MOBILITY ON DEMAND (MOD) SANDBOX

LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles County and Puget Sound First and Last Mile Partnership with Via

TEAM, BUDGET, AND WAIVERS

Key Partners: King County Metro, Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit), Via, Access Services, Foothill Transit, and the Eno Center for Transportation

Other Partners: University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Institute of Transportation Studies; University of Washington; University of Oregon; and City of Los Angeles

Budget Summary: The budget from the applicant is summarized below:

MOD Sandbox Demonstration Federal Amount ($)	MOD Sandbox Cost Share ($)	Total Cost
$1,350,000	$400,000	**$1,750,000**

INNOVATION: PROJECT APPROACH

Offering 2 regions as test beds, Los Angeles (LA) County and the Puget Sound transit operators propose a partnership with Via to explore the viability of using transportation network company (TNC) services to provide first/last mile (FMLM) solutions for trips originating and ending at select transit stations. Our partnership aims to increase connections with transit by broadening TNC access to a wider audience, including populations without smartphones, those who need wheelchair accessible vehicles, unbanked populations, and populations with limited English proficiency (LEP). The two regions have partnered to demonstrate analogous MOD pilot projects that will:

1. Define how TNC service can align with existing transit service to provide an effective FMLM solution and high quality customer experience.
2. Identify how key partners can cost-effectively ensure equal access for populations without smartphones, populations requiring wheelchair accessible vehicles, populations who are unbanked and populations with limited English proficiency.
3. Explore how payment can be integrated across transit operator and TNC platforms, specifically to enable service to lower income and unbanked populations.

By incorporating TNC service into the public sector mobility menu, LA County, Sound Transit and King County Metro will test the provision of expanded transportation options in the communities we serve, providing new ways for people to connect with high capacity transit. TNCs have the ability to meet FMLM needs by providing a convenient, on-demand service that connects riders with transit who may not otherwise have access.

This project brings Via to LA County and the Puget Sound as a publicly supported TNC option for customers connecting with transit at pilot locations. In both LA County and the Puget Sound, customers can either download the Via mobile application (app) on a smartphone device or call Via's call center to register for an account and request a ride from Via to take them to/from select transit pilot locations. Customers who need extra assistance or an accessible vehicle can also request rides through the Via mobile app or call center. Via will accept payment for rides

through a pre-paid debit card or credit card. In the Puget Sound, customers will be able to use their ORCA card to pay for their Via trips and receive transfers to/from transit.

This project provides an opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of public-private partnership among transit agencies and private mobility services, in this case Via. It also serves as a forum for synergies among partners within each region, and among transit providers throughout the nation interested in relevant lessons-learned from across state lines.

CHALLENGES THIS PROJECT IS DESIGNED TO ADDRESS

Best Practices and Standards: Due to the fairly recent emergence of TNCs, transit agencies have not yet defined best practices or standards, and there are no common guidelines.

Inconsistent Regulatory Interpretation: As a consistent national interpretation of appropriate regulations has yet to emerge, such interpretation has occurred on a localized case-by-case basis.

Duplicative Systems: The rise of TNCs has begun to create a bifurcated, duplicative transportation, which may lead to increased congestion without public sector intervention.

Auto-Centric Environment: Individual transit users may experience a range of site-specific physical challenges to access transit facilities.

Low Population Density: While the LA and Puget Sound regions have excellent fixed-guideway bus and rail transit, it is difficult for a transit agency to connect riders within a few-mile radius of the stop itself cost effectively, or at a frequency that satisfies all riders.

Challenges for People with Disabilities: Local data suggest that even when removing the cost of the fixed-route service, challenges still remain that may deter fixed-route use among a significant portion of these populations.

Parking: Many of the parking facilities within LA County and the Puget Sound region are at or over capacity utilization to the extent that riders are being turned away to complete their trips in personal vehicles on congested roadways. Alternative means of accessing transit without requiring a parking stall are needed.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES, BENEFITS, IMPACTS

Expected benefits include: an expanded menu of FMLM delivery options for customers in Los Angeles County and the Puget Sound region at pilot locations, improving mobility in each region; lessons-learned for how to develop partnerships between public sector transit agencies and private sector start-up mobility companies, including in areas such as data sharing; and two analogous case studies that will help inform best practices and FTA guidance for these types of partnerships.

Performance measures will be used to test the MOD project in comparison to existing conditions. Performance measures include, but are not limited to: improved mobility, expanded geographic access to transit; increased number of unique users of public transit and overall ridership, improved reliability of FMLM service; increased utilization of FMLM vehicles; ensured access for disadvantages populations through availability of an LEP enabled call center and affordable service; ensured availability and usability of ADA-compliant accessible vehicle service; increased cost efficiency to the transit agencies; and decreased greenhouse gas emissions.