

Understanding Commuter Transportation Terms

Category	Subcategory	Description	Marketing or Matching Process	Driver Motivation	Rider Motivation	Public Benefits	Insurance Provided By	Car Ownership	Equity
Carpool	Family Pool	Family members, usually spouses, drive together to work and return home together. Family pool trips are often combined with other errands before and after work (e.g., grocery shopping, dropping kids off).	No matching software or other marketing is utilized. Spouses or partners must have common routes and work schedules in order to 'pool'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOV lane access • Financial/gas savings • Spending time with significant other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOV lane access • Financial/gas savings • Spending time with significant other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VMT/congestion reduction • Energy conservation • Parking demand reduction • Air quality improvement 	Car owners; no special insurance needed	Personal auto	N/A
	Employer-based Carpool	Employers or transportation management organizations (TMOs) encourage employees to carpool. Poolers either meet at a common spot near their home, such as a park & ride lot, or the volunteer driver picks up the riders at their homes. Poolers will sometimes share the costs of the trip or take turns driving.	Employers, TMOs, or another entity will encourage employees at a worksite or an employment center to carpool together. Employers may use ridematching software to identify employees with common commute times as origin points. The employer, TMO, or agency may offer preferred parking, prizes/giveaways, or other small incentives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOV lane access • Shared cost • Employer/TMO-provided incentives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred parking • Prizes/giveaways • Financial incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOV lane access • Financial/gas savings • Employer/TMA-provided incentives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred parking • Prizes/giveaways • Financial incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VMT/congestion reduction • Energy conservation • Parking demand reduction • Air quality improvement 	Car owners; no special insurance needed	Personal auto	Some employers will partner with public agencies to provide special programs for low-income workers, including guaranteed ride home programs.
	Slugging (Casual Carpooling)	People looking for a ride to work will gather at a common park & ride location. Drivers pick people up from these groups based on their common work-area destinations. The same is true for the trip home: riders gather at a common location and pool together back to their park & ride location.	Slugging/casual carpooling is very organic and only occurs in areas with a well-managed HOV lane system and sufficient population density.	HOV lane access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOV lane access • Financial/gas savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VMT/congestion reduction • Energy conservation • Parking demand reduction • Air quality improvement 	Car owners; no special insurance needed	Personal auto	No equity protections. Slugging is generally utilized by commuters travelling more than 20 miles to and from work.
	Ride-matched Carpool	Local/regional public agencies provide ridematching services linking commuters who have common routes to and from work as well as common schedules. Poolers will sometimes share the costs of the trip or take turns driving.	Riders and drivers are recruited in a variety of ways, including mass media (radio/print/highway signage), surveys, or targeted means such as employer-based marketing (see above). Ridematching software is usually used to identify drivers and riders who share a common route and work schedule. Ridematching is generally paired with a guaranteed ride home program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOV lane access • Shared cost • Other incentives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred Parking • Prizes/giveaways • Small financial incentives (not exceeding cost of commute) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOV lane access • Financial/gas savings • Prizes/giveaways • One-time financial incentive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VMT/congestion reduction • Energy conservation • Parking demand reduction • Air quality improvement 	Car owners; no special insurance needed	Personal auto	Some programs geared toward low-income workers; most programs offer guaranteed ride home program.
	Real-time Carpool	Drivers will use a phone- or tablet-based app to locate commuters in real time who are looking for a ride along a common route. In some cases, micro-payments are used for cost-sharing (but not profit). In other cases, drivers are incentivized through coupons or prizes. At no point does the driver profit from this activity and the incentive is cost-sharing, not profit.	Some regional governments have programs that contract with real-time carpool providers such as CarMa, NuRide, and Zimride. They offer a variety of incentives and promotions for both drivers and riders. The incentives do not exceed the cost of the commute.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOV lane access • Shared cost • Real-time flexibility • Prizes/giveaways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOV lane access • Shared cost • Real-time flexibility • Prizes/giveaways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VMT/congestion reduction • Energy conservation • Parking demand reduction • Air quality improvement 	Car owners; no special insurance needed. In most states true carpooling is exempt from commercial insurance requirements so long as financial transactions are shared costs versus profit.	Personal auto	Little evidence to suggest equity issues are being addressed through real-time carpool as drivers (and passengers) have the option to reject offering or accepting rides. However, there is certainly space for real-time ridesharing to be used as a job access tool.

