INNOVATION IS INNEVITABLE. JUSTICE IS NOT.

Recommendations from California Walks' ETT Roundtable Series

WHAT IS EMERGING TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGY?

Emerging Transportation Technology (ETT) refers to the wave of new technologies, devices, and services that have exploded in the transportation sector in recent years. While these new travel options promise better mobility choices for many, they also have far-reaching implications on the health, well-being, privacy, and sustainability of all communities, especially those most impacted by intentional and historical marginalization.

ETT falls into three main categories:

AUTOMATION

This refers to driverless and self-driving vehicles and devices, including both passenger vehicles and delivery devices and services.

SHARED MOBILITY

Shared mobility includes scooters, bikes, other micro-mobility devices, and cars that provide short-term access to a vehicle or device. They can be docked or dockless.

ELECTRIFICATION

Electrification includes electric and electric-assist vehicles of all types, such as scooters, bikes, cars, and buses.

WHY DO WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT ETT?

ETT is often discussed as a silver bullet that will solve all of our mobility challenges – from traffic safety to congestion to climate change. California Walks believes that mobility justice advocates must re-center the ETT conversation on improving the *current* transportation network with community-oriented planning and people-focused infrastructure. We believe that tech-optimism should not distract policymakers, agencies, and the general public from addressing residents' current mobility needs that cannot be met by ETT policies, programs, and projects.

*Title inspired by Movement Generation's <u>Just Transition Framework</u>

In 2019, California Walks began convening advocates across the state to discuss and proactively shape the public conversation around ETT. We hosted five roundtables with the goal of identifying concerns related to ETT and recommendations to mitigate those concerns. This document summarizes those discussions and is intended to be a resource and a guide to help generate ideas for further policy and program development.

CENTRAL VALLEY
MARCH 2021

- Electronic Frontier Foundation
- Fresno Building Healthy Community
- Fresno Metro Ministry
- U.S. Green Build Council – Central California
- United Way Merced

SACRAMENTO
FEBRUARY 2020

- 350 SAC
- Catholic Charities Diocese of Stockton
- Coalition for Clean Air
- La Familia Counseling Center
- Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
- Public Health Advocates
- Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates
- Walk Sacramento

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
NOVEMBER 2019

- AARP
- ACLU
- American Heart Association
- CalBike
- Climate Resolve
- Day One
- Investing in Place
- Los Angeles Walks
- Pacoima Beautiful
- People for Mobility Justice
- Santa Ana Active Streets / Bicycle Tree
- The Nature Conservancy
- Walk Bike Long Beach
- Walk Long Beach

BAY AREA
JANUARY 2020

- Climate Plan
- Mineta Transportation Institute
- PolicyLink
- Silicon Valley Bike Coalition
- UC Berkeley SafeTREC
- Walk San Jose

YOUTH STATEWIDE
OCTOBER 2021

- Greenfield Walking Group (Bakersfield)
- Healthy Active Streets (Long Beach)
- KidWorks (Santa Ana)
- Running for a Better Oakland
- Self Help Graphics (Los Angeles)
- Walk Sacramento

5 ETT EQUITY CONCERNS + RECOMMENDATIONS TO RECENTER THE EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

1

TRANSPORTATION STATUS QUO AND CONTINUED UNDER-FUNDING OF A MULTIMODAL SYSTEM

The future of transportation is already diverse and should accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit, drivers, and micro-mobility services such as e-scooters. However, ETT proponents continue to push the current transportation planning and funding paradigm to prioritize policies and project investments that overwhelmingly benefit travel by single-occupancy vehicles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen the capacity of community residents and community-based organizations by sharing knowledge on transportation funding, policy, politics, and project implementation timelines. Ensure communities have the resources and knowledge they need to advocate for themselves, and establish community-led advisory groups to ensure accountability in how policies are implemented.
- Develop, pilot, and integrate processes for communities and advocates to shape and participate in planning, budgeting, and decision-making. Identify processes and practices that accommodate the access needs of vulnerable communities including youth, older adults, people with disabilities, migrants, low-income communities, communities of color, Indigenous communities, and other marginalized communities.
- Build intersectional partnerships and policy approaches that include housing, tenants' rights, environmental justice, Indigenous rights, immigration, labor, and public health. Ensure policy solutions center equity and address historical and ongoing harms caused by racist policies and practices.
- Integrate transportation and land use funding and policy through close collaboration with Indigenous and Native groups, and being mindful of federal rollbacks on land protections
- Foster cross-collaboration in grant writing and planning, especially in terms of linking affordable housing and transportation.

