



Trends Report

NATIONAL AGING AND DISABILITY TRANSPORTATION CENTER



**2016 Transportation Trends:
A Look at the Year's Top Mobility Challenges & Opportunities**
February 2017

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1 Introduction

This report discusses trending topics—*significant issues that affect the availability of accessible transportation in communities*—identified by the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) in 2016. With its mission to increase the availability and accessibility of transportation for older adults and people with disabilities, the NADTC recognizes that our work must be grounded in, and respond to, the needs and preferences of the communities and organizations that the center was created to serve. Critical to the center’s success is access to information about local communities’ efforts to develop accessible transportation, how those developments are received by people with disabilities and older adults, and the reactions of leaders in accessible transportation to developments in the transportation field.

In July 2016, the NADTC conducted a national survey of our constituents. The online survey consisted of only four questions (three of which were multiple choice) designed to elicit information about preferred methods of receiving information, training methods, top topics in accessible transportation that the NADTC should address and the top issues affecting transportation accessibility for older adults and people with disabilities. Invitations to complete the survey were sent to subscribers to NADTC e-alerts, attendees at the June 2016 NADTC launch event and the other target groups. A link to the survey was posted prominently on the NADTC website.

To supplement and enhance the information collected through the survey, the NADTC also used the following avenues for obtaining input from our broad constituency throughout the year.

- Review of information and technical assistance requests received via the NADTC toll-free number and email during the first year of the center’s operation (October 2015-September 2016);
- Discussion with participants at the NADTC launch event, held in Washington, DC, on June 22, 2016;
- Feedback from participants at conferences and workshops where NADTC presented; and
- Formal and informal contacts with colleagues in the transportation and human services arenas.

The short information briefs that follow address the top trending topics in accessible transportation that the NADTC identified. Some of the topics concern developments in the field that are newsworthy and subject to change over time (e.g., shared ride services, bikeshare);

others relate to longstanding problems that are not amenable to one-size-fits-all solutions and continue to present new challenges (e.g., crossing boundaries, safety). The selected topics are:

- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Accessible Bikeshare
- Crossing Jurisdictional Boundaries
- First Mile/Last Mile
- Safety
- Section 5310
- Shared Ride Services

The information briefs each address one of the above topics and include a summary of the major issues, challenges, and opportunities, one or more case examples, and a list of resources for additional information. All of the briefs include a particular focus on the impact of the issue on older adults and people with disabilities. Together, the exploration of these diverse topics illustrates how people with disabilities and older adults may benefit from an expanded array of transportation options.

2 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Trending Questions Requiring Clarification

Introduction

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law prohibiting discrimination against persons with disabilities. Under Title II of the ADA, public transportation must be usable by people with disabilities. The U.S. Department of Transportation regulations pertaining to transportation at 49 CFR Part 37 and 38 are written to create an equal travel environment so that people with disabilities will not be excluded or denied from participation in using transportation systems or facilities.

While the ADA addresses a number of issues that promote transportation accessibility, there are three topics that currently create the most requests for technical assistance or are brought up as questions: **reasonable modification, service animals, and customer service/passenger assistance**. Even though the ADA was enacted in 1990, this brief intends to clarify these recurring issues.

Reasonable Modification

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) published a final rule in 2015 that clarifies the obligation of "transportation entities" to make "reasonable modifications/accommodations to policies, practices, and procedures to avoid discrimination and ensure that their programs are accessible to individuals with disabilities." Transit systems must modify their policies to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities unless the modified policies result in an undue burden or a fundamental alteration of the program.

The final rule requires transit agencies to designate at least one person to coordinate its efforts to comply with their reasonable modification policy and process.

Providers are expected to develop procedures that meet the following requirements:

1. The process for filing a complaint, including the name, address, telephone number, and email address of the employee designated under (a) of this part, must be sufficiently advertised to the public, such as on the public transit agency's website.
2. The procedures must be accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.
3. The public transit agency must promptly communicate its response to the complaint allegations, including reasons for the response, to the complainant by a means that will result in documentation of the response.

The process shall provide a means, accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, to request a modification in the entity's policies and practices applicable to its transportation services.

1. Individuals requesting modifications shall describe what they need in order to use the service.
2. Individuals requesting modifications are not required to use the term 'reasonable modification' when making a request.
3. Whenever feasible, requests for modifications shall be made and determined in advance, before the transportation provider is expected to provide the modified service, for example, during the paratransit eligibility process, through customer service inquiries, or through the entity's complaint process.
4. Where a request for modification cannot practicably be made and determined in advance, operating personnel of the entity shall make a determination of whether the modification should be provided at the time of the request.

Reasons for Denial of a Request for Reasonable Modification

Requests for modification of a public entity's policies and practices may be denied only on one or more of the following grounds:

1. Granting the request would fundamentally alter the nature of the entity's services, programs, or activities.
2. Granting the request would create a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
3. Without the requested modification, the individual with a disability is able to fully use the entity's services, programs, or activities for their intended purpose.

A request for rides on a specific type or style of vehicle could be denied, for example, if the normal operation of the provider is to use a mixed fleet with no guarantee that specific vehicles can be assigned to specific routes or trips. In contrast, some providers make an effort to provide a specific type vehicle for most trips but advise the customer that it is not guaranteed for a specific type of vehicle to be available for all trip requests.

Reasonable Modification Examples

Reasonable modification to policy examples can be found in U.S. DOT ADA Regulations at Appendix E to Part 37—*Reasonable Modification Requests*. The examples provided there are not exhaustive and providers should look at each individual request and make determinations. Flexibility in perspective is helpful.

U.S. DOT identifies additional examples of reasonable modification:

- Allowing food or drink on a vehicle for a customer who is diabetic.
- Allowing operators to handle fare for a customer who has a disability that makes fare payment difficult or impossible.
- A driver will stop a bus away from the bus stop so a person in a wheelchair can avoid obstructions at a boarding location due to construction or snow and ice.
- Demand response drivers may need to adjust their policy of curb to curb service to door to door service for the customer that needs assistance to the door to complete their trip.

Service Animals

For transit providers and customers, there is often confusion because of differences in the definitions of Service Animals of the U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). For vehicle operations, DOT rules apply for both public and private providers. The DOT definition states, “Any guide dog, signal dog, or *other animal* individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability.” Tasks include but are not limited to:

- Guiding individuals with impaired vision
- Alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds
- Providing minimal protection or rescue work
- Pulling a wheelchair or fetching dropped items

DOJ defines service animals as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Tasks include,

- Guiding people who are blind
- Alerting people who are deaf
- Pulling a wheelchair
- Alerting and protecting a person having a seizure
- Reminding a person to take prescribed medications
- Calming a person with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Other duties needed by the person with disabilities



The DOJ regulations apply to any areas where the public is permitted go and apply to Title II (State and Local Governments) and Title III (Places of Public Accommodation) entities.

There are no national certification processes for identifying service animals. Transportation providers cannot require:

- A certificate
- Identification card
- Note from a physician
- The animal to wear a vest or other identifying gear
- Any limitation on the type of animal

Service Animal Policy Examples

- Transit providers may have a policy that service animals must not occupy a seat. In general, service animals are trained to stay at a rider's feet or under a seat.
- There is no limit to the number of service animals that a customer could bring on to a bus. If the animal meets the definition of a service animal and is under control of the owner, a provider should allow more than one service animal to board. Some service animals provide assistance at locations away from the bus.
- Service animals can ride on lifts but must be under control of the customer to protect the animal and harness from moving parts of the lift.

