

LA Metro New Mobility Service Fee Plan**Executive Summary**

New Mobility fees and regulations, if implemented effectively, can be used to improve **equity, mobility, and environmental** outcomes immediately, while also providing revenues for long-term capital projects. Anticipated public policy benefits include:

Ensure equity and fairness:

- New Mobility fees can improve transportation equity by influencing behavior. Fees can be applied to services, products and programs with goals such as ensuring geographic equity of service coverage, ensuring service is provided to the County’s most vulnerable populations, and including customers who need extra assistance or wheelchair accessible service.<sup>1</sup> Revenues can also be used for these purposes.
- New Mobility service fees and regulations can level the playing field for private sector competition by setting standards for compliance across private companies and operations County-wide. This will create better and more stable mobility outcomes for LA County, and can potentially improve working conditions for drivers.

Improve mobility:

- New Mobility service fees and regulations can be used to manage congestion by discouraging single-use Transportation Network Company (TNC) rides and, instead, encouraging pooled rides and mode shift to transit services. This reduction of solo driving trips in turn reduces congestion.<sup>2</sup>
- Revenues can be re-invested to improve the quality, reliability, safety, and convenience of transit services and walking and biking access.<sup>3</sup>

Preserve the environment:

- New Mobility service fees can be used to reduce deadheading (circling empty TNC vehicles). Fees can be increased when vehicles fail to meet efficiency standards.

With these public policy benefits in mind, we propose the following timeline and key activities to develop and implement a New Mobility service fee in LA County. Note that these steps are not meant to be sequential as some of them will need to be undertaken simultaneously.

Immediate & Ongoing	2019 - 2020	2020	Late 2020
Build and grow a regional coalition to support fees	Study effects of New Mobility services	Pursue legislative authority	Pilot New Mobility service fees

Next steps for exploring New Mobility service fee in LA County:

<sup>1</sup> Editorial Board. Washington Post. “D.C. is raising taxes on Uber and Lyft. Good.” July 20, 2018

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Kim, So Jung and Robert Puentes. Eno Center for Transportation. “Eno Brief: Taxing New Mobility Services. What’s Right? What’s Next?” July 2018.

- Conduct a study to better understand the effects and impacts of New Mobility services (private companies/operations) in LA County
- Build and grow a regional coalition to support New Mobility service fees
- Pursue legislative authority to institute New Mobility service fees
- Pilot New Mobility service fees in tandem with congestion pricing

## Background and Justification

New Mobility companies, such as Uber, Lyft, Bird, and Lime, have been able to grow market share and value from unchecked consumption of public investments in roads and infrastructure. Across the Country, private companies have put shared bicycles, scooters, and cars on the streets with the expectation of using public rights of way to generate private benefit.

This approach has resulted in numerous mobility benefits, but also many negative externalities. In terms of improved mobility, TNCs have become the emergency ride home for regular transit customers, and shared e-scooters and e-bikes have become a popular, efficient form of first and last mile access to transit stations and stops. However, some net negatives include additional congestion on our roadways and curbside, space taken from pedestrians on sidewalks, increased emissions, and labor market disruption due to inconsistencies in regulatory practices. In some markets, TNC services may have also contributed to ridership declines on transit and jeopardized the sustainability of current services for all.<sup>4</sup>

In response, some jurisdictions (cities and states) have begun to institute fees on TNCs to raise revenue for public goods and services, manage demand, and address the impact of private companies, thus minimizing externalities. The table below illustrates the various taxes and fees that jurisdictions have levied on private companies.<sup>5</sup>

Location	TNC Tax/Fee	Disposition of Funds	Estimated Revenues
Chicago, IL	\$0.67 per trip	\$0.02 to Business Affairs and Consumer Protection \$0.10 to Vehicle Accessibility Fund \$0.55 to City General Fund	\$16M in 2018 \$30M in 2019
New York, NY	8.875% of total fare  \$2.75 per trip or \$0.75 if pooled	51% to City General Fund 45% to State General Fund 4% to Metropolitan Transportation Authority  100% to Metropolitan Transportation Authority	\$400M per year
Washington, D.C.	6% of total fare	17% to Department For-Hire Vehicles 83% to WMATA	\$23M per year
California	0.33% of total TNC revenue	100% to CPUC Transportation Reimbursement Account	Estimates show \$67M since 2013
Rhode Island	7% of total fare	General Fund	N/A

While these taxes and fees are raising revenue for the jurisdiction, they are not necessarily improving the public's mobility. For example, some fees above have been earmarked towards cities' general funds. This amounts to little more than a sales tax, and does not allow revenues to be re-invested to improve the quality, reliability, safety, and convenience of transit services

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.scag.ca.gov/Documents/ITS\\_SCAG\\_Transit\\_Ridership.pdf](https://www.scag.ca.gov/Documents/ITS_SCAG_Transit_Ridership.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Kim, So Jung and Robert Puentes. Eno Center for Transportation. "Eno Brief: Taxing New Mobility Services. What's Right? What's Next?" July 2018.

and walking and biking access. Even where revenue is dedicated to transportation, how a tax is collected can be just as important as how the money is spent. When taxes from New Mobility providers are simple flat fees, they might suppress demand but accomplish little else from a mobility perspective.

