WORKERS FIRST | AI

How Government Can Ensure Automation Benefits Working People

Rideshare Drivers and Robotaxi Services

FULL REPORT

PROJECT LED BY

Andy Stern
President Emeritus, SEIU

Rayan Semery-Palumbo
PhD in Public Policy; Fellow at the Economic Security Project

Tash Diallo
Rideshare driver; former National Organizing Director, Independent Drivers Guild

2026

WF AI

Acknowledgments

Drivers helped us build Workers First AI. Their words appear throughout this report so readers can hear directly from people whose work robotaxi service may change. Participating drivers described how driving supports their lives and disagreed about whether robotaxi service should operate. In later group discussions, drivers evaluated policy ideas against their experience. Their testimony and judgment shaped the questions we asked and the two requirements we developed for protecting drivers.



New York drivers who participated in the project: Liakat Ali, Shaun Beckles, Jose Gomez, Asad Iqbal, Dachuan Nie, and Muneeb Rehman. Photographs by Coral Ortiz.

ADVISORY PANEL

Twelve people served on the advisory panel. Members participated at different stages and in different ways. Participating members reviewed different subsets and versions of work still in development; the panel did not review the final report as a panel. Eleven advisory-panel members are named below; one member chose not to be named publicly. Advisors are listed alphabetically by surname.

Jillian Arnold
Labor & Technology Intelligence Officer, IATSE

Roy Bahat
Head of Bloomberg Beta

Juliana Bidadanure
Associate Professor of Philosophy, NYU Arts & Science; Affiliate Faculty of Law, NYU School of Law

Ron Bloom
Co-Chair, Center for State Labor Innovation (CSLI)

Adrian Brown
Founder and CEO, Windfall Trust

Laphonza Butler
Partner, Actum; former U.S. Senator for California

Eric Gertler
Executive Chairman and CEO, U.S. News & World Report

Pamela Mishkin
Former Head of Economic Research Team, OpenAI

Andrew Salkin
Founding Principal, Resilient Cities Catalyst

Brendan Sexton
President, Independent Drivers Guild

April Verrett
International President, Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Omidyar Network provided funding for the project. Economic Security Project collaborated on the work, hosted Andy Stern and Rayan Semery-Palumbo as fellows, and contributed funding that supported Rayan Semery-Palumbo's fellowship. Assets Under Movement (formerly Amalgamated Foundation) provided fiscal sponsorship.

Omidyar Network · Economic Security Project · Aum assets under movement

Participation, acknowledgment, proposal selection, panel service, institutional support, or credit for an idea does not imply endorsement of the report's analysis, conclusions, or recommendations. The project team is responsible for the report's analysis, conclusions, and recommendations.

Detailed recognition of participating drivers, advisors, proposal contributors, organizers, researchers, production contributors, and supporting institutions appears in Project Contributors and Credits.

Contents

Acknowledgments 2

Introduction 5

Summary 7

Part One — Can Robotaxis Benefit Drivers? 15

Part Two — What Participating Drivers Told Us 25

Part Three — Two Worker Requirements and Five Policy Areas 33

- Policy Area 1 — Evidence About Drivers' Work and Income 36
- Policy Area 2 — Company Funding Before Robotaxi Service Begins or Expands 38
- Policy Area 3 — Whether, How Much, and Under What Conditions Robotaxi Service May Operate 45
- Policy Area 4 — Designing Loss Protection and the Additional Benefit 48
- Policy Area 5 — Eligibility, Division of Payments and Benefits, Driver Decisions, and Administration 54
- Questions to Resolve Before Authorizing Robotaxi Service 60

Part Four — Other Approaches Worth Considering 64

Part Five — Next Steps for Local Work and Broader Research 74

Conclusion 78

How We Developed the Policy Recommendations 80

Project Contributors and Credits 81

Bibliography and Project Materials 87

Notes 95

Introduction

Technology does not decide who benefits from progress. Public rules and company decisions shape who gains and who bears the costs. Working people should have a say.

