Bringing Innovation to Paratransit

Executive Summary

The NYU Rudin Center for Transportation analyzed 6.3 million trips on Access-A-Ride, New York City's transportation service for people with disabilities. Approximately 150,000 people depend on Access-A-Ride (AAR), which has remained largely unchanged since 1993. The program cost New York City and State $467.7 million in 2016.

In this first-ever study of Access-A-Ride usage, the NYU Rudin Center analyzed the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's data set of all AAR trips taken in 2015. Key findings include:

Key Findings

- A total of 6,284,188 Access-A-Ride trips were recorded, each with an average duration of 45 minutes.
- In 2015, 14,092 outages occurred on subway elevators, for an average of 53 outages per elevator that year. People who use wheelchairs cannot depend on having access to the subway system. If elevators were upgraded and maintained, the city's public transportation, rather than Access-A-Ride, could be used by more passengers.
- Access-A-Ride trips starting or ending near non-ADA-accessible subway stations cost a total of $258 million in 2015. Sixteen non-accessible subway stations each has more than $2 million worth of pickups or drop-offs within a quarter-mile.
- Nearly one quarter of all Access-A-Ride trips began or ended at medical facilities in New York City. However, only 37 percent of those 1.6 million trips were rides shared among users, occupying curb space and increasing congestion near these facilities.
- Taxis were used for less than 5 percent of paratransit trips, and only one-third of those trips was shared. Access-A-Ride should better utilize yellow and green taxis and e-hail services, which are increasingly accessible, and rideshare vehicles for ambulatory disabilities to decrease waiting times and provide on-demand services.

The NYU Rudin Center for Transportation has created an interactive map for advocates, policymakers and the public to explore this previously undisclosed data. The map is available at NYURudinCenter.com.