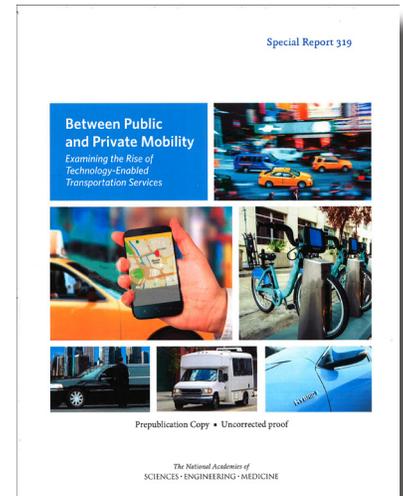


Between Public and Private Mobility: Examining the Rise of Technology-Enabled Transportation Services

TRB Special Report 319: *Between Public and Private Mobility: Examining the Rise of Technology-Enabled Transportation Services* analyzes how innovative transportation services, including ridesharing, carsharing, bikesharing, and microtransit, are changing mobility for millions of travelers. Yet regulation of these services often varies greatly across geographic areas and industry segments. Such services could reduce congestion and emissions from surface transportation if regulated wisely to encourage concurrent, rather than sequential, ride sharing. Rapidly growing transportation network companies (TNCs), like Uber and Lyft, however, are disrupting conventional taxi and limousine services and raise policy challenges regarding personal security and public safety, insurance requirements, employment and labor issues, and accessibility and equity.



Current regulation of taxis and other for-hire transportation vary considerably across and within jurisdictions, even when the services offered are similar. Most large cities with sizeable street-hail markets extensively regulate taxis, while smaller cities where dispatch service is the norm tend to have lighter regulation. This pattern of regulation raises public policy concerns when taxi regulation is more stringent than that of TNCs. Leveling the regulatory playing field does not necessarily mean tighter regulation of TNCs; in some cases it may appropriately entail lighter regulation of taxis in order to best serve the public interest.

To address personal security and public safety concerns, regulations governing taxis and limousines currently focus on background checks of drivers, vehicle inspections, and minimum standards for vehicle liability insurance. Procedures for driver background checks are based on common practice but have not been rigorously evaluated, and the safety benefits of viewing shared driver ratings and operator and vehicle images on mobile apps have not yet been well-documented. Driver, vehicle safety, and insurance requirements should be more consistent between TNCs and taxis, but this will require determination of the most cost-effective approaches.



In addition, policymakers and regulators should examine the pros and cons of alternative employment classifications of TNC and taxi drivers. While new mobility services offer expanded opportunities for flexible, part-time employment, TNC drivers and most taxi drivers are classified by their companies as independent contractors, which limits their access to benefits tied to employment.

Taxis offer critical transportation services for people with disabilities, and although TNCs have introduced pilot programs, they do not currently provide wheelchair-accessible services on an extensive or reliable basis, the report says. About 10 percent of the U.S. population has a physical limitation; 3.6 million people use a wheelchair and another 11.6 million use a cane, crutches, or a walker. Further, most shared mobility services require users to have a credit card and to arrange for trips using a smartphone, yet roughly 8 percent of U.S. households lack credit cards and 50 percent of adults earning less than \$30,000 do not own smartphones. A decline in taxi fleets due to the continued rapid rise in TNCs could decrease the availability of vehicle-for-hire services for a substantial number of disabled and low-income travelers.

Policymakers and regulators should also consider whether traditional for-hire and shared mobility services are best monitored and regulated at the state, regional, or local level on the basis of market and service characteristics and regulatory capabilities. In addition, transportation planning bodies should develop methods for incorporating shared mobility into transportation planning initiatives, and promote collaboration between public- and private-sector transportation providers.

In exchange for being allowed to operate, TNCs should provide state and local officials with basic, anonymized information about the volume, frequency, and types of trips being provided. This will allow for informed regulation and planning of transportation services.

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