Passenger Assistance

For riders using public transit, assistance from the driver is often vital to ensure that the trip can be made successfully by passengers with disabilities and seniors. Drivers should be trained to assist passengers and be sensitive to disability etiquette when interacting with people. Good customer service begins with drivers who make it part of their routine to assist passengers.

Additionally, Section 37.163(f) of the Department of Transportation's Americans with Disabilities Act regulations states: "Where necessary or upon request, the entity's personnel shall assist individuals with disabilities with the use of securement systems, ramps and lifts. If it is necessary for the personnel to leave their seats to provide this assistance, they shall do so." Regulation 37.173 adds that transit operators are required to ensure that personnel are trained to proficiency, as appropriate to their duties, so that they operate vehicles and equipment safely and properly to assist individuals with disabilities in a respectful and courteous way.

The appendix to this section clarifies: “On a vehicle which uses a ramp for entry, the driver may have to assist in pushing a manual wheelchair up the ramp (particularly where the ramp slope is relatively steep). [This may] involve a driver leaving his seat.”

Summary

A public or private transportation provider that operates fixed-route or demand response service, or any combination, is required to provide accessible services for everyone meeting the ADA requirements and without discrimination. The reasonable modification rule of U.S. DOT helps clarify and guide providers to ensure that people with disabilities have opportunities to use accessible transportation and be connected to their communities. Likewise, understanding service animal requirements and passenger assistance requirements under the ADA benefits both customers and providers to make trips without hassle.

A crucial element for providing quality accessible transportation is to have a solid operator training program for ADA requirements and passenger assistance. The training is strongest when guided by clearly written agency policy that promotes practices which help customers make trips from origin to destination.

Resources

Americans with Disabilities Act: Guidance, FTA Circular 4710.1

https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/Final_FTA_ADA_Circular_C_4710.1.pdf

Topic Guides on ADA Transportation

<https://dredf.org/ADAtg/index.shtml>

Transit Manager’s Toolkit: ADA

<http://nationalrtap.org/transitmanager/Administration-Compliance/ADA>

DOT Final Rule, reasonable modifications to policies, practices and procedures for public transportation providers.

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/03/13/2015-05646/transportation-for-individuals-with-disabilities-reasonable-modification-of-policies-and-practices>

Kansas RTAP, *How to Respond to Requests for Reasonable Modification to Your Policies? Use Common Sense.* <http://www2.ku.edu/~kutc/pdffiles/KTRFS16-ModifyPolicies.pdf>

Department of Justice Definition of Service Animal, National ADA Network Fact Sheet.

<http://adata.org/factsheet/service-animals>

Frequently Asked Questions about Service Animals.

<http://www.nadtc.org/wp-content/uploads/NADTC-Frequently-Asked-Questions-about-Service-Animals.pdf>

3 Accessible Bikeshare: Benefits to Older Adults & People with Disabilities

Introduction

Bicycle sharing systems, commonly referred to as public bicycle systems or bikeshare systems, are services that provide additional mobility options for members of the community in which the bikeshare system is located. Bikeshare affords individuals the option to borrow a bike from one point and return it to another. Individuals typically use bikes from bikeshare docks for short trips in a given area, such as first and last mile connections to public transportation systems. Costs for using a bikeshare system range from a daily fee for new users, to a subscription fee for annual members typically ranging from \$65-\$120. Some bikeshare programs are also free. Many systems also utilize mobile application technologies to show nearby bike station locations with available bikes and open bike docks. According to the National Bikeshare Association, as of June 2014, public bikesharing systems were available in 50 countries on five continents.

Bikesharing systems facilitate one-way rides to work, school, medical destinations, shopping destinations, and other community opportunities. These systems offer increased transportation choices as an alternative to driving while simultaneously assisting people in moving about their communities. For people with disabilities and older adults, additional transportation options can be critical to accessing needed community and regional services.

As bikesharing efforts expand across the United States, there has been an increased emphasis on ensuring these systems and programs are both accessible and inclusive to all. Fully inclusive bikesharing systems, including some mentioned as best practices in this report, recognize that they serve a diverse community needing different types of bikes for a variety of purposes. MobilityLab, a key researcher on accessible transportation options, finds that bikeshare helps people who do not own a bike or who may want to only ride a short distance in a given area with the chance to ride, but that as these programs grow, there is a heightened need to ensure all community members can benefit from the options available to them. Bikesharing enables people to access their communities in ways they might not have previously done. It also enables first and last mile connections to transportation options, thereby affording greater travel independence to community members.

There are also many programs that fall outside of the traditional city or campus-based model, including creative rural and suburban bikesharing systems that provide the same types of connections to transit that larger urban bikeshare programs do. One system in rural Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, uses libraries to facilitate short-term bike loan programs. Users can rent a bike for a day for free, and use it to connect to community destinations and

transportation services. The bikes can be returned to any library within the county system, not necessarily the point of origin.

Types of Accessible Bicycles

As bikesharing grows in popularity and efforts are made to incorporate accessible bikes into the fleet of a new or existing bikeshare system, it is important to understand that there is not a “one size fits all” type of accessible bike. To utilize a bikeshare system, one user may need to use an E-bike that assists in propelling and pedaling, while another user may need a hand bike that eliminates the need for foot pedaling completely. Some of the most common accessible bikes are described below.

Handcycles

Handcycles feature a hand-propelled design and easy-to-use hand steering and braking controls. They often feature an upright seat for maximum comfort and ease of use.



E-Bikes

Commonly referred to as E-Bikes, electric assist bicycles feature an integrated electric motor which can be used for propulsion. Electric assist motors are used to assist users in pedaling.



Side-by-Side Bikes

These bikes, sometimes called tandem bikes, feature side-by-side seating for pairs for riders of different sizes and abilities. They offer twin independent transmissions so each rider can pedal at his or her own pace. Side-by-side bikes typically also feature hand brakes.



Trikes

Trikes, or tricycles, offer a different type of design than a traditional bicycle. They feature three wheels instead of two that affords users in staying seated in a more natural position. They also have hand brakes and a heavy duty frame construction.



Bicycle Attachments

There are various types of attachments for bicycles, and some attachments can be cheaper additions to current bicycles. One design, for example, features a one-wheeled bike attachment that can be buckled onto a wheelchair, thus creating tricycle capabilities for the user.



Best Practices in Accessible Bikesharing

- College Park, Maryland mBike

mBike was launched in May 2016 as a partnership between the city of College Park, Maryland, the University of Maryland, and the bikeshare operator Zagster. The mBike program has 125 bikes that serve students, faculty, staff, and residents on the university campus and in the surrounding city, and includes five accessible bikes in its fleet. Available accessible bicycles include hand cycles, tricycles, and side-by-side bikes.

- Ohio State University Bikeshare Program

Ohio State University's system has 115 bicycles and 15 stations that deliver a safe and sustainable alternative transportation option for the large university community. In addition to commuter bicycles, the system also includes tandem, hand cycle, electric assist, heavy duty cruisers designed to carry more weight, and three-wheeled cargo bikes that have a platform or basket designed for carrying packages or boxes.

- Westminster, Colorado

The town of Westminster launched its new accessible bikeshare program in June 2016, designed to provide the entire community with equitable access to a convenient, affordable, and healthy way to experience Westminster. The system includes 32 cruiser bikes and eight accessible bikes (three hand bikes and five trikes).

- City of Detroit Bikeshare Program/Shift Transit

This innovative new program will launch in spring 2017 and features 420 bikes, including a range of accessible bikes to be selected by the City of Detroit and the manufacturer, Shift Transit.