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Ridesharing	Any form of traditional carpooling or vanpooling.	Ridesharing is a catch-all term most commonly applied to workplace-oriented carpooling or vanpooling but may also include household pooling. The drive services/ car service industry (TNCs, taxis, etc.) does NOT offer traditional ridesharing.	See 'carpool' and 'vanpool' categories.	See 'carpool' and 'vanpool' categories.	See 'carpool' and 'vanpool' categories.	See 'carpool' and 'vanpool' categories.	See 'carpool' and 'vanpool' categories.	See 'carpool' and 'vanpool' categories.	See 'carpool' and 'vanpool' categories.
Vanpool	Vanpool	Groups of 7-15 people are provided a mini-van or 9-15 passenger vehicle to commute to and from work. The provider might a public agency, a private entity, or a private entity working on behalf of a public agency. The vanpool provider takes care of vehicle maintenance, insurance, and other capital issues. The driver of the vehicle is a volunteer and part of the commuting group.	Vanpool providers utilize a variety of marketing techniques, including working with employers & TMOs, social media, print and radio ads, and other mechanisms to link people with common routes and work schedules.	Drivers are volunteer and in some cases may get to ride for free. Other small perks include limited use of the vehicle on nights and weekends. The driver is required to take and follow certain safety procedures. Drivers share some of the same benefits as riders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOV lane access • Financial/gas savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VMT/congestion reduction • Safest mode of public transportation • Energy conservation • Parking demand reduction • Air quality improvement 	Insurance is provided by the vanpool provider.	Vehicle is owned and maintained by the provider.	Vanpool providers that use federal funds to partially capitalize a fleet must adhere to civil rights legislation that requires them to offer and promote services to all populations including low-income and handicapped individuals.
	Real-time Vanpool	A real-time vanpool opens empty seats to riders who may occasionally want to vanpool. The service is generally smartphone- or tablet-based.	Marketing is done via social media and websites, as well as through employers.	Vanpool providers that use federal funds to partially capitalize a fleet must adhere to civil rights laws requiring them to offer and promote services to all populations including low-income and handicapped individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOV lane access • Financial/gas savings • Flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VMT/congestion reduction • Safest mode of public transportation • Energy conservation • Parking demand reduction • Air quality improvement 	Insurance is provided by the vanpool provider.	Vehicle is owned and maintained by the provider.	Vanpool providers that use federal funds to partially capitalize a fleet must adhere to civil rights legislation that requires them to offer and promote services to all populations including low-income and handicapped individuals.
Transportation Network Company (TNC)	TNC	Transportation network companies (like Uber and Lyft) provide an online platform that allows entrepreneurial drivers to find passengers who are seeking one-way rides. The companies use an app-based platform and riders pay the driver using a virtual wallet. Trip fares are generally cheaper than taxis, but the driver profits from the transaction. Drivers are not volunteers, rather they are 'hired' to provide transportation service.	TNCs have used guerilla marketing techniques, often using social media to target millennials and those who live in urban cores. Marketing campaigns for drivers have revolved around the opportunity to make money. For riders, they claim better reliability and lower trip cost compared to taxis.	Profit is the primary motive of drivers. As such, it is not only possible, but likely, that TNC drivers are generating trips rather than reducing trips.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there is critical mass, it very easy and quick to get a ride. • Rides usually cost less than taxis. • Provides an additional (and more flexible) mobility option 	Little research has been done on the impact of TNCs. While more research is needed, the research that has been done indicates the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trips are being generated, increasing VMT and pulling people off transit and bike/ped • Increased economic activity – riders are using TNCs to get to places • Riders are using TNCs when intoxicated • Insurance and safety issues remain a concern 	Laws vary on provision of insurance; litigation is ongoing in a handful of cases. Some states are moving to require both the driver and the TNC to provide levels of insurance.	Varies: in some cases it's a personal auto, in other cases it's a for-hire sedan or limo.	Concerns have been expressed that some drivers refuse to provide rides in disadvantaged areas. Additionally, use of the service requires ownership of a smartphone or tablet, which may exclude many low-income households. Additionally, vehicles are not required to be handicap-accessible. However, opportunities exist for these services to be used to provide job access.

