guidebooks or manuals.**
  - **Syntheses of Practice – report on the "state of the practice" informing the transit industry about practices and innovations being used by others to solve problems.**
  - **Research is guided by a panel selected for their knowledge of the research topic.**
- **Synthesis 119 Use of Taxis in Public Transportation for People with Disabilities and Older Adults http://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/174025.aspx**

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Components of Synthesis 119

- Literature review
- Survey of transit agencies
  - 45 transit agencies surveyed
  - 39 responded with a current taxi-based program
  - Remaining six
    - 5 used taxis in the past
      - Why no longer?
        - » Taxi company unwilling to comply with FTA drug and alcohol testing requirements
        - » Contractual issues related to service quality
        - » Not as economical as originally expected
    - 1 has not used taxis
- Case studies
- Conclusions and Lessons Learned

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Survey Highlights

“How are taxis used?”

- For required ADA service for ADA certified riders only: 7 (18%)
- For required ADA service for ADA riders and others: 6 (15%)

- For same-day service for ADA certified riders only: 4 (10%)
- For same-day service for ADA riders and others 7 (18%)

- For both ADA service and same-day service: 15 (38%)

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“How are taxis used for ADA paratransit?”

- ❑ On a dedicated basis 10 (29%)

(taxi vehicles serve only our passengers during the contracted time periods) .

- ❑ On a non-dedicated basis 24 (71%)

(taxi vehicles are not restricted to serving only our passengers)

“How are taxi companies paid?”

- Dedicated service
  - Per hour 3
  - Per mile/meter 8
  - Per trip 5
  - Other 1
- Non-dedicated service
  - Per hour 1
  - Per mile/meter 5
  - Per trip 5
  - Other 5

“Does the taxi company(ies) have accessible vehicles?”

- Yes 23 (61%)
- Some of the taxi companies we use have accessible vehicles: 12 (32%)
- No 3 (8%)

“Advantages of Taxis for ADA Paratransit Service?”

	Major Advantage	Minor Advantage	Not Very Important
Improve overall cost-efficiency	22	6	3
Serve "overflow" trips on pre-scheduled basis during peak periods and other times	22	6	2
Serve "overflow" trips on day-of-service/real-time scheduling basis during peak periods and other times	22	3	4
Expand service without buying vehicles	20	6	4
Reduce/eliminate trip denials	18	4	7

“Challenges of Using Taxis?”

	Major Challenge	Minor Challenge	Not an Issue
Efforts needed for oversight and monitoring	20	11	3
Lack of accessible taxi vehicles	18	6	11
Taxi company(ies) has difficulty with reporting requirements	12	13	8
Inadequate driver training	9	13	12
Service reliability (e.g., late trips, missed trips)	8	13	13
Impact on taxi industry from TNC competition	8	6	17
Overall service quality	7	18	8
Driver quality (e.g., driver assistance, adequate English language skills)	7	19	7
Inadequate taxi regulations governing taxi industry	6	13	12
Difficulty/inability to meet insurance requirements	3	6	24
Difficulty/inability to meet FTA drug & alcohol testing requirements	3	9	22

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“Lessons Learned?”

- 30 responding transit agencies provided advice.
- Two messages clearly emerged most frequently:
  - There is a need for concerted oversight and monitoring of transit agency-subsidized taxi service.
  - It is important to understand the business and culture of the taxi industry and then to find a taxi company interested in building a relationship with the transit agency. Sample comments:

“…select a company interested in long-term growth as opposed to a quick profit and work to understand the company’s business.”

“…build relationships with taxi companies so they can see your service as a market they could fulfill and you can better understand how the services you need fit within the taxi company framework...”

