Toward Universal Access: A Case Study in Los Angeles and Puget Sound Regions

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Mobility on demand (MOD) refers to transportation services that can be hailed in real-time for an impending trip.

$8 million from the FTA to 11 unique projects.

$1.3 million awarded to a two-region partnership between Los Angeles and the Puget Sound Regions and a MOD provider.

Contracts developed between transit agencies, MOD provider, research institutions, and the FTA among other partners.
Disability and mobility

• Approximately 61 million U.S. adults live with some form of disability (CDC 2019)
• Mobility impairment affects 13.7% of U.S. adults (CDC 2019)
• Each disability is unique
National laws and regulations

• Federal civil rights laws
  • Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) – Titles II & III
  • Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
• Equal opportunity in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation
• The ADA regulates transit service operations regarding:
  • Passenger assistance and customer service
  • Accessible rider information
  • Outreach and communication strategies
“Stands in the shoes”

A private entity that provides services under contract with a public entity “stands in the shoes” of the public entity and is subject to the same requirements to provide accessible transportation services and vehicles.
Standards for demand-responsive service

Equivalent service is evaluated in terms of:

- Response time
- Fares
- Geographic service area
- Hours and days of service
- Restrictions or priorities based on trip purpose
- Availability of information and reservation capability
- Any constraints on capacity or service availability
Challenges to coordination between TNCs and transit agencies

• Adherence to local, state, and federal accessibility regulations
• ADA-related workforce training
• Data sharing between agencies and TNC companies
• Measurement of both WAV and non-WAV TNC service is needed to assess equivalency
• Access to apps for customers with disabilities or limited English proficiency
State & local regulations: Puget Sound

• ADA Title II and Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD)
• TNC insurance and licensing regulated at State level
• Cities, counties, and port districts can regulate TNC service
• King County/City of Seattle interlocal agreement for joint regulation of for-hire vehicles
• Per-trip fees cover TNC regulation and enforcement costs, support Wheelchair Accessible Services (WAS) Fund
State & local regulations: Los Angeles

- ADA Title II and LA County Board non-discrimination policy
- California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) manages statewide TNC policies
- TNC Access for All Act (2018)
  - TNCs to provide accessible services through app platforms
  - Annual reporting to CPUC
  - Plans for accessibility, integrated services, driver training
- TNC Access for All Fund (2019)
Project Planning

• Via chosen in part due to willingness to provide accommodation beyond ADA requirements
• Term Sheet signed early on before contract finalization
• WAV service
• WAV data
• Early engagement with Access Services in Los Angeles and King County Metro’s Accessible Services
• Taxi Service on hand in case of high demand
• PUDO consideration
Service Elements

• Cost equal to ambulatory vehicle rides
• Dedicated WAVs made up just a portion of total fleet
• WAV requests were binary – no space for additional information
• Only WAV service was point to point
Data Collection

• Via ride, request, driver, and comment data
• Via rider survey
• Agency paper intercept surveys
• Agency focus groups
Weekly Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Rides
Completed in the Los Angeles Region During the Pilot Project

- No WAV requests in first four months
- Targeted outreach starting in summer 2019
- 961 requests made by 96 unique userIDs
- 26 people only requesting one ride
- 44 users requesting between two and nine rides
- 26 people requesting 10 or more rides
Weekly Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Rides
Completed in the Puget Sound Region During the Pilot Project

- 1.5 mile mean trip distance
- Of 220,939 completed rides only 701 (or about 0.32 percent) were WAV
- 701 requests by 41 unique UserIDs
- 5 unique IDs made up two-thirds of all WAV rides
# WAV-related Performance Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Actual as of Q4 in Los Angeles</th>
<th>Actual as of Q4 in Puget Sound</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average actual wait time for all requests</td>
<td>9.05 minutes</td>
<td>8.55 minutes</td>
<td>10 minutes or less</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average actual wait time for WAV requests</td>
<td>13.66 minutes</td>
<td>11.91 minutes</td>
<td>10 minutes or less</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average wait time for rides booked through call center</td>
<td>10.18 minutes</td>
<td>9.01 minutes</td>
<td>10 minutes or less</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent demand met for all requests</td>
<td>95.19%</td>
<td>97.91%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent demand met for call center users</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent demand met for WAV requests</td>
<td>90.77%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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Lessons Learned

• Learn about the variety of types of disabilities riders live with
• Plan for and discuss accessibility considerations from the beginning with private providers
• Engage the disability community
• Budget liberally for disability accommodation and ADA compliance
• Set clear performance measures and targets, and report them transparently
• Have a backup plan
• Train as many drivers as possible to provide service for all potential users
• Learn from experts in the field of transportation for people with disabilities
  Provide flexibility in the app to indicate needs
Questions?

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