Delivering Boston's Ride-Hailing Metrics

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- No Boston-wide data previously available.
- StreetLight pinpointed ridehailing and delivery traffic, by street and hour.
- Story unveiled empirical facts behind public perception.

Planning a three-part series on traffic, Boston Globe reporters sought detailed insights about ride-hailing and delivery driving. StreetLight provided unique front-page-news metrics.

Mission: Get Granular on Boston's Congestion

Seeking to shed light on congestion causes, the Globe wanted granular detail for traffic contributed by vehicles driving for on-demand services such as Uber, Lyft, UberEats, DoorDash, and GrubHub. But those services only provided high-level statistics for the Boston metro area over a year's time.

Reporters were able to collect statistical traffic data from Logan airport, the Census, and the state, but that data did not separate ride-hailing and delivery driving from personal vehicles.

Instead, StreetLight provided volumes for personal vehicle and ride-hailing travel along specific roads and at various times during the average weekday. StreetLight was the Globe's only source able to provide these granular ride-hailing metrics. "The technology built around our desire for instant gratification...has become the source of huge amounts of new traffic."

The Boston Blobe

Analysis: Segment Boston Traffic by Mode

Analyzing traffic in Greater Boston between April and December 2018, the StreetLight team began by quantifying total vehicular congestion.

The analysis established a baseline of granular metrics for Boston-area traffic, hour by hour, and street by street. Reporters were able to compare results over time, and identify problem areas where congestion has increased most over several years.

Then, using its proprietary Route Science[®] technology, StreetLight separated out the percentage of ride-hailing and on-demand delivery traffic versus other modes.

For the first time, Boston residents and officials had access to ride-hailing trip facts, not just anecdotal evidence.

Results: Understand Congestion Street by Street, Hour by Hour

StreetLight's analysis confirmed that ride-hailing vehicles contribute substantially to congestion. At Logan International Airport, at almost every hour of the average weekday, 15 to 20% of traffic was composed of ride-hailing vehicles.

During the 4 to 5pm peak on the John F. Fitzgerald Surface Road, Boston's famed "Central Artery," up to 15% of traffic was composed of a combination of ride-hailing and ondemand delivery vehicles. On D Street in the Seaport, from 2 to 3pm, ride-hailing cars make up one in five of all vehicles.

StreetLight's analysis covered virtually every Boston roadway to shed light on smaller neighborhoods and individual streets – whose traffic may in fact benefit from ride-share replacing personal vehicles circling to find parking – and provided valuable insights for places where congestion depends heavilyon the hour.



StreetLight's analysis shown in a heat map of average weekday ride-hailing traffic around Boston's Logan Airport at 1 - 2 p.m.



Along D Street in Boston's Seaport, up to one out of five trips made from 2 - 3 p.m. are made by ride-hailing cars.

In any city, ride-hailing and delivery vehicle traffic varies depending on location and time, which makes granular metrics a requirement for understanding behavior, surfacing congestion solutions, and measuring their impact.



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