When app-based rideshare transformed New York's passenger market, it did not include a fair transition plan for many taxi drivers and owner-drivers whose livelihoods and savings were tied to the system being disrupted. Rideshare contributed to falling taxi revenue and medallion values; risky lending and weak oversight left many owners with unsustainable debt; and the city later created debt-relief programs.[1]

Workers First AI is a project to help working people shape decisions about whether and how AI is used, protect their livelihoods, and share in any gains. We do not advocate for AI expansion.

Rideshare driver Tash Diallo co-led the project with Andy Stern and Rayan Semery-Palumbo. Around 100 participating drivers in New York City, San Francisco, and Atlanta described how driving supports their lives. Later, drivers discussed policy ideas in groups and gave feedback based on their experiences, hopes, and fears. Their testimony and judgment helped shape the project team's questions and recommendations.

Robotaxis offer an unusually concrete place to begin. Robotaxi driving systems use AI to interpret their surroundings, predict how other road users may move, and help make driving decisions.[2] Rideshare drivers helped build—and still sustain—the app-based passenger market robotaxi companies seek to serve. Taxi and black-car drivers work in the broader paid-passenger market and may also be affected by robotaxi service.[3, 4, 5] Robotaxis operate on public streets and, where the law provides authority, under rules government can set. Their trips can be counted, their expansion can be measured, and conditions can be imposed before—not merely after—working people lose their livelihoods.

There is precedent for a different kind of transition. When mechanization and containerization transformed the docks, longshore workers did not simply receive retraining after their jobs disappeared. They bargained over the terms of technological change itself, securing arrangements that supported wages, retirement, health coverage,

and economic security. They did not prevent innovation. They insisted that progress include them.[6]

Where law permits, we recommend that public officials require robotaxi companies to secure funding before officials authorize service, renew an authorization, or permit expansion. The required funding must cover loss protection for the driver workforce covered by the proposal and a separate, meaningful additional benefit for drivers who qualify through verified past work.

The rules governing robotaxis are still being written. So, in a much larger sense, are the rules governing artificial intelligence and work.

> Working people should not be an afterthought of innovation. They should have a stake in its success.

Summary

Public Rules and Driver Protection

Robotaxis could make travel safer and give people who cannot drive greater independence and more transportation options.[7, 8] People should be able to welcome useful technology with confidence that working people will be protected. Protecting people's lives and livelihoods is a basic responsibility of government. Rideshare drivers helped build—and still sustain—the app-based passenger market robotaxi companies seek to serve.[3, 4, 5] Alphabet, Google's parent company, owns Waymo; Amazon owns Zoox; and Tesla reported operating its own robotaxi service.[9] If robotaxis take trips human drivers otherwise would have made, those companies gain revenue while drivers lose work and income. Potential benefits for riders do not justify leaving drivers and their families to bear those losses.

Retraining and new jobs may help some drivers, but neither by itself ensures work with comparable income and scheduling flexibility.[10, 11] Drivers should have enforceable, company-funded protections in place before harm occurs.

Where law permits, we recommend that public officials adopt enforceable rules requiring robotaxi companies to secure funding for both worker requirements before officials authorize service, renew an authorization, or permit expansion: first, protection against robotaxi-related losses for the driver workforce covered by the proposal; and second, a separate, meaningful additional benefit for drivers who qualify through verified past work—one that should improve their security, opportunity, or freedom over their time. Loss protection responds to harm; the additional benefit recognizes the value drivers helped create.

Because robotaxis use public streets, whether and how they operate is a public choice where law gives officials authority. Those rules should require robotaxi service to benefit the public. Officials should evaluate how robotaxi service, including commercial pilots, affects drivers' earnings from driving and the amount of paid driving work available. Those effects should be core measures of success alongside safety, accessibility, and transportation outcomes. Once service operates, officials should also check whether the

required loss protection and separate additional benefit are delivered. Drivers whose work may change should help shape and evaluate the rules before adoption. Public officials remain responsible for setting and enforcing the rules and using independent evidence to decide whether service may begin, continue, or expand.

