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Title: Issues and opportunities integrating TNCs into transportation services for older adults and people with disabilities

Abstract: Older adults are one of the fasting growing demographics in the United States and are on average living longer than ever before. Most plan to age in place, but a major barrier is adequate transportation options, especially for those who cannot drive. This can lead to isolation, depression and other health issues. Similarly, for people with disabilities, barriers to making trips whether for medical appointments, work or social engagements can reduce quality of life.   Equitable access to transportation services is a civil right under the Americans with Disabilities Act and other civil rights laws. Paratransit services were established to provide a means of transportation for people with disabilities that could not otherwise take public transit. These services usually require booking one day in advance and give a window of arrival that makes planning a trip difficult. Recognizing paratransit's limitations, public agencies have pursued partnerships with taxi companies to provide complementary services to the ADA-required ones. One form this has taken are taxi scrip programs, where a city, county or transit agency will provide eligible residents with vouchers to subsidize their taxi trips. Eligibility rules vary; in addition to people who qualify for ADA service, some programs include others based on age and / or income. The emergence of transportation network companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft, presents an opportunity to expand the services and potentially improve the level of service provided. However, for some program participants, lack of access to smart phones, credit cards, and bank accounts are barriers to TNC use. In this paper we examine the current state of taxi scrip programs and analyze the potential for TNC integration into taxi paratransit services. We assemble data from taxi scrip services across the US, including criteria for eligibility, subsidies provided, and how subsidies are distributed. We also analyze the 2017 National Household Travel Survey data on taxi and TNC use by people with disabilities and older adults. Four case studies of pilot programs to integrate TNCs into these services are presented: two established by transit agencies, one established as a city-hospital-transit agency partnership for medical trips, and a city partnership with an app developer, established assist seniors. Through interviews with transit agencies, city administrations, advocates from the disability and older adult communities, and TNC officials, we identify key concerns and potential hurdles to implementation. We conclude with several potential technology solutions that could assist in TNC integration.