Conclusion

The advent of bikeshare programs has brought increased choices in transportation and a greater level of independence to users of such systems. However, since accessible bikesharing is a relatively new concept, it does not come without its challenges or growing pains. One of the current challenges as bikeshare expands is the availability of accessible options that benefit people with disabilities and older adults in all bikeshare programs and systems. While some communities, such as those highlighted in this report, have been quick to develop solutions to make bikesharing accessible and inclusive, other communities have been slow to adopt similar efforts.

Planning partners should make every effort to include the disability and aging communities in all planning efforts focused on bikesharing. It is necessary to hear the ideas of potential system users and seek out opportunities to make systems inclusive and accessible to all.

As bikesharing continues to grow, special emphasis should be placed on safety for cyclists and pedestrians. Incorporating safety goals into overall bikeshare and first/last mile connection efforts is an integral part of promoting community safety.

Resources

Ohio State Bikesharing Program to Offer Accessible Bikes

<https://odi.osu.edu/news/news-archive/bike-sharing-program-to-offer-accessible-bikes.html>

College Park's mBike Brings Accessible Bikeshare to the Region

<http://mobilitylab.org/2016/05/12/college-parks-mbike-brings-accessible-bikeshare-region/>

Zagster Company Website

<http://www.zagster.com/>

Zagster Press Release: Westminster and Zagster Introduce Inclusive Bike Share Program

<http://www.zagster.com/press/westminster-and-zagster-introduce-inclusive-bike-share-program>

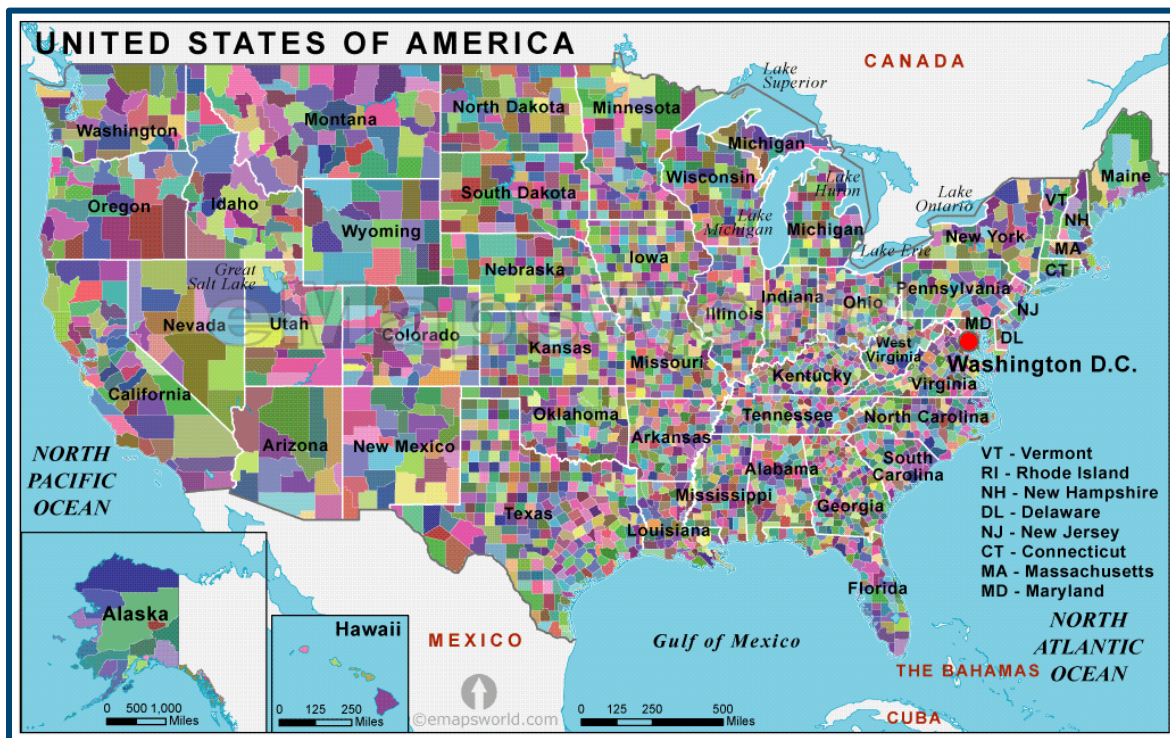
Is Biketown Bike Share for All? Or Only the Able-Bodied?

<http://bikeportland.org/2016/06/02/bike-share-for-all-or-only-the-able-bodied-184789>

4 Crossing Jurisdictional Boundaries

Introduction

Crossing a county or state line may go unnoticed by many of us when driving, but for many people, especially older adults and people with disabilities who cannot drive, that line may represent a barrier to much-needed services. Being able to access medical care, shopping, work and social connections is vitally important to people as part of their daily lives. While many people, including older adults and people with disabilities, are able to accomplish this on their own, those who rely on public transportation services sometimes encounter obstacles based on the geographic area served. The source of transportation funds, which may come from a single county or a limited amount of funding available to cover a large geographic area, may restrict access to needed services. According to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Factbook, in 2013 there were more than 6,800 organizations providing transportation in the United States, with the majority of the systems being demand response and serving older adults and people with disabilities. These organizations were unequally distributed between cities and 3,143 counties and county equivalents throughout the country. While 38 states have at least one transportation agency covering more than one county, outside the major cities at least one quarter of the U.S. lacks public transportation services to travel to a neighboring county and its services. The following map of the United States divided into counties and county equivalents is an illustration of the possible patchwork of systems.



To solve the frequent problem of being able to connect people to the services they need on the other side of a border is not easy, and there is no single solution. As noted above, the primary causes of the fragmentation of transportation services are funding sources and services that are limited to one local jurisdiction. A combination of approaches is needed to expand services beyond the jurisdictional boundary, and better coordination and communication among transportation providers, support services, and representatives of many political levels is a fundamental step.

Case Examples:

Following are selected examples of coordination among transportation, human services, and government agencies that illustrate the challenges, as well as efforts to diminish or eliminate barriers, to enable older adults and people with disabilities to access the services they need. These examples represent suburban, rural, and frontier environments--each with their own set of challenges.

Montgomery County, MD Call-n-Ride (Suburban)

Montgomery County created a taxi voucher program called *Call-n-Ride* to provide medical transportation, both within the county and to certain other jurisdictions, for low income residents who are aged 65 years or older or who have a disability. *Call-n-Ride* is funded by the county and utilizes county-based taxi providers. Montgomery County is on the northern border of Washington, DC, and is served by the region's public transportation system which primarily connects it with Washington, northern Virginia, and a neighboring county in Maryland, and the county also offers a number of county-based transportation options. Call-n-Ride enables eligible residents of the county to get on-demand taxi services at a much cheaper rate, and to get to places that are not served by the public transit system, such as hospitals in Baltimore, MD. However, as much as it exemplifies good coordination between county and private transportation providers in the county, one problem is helping individuals who travel outside the county using Call-n-Ride to get back home. There is currently no relationship between Montgomery County and taxi services outside of the county, so riders cannot use the voucher for a return trip. This is a challenge that the county is still working to resolve.

Green River, KY Intra-County Transit System (Rural)

The Green River Area Development District was formed by seven counties, Daviess, Henderson, Ohio, McLean, Webster, Union, and Hancock, in the northern part of Kentucky, offering aging,



health and social services. This organization created the Green River Intra-County Transit System (GRITS) to provide residents with region-wide transportation that enables them to travel and access services in the seven county area. Seven different county

governments, each with their own needs and revenue sources, found common ground and came together to create a coordinated system that serves the entire region. As with *Call-n-Ride*, while this coordination has increased accessibility for the residents, further cooperation with other organizations and local governments could improve some people's lives. For example, it is now easier for residents from outlying counties to travel to Henderson or Owensboro (two urban areas), but with the trip frequency limited to once a week, it is still not very practical for individuals who need frequent medical services such as dialysis.

