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Ridehail Travel & Use in Los Angeles

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Ridehail Travel & Use in Los Angeles

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Topic / Issue

In 2011 and 2012, ridehail companies including Uber and Lyft launched a transportation revolution by connecting drivers to riders through smartphone apps. Six years later, ridehail companies provide over 12 million trips per day around the world. Despite intense interest in how these new services fit into the broader transportation landscape, policymakers have been largely unsuccessful in obtaining data from ridehail companies. As a result, we do not yet understand how these modes serve different neighborhoods and travelers, and who, if anyone, is being left behind.

Main Findings

There is no evidence that neighborhoods are systematically excluded from Lyft service based on the characteristics of their residents. Between September and November 2016, Lyft served neighborhoods home to 99.8 percent of the Los Angeles County population. For most users, ridehailing fills an occasional, rather than regular, travel need, and 40 percent of users made less than one trip per month. At the same time, a small share of users make the majority of trips with 10 percent of users completing more than half of all Lyft trips to, from, or within Los Angeles County.

While Lyft service and use is associated with the local built environment, the strong association between Lyft use and neighborhood household vehicle ownership suggests that Lyft is providing car access to neighborhoods and households where its substitute — the household car — is least available. Shared Lyft Line trips comprised 29 percent of all Lyft trips in Los Angeles County. People living in low-income neighborhoods made a higher share of trips by Lyft Line, while people took shared rides less if they lived in racial or ethnically diverse neighborhoods. Lower Lyft use in majority-Asian and Hispanic neighborhoods suggests either that car access without ownership is already being met in these neighborhoods through carpooling or informal services, or that barriers — such as lower smartphone, data plan, or banking access — inhibit ridehail use.

Study

Researchers at UCLA are the first to use trip-level data obtained directly from a ridehail company to analyze ridehail travel and use patterns. Ridehail data include over 6.3 million Lyft trips taken to, from, and within Los Angeles County from September to November 2016. Combining trip data with socioeconomic and built environment data, researchers investigated which neighborhoods Lyft served and how home neighborhood characteristics were associated with the number and types of trips an individual made.

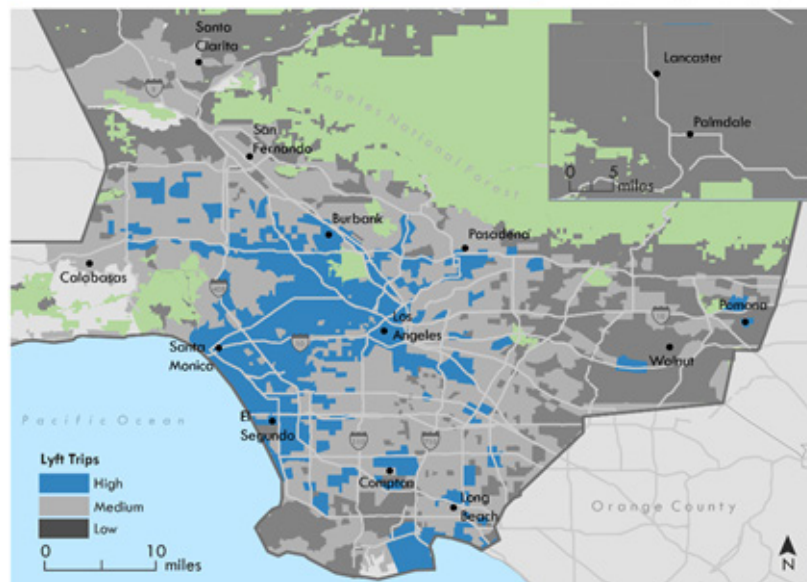
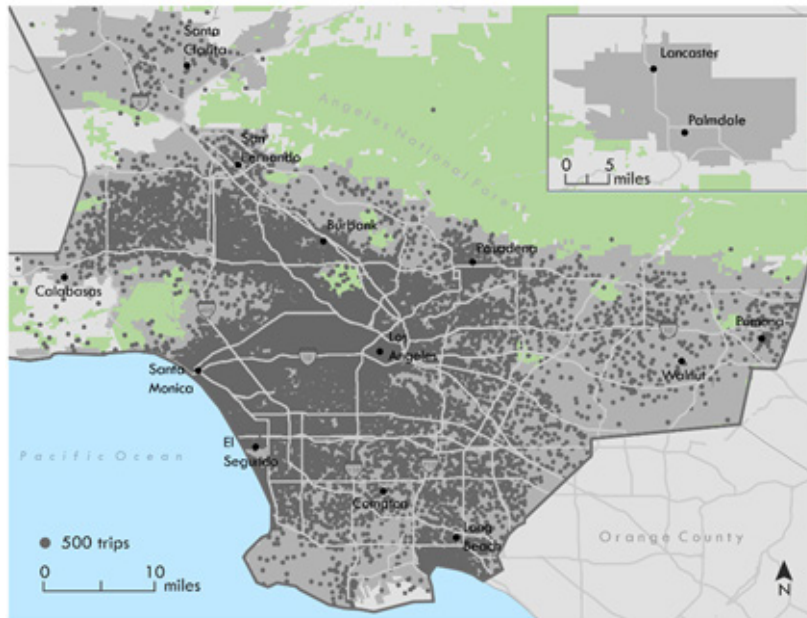
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Lyft served neighborhoods home to 99.8 percent of the Los Angeles County population.
- Most people use Lyft only occasionally; nearly two-thirds hailed one Lyft trip per month or less.
- Of all Lyft trips, 29 percent were on its shared service, Lyft Line. People living in neighborhoods with low average household incomes relied more heavily on shared services.
- Lyft may provide auto-mobility in neighborhoods with less reliable access to cars.

“...Lyft is providing car access to neighborhoods and households where its substitute - the household car - is least available.”

Conclusion / Recommendations

- Ridehailing extends access to cars across a wide array of built environments, particularly in neighborhoods with lower access to personal cars.
- Partnerships with community organizations, or landline-based services may extend access to travelers without smartphones. Integrating ridehail payment with transit cards may extend access to those without bank accounts.
- Ridehail data requests must be specific and connected to actionable performance metrics or mobility outcomes.



Distribution of Lyft trips

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