



Caltrans Division of Research,
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Research



Results



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Project Title:

Evaluating the Policy Needs for On-Demand Ridesharing Services

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Evaluating the Policy Needs for On-Demand Ridesharing Services

Recommendations and suggest strategies for policy makers to align the advancement of these new services with existing state and local sustainable transportation goals.

WHAT IS THE NEED?

The constantly evolving landscape of on-demand ridesharing services may provide opportunities for improved mobility and access in addition to reductions in congestion, VMT, and emissions. However, the rapid introduction of these services also poses many challenges due to great uncertainty about what their future impacts are. Thus far, much of the regulatory dialogue related to on-demand ridesharing services has focused on the organization of the market, employment arrangements, and safeguards for consumers. As these issues get resolved, the discussion of what the relevant policies are is turning to the potentially positive environmental and equity outcomes of these services. However, the extent to which these outcomes occur largely depends on how on-demand ridesharing services are integrated into existing systems and accounted for in sustainable transportation programs and regulations.

WHAT WAS OUR GOAL?

The goal of this project is to provide recommendations and suggest strategies for state and local policy makers to align the advancement of on-demand ridesharing services with their existing sustainability and mobility goals.

WHAT DID WE DO?

This study explored the need and potential for policy mechanisms related to on-demand ridesharing services that facilitate sustainability and mobility benefits. Then, it evaluated the transferability of innovative and promising approaches that have already been implemented in a number of locations. This project relied on existing data sources and reports, as well as the



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development of a new database through interview and survey based data collection. Approximately 100 stakeholders were interviewed who represent California agencies related to transportation (California's MPOs, transit agencies, etc.) and the environment (Public Utilities Commission, Air Resources Board, etc.), on-demand rideshare service providers, the traditional taxi industry, and community and non-profit organizations involved in equity or sustainability in transportation. Key focus areas for the interviews included:

- Industry intentions to enhance sustainability and mobility goals
 - Do other industry objectives sufficiently serve as a proxy for these goals; i.e. efficiency tends to improve sustainability.
- Current services that enhance sustainability and mobility goals
- Challenges facing the industry to actively pursue enhancing sustainability and mobility; specifically, what are the barriers to the mechanisms noted above?
- Industry practices, and driver and user behaviors that relate to these goals
- Opportunities within existing policies and regulations for enhanced sustainability and mobility outcomes related to on-demand services
- Weaknesses of existing policies and regulations with respect to enhancing these goals with on-demand services
- Potential policies and strategies to enhance these goals and the political feasibility, costs, timeframe, burden to local or state government, additional challenges or consequences related to potential policies
- Adequacy of transportation service and access to variety of transportation modes

In addition to interview data collection, other sources related to these outcomes were sought out including transportation plans, sustainable communities' strategies, industry blogs, and data

from rideshare service providers.

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

This project is intended to be the first step towards the development of standardized guidelines for the conduct of social and environmental LCAs for complete streets to be used with life cycle cost analysis to produce a complete, transparent and quantitative picture of a complete street project, including interdependencies between impacts.

The conceptual framework can serve as a check for the Caltrans Complete Streets Implementation Action Plan that will allow decision-makers to address, or at minimum consider, all aspects of complete streets and also identify unintended consequences. The system boundaries are expected to consider impacts of changes beyond just the street itself to its role and effects on the entire neighborhood, and the project within the road network.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

On-demand ridesharing services have the potential to alleviate long standing transportation problems, including congestion, and emissions, and to improve transportation access in poorly served areas. The magnitude of the impact that these services may have is largely unexplored and the extent to which policy intervention is needed, as well as an evaluation of policy mechanisms that will best facilitate these outcomes, is not yet well understood.

LEARN MORE

<https://ncst.ucdavis.edu/project/life-cycle-assessment-for-complete-streets-framework-and-pilot-studies/>