Grand Gateway Economic Development – Pelivan (Frontier)

Another example of coordination amongst various organizations and governments is a system called Pelivan Transit. The Grand Gateway Economic Development Association established Pelivan Transit in 1985 to provide flexible, accessible transportation to a rural, seven-county area in northeastern Oklahoma. The program serves an aging and geographically dispersed population, offering demand-response, deviated fixed-route, and transportation to nutrition sites, work, medical care, and other activities. Public transportation provided by Pelivan includes integration with tribal systems through contracts with 10 tribal jurisdictions. Grand Gateway Area Agency on Aging works closely with Pelivan Transportation to improve existing service and transportation options for seniors. Pelivan Transit has actively pursued and secured a diverse range of federal funding. Funding sources include Section 5311 (Rural & Small Urban Areas), Discretionary Section 5309 (Bus and Bus Facilities), Section 5310 (Elders/Disabled Persons), as well as Section 5311(c) Tribal Transit Funding. Some of these grants require local matching funds, which Pelivan meets through its service contracts with the State of Oklahoma, local municipalities, the Department of Human Services' Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Medicaid nonemergency transportation and Older Americans Act nutrition funding (Title III-C). It also supplements these funds with revenue from advertising, private for-profit businesses, nonprofit foundations and fares. Multi-county, multi-tribal, and multi-organizational cooperation and coordination created a system allowing travel for residents throughout a large territory that would otherwise have services limited to only one tribe or county.

Summary

The above examples highlight organizations that recognized the needs of their residents, formed partnerships with other organizations to explore options, and worked to address a jurisdictional or transportation boundary through better coordination of services. In the example of Montgomery County, MD, it was cooperation between county and private services that created taxi vouchers that got people to services outside of the county. In Kentucky, it was communication and cooperation between various county governments that created a larger transportation network. Finally, in Oklahoma, there was coordination among several counties, tribal governments and other organizations that opened up areas and services to groups of people who would otherwise be isolated. Coordination requires a lot of work. Resolving a boundary issue requires first of all, a willingness to seek out and communicate with other groups and/or local governments that have a vested interest in providing better services to the target populations. As these case examples show, through sharing of ideas, information, and resources (including funds), solutions may be found.

Resources:

American Public Transportation Association (APTA), *2015 Public Transportation Factbook*
<https://www.apta.com/resources/statistics/Documents/FactBook/2015-APTA-Fact-Book.pdf>

APTA; U.S. Local and State Transit Links

<http://www.apta.com/resources/links/unitedstates/pages/default.aspx>

- Links to thousands of transit agencies for cities, towns, and counties across the United States.

United States Census Bureau

<https://censtats.census.gov/usa/usainfo.shtml>

Call-n-Ride Website

<https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/CNR/>

Call-n-Ride Brochure

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/Resources/Files/seniors/Call-n-Ride%20Brochure.pdf>

Green River Area Development District Website

<http://www.gradd.com/AboutUs/>

Pelivan Transit Website

<http://www.pelivantransit.org/>

Transit Cooperative Research Program, *TCRP Report 101, Toolkit for Rural Community Coordinated Transportation Services*: Provides further examples of the benefits of coordinating services between organizations, as well as guidelines on how to establish and implement coordinating efforts.

http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_101.pdf -

Federal Highway Administration, *Planning for Transportation in Rural Areas*: A detailed examination and explanation of rural transportation by the Federal Highway Administration.

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/rural_areas_planning/page03.cfm

5 First Mile/Last Mile: Challenges and Opportunities

Introduction

Fixed-route public transportation accessibility requirements became law with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Since that time, concerted effort has been made to inform travelers of the options they have to reach destinations by public fixed-route bus or rail service and of the options available for ADA-complementary paratransit or Demand Response services. In addition, travel has become easier with updates to vehicle accessibility (e.g., kneeling buses, transition of lifts to ramps) as technology has improved. Despite these advances, a continuing challenge is connecting passengers to the public transportation system itself. Gaps include lack of service connections between transportation providers; physical breaks, such as an incomplete sidewalk system when a person is traveling to the bus stop; insufficient availability of alternate modes to reach a final destination after leaving the transit system; lack of coordination among providers; inadequate information about options; and differing levels of familiarity with and use of mobile or desktop technology applications by passengers. These gaps are referred to as “first-mile/last-mile” issues. This segment of the Trends Report examines the challenges and opportunities related to that first and last mile when a person attempts to complete a transit trip from true origin to final destination.

Challenges and Issues Related to First Mile/Last Mile

According to Transloc’s January 2016 blog post, *Eliminating Public Transit’s First-Mile/Last Mile Problem*, many people in the United States are ‘comfortable’ walking one-quarter mile or less to reach public transportation and then reach their destination on the other end. Many have the ability to walk farther than ¼ mile and do so to reach bus or rail service; however, people with disabilities and older adults may not be able to walk that far, especially when rest stops or completed sidewalks are not available. A lack of connection from front door or curb to the nearest transportation network or a longer than acceptable distance to transit can result in seniors driving longer. It can also result in older adults and people with disabilities traveling less, leading to decreased health and nutrition, or an inability to reach needed medical services.

Data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) indicates that older drivers made up 18% of all licensed drivers in 2014 compared to 15% in 2005. The overall motor vehicle fatality rate declined for the 65 and older age group from 2005 to 2014; however it should be noted that the fatality rate for that age group has been increasing since the 2009. An October 2016 *Toronto Star* article noted that 68% of Canadians age 65 to 74 used driving as their primary means of transportation; only 31% of residents over age 85 were driving. Strategic

driving cessation programs put into place in North America needs to be accompanied by adjustments to transit and alternate transportation modes that take into consideration travel needs and service frequency, as well as improvements to pathways and street intersections so that older adults would be more able and willing to walk to nearby destinations.

People with disabilities may have needs similar to or different from older adults depending on their ability to drive, use regular fixed-route transit, use bikeshare, take a taxi, or travel by rideshare services. For both older adults and people with disabilities, a person's familiarity with transit offerings may depend on how well a person is able to access information and services through a phone or the internet, whether accessible bikeshare is available in the community, and how well local systems coordinate to support origin and destination connections. In addition, distance to the nearest public transportation routes affect awareness and comfort with using public transportation.

Four Opportunities for Improving First Mile/Last Mile

What are some of the opportunities available to close the first mile/last mile gaps? Four approaches have featured prominently in recent news and reports, and implementation depends on a community's needs, geography, and demographics. Approaches include a) improving pedestrian access to transit; b) providing alternate modes such as bikeshare, taxi or rideshare (e.g., transportation network companies); c) technology, apps, mobile reservations; and d) coordination and partnerships between traditional public transportation agencies and private providers. The following section provides a snapshot of state or local practices that incorporate one or more of these four approaches.

Improving Pedestrian Access

The ability to **use** fixed-route transit hinges on the ability to **reach** public transportation. The number of travelers who can use fixed-route bus or rail increases when sidewalks are completed, when crosswalks have signals, when pedestrian signals offer adequate crossing times, benches or rest points are available, and when transit stops are fully accessible. The Hawaii Department of Transportation is addressing all of these factors through a statewide pedestrian master plan. A Hawaii DOT pedestrian toolbox contains sections on accessibility and pedestrian access to transit that highlight best practices. The toolbox suggests some simple measures that can make a big difference. For example, humans, by nature, tend to pick the most direct path of travel to reach a destination. With this in mind, bridges over streams, paths through parks and neighborhoods, and walkways that connect dead-end streets can be constructed so that pedestrians are not taking a circuitous route to reach transit. Section 6 of the toolkit includes a comparison of transit stop locations related to intersections and how stop



placement can help or hinder pedestrians approaching a bus, rail, or bus rapid transit stop. As part of facility construction, lighting, benches, signs, and landscaping maintenance all need to be taken into consideration. Adding shade, a windbreak, a bench, and well-maintained lighting along the path of travel can make all the difference as to whether a rider chooses transit

versus another mode or not traveling at all. These improvements also affect whether an older adult or person with a disability is able to use fixed-route transit versus paratransit services.