On the other hand, innovative approaches, such as a tiered tax or a dynamic tax, can be used to encourage preferred travel behaviors such as shared rides.<sup>6</sup> Reduced or waived fees could be used as a mechanism to encourage services to be deployed in underserved areas of the County, such as low-income neighborhoods, which are not the top choice of operations for private companies. Fees could be increased at times of high congestion or poor air quality. Instituting service fees offer revenue generation; however, this is also an opportunity for Metro to be deliberate and lead with the desired public policy outcomes and avoid a patchwork approach.<sup>7</sup>

### **Detailed Plan**

The following outlines the recommended timeline and key activities for developing and implementing a New Mobility service fee in LA County. Note that these activities are not meant to be sequential as many of them will need to be undertaken simultaneously.

#### **Immediate and Ongoing: Build and Grow a Regional Coalition to support New Mobility service fees**

Despite their profound impact on mobility in LA County, Metro lacks regulatory oversight authority for ride-hail, scooter-share, and other new mobility services.<sup>8</sup> The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) currently regulates TNCs in California, but their approach has been relatively hands-off and not at all focused on mobility, equity, or environmental outcomes. Some jurisdictions within LA County have begun to develop their own regulatory structures for shared devices, which includes piloting permit programs. Other jurisdictions have decided to ban private sector mobility devices altogether. This piecemeal approach creates a poor transportation experience, since users who cross city boundaries can be subject to different regulations. This approach also impacts equity in the distribution of these services and limits Metro's ability to improve access to our transit stations. Ensuring that 89 jurisdictions and their different regulatory policies are being followed surely creates a headache for private companies as well. As the county transportation authority and congestion management agency, Metro is best positioned to take on this oversight role.

Metro will need to begin by developing regional support from its city and local transit partners and other relevant stakeholders in advance of stepping into this role. Securing city buy-in will be critical, given that certain cities such as Santa Monica and the City of Los Angeles have already begun pilot programs that include revenue collection. Extensive communication and coalition building with our local government partners and other stakeholders will help to ensure success. In line with the values articulated in Goal 4.1 of Vision 2028, Metro plans to

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<sup>6</sup> Adams, Sam. City Lab. "Don't Enact a 'Lazy' Ride-Hailing Tax," July 2018.

<sup>7</sup> SFCTA. "The TNC Regulatory Landscape: An Overview of Current TNC Regulation in California and Across the Country." December 2017.

<sup>8</sup> SFCTA. "The TNC Regulatory Landscape: An Overview of Current TNC Regulation in California and Across the Country." December 2017.

establish multiple forums and methods for meaningfully engaging with stakeholders to establish a consistent line of communication, build trust, and foster transparent, inclusive decision-making. This will include engaging the various private companies to provide input on the agency's approach.

### **2019-2020: Study effects of New Mobility services (private companies/operations) in LA County**

To be effective at achieving the above-referenced public policy goals, and to help Metro fulfill its role as the congestion management agency for LA County, Metro needs to better understand the impacts of New Mobility services (private companies/operations).

The extent and impact of these private companies on the transportation system in LA County is not yet fully understood. This is in part because service providers are reluctant to share their data with public transit agencies and departments of transportation and will not do so willingly. Although TNCs in California are regulated at the state level by the CPUC, which does require TNCs to report an extensive amount of data to them, the CPUC does not share this information publicly. In contrast, non-TNC New Mobility companies, such as Bird and Lime, are not regulated at the state level, and regulation is generally managed by cities that regulate sidewalks and streets rather than transit agencies. Over the past year, some cities within LA County have developed their own regulatory structures that include data sharing requirements. However, these programs are still in their infancy.

Despite this lack of data sharing, the City and County of San Francisco were able to produce reliable estimates on TNC ridership. They worked with researchers from Northeastern University who were able to acquire data on TNC activity that was gathered through Uber's and Lyft's public-facing application program interface (API).