2 LACK OF MEANINGFUL BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITIES AND EXPLOITATIVE BUSINESS PRACTICES

As transportation technology continues to evolve, it is critical to consider all consequences, such as the loss of jobs due to automation. The gap between the poor and the rich has grown, and disparities will continue unless the jobs of the future come with the promise of dignity and living wages. Ensuring overburdened communities benefit through the reinvestment of revenue generated by ETT operating on public goods is vital to advancing equity in our transportation system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure revenue generation strategies are tied to community needs. Prioritize historically underserved communities and create programs for low-income communities to access technology that comes in. Reduce fares and costs of ETT options to give access to all.
- Reinvest ETT company fees into reduced fares and modes used by the community such as public transit; at the same time, be cautious about accelerating funding to ensure benefits serve communities with historical disinvestment.
- Create policies that protect communities from and prevent displacement due to ETT. Develop systems and policies that track displacement and gentrification connected to ETT at the local and statewide levels. Establish community land trusts so that communities can own land and dictate how it is used.
- Foster partnerships between private companies to help support community projects, such as community-led participatory research to identify mobility needs and solutions.
- Engage and center the needs of the disability community, which often gets left out of the conversation.
- Require ETT companies to pay rent on the public infrastructure that they use.
- Decriminalize other forms of entrepreneurship also operating in the public realm, such as street vending.
- Prioritize local hire for new businesses coming in and ensure living wages. Require job training for employees of companies pushed out because of automation.

3 UNETHICAL COLLECTION AND USE OF DATA

Private ETT companies currently collect user trip data, yet it is unclear exactly what information is collected and how it is used. Users are not presented with a choice to opt-out of data collection, and there are no clear parameters on what is shared with third parties, including advertisers and government agencies, such as transportation and law enforcement departments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Educate communities about existing laws that protect their data and privacy.
- Ensure users of ETT can opt-in or out of data collection.
- Explore different models for privacy and data collection.
- Require companies to pay for the data they use and reinvest it in communities that are most impacted, including providing free public transportation.
- Prevent data from being exploitative.
- Make data more accessible to communities for the advancement of equity.
- Create data advisory councils to establish protocols for and monitor data usage.
- Require more transparency on the usage of data.

4 FRAMING AUTOMATION AS A TRANSPORTATION SAVIOR

Autonomous vehicle research and development perpetuates a car-centric consumerist culture by promoting single-occupancy vehicle trips. This vision for the future ignores the needs of communities that rely on poorly funded public transit and active transportation infrastructure, while undermining climate change progress. A fully automated vehicle is considered a level 5 automation. Today we are in level 2 despite vast sums of public money spent on research and design - funds that could be invested elsewhere to address basic mobility needs. At the same time, automation may lead to major job loss in the transportation sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Highlight the true cost of automation on vulnerable communities in terms of environmental, labor, and socioeconomic impacts. Develop messaging on inequitable impacts of automation on jobs and the need for other mobility solutions.
- Involve impacted workers and labor organizers in identifying solutions to preserve jobs, train workers, and maintain living wages.
- Mitigate negative impacts of automation on low-income communities of color by incentivizing investments in and redistributing resources to them (ie universal basic income).

5

PRIVATIZING PROFITS AND SOCIALIZING LOSSES ON THE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

Our current road, curb, and sidewalk infrastructure is overwhelmed by microdelivery services that prioritize convenience for a select few. While most of these services are currently being provided by workers, often under exploitative conditions, many ETT companies are looking to transition to automated vehicles and devices to make these deliveries. Those who can afford these options may experience its benefits, while most will be left with the challenge of navigating our already congested and dangerous roadways. Additionally, there may be a loss of services if local stores are shut down due to competing micro-deliveries, further decreasing access to basic services and needs of those who are already financially burdened and face mobility challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Price and manage private companies' use of public roadways for doing business.
- Regulate goods movement during peak periods.
- Develop policies that prevent companies from privatizing profits and socializing losses.
- Create centralized drop off spots and incentivise them over delivery to minimize the negative impact of micro-goods movement on communities that have to deal with overburdened public right of way.
- Examine the impacts that the gig economy and retailers like Amazon have on roadways and health. Explore campaigns and policies that highlight these impacts and the need to shift away from consumerism.

SUGGESTED READINGS + RESOURCES

- Emergin Modes: Micromobility
- Wait, Who's Driving this Thing? Bringing the Public to the Autonomous Vehicle Table
- Micromobility, Eauity and Sustainability
- Greenlining's Mobility Equity Framework
- Partnership for Active Transportation's Human-Centered Mobility Principles

- The Untokening's Principles of Mobility Justice
- Economic Dignity
- Building Access and Equality
- The Future of Data Justice
- When It Comes to Aging in Place, Self-Driving Cars Won't Save Us

Authors:
Caro Jauregui
Lyndsey Nolan

For more information:
info@calwalks.org