Alternate Modes

The increase in bicycle use, creation of dedicated cycling lanes, and the growth in bikeshare reflect public interest in economical, convenient, and environmentally friendly means of travel. For bikeshare to be an effective alternative for travelers of varying ages and abilities, accessible bicycles—tricycles and handcycles (powered by the rider’s hands rather than his or her legs)—must be available and identifiable on bikeshare apps. Bikeshare systems in Columbus, Ohio, Carmel, Indiana, Westminster, Colorado, and College Park, Maryland, have handcycles in their fleets. In the College Park system, riders can choose among tricycles, side-by-side bikes, and a handcycle. All of the accessible bikes can be checked out and docked at any of the 14 stations around the city, and the accessible bikes include reflectors, bells, and lights. Improvements are under way so that the bikeshare app indicates where the accessible bikes are within the system. In an article on the College Park system, a cyclist who has disabilities is quoted, saying that bikeshare systems “are meant to provide transportation for the people that are there, and in all cases, there are going to be people with disabilities. It makes a lot of business sense for bikeshare companies to be creating bikes that everyone can use.” In San Antonio, Texas, tricycles have been tested and similar to the other cities mentioned, locating a three-wheel cycle may take the assistance of a customer service representative. The easier it is to get to these accessible bicycles, the more apt they are to get used.

Technology Apps and Mobile Reservations

Valley Metro in Phoenix, Arizona, has received a Federal Transit Administration grant to develop a mobile app that integrates trip planning and ticketing. The app will incorporate the area’s light rail, bus, and paratransit systems. Transportation network companies will

participate to assist with connections from transit to rider destinations. Mobile ticketing will link to apps for Lyft and Grid Bikeshare reservations. App users can pay for transit fares, reserve a bicycle, or transfer to a Lyft app if they want to make a rideshare reservation. The app project is being funded by the Federal Transit Administration, and future phases will include data alerts of bus and rail arrivals, reservation and cancellation of paratransit trips, and single payment options for multiple modes—transit, bikeshare, and rideshare. A Valley Transit survey has indicated that 65% of Valley Metro riders use smart phones, so the system sees the free app has having broad appeal.

Coordination and Partnerships

Partnerships between public agencies and private companies have been essential to the growth in shared modes, completion of pedestrian connections, and technology deployment. *Mass Transit Magazine* recently featured an example of how the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority and Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority have begun partnering with Uber by using an On the Go app so that rail or bus customers can reach their final destinations. In the Denver region and in Portland, Oregon, Lyft is working with transit districts on app integration. In Denver RTD's pilot, Lyft provides subsidized rides to and from the City of Centennial's Dry Creek light rail station. What makes the Lyft partnership so appealing? As noted in an August 2016 *City Lab* article, the Centennial model connects riders directly to the light-rail network, which provides regular, on-time service, and the associated trip-planning tools are simple and intuitive to use. Ease of movement and a lack of a cumbersome process are essential for first-mile/last mile models.

Summary

Innovations and increased emphasis on walking, cycling, and livable communities means opportunities for older adults and people with disabilities who would like to use public transportation but have been unable to complete that first or last mile. Mobile technology is opening doors by promoting the integration of different transportation providers' fare payment and reservations systems into one seamless app or concierge number. When implementing first-mile/last-mile solutions, each gap-closing approach relies on the other approaches being in place, starting with the basic foundation of travelers being able to walk to public transit if they are physically able, then the secondary stage of supplementing pedestrian routes with alternate modes (e.g., accessible bikeshare and rideshare), and finally, making technology interfaces with alternate modes (e.g., apps, trip planners, and one-call centers) available to riders.

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6 Addressing Transportation Safety Concerns of Older Adults & People with Disabilities

Introduction

Public transportation helps everyone—commuters, families, students, older adults, persons with disabilities—in their efforts to reach their personal and career goals, meet their daily needs, and maintain a high level of transportation independence. Public transportation helps foster an active lifestyle, encouraging people to walk and/or bike to transit stops. In 2014, an estimated 14.5% of the population was 65 or older and in 2015, nearly 20% of Americans were living with some type of disability. Accessible, safe mobility options are especially vital in supporting the independence of these two populations and of those who care for them.

For many older adults and people with disabilities, lack of experience using public transportation limits their interest in the possibilities available to them. The lack of experience with and knowledge about the various modes of transportation available in today's market often results in fears about the potential risks associated with using public transit and deters people from exploring the options. Such fears can pose a major obstacle to efforts that encourage transit travel and improve transit services. Although rational arguments alone may not change everyone's attitudes and feelings about public transit, carefully crafted, positive, and inviting safety and security messages disseminated through familiar and trusted sources can help dispel some of the negative attitudes and feelings of insecurity.

www.vtpi.org/safer.pdf

Positive safety messages should also highlight that the availability of public transportation during emergencies—both natural and man-made—is critical in maintaining basic access, mobility, and safety for all individuals, especially older adults and people with disabilities. In an emergency, the availability of public transportation can literally become a matter of life or death.

Issues Related to Safety

1. One of the primary reasons older people are often reluctant to give up driving and use public transportation is that they have never learned how to use public transportation. In addition, when asked about their hesitance to use public transportation, many older adults say they are concerned about their safety and vulnerability while waiting for and riding on local public transportation vehicles.

2. Older adults with memory issues or dementia will need help to navigate the public transportation system safely.
3. Older people with mobility limitations may experience physical instability when getting in or out of various transportation vehicles.
4. Many parents/caregivers of children and young adults with disabilities—particularly those with intellectual and developmental disabilities—have never allowed those children/young adults to learn how to use public transportation because they feared for their safety.
5. Although most public transportation vehicles in urban/suburban settings are now accessible (e.g., kneeling buses with low floors and small ramps to curbs, automated annunciator systems that call out names of stops) to people with physical disabilities, the areas where passengers must wait to get onto the vehicles are often not accessible (e.g., no seat available on which to sit and wait, broken or no sidewalks leading to the stop, poorly or unlit area). Such missing elements cause legitimate safety concerns.
6. Public transportation can be the key to achieving independence for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities; however, using transit on one’s own can create anxiety and fears.

Opportunities Related to Safety

Each of these challenges present a variety of opportunities for transportation and health care service providers, local governments, commercial businesses, and other supporters of public transportation to engage with older adults and people with disabilities and their caregivers in efforts to increase passengers’ ability to use and be comfortable with using public transportation.



1. Identify and/or develop ways to help older adults learn to use public transportation and feel safe doing so.
 - Organizations that provide services to older adults (e.g., Area Agencies on Aging, adult day programs, community senior services programs) can partner/collaborate with public transportation agencies to develop and disseminate information

specifically describing the ways in which older adults can receive the assistance they need in order to use public transportation safely. System familiarization programs and travel training specifically designed for this population have proven very effective.