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	TNC with 'carpool' option	Similar to a TNC, except the marketing and pricing is geared toward commuters. Prices are lowered to incentivize riders.	Marketing is geared toward commuters. Prices are lowered in order to make them competitive with other options such as transit.	Profit is the primary motive of drivers. As such, it is not only possible, but likely, that TNC drivers are generating trips rather than reducing trips.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there is critical mass, it very easy and quick to get a ride. • Rides usually cost less than taxis. • Provides an additional (and more flexible) mobility option. 	<p>Little research has been done on the impact of TNCs. While more research is needed, the research that has been done indicates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trips are being generated, increasing VMT and pulling people off transit and bike/ped • Increased economic activity – riders are using TNCs to get to places • Riders are using TNCs when intoxicated • Insurance and safety issues remain a concern 	Laws vary on provision of insurance; litigation is ongoing in a handful of cases. Some states are moving to require both the driver and the TNC to provide levels of insurance.	Varies: in some cases it's a personal auto, in other cases it's a for-hire sedan or limo.	Concerns have been expressed that some drivers refuse to provide rides in disadvantaged areas. Additionally, use of the service requires ownership of a smartphone or tablet, which may exclude many low-income households. Additionally, vehicles are not required to be handicap-accessible. However, opportunities exist for these services to be used to provide job access.
Shuttle	Employer-based Shuttles	Employers purchase and operate shuttles, often as a part of first- and/or last-mile service. Drivers are generally hired (or contracted) and the service is often provided in coordination with a TMO or local transit agency.	Shuttles are typically marketed through employers and transit agencies.	Provides a job	First/last-mile connections	Increases transit ridership	Generally subject to Federal Transit Administration rules and safety guidelines. Insurance provided through a number of mechanisms.	Varies: in some cases service is contracted and vehicle is owned by the contractor. In other cases the employer or transportation management organization owns the vehicle.	Required to serve all communities and be ADA compliant.
	Airport Shuttles	These services provide door-to-door transportation to and from airports. Service is generally operated by private for-hire companies with paid drivers, but may also be run by a public sector agency, hotels, or other commercial entities. In all cases, drivers are hired or contracted.	Airport shuttle services use traditional commercial marketing techniques.	Provides a job	Reduces need for rental vehicle	Reduction in rental car use reduces parking needs and VMT.	Subject to FMCSA rules as well as local and state ordinances. Shuttle providers must maintain very high levels of insurance coverage.	Shuttle provider generally owns the shuttle. In some cases the services is contracted.	Required to serve all communities and be ADA compliant.
Taxi	Taxi	For-hire taxi drivers are required to follow taxi cab commission rules related to insurance, hours, and often where and when to provide service.	None	Provides a job	Easy and generally quick access to a ride.	Offers a mobility option for those without vehicle access or suitable public transit.	Subject to taxi-cab commission rules. Rules vary, but insurance standards are very high.	Varies: in some cases, the driver is the owner, in other cases a company owns all of the vehicles.	Required to serve all communities and be ADA compliant.
	Sedan/Limo Service	For-hire black car and limo services usually cater to high-end and executive riders. Limos and sedans often have their own state or local rules to follow.	These services often market via yellow pages, word of mouth, and working with hotels and companies.	Provides a job	1st class on-demand car service.	Offers a mobility option that adds to traveler choices.	Subject to taxi-cab commission rules. Rules vary, but insurance standards are very high.	Generally owned by limo or sedan company.	Required to serve all communities and be ADA compliant.