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Shared Mobility Resources: Helping to Understand Emerging Shifts in Transportation

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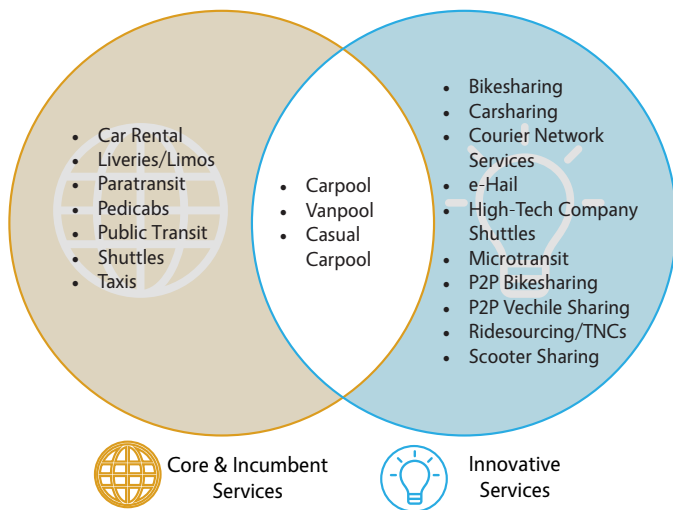
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Topic

Shared mobility is a transportation strategy that is rising in prominence and has the potential to align with supportive land use, mobility, social, and environmental goals. As a concept, the term applies to any mode, whether bicycle, car, public transit, or other mode, in which shared use (concurrent or sequential) is often facilitated by smartphone apps and technology. Casual carpooling is one example in which sharing has been more organic and non-technological in nature. Given shared mobility's notable growth and expansion in recent years, it merits a deeper understanding in light of its public policy potential and expansive scope. It is now being used outside of the urban core in both suburban and rural contexts. To facilitate a greater understanding of shared mobility, particularly among policymakers and planners, the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Shared Mobility: Current Practices and Guiding Principles and the American Planning Association's (APA) Planning for Shared Mobility were authored.

Research Findings

SHARED MOBILITY SERVICE MODELS



Comparing traditional / incumbent mobility service models (left) with new and innovative services (right).

The documents first describe various forms of shared mobility beyond the "mode" itself. For example, car, bike, and microtransit shared mobility services have a variety of operational models, ranging from membership-based self-service, peer-to-peer service, non-membership self-service, for-hire service, and mass transit service.

These Shared Mobility resources serve as "primers" on the subject. Each document defines what shared mobility is, describes its benefits, outlines the current effects of regulation and taxation in shaping it, provides case studies and success stories, and offers guiding principles for public agencies to use as they engage with this emerging "mode of modes."

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Many shared mobility services, across cities, are enhancing transportation accessibility, increasing multimodality, reducing vehicle ownership and vehicle miles traveled, and providing new opportunities for travel and goods delivery.
- Although shared mobility has notable potential to address a number of social and environmental goals, it is not yet mainstream and a number of policy challenges remain.

"Shared mobility affects everyone, not just its users"

Findings (continued)

The reports outline the current understanding of shared mobility services impacts including: carsharing, bikesharing, ridesharing, and or transportation network companies. This serves to inform the role public agencies have in shaping shared mobility through regulations, taxation, and management of public signage, rights-of-way, and data.

Findings to this end include the following:

- Health, safety, and consumer laws that, for example, require cyclists to wear helmets and how this appears to have impacted some bikesharing programs;
- How insurance laws and minimum insurance levels mandated have affected shared mobility;
- How for-hire driver laws, which historically served to protect public safety, have impacted ridesourcing operations, like Lyft and Uber;
- How taxes and fees, such as auto rental fees that apply to one-hour carsharing reservations, affect user costs and competitiveness with other travel options;
- Decisions that local governments make with regard to signage, street permitting, and other markings are critical to many shared mobility operations; and
- Policies that allow or encourage partnerships with private companies can be beneficial, and mutual data sharing can help planners manage the transportation system and help the transportation ecosystem work better, overall.

Approach

These documents address a gap in guidance available to policymakers. The FHWA report is targeted at a broad stakeholder group and the APA document is specifically designed for planners, including a series of case study cities. They both comprise a literature review and summary of the impacts shared mobility has on cities and the impacts policies have had on shared mobility. The goal in preparing both Shared Mobility documents was to provide an overview of current practices in an emerging field and outline the trajectory of its continued evolution, to inform policymakers, planners, and agency staff who have an interest in shared mobility developments and the public benefits they confer.

Suggested Public Agency Guiding Principles for Shared Mobility

Guiding principles for public agencies are offered and include the following:

- Public agencies should embrace collaboration with private sector firms;
- Public participation is vital in planning and implementing shared mobility services;
- Public agencies should facilitate mobility-related data sharing that would improve traffic and transportation system performance analyses;
- Shared mobility should be incorporated into transportation planning, particularly where its benefits affect future land use (e.g., from reduced auto ownership); and
- Public agencies should ensure shared mobility services offer the reasonable access to which people are entitled.

Full reports can be found online at the following websites:

Federal Highway Administration primer: <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop16022/fhwahop16022.pdf>
American Planning Association report: <https://www.planning.org/publications/report/9107556/>

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