2. Identify and/or develop ways to help people with memory problems or dementia and their caregivers safely use public transportation.
 - For people with memory issues, including dementia, offer programs that provide operators with information and training on the challenges that individuals with dementia and their caregivers face so they are better able to recognize dementia symptoms and ensure a safe and enjoyable trip for all riders. It is important to know the difference between normal age-related changes and the symptoms that may indicate a developing problem. As the first line of contact for many riders, the operator's observations are important and may help detect changes in riders' behavior that are indicative of a need for extra assistance.
3. Identify and/or develop ways to help parents feel comfortable allowing their young and adult children with disabilities to learn how to use public transportation.
 - Organizations that provide services to children can partner/collaborate with public transportation agencies to develop and disseminate through as many channels as possible information specifically for parents describing the ways in which all parties can provide the necessary assistance to teach both young and adult children how to use public transportation safely.
4. Identify and/or develop ways to help children and adults with disabilities learn how to use public transportation and feel safe doing so.
 - Schools and organizations that provide services to children and adults with disabilities can partner/collaborate with public transportation agencies to develop and disseminate information specifically describing the ways in which individuals can receive the assistance they need in order to use public transportation safely. System familiarization programs and travel training specifically designed for people with disabilities have proven very effective.

Case Studies/Addressing the Issues

Two examples of local transportation systems' efforts, from the State of Maryland and the City of Chicago, illustrate how programs might allay the fears of, and provide hands-on

support/training to, potential passengers on their public transportation vehicles. Click on the links provided below to access additional information on the MTA and Chicago RTA websites.

- [Ten Ways to be Safe and Feel Safe on Public Transportation](#)

The following is an abbreviated section from the Maryland Department of Transportation website. Click on the title “Ten Ways to be Safe” below to view the entire page.

The National Safety Council estimates that taking the bus is 170 times safer than traveling by automobile. That number shouldn't surprise us when one [adds up the number](#) of fatalities on the road due to driving intoxicated (30%) or distracted (26%) or speeding (30%). Those bad options just aren't available to us as passengers on a bus or rail vehicle. That's why it makes the news when a mishap involves public transportation. The suggestions below are offered to help you travel more safely and feel safer too.

While waiting for a bus or streetcar, try to avoid unlit or deserted areas. Stand near others who are waiting, an occupied building, or in a lighted area until transportation arrives.

- *Plan your route. If you're new to public transportation, the bus or train schedule may be confusing at first. You should plan ahead of time where you are going and how you will get there.*
- *Consider tracking the real-time arrival of your MTA Local Bus or Light Rail if you own a smart phone, or via text messages on any mobile phone. ([MyMTATracker.com](#) is a good place to start.)*
- *Do not run to the train. Watch your step when boarding or exiting a subway train, as there is a gap between the edge of the subway platform and the train door.*
- *Listen for public announcements and follow the directions provided.*
- *Never attempt to board a subway train once the doors begin to close.*
- *Stand to one side to allow people to exit the subway car before you board.*
- *Stay alert and hold on to railings when a bus or train is slowing down or turning.*
- *When you arrive at your stop, be aware of others around you. If you feel you are being followed, go to the nearest occupied building and ask for assistance.*
- *Limit your display of money, electronics or valuables in public. Carry your wallet in an inside pocket or a pocket that can be buttoned. Keep your purse, shopping bag or other belongings in your lap, on your arm or between your feet. Do not leave them on an empty seat.*

We invite you to check out [more tips](#) about traveling safely on MTA.

- [The RTA Travel Training Program teaches individuals with disabilities and older adults how to use Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, and Pace buses and trains.](#)

The RTA Travel Training Program offers three types of training tailored to meet each participant's need: (1) Trip Training, (2) Individual Transit Orientation, and (3) Group Transit Orientation. The RTA Travel Training Coordinator will help participants decide which type of training will work best for them. Travel training sessions are provided by professionals who have experience working with people with disabilities and older adults, and are knowledgeable about transportation accessibility. Travel Training is free except for the cost of transit fares during training sessions.

[Travel Training Brochure - English](#) [Travel Training Brochure - Spanish](#)

Trip Training: Participants in this type of training work one-on-one with a travel trainer to practice using buses and trains to travel to locations they visit on a regular basis.

Individual Transit Orientation: Participants in this type of training will work one-on-one with a Travel Trainer to receive a general introduction to bus and train accessibility.

Group Transit Orientation: This type of training provides group presentations at agencies that serve people with disabilities and older adults throughout the six-county region. To sign up for Travel Training, contact the RTA Travel Training Program at (312) 913-3120 or by email at: traveltraining@rtachicago.org

Conclusion

It is imperative that transportation systems find and promote ways to meet the needs of citizens who are unable to drive or who want other mobility options so that they are better able to participate in their communities. Wide distribution of clear and welcoming information and programs that promote safety and security for older adults and people with disabilities can help position public transit as an efficient, enjoyable, and respected form of travel. In addition to such program information, transportation networks should be sure to highlight the essential role they play in providing emergency services for all community residents when natural and/or man-made disasters strike.

Resources

AAPD: Facts about Equity in Transportation for People with Disabilities
<http://www.civilrights.org/transportation/disability/facts.html>

Current Practices Used by Travel Trainers for Seniors

<http://www.nadtc.org/wp-content/uploads/Current-Practices-Used-by-Travel-Trainers-for-Seniors-Cover.pdf>

10 Safety Tips for Seniors Using Public Transportation

<http://seniorliving.about.com/od/travelsmart/a/publictransport.htm>

Transportation Education Curriculum

<http://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/transportation-education-curriculum/>

Manual for the Development of Bus Transit System Safety Program Plans

Prepared by APTA, this document serves as a primer and guideline for both new start and established bus systems in defining the elements recommended for inclusion in a system safety program plan. http://bussafety.fta.dot.gov/show_resource.php?id=2951

Dementia Awareness in Public Transportation

<http://www.nadtc.org/wp-content/uploads/Dementia-Awareness-Transportation-Final-Cover.pdf>

Recommended Practice for the Development and Implementation of a Security and Emergency Preparedness Plan [SEPP]

This APTA-recommended practice for the development and implementation of a security and emergency preparedness plan represents a common viewpoint of those parties concerned with its provisions, namely transit operating/planning agencies (transit systems), manufacturers, consultants, engineers, and general interest groups.)

http://bussafety.fta.dot.gov/show_resource.php?id=3916

Clearinghouse for Older Road User Safety

<https://www.roadsafeseniors.org/forum/general-discussion/public-transportation-fear>

7 Section 5310: Opportunities, Requirements, and New Developments

Introduction

The “Section 5310 Program: Enhanced Mobility for Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities” (Section 5310) is a program of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that supports investments to remove transportation barriers for older adults and individuals with disabilities. While there is no single solution to address the mobility needs of a community, Section 5310 provides the necessary flexibility of funding, whether capital or operational, to create investments specific to the needs of a select community’s population.



The Section 5310 program was initially established in 1975 as a discretionary capital assistance program directed mainly to human service agencies and non-profit organizations for the purchase of vehicles. As federal transportation legislation evolved over the next four decades, changes were made to Section 5310 to benefit older adults and people with disabilities, including allowing funds to be used for operating expenses, encouraging coordination among human service providers, and mandating development of a Coordinated Public Transit – Human Service Transportation Plan. Recent funding increases to the Section 5310 program represent an opportunity to continue and expand projects that serve the needs of older adults and people with disabilities.

Under the previous federal legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century or MAP-21, the “New Freedom Program” (Section 5317) was merged into the Section 5310 program. Under the New Freedom Program, funds were made available for both capital and operating investments for services beyond traditional public transportation services and ADA complementary paratransit services. As a result of this merger of programs, activities eligible under the New Freedom program became eligible under Section 5310.

The combination of New Freedom-type activities (also called “nontraditional” activities) and “traditional” Section 5310 capital expenses was critical in creating a new 5310 program that not only aids in the purchase of much needed vehicles, but the development and support of

creative programs to address the wide range of travel options, services, and modes of travel that a community has available.

