

DYNAMIC RIDESHARING FOCUS GROUPS

Discussion Questions

Section A: Knowledge leading to decision to participate

1. Define dynamic ridesharing. How did you first hear/learn about dynamic ridesharing? Probe on source(s) of initial information about system, word-of-mouth, seeing it in action, and employer's role
2. What was it about dynamic ridesharing that most intrigued you, or intrigued you enough to consider it as a means of commuting? Probe on economic/financial, environmental, other personal values
3. Did you have any initial concerns about it? What were they and what did you do to resolve them?
4. Do you consider dynamic ridesharing to be carpooling? Why or why not?

Section B: Current behavior

1. How long have you been participating in dynamic ridesharing?
 - a. Are you a rider or a driver?
 - b. In which location(s) do you participate and why did you choose that (those)?
 - c. We recognize that you all participate in dynamic ridesharing for work. Have you ever used it or considered using it at a time other than for work (e.g., commuting to/from school or for some other purpose)? If yes, tell me about it
2. Tell me about your first experience.
 - a. Did you do any preparation work (email/talk to someone/internet search) before you participated for the first time?
 - b. What did your family members, colleagues, or friends have to say about it when you first started dynamic ridesharing? Over time, has their opinions changed?
3. How often do you typically participate?
 - a. Is it always as (refer to 1a) a driver or rider?
 - b. Do you participate every day or just certain days?
 - c. What kinds of considerations or decisions do you make when you decide to use dynamic ridesharing on a given day? Probe

on participation preferences weather, vehicle type, safety, commute time

- d. On days that you participate in dynamic ridesharing, are there any changes to your routine to support your participation? Probe on whether they have changed work hours, alter routes, use a park-and-ride, use public transit part of the way, etc.
4. What are the factors that drive or detract from personal participation?
 - a. To what extent is or is not safety an issue? Probe on gender, age, and other socio-demographic differences?
 - b. What do you consider when you decide to accept a rider/ride? Probe on whether the Riders/Drivers are always someone new or whether they look for someone in particular?
 - c. Do you ever decide NOT to accept or pass on a rider/ride? Why or why not. Probe on whether they look for certain characteristics of the rider/ride, vehicle type, or number of passengers, blue/white collar, etc.
 - d. You decide (Riders) whether or not to pay for the ride (Drivers) to ask for or accept payment for the ride? Probe on whether there are other forms of “payment” than money (e.g., reduced or waived toll fees, etc.)
 - e. What makes a ride/rider a “good one” and a “bad one”? Probe on conversation making, offer of payment, etc.

Section C: System guidelines or improvements

1. Overall, if you had to grade the dynamic ridesharing “program” in (DC, Houston, San Francisco) as it exists today, would you give it an A, B, C, D or a failing grade of F. Explain why you gave it that grade.
2. Are the numbers of participants (riders and drivers) sufficient to support the program and in all locations?
3. What could or should be done to improve the program or the location at which you participate? Probe on:
 - a. What tools are in place or should be in place to facilitate dynamic ridesharing? Signage, electronic-software, agency partnership
 - b. What is the best way to market/communicate the concept of dynamic ridesharing to others?
4. Part of the allure, according to some participants, is the “organic nature” or unstructured-ness of the program. Do you think written guidelines would compromise the program or would they be helpful? Probe on what guidelines should be developed.

