

The Shared Lyft Ride Should Replace Public Transportation

There are many people who feel the future of transportation is public transportation.

I shudder at the thought.

Sure, I'd like to reduce negative human impacts on the environment, too. But I'm also not a big fan of drab, boring, bureaucrat-administered travel experiences – not to mention the non-consensual funding, political manipulation, and supply/quality problems natural to government-run systems.

Enter the Lyft shared ride.

Without calling in government subsidies, Lyft has managed to create models and incentives that ***voluntarily*** bring several (or more) people into a car together for shared travel.

Given the abundance of these things, you can see how this is reducing the need for more cars on the road. Given time, the environmental impact could really add up.

Beyond efficiency, though, there's more to the shared Lyft ride that public transportation lacks.

Now that I've been a passenger and a driver (my first time driving for a shared ride was this weekend), I feel qualified to say that these experiences create magical connections between people.

There's something about getting into close quarters in a car with a group of strangers that tends to lower peoples' walls. In the shared ride I gave on Saturday, my passengers (one coming from restaurant work, one coming from a symphony, and one hailing – or so it seemed – from the Czech Republic) bonded over film score music and foodie locations around Atlanta. I've had shared rides of my own that have been a barrel of fun, with people and conversations I would never expected to have found together.

So it seems that Lyft has successfully replicated the randomness of shared public transportation. But it does so in an environment of true customer service. The driver (hi!) and the company must both create experiences of safety, convenience and even delight – they won't survive if they don't. This creates that feeling of confidence and safety you have when you climb into the back of a strangers' car, assuming that it's a Lyft.

I think it's this feeling of safety that enables people to be so open with each other in shared

Lyft rides. Unless you work really hard, you just won't find the kind of regular spontaneity and friendliness of a shared Lyft in your next subway ride.

As we look to creative ways to make transportation more efficient, let's not forget to make it humane. Lyft hasn't.

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