Metro would commission reports that analyze and evaluate the current state of New Mobility in LA County. The report would 1) provide an inventory of emerging mobility services and technologies in the region and should include a profile of usage in LA County, 2) include an evaluation of the near-term impacts on publicly operated services and systems and 3) identify and articulate potential longer-term effects on core transit operations, congestion, equity and mobility. An additional report should provide an overview of existing state and local regulatory frameworks within California and globally. These reports would inform the Metro Board on potential near term policy and legislative options. Reports should build upon findings and operational insights collected and produced from the research project (Mobility on Demand) and Metro's direct operations of the MicroTransit Pilot Project.

### **2020: Pursue legislative authority**

For Metro to be able to institute New Mobility service fees, the state of California needs to affirm the County's authority to dedicate a tax on privately operated services.<sup>9</sup> San Francisco

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<sup>9</sup> Norman, Hannah. San Francisco Business Times. "Uber, Lyft agree to proposed ridehail tax in San Francisco." August 1, 2018.

recently successfully went through this process under three years, and their experience serves as a framework and precedent for Metro. See appendix for more detailed information.

### **Late 2020: Pilot New Mobility service fees in tandem with congestion pricing pilot**

Once Metro receives the support of the state and local jurisdictions and secures legislative authority, Metro can launch a pilot program to test regulating private companies. Metro should pilot this program in parallel with any congestion pricing pilot and in alignment with other New Mobility pilots throughout the County. Criticism against TNC fees is that they are penalizing TNCs while single occupancy vehicle (SOV) driving still makes up most of traffic congestion and other negative externalities. Ideally, TNC fees should be part of the overall mobility, equity, and environmental solution along with congestion pricing.

Once the pilot begins, revenues will be realized immediately. There will likely be modest costs associated with setting up a regulatory program. As part of the permitting program, Metro should require private companies to share data, which will enable Metro to understand how these services are being used and allow for appropriate monitoring of the services in conjunction with transit and other transportation services.

### **Conclusion**

Goal 1.3 of Metro's 10-year strategic plan, Vision 2028, sets forth our agency's intentions to manage transportation demand in a fair and equitable manner. It identifies pursuing regulatory strategies of New Mobility services as a way to 1) level the playing field to ensure access to a variety of transportation options for everyone, 2) preserve competition, and 3) reduce negative impacts. The initiation of a study of the effects new mobility providers, the pursuit of legislative authority, and an analysis of how to pilot new mobility fees and regulations, are the first steps in delivering on this goal.

## Appendix: San Francisco's Legislative Experience Regulating TNCs

Between June 2017 and October 2018, San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) published three reports on the status of TNCs in San Francisco. Findings included how many trips TNCs make on a typical weekday, where in the city TNC trips are concentrated, the amount of vehicle miles driven daily, and how TNCs contribute to the rise of congestion in the San Francisco area.<sup>10</sup>

In response to these findings, in April of 2018, San Francisco County Supervisor and chair of SFCTA Aaron Peskin introduced a ballot measure that would put a gross receipts tax levied on ride-hailing companies on the November 2018 ballot. By end of July 2018, San Francisco's Mayor's Office, Supervisor Peskin, Uber, and Lyft had all reached agreement to allow San Francisco to levy a tax on a per-ride basis instead. A tax on gross receipts would have included taxes on drivers' tips, tolls, and other accumulated fees. After the City, County and private mobility partners were in alignment, Assembly member Phil Ting and State Senator Scott Wiener then authored state legislation to confirm San Francisco's authority to levy a local tax on TNC and future autonomous vehicle trips and have the dedicated funding be remitted to the SFCTA. Governor Brown signed this bill in September of 2018.<sup>11</sup>

AB1184 allows the City and County of San Francisco to impose a tax on each ride originating in the City and County of San Francisco provided by a TNC or autonomous vehicle. The tax is tiered in that shared rides are taxed at 1.5 percent per-ride, while single-seat rides are taxed at 3.25 percent per-ride. Late-night trips, trips made in hybrid vehicles, and trips that originate from low income neighborhoods and communities of color will have a reduced per-ride tax. Paratransit trips and fully electric vehicles will not be taxed. Revenues go to SFCTA. The bill will require voter approval at the November 2019 ballot, and it is expected to go into implementation in 2020, and will bring in \$30M in the first few years.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> SFCTA. "The TNC Regulatory Landscape: An Overview of Current TNC Regulation in California and Across the Country." December 2017.

SFCTA. "TNCs and Congestion." October 2018.

SFCTA. "TNCs Today: A Profile of San Francisco Transportation Network Company Activity." June 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Wray, Sarah. Smart Cities World, "San Francisco reaches ride-sharing tax agreement with Uber and Lyft." August 6, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> Norman, Hannah. San Francisco Business Times. "Uber, Lyft agree to proposed ridehail tax in San Francisco." August 1, 2018.

Wray, Sarah. Smart Cities World, "San Francisco reaches ride-sharing tax agreement with Uber and Lyft." August 6, 2018.