Here, robotaxi service means paid passenger service in which an automated system does all the driving within defined conditions. Our research focused on people who earned income through Uber, Lyft, or both; some also had experience in taxi, black-car, or local car-service work.[12, 13] This report neither assumes robotaxi service is inevitable nor recommends stopping it everywhere. Depending on local law, officials may authorize service, authorize it with limits, keep existing restrictions, or refuse authorization.

What Participating Drivers Told Us

Thirty-three of the 36 survey respondents said driving was their only or main income. Asked how quickly they could find similar income if they had to stop driving, 23 said they did not think they could, and 10 more expected it would take more than six months.[14] Respondents could select up to two listed forms of support. Twenty selected driver ownership or a share of autonomous-service revenue, 14 selected a one-time payment, eight selected temporary monthly payments, and four selected training and help finding new work.[15]

We interviewed rideshare drivers in New York City, San Francisco, and Atlanta, held recorded group discussions, received 36 survey responses, and drew on unrecorded conversations.[16] Most structured interviews began with drivers' work; interviewers introduced robotaxis and policy options later. The survey listed possible forms of support. The interviews, group discussions, and survey responses describe participating drivers, not the full workforce, and do not support representative estimates.

Participants took three broad positions. Some opposed robotaxi service or supported existing restrictions. Others expected human-driven and autonomous service to coexist under limits. A third group expected expansion and wanted to use drivers' remaining influence to secure protection and a share of the gains while officials decide whether and how service expands. Expecting expansion did not mean supporting it.

Four priorities recurred: earning through driving; avoiding lower pay or less paid work; recognition for past work and the value drivers helped create; and a say in what driver support should include.[3]

Some drivers discussed cash, but not as a complete answer. One Atlanta participant said, “Some of us might be happy to … get the basic income … but we want more. We want to be known that we're valued.”[17] In this report, cash that replaces lost work or income is loss protection; cash may also be one form of the separate additional benefit. The evidence does not establish cash—or any other single form—as drivers' collective preference.

Published research, submitted proposals, financial modeling, advisor feedback, outside expertise, and drivers' later evaluation of policy ideas informed the rules. The project team is responsible for the synthesis and recommendations; participation or review does not imply endorsement. ‘How We Developed the Policy Recommendations’ explains the process.

Evidence and Uncertainty About Effects on Drivers

Through September 23, 2026, we identified no rigorous published U.S. study isolating robotaxi service’s effects on drivers’ earnings, trips, or hours.[18] Gridwise found mixed trends from Q4 2024 to Q4 2025: trips per hour fell in all five markets with robotaxi activity and nationwide, while hourly gross pay excluding tips rose in two of the five markets and fell in three. The comparisons do not show whether robotaxis caused those changes.[19] The available evidence therefore does not establish whether or how much robotaxis have changed drivers’ work and income. That uncertainty is why public officials should require initial worker protections and secured funding before service begins or expands. Local rules should state how officials will use independent analysis of company records to decide whether to change required company funding, the payments and benefits available to drivers, the amount of robotaxi service allowed, or the conditions under which it may operate (Policy Area 1).

Key Terms

A local proposal should distinguish four overlapping groups of drivers:

- Covered drivers: the driver workforce within the proposal's scope.
- Drivers eligible for loss protection: covered drivers who qualify for individual loss-protection payments.
- Drivers eligible for the additional benefit: drivers who qualify for the additional benefit through verified past work.
- Affected drivers: drivers whose work or livelihood the proposal may change.

Independent analysts and administrators are independent of every robotaxi company the proposal covers. Scope of service means whether, how much, and under what conditions robotaxi service may operate.

