

Transportation Network Companies, Transportation Brokerage Companies, and Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

This policy brief by the Institute for Public Administration was prepared for the Delaware Transit Corporation, a division of the Delaware Department of Transportation that operates DART First State Transit. It explores the use of transportation brokerage companies to enhance on-demand mobility and improve customer experience for paratransit customers. Roundtrip, a ride-booking platform based in Philadelphia, may provide an innovative, on-demand, and affordable ADA-compliant specialized transportation option for existing paratransit customers in Delaware. The brief was prepared as part of the research process to update Delaware's 2020 Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan.

WHAT ARE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANIES (TNCs)?

Transportation network companies (TNCs) provide a platform for independent transportation contractors to connect with and provide rides to customers. Examples of these TNCs include traditional rideshare companies like Uber and Lyft. Transportation services provided by these companies are utilized by the public to fulfill a broad variety of transportation needs in the United States. Some also provide more specialized services through partnerships with government agencies and medical providers—and therefore offering affordable, on-demand rides to non-emergency appointments for patients. For example, Uber has developed a partnership with Circulation, a non-emergency medical

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transportation company. Mercy Health Systems in Pennsylvania, Boston Children’s Hospital, and Nemours Children’s Health System in Wilmington have partnered with Uber and Circulation to provide reliable non-emergency medical transportation for patients, reducing costs associated with no-shows and delayed care.¹

As a comprehensive transportation solution, however, there are some limitations with these partnerships. Traditional forms of transportation are required to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant with the ability to equitably transport individuals with mobility challenges. However, many TNC’s classify themselves as technology companies that establish transportation networks, not provide transportation services. As transportation network companies, these companies are not currently required to meet ADA accessibility requirements.² Due to this gap, TNCs are not a comprehensive solution for transportation gaps experienced by all people. Transportation Network Brokerage Companies can often address this issue by providing alternative, non-emergency medical transportation options to all people.

WHAT ARE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK BROKERAGE COMPANIES?

Transportation brokerage companies are a category of company that utilizes TNC’s and provides services to people of all abilities. To accomplish this task, these brokerage companies use TNCs as one

provider among many, connecting different types of transportation providers into a single regional network. Within this system, people who are able to travel by personal vehicle are connected with traditional TNC companies, while people who have different mobility needs are connected with companies that can provide paratransit or non-emergency ambulatory services. Within this system, the cost and convenience benefits of TNCs are preserved, while transportation options for all people are available.

The Greater Richmond Transit Company, for example, provides “CARE On-Demand,” a web-based reservation system and market aggregator, in collaboration with Roundtrip.³ Through this partnership, people can book on-demand rides with a network of transportation options, including traditional rideshare as well as accessible and paratransit vehicles, and the cost is split between the rider and partnering agency. This type of partnership between brokerage companies and transit companies presents an opportunity to provide convenient paratransit and non-emergency medical transit services.

ROUNDRIP AS AN OPPORTUNITY IN DELAWARE

Roundtrip is a Philadelphia-based transportation network broker. Roundtrip partners with transportation and medical entities to develop a market of transportation providers. Partners of

LOCAL Roundtrip Partners

- Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children (Wilmington, Del.)
- Camden Coalition (Camden, N.J.)

NATIONAL Roundtrip Partners

- Greater Richmond Transit Company (Richmond, Va.)
- Access On Demand (Chesterfield, Va.)

roundtrip are shown below. A web-based portal and mobile platform are used to coordinate transportation services and connect patients with certified drivers. The full-spectrum of non-emergency medical transportation (Lyft, medical sedan, wheelchair van, non-emergency ambulance) can be ordered from a single platform. Depending upon needs of the passenger, ride requests are assigned to the most appropriate of these providers.

MOVING FORWARD

TNCs provide many potential benefits, some of which are listed in Figure 1. Data is needed to flesh out a potential scope of work for a pilot project in Delaware; this would include paratransit data of specified geographic areas where a premium paratransit alternative could be piloted. To undertake a pilot project in Delaware, the following aspects require investigation:

- Geographic Area and Scope of Coverage
- Ridership
- Authorization Requirements
- Payment Structure
- Contract Specifications
- Program Length

Ultimately, TNCs present an opportunity for overcoming barriers to access of non-emergency medical transportation for people in Delaware. Whether this opportunity comes to fruition depends upon careful analysis of local transportation need and serious investigation of the feasibility for this model in Delaware.

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Figure 1. Potential Benefits of Partnership with TNCs

- On-Demand Transportation
- Real-Time Data Reporting
- 24/7 Navigation Support
- Expanded Transportation Network
- Opportunities for Customers' Feedback
- Multiple Payment Models
- Transparent Payment Structures
- Cost Savings
- Reduced Booking Time

END NOTES

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