Section 5310 dollars are apportioned to states based on the population of older adults and people with disabilities, and then divided into urban, small urban, and rural areas. Finally, funds are distributed through a flexible state-managed process (this could be a competitive application process, formula-based distribution, or discretionary).

Currently the Section 5310 program provides funding for:

- “Traditional” investments, which are capital transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of older adults and people with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable (at least 55% of funding must be used on these projects);
- “Nontraditional” investments, meaning capital or operating projects that exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit (up to 45% of funding can be spent on these projects); and
- Program administration including planning and technical assistance (up to 10% of funding can be used on program administration).

Section 5310 also outlines the following match requirements:

- The match ratio for capital expenses is 80% federal and 20% local;
- For operating expenses, the federal share cannot exceed 50%;
- For program administration, 100% of federal funds can be used (meaning no match is required).

It is important to also keep in mind that the match can be derived from other federal funds (e.g., funds from the Administration for Community Living can be used as match), but funds from other FTA or US Department of Transportation (DOT) projects cannot be used as match.

Changes to Section 5310 under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act is the most recent federal surface transportation legislation which was signed into law on December 4, 2015. The FAST Act replaces previous MAP-21, and while it continues many of the Section 5310 provisions that MAP-21 established, it also includes some critical changes. Namely, the FAST Act:

- Increases Section 5310 funding to \$262.9 million in FY 2016, \$274 million in FY 2018, and \$285.6 million in FY 2020;
- Requires FTA to develop a best practices guide for Section 5310 service providers;

- Establishes a pilot program to provide grants to entities eligible for Section 5310 funding for innovative projects that improve the coordination of transportation services and non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) services;
- Allows states or localities that provide transit service and are eligible as direct recipients under Sections 5307 and 5311 to be direct recipients under Section 5310;
- Requires the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) to publish a new strategic plan by December 2016.

Section 5310 Opportunities

With the availability of Section 5310 funds, communities across the country have been provided with the opportunity to develop unique, local solutions to increase mobility for older adults and people with disabilities. A community's family of transportation options may include a range of modes and services, such as fixed-route public transit, dial-a-ride services, taxis, driving, private vehicles, and biking, as well as options such as volunteer transportation programs, mobility management services, one call/one click platforms and travel training programs.



Examples of program innovations that may be funded under Section 5310 include a variety of projects defined under the traditional and nontraditional categories.

Traditional projects can include:

- buses and vans
- wheelchair lifts
- ramps, and securement devices
- transit-related information technology systems
- mobility management programs.

Nontraditional projects can include:

- travel training
- volunteer driver programs
- building an accessible path to a bus stop
- mobility management programs

You'll notice that **mobility management** programs can be funded as either a traditional or nontraditional project. Mobility management activities help users choose the best transportation option(s) to meet their individual needs, while also optimizing existing community resources. While both aspects are important for the success of mobility

management, some programs put greater emphasis on one or the other. An individual approach focuses on information and assistance to help older adults and people with disabilities make confident and educated transportation choices based on their own needs and preferences, while a systems approach is concerned with improves efficiency and reduces service duplication so providers can work together to better meet demand and unmet needs.

A one-call/one-click platform may be considered a component of mobility management activities. There are a number of ways a one-call/one-click service may operate, but typically users call a single telephone number and receive assistance from a trained specialist and/or independently use a website to compare different travel options and costs, including specialized services targeted to older adults, people with disabilities and veterans. Often one-click websites will complement and operate in conjunction with one-call Information & Referral programs. Some one-click websites even allow users to make trip transactions including booking and scheduling rides, and arranging payment. Not only are individuals provided assistance with obtaining a ride where and when they need to go, but the information collected from the platform can help identify service gaps.

Section 5310 Requirements

In addition to the flexibility Section 5310 offers in supporting a wide range of activities, there are also mandates in the program that require communities to participate in certain activities for funding eligibility. MAP-21 specified that projects selected for funding must be included in a region's **Coordinated Public Transit – Human Service Transportation Plan** (also called a coordinated plan), and this requirement is continued in the FAST Act. A coordinated plan lays out a regional strategy to provide transportation and is meant to ensure that Section 5310 funding is being used in the most appropriate manner to reduce duplication in services. A coordinated plan also helps the region identify needs and gaps, and strategies for addressing those.

The coordinated planning requirement also includes a mandate for the coordinated plan to be developed and approved through a process that includes participation by older adults, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, and other members of the public. This engagement can be in the form of public meetings, workshops, or surveys. By mandating public participation, Section 5310 is supporting and empowering older adults and people with disabilities to be actively involved in designing community transportation systems that are responsive to their needs as users. To find information on your region's coordinated plan, contact your local Metropolitan Planning Organization: <https://www.planning.dot.gov/mpo.asp>.

Case Example: Innovative Use of Section 5310 Funds in North Carolina

In 2016, North Carolina's Centralina Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and the Centralina Council of Governments Planning Department developed the "Centralina Transportation Barriers Study" under a Section 5310 grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). The purpose of the project was to identify challenges faced by older adults and people with disabilities in the nine-county Centralina region served by the AAA: Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly, and Union. The study also created recommendations to overcome the barriers and synthesized and presented information to inform policy decisions and strategies. Section 5310 funding allowed this project to tackle a depth and breadth of research that the region would otherwise have been unable to capture.

The study gathered input from older adults and people with disabilities through a combination of online and paper surveys and focus groups, as well as input from 25 mobility providers and regional planning professionals. With this input, the study identified the most prominent challenges faced by older adults and people with disabilities in the Centralina region, which include: financial constraints, isolation, physical access issues, and lack of eligibility for transit programs. To develop recommendations, the study conducted a literature review and analysis of nationwide best practices on transportation and mobility. Combined with the surveys, focus groups, and input from mobility providers, the study resulted in a recommendation list that addressed five categories of barriers: Physical and Accessibility Factors; Rider Perceptions and Education; Policy and Service Coordination; Funding Structure; and Land Use and Environmental Conditions. The development of these recommendations, along with all of the information the study gathered in the process, will guide future development of transportation for the area.

Resources

National Aging and Disability Transportation Center Resources

<http://www.nadtc.org>

Section 5310 Course: Filling Gaps in Mobility for Older Adults & People with Disabilities

<http://www.nadtc.org/event/section5310-gapsinmobility/>

Section 5310 Funding Application Checklist

<http://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/section-5310-funding-an-application-checklist/>

[FTA Resources](http://www.transit.dot.gov) (<http://www.transit.dot.gov>)

- o [FAST Act Webpage](https://www.transit.dot.gov/FAST) <https://www.transit.dot.gov/FAST>

- [Section 5310 Webpage https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/enhanced-mobility-seniors-individuals-disabilities-section-5310](https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/enhanced-mobility-seniors-individuals-disabilities-section-5310)
- [Section 5310 Fact Sheet https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/enhanced-mobility-seniors-disabled-fact-sheet-section-5310](https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/enhanced-mobility-seniors-disabled-fact-sheet-section-5310)

Centralina Transportation Barriers Study

<http://www.nadtc.org/wp-content/uploads/Transportation-Barriers-Study-FINAL-Dec2016.pdf>.

Centralina Region Transportation Services Information

<http://centralinamobility.org/>.

8 Shared Ride Services and Transportation Network Companies

Introduction

Older adults and people with disabilities may have limited transit options and may need to travel to destinations outside of their transit area. They also may have to travel at a time when transportation is not available. Transportation Network Companies (TNC) can be a convenient way to get around and TNCs are now putting forth an effort to increase access for people with disabilities and older adults.