Case Studies

- Phoenix, AZ
  - 5 taxi-based programs; none are ADA paratransit
- San Francisco, CA
  - SF Taxi: same-day service for ADA certified riders
  - Several other taxi-based programs
- Denver, CO
  - Access-a-Ride: ADA paratransit provided by 3 contractors, one of which is Yellow Cab
  - Access-a-Cab: same-day service for ADA certified riders
- Ann Arbor, MI
- Washington County, MD
  - Voucher program using sedans in a small community

San Francisco

- SF Taxi: same-day taxi service available to all ADA riders; same curb-to-curb service that is available to public
- Payment by debit card introduced in 2009
- Technology implementation
  - Three vendors selected for in-vehicle equipment:

    Verifone, Wireless Edge, and Creative Mobile Technologies

San Francisco (con't)

- Technology implementation (con't)
  - Cabconnect, Inc. and its "CardOne" software selected for the back-end processing software
- Riders have a debit card with a monthly allotment, based on rider's need, to purchase taxi trips; rider pays $5.50 per $30 worth of taxi service. Most get $90-$150/month.
- Average trip cost per meter is $13.81 for trip about 3 miles; average trip cost for next-day ADA van service: $33.95
  (FY14 cost data)

San Francisco (con't)

- Implementation of technology: *"challenging"* but *"well worth the effort"*
- Advantages:
  - Improved monitoring
  - Misuse and fraud greatly curtailed
  - Eliminated trips beyond defined service area (technology provides a geo-fence, disallowing any portion of a trip that extends beyond the service area)
  - Riders allowed to tip their driver, which was not allowed with paper payment. Technology gives rider the option to tip up to 10% of trip cost but not more than $2
  - Electronic processing lets transit agency pay taxi companies more frequently: now 2/month, formerly 1/month.

Transportation Network Companies

- Survey: 26 agencies responded to the question on TNCs.
  - Half reported no current impact on their taxi industry or no impacts on the agency's subsidized service
  - Six reported minor impacts but raised concern about the future:

"While still a minor problem in [our county], some taxi drivers are moving to TNCs or provide dual services. This is not good for the taxi industry as a whole and TNCs currently do not provide any accessibility options in our area. If taxi services as we know them today disappear, who will serve the elderly and disabled? Notwithstanding these concerns, there is still a lot of room for improvement in the taxi industry, including adopting some of the conveniences and vehicle and grooming standards typically offered by TNCs."

TNCs (con't)

- Survey (con't)
  - Three agencies reported significant impacts, including San Francisco's transit agency.
- San Francisco:
  - SF Cab Drivers Association reported the city has lost 1/3 of its 8,500 taxi drivers (2014)
  - As many as 25% of ramp taxis not in service
  - SFMTA reported 44% decrease in its subsidized ramp taxi trips from FY13 to FY14.
  - Taxi company with largest number of ramp taxi permits – 17 – has only 11 ramp taxis in service
  - The company has lost drivers: 400-500 out of a roster of 1,300

TNCs (con't)

