



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration



# Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox Demonstration: Limited Access Connections

## *Final Report*

### Background

The MOD Sandbox Demonstration Program provides a venue through which integrated MOD concepts and solutions supported through local partnerships are demonstrated in real-world settings. Pierce Transit's Limited Access Connections (LAC) project provided transportation options to urbanized areas in Pierce County/Tacoma, Washington, that have insufficient access to transit based on geography, limited service span, and at-capacity park-and-ride lots. Project partners included Lyft, Sound Transit, and Pierce College Puyallup.

### Objectives

The objectives of the project were to determine if transit agencies and Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) can collaborate on new or improved transportation solutions and to test existing federal regulations and policies to see how partnerships would function within the existing framework and if an adjusted regulatory environment would be required to ensure success, increase transit ridership throughout the system, attract new transit users, and improve transit user satisfaction.

### Findings and Conclusions

*With the experience of LAC, Pierce Transit has a knowledge base upon which to design and pilot first/last mile connective service in areas and at times when fixed-route service is not cost-effective or feasible.*

The project used a three-pronged approach to provide riders access to transit through first/last mile solutions via rideshare partners, guaranteed ride home for riders from Pierce College Puyallup, and trips to and from park-and-ride lots at the Puyallup Sounder station. The Pierce County/Tacoma zones targeted were generally in lower-density areas not well-served with fixed-route bus services. The effort included significant community engagement and strong partnerships.

The project demonstrated that it is possible for a transit agency to partner with a single TNC to provide first/last mile connections, but not if existing federal regulations for drug and alcohol testing of drivers are followed, because TNCs do not require the same standards for drug and alcohol testing of contracted drivers as does FTA. Several challenges were encountered, particularly related to TNC data-sharing agreements.

This final report presents an overview of Pierce Transit's LAC project including identified needs, project goals, service model, project challenges, service outcomes, and lessons learned and includes TNC cost estimates, an equity accessibility plan, sample agreements, and marketing materials. A user survey was conducted, and results will be available in an Evaluation Report in late 2020.

## Benefits

The MOD LAC project provides recommendations and lessons learned to help agencies, organizations, and policymakers establish a first/last mile pilot, identify a research and design framework for first/last mile service, and develop criteria for the identification of pilot zones to implement first/last mile service within a transit agency service area. Other public transit agencies contemplating partnership with a TNC may find valuable the agreement negotiation experience of the LAC project.

## Project Information

### FTA Report No. 0178

This research project was conducted by Penny Grellier of Pierce Transit. For more information, contact FTA Project Manager Hendrick Opstelten at (202) 366-8094, [hendrik.opstelten@dot.gov](mailto:hendrik.opstelten@dot.gov). All research reports can be found at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/research-innovation>.