A Transportation Network Company connects paying passengers with drivers who provide transportation in their own non-commercial vehicles. With a simple download of an app on a smart phone, one can schedule a ride, at any time, at their convenience. In most cases, there is no need to have cash on hand because the ride is pre-paid on the app. TNC drivers are classified as independent contractors, and the price of the ride is based on miles and the duration of the trip.



There is some confusion as to what to call TNCs. Is it a ridesharing service or is it a ride-hailing service? The definition of ride-sharing is sharing a ride with another passenger or carpooling. Ride-hailing is defined when an individual personally summons or “hails” a vehicle, is immediately picked up and driven to their destination, usually alone. The Associated Press has also weighed in, instructing media to refer to both Uber and Lyft as “ride-hailing” or “ride-booking” services since both companies offer the option to share a ride with another passenger.

Opportunities

Transportation is a major challenge for people with disabilities and older adults who want to stay active and mobile in the community. TNCs can be an important part of the solution. If an individual does not require an accessible vehicle, one advantage of using TNCs instead of ADA paratransit is same day service instead of having to reserve a ride ahead of time.

Accessible options

uberWAV, uberASSIST and Lift Hero (now Ride Hero) are the more prominent players when it

comes to accessible transportation options offered by TNCs, but these options are available in just a few locations.

- **uberWAV** offers on-demand wheelchair accessible vehicles equipped with ramps or hydraulic lifts and connects with paratransit drivers.
- **uberASSIST** provides door-to-door support for riders who may need a helping hand with wheelchairs, walkers, scooters or have a service animal.
- **Lift Hero** is a ridesharing service for older adults that may provide a specially trained professional driver.

Both Lyft and Uber have developed partnerships with other organizations that enable customers without Uber or Lyft accounts or access to smart phones to use their services. The services described below are currently available in parts of California, Florida, Arizona, Dallas and Texas.

- Lyft recently partnered with the San Diego firm, GreatCall. With GreatCall, customers press '0' on their GreatCall Jitterbug phone and speak with an operator, who books a ride on their behalf. The operator has access to Lyft's Concierge platform which lets them contact the assigned driver to let them know they are picking up an older passenger who may require assistance. Billing for the ride appears on the customer's GreatCall statement.
- To book a ride with Uber, customers may call RideWith24, a toll-free number, and speak with an operator who takes the customer's credit card details and books the ride for them.

The partnerships described above are similar to a service offered by **GogoGrandparent**, which began operation in San Diego and has expanded to other areas of California. Seniors call an operator to book rides with Uber or to use a variety of on-demand services such as Instacart (grocery delivery), Munchery (dinner delivery), and Postmates (shopping).

Transportation Network Companies may potentially fill in the gaps in transportation for older adults and people with disabilities. For example, MetroAccess in Washington, D.C. is now considering using TNCs to provide transportation for passengers who use the paratransit service in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. With the launch of the new Abilities-Ride program, the rider's trips will be subsidized up to \$15 dollars for a maximum of four one-way trips per day, compared to the \$44 dollars to use the paratransit service.

Rural communities

When it comes to rural communities, Transportation Network Companies are challenged by the lack of a steady stream of customers. Other challenges include car maintenance, recruiting around-the-clock drivers, and long distances between destinations. **Liberty** provides transportation to rural areas in Texas and Nebraska through an Uber-like application that coordinates with existing public transportation providers. Services may include transportation at night and on weekends when public transportation is not an option. Liberty is also working with medical communities so that they can book rides on behalf of their patients as part of their caregiver platform. Currently, Liberty is awaiting approval from the Nebraska Public Service Commission to operate in the state, and the company will manage 30 to 40 drivers in the coastal city of Corpus Christi, Texas.

New developments

To address the needs of individuals with chronic conditions who require multiple and frequent medical appointments, healthcare providers and senior communities are now taking a closer look at TNCs as a potential solution. In January 2016, MedStar Health, a nonprofit health care system with hospitals in Maryland and D.C., began a partnership with Uber that allows its patients to arrange a ride via the hospital's website and set up reminders for appointments. In some cases, Medicaid and other insurance plans cover the expense, and the rides are set up through the facility's client advocate or a social worker. Lyft recently announced a relationship with the National Medtrans Network in New York City to provide rides to Medicaid users for non-emergency medical appointments.

Legal issues surrounding TNCs

There has been considerable discussion about the legal issues pertaining to Transportation Network Companies, especially related to serving the needs of older adults and people with disabilities. Uber and Lyft have policies barring discrimination against riders based on their geographic departure point or destination, nor may they charge additional fees to people with physical or mental disabilities. Uber has had a troubled history related to the treatment of passengers with disabilities, wheelchair issues and service animals. For example, the company settled a discrimination lawsuit with the National Federation of the Blind for \$225,000.

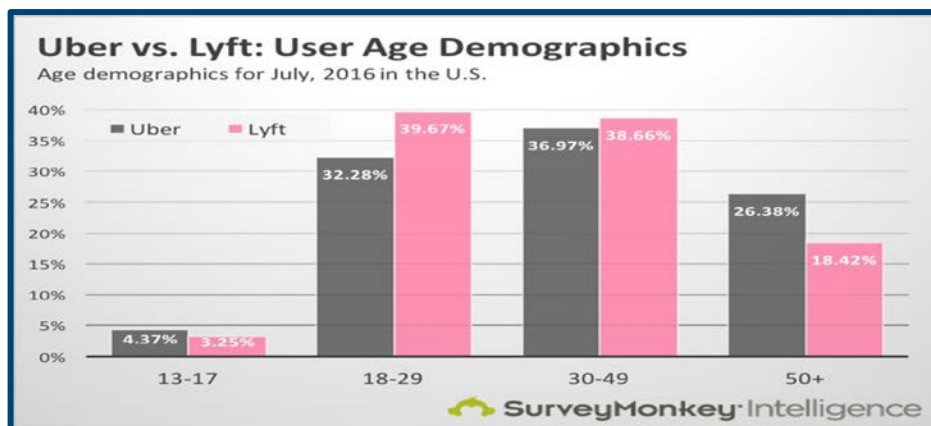
Screening

Background check requirements for drivers vary state by state. Uber uses the driver's social security number to conduct background checks. Overall, drivers must submit to a criminal history check initially and again every five years, and the TNC must review the driver's driving history. Anyone who has been convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (along with some other types of offenses) in the past seven years, or anyone who has had more than three moving violations or one major moving violation (e.g., reckless driving) in the previous three years is prohibited from being a driver. In addition, Uber monitors driver performance based on a 5-star rating from passengers who complete a questionnaire on the app.

Some states collaborate with their local police department to conduct background checks, and the TNC drivers receive a unique decal for their cars. In New York City, DMV and criminal background checks are conducted by the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) according to their licensing standards, instead of through Lyft.

Conclusion

More can be done in terms of outreach to older adults and people with disabilities. Partnering with local Area Agencies on Aging and establishing an in-house TNC navigator could be a solution. In addition, outreach to medical facilities to provide transportation for discharged patients can be an introduction to the service that Transportation Network Companies provide. Finally, as part of AARP's Life Reimagined Campaign, Uber is partnering with AARP to encourage retirees to become Uber drivers as a way to earn extra income.



Resources

Lift Hero

<http://venturebeat.com/2014/10/08/the-evolution-of-uber-leads-to-lift-hero-ridesharing-for-the-elderly/>

Liberty

<http://siliconprairienews.com/2016/07/meet-liberty-uber-like-service-built-for-rural-america/>

Uber and Lyft fill in the gaps for senior transportation

<http://www.ajc.com/lifestyles/health/uber-lyft-fill-needs-gap-senior-transportation/L9TeGQJ6C4rAJxBvawjkeM/>



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