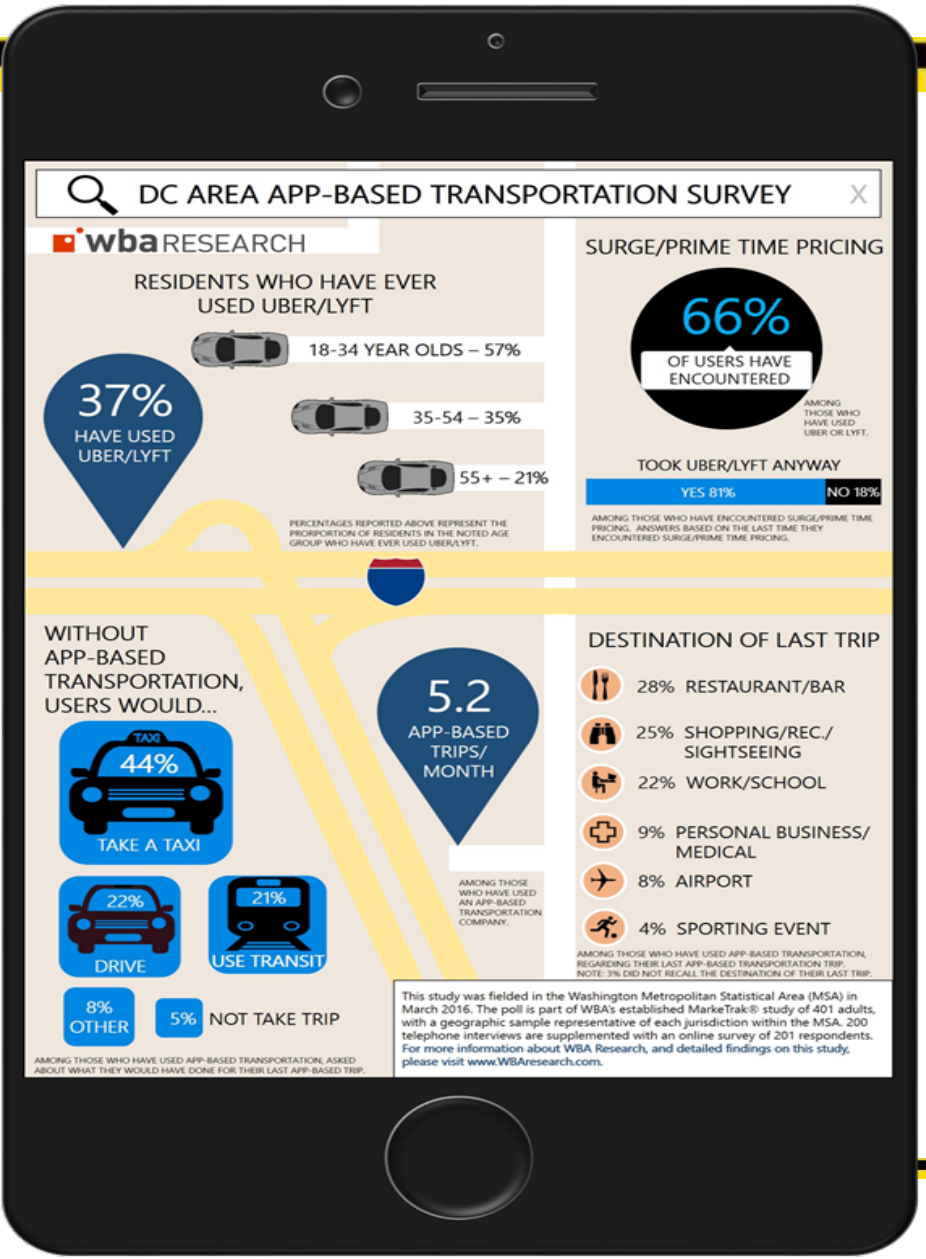
- Arlington, VA: Largest taxi company reports a loss of 10% of its drivers and its call volume is down 15%

Other Research

TNC Use in DC Area

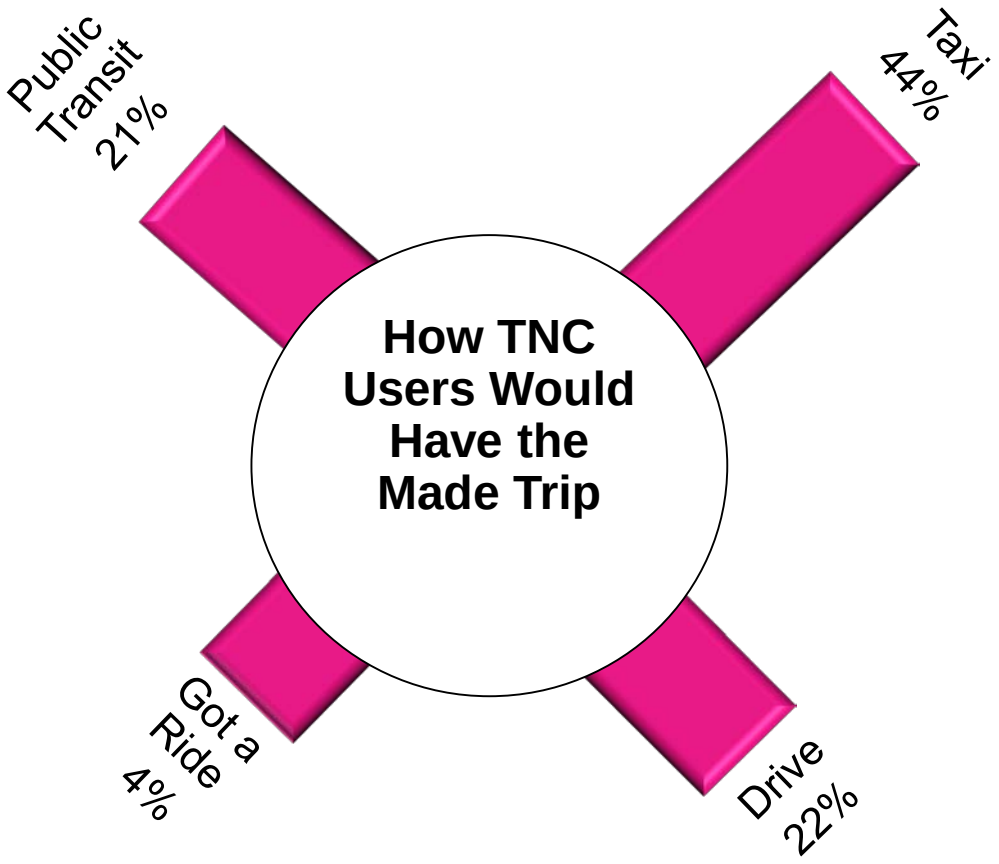
- Study conducted March 2016
- 400 adults living in the Washington, DC MSA
  - ➢ 200 telephone interviews, 200 online interviews
- Interviews proportionate to the household population of each city/county in MSA and distributed approximately evenly between men and women.

TNC Use in DC Area (cont'd)



- More than 1/3 of residents have used TNCs. Use driven by 18-34 age group.
- On average, they have taken 5.2 trips per month on TNCs.
- 18% have used TNCs to get to/from a public transit station or stop (e.g., Metrorail).
- 34% of those in 18-34 age group use both TNCs and public transit.
- 20% have used TNCs to get to/from National, Dulles or BWI Airports.

TNC Use in DC Area (cont'd)



"Shared Mobility and the Transformation of Public Transit" – "Key Findings"

1. The more people use shared modes, the more likely they are to use public transit, own fewer cars, and spend less on transportation overall. "Supersharers"—people who routinely use several shared modes, such as bikesharing, carsharing (e.g. car2go or Zipcar), and ridesourcing (e.g. Lyft or Uber)—save the most money and own half as many household cars as people who use public transit alone.

2. Shared modes complement public transit, enhancing urban mobility. Ridesourcing services are most frequently used for social trips between 10pm and 4am, times when public transit runs infrequently or is not available. Shared modes substitute more for automobile trips than public transit trips.

3. Shared modes will continue to grow in significance, and public entities should identify opportunities to engage with them to ensure that benefits are widely and equitably shared. Public transit agencies should seize opportunities to improve urban mobility for all users through collaboration and public-private partnerships, including greater integration of service, information and payment methods.

4. The public sector and private operators are eager to collaborate to improve paratransit service using emerging approaches and technology. While a number of regulatory and institutional hurdles complicate partnerships in this area, technology and business models from the shared mobility industry can help drive down costs, increase service availability and improve rider experience.

APTA AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION

SHARED-USE MOBILITY CENTER

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Survey of Passenger Transportation Habits

- Interviewed 3,075 adults
  - Used a taxi or TNC in last year
  - Own smartphone and have credit card
  - Online interviews in January 2016
- Key finding related to impact of TNCs on other modes: Respondents were asked how their use of TNCs impacted their use of other modes …..
  - 85% use taxis less
  - 49% use public transit less
  - 60% use limousine service less
  - TNCs are more significantly impacting market share among millennials.

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A Boston taxi vehicle…..