The Two Worker Requirements

We recommend requiring robotaxi companies to meet two separate obligations: loss protection and a separate additional benefit. One cannot substitute for the other.

Measuring the loss: First, independent analysts must estimate total net robotaxi-related loss across all covered drivers. That includes lost paid work and income, plus any other losses the local proposal expressly covers. The estimate first accounts for changes that would have happened anyway, so only robotaxi-related loss counts.

Paying before service: Before service is authorized or expanded, public officials should require robotaxi companies to meet two enforceable funding requirements: one sufficient to cover the best-supported estimate of that loss, and a separate requirement for the additional benefit.

Three time periods: Local rules should set:

- how long companies must fund loss protection across covered drivers
- how long each individual driver receives payments
- how long the additional benefit lasts

The company's obligation can outlast any single driver's payments. If robotaxi-related loss among covered drivers continues after individual payments end, companies must keep covering it.

If money runs short: Loss protection is paid first, and the additional benefit is still required.

What the requirements do not do: They do not guarantee that every driver keeps the same hours or income. They also do not require drivers to prove that robotaxis caused each lost trip or dollar. Training, promised but unguaranteed jobs, and wages from other work cannot by themselves satisfy either obligation. And drivers need fair pay and enforceable rights in human-driven work whether or not robotaxis ever operate.

Five Policy Areas

- **Evidence about drivers' work and income:** Require company records, independent analysis, published methods, and privacy protection, plus rules stating how officials will use new evidence to determine whether required company funding, the support available to drivers, or the amount or conditions of robotaxi service permitted should change.
- **Funding:** Secure company funding before service begins or expands, with published amounts, payment methods, correction deadlines, and rules for what happens if funding falls short.
- **Scope of service:** Depending on local law, preserve restrictions, decline authorization, require that a defined share of passenger service remain human-driven, or limit vehicles, trips, hours, areas, or expansion. Officials should not automatically renew an authorization or allow more service.
- **Loss protection and a separate additional benefit:** Base company funding on losses across all covered drivers. If evidence points to serious losses in a particular group, type of driving work, or location that the overall estimate masks, independent analysts should review the evidence, and officials should decide what protective action is needed before further expansion.[20]
- **Eligibility, division of payments and benefits, driver decisions, and administration:** Define who is covered, who qualifies for each payment or benefit, how payments and benefits are divided, how the process determines whether affected drivers support the complete proposal, how appeals work, how records and personal information are protected, who administers the rules, how company control is prevented, and what must be reported publicly.

Two Driver Decisions

The proposal requires two separate driver decisions; neither can replace the other.

- Affected drivers should shape loss-protection rules. A process using a published rule for measuring support must establish their support for the complete local proposal.
- Drivers eligible for the additional benefit select or approve the kind of benefit and how it is divided.

Both decisions require paid, accessible, multilingual participation without company control. Rules must say how any representatives are chosen and held accountable. Non-participation is not support. Significant changes require affected drivers to decide again; changes to the benefit or how it is divided also require drivers eligible for the additional benefit to approve the revision. Officials adopt and enforce the rules; independent administrators verify records, calculate payments, and apply the rules.[21]

Driver support does not authorize service or waive worker, company, or public duties. Officials retain their separate legal and authorization decisions and may deny authorization even when both driver decisions succeed.

Four Questions Before Authorizing Robotaxi Service

- Legal authority: Do the relevant public bodies have the legal power and practical ability to enact, administer, and enforce the proposal, including the power to require the specified company funding?
- Financial feasibility: Does independent review find that, at the proposed fare, amount of service, and service design, the companies responsible for robotaxi service can finance both worker requirements and every other requirement the proposal places on them? Separately, does every other public requirement that requires funding have an adequate funding source?
- Driver decisions: Through paid, accessible, multilingual participation free from company control and under rules published in advance, did affected drivers support the complete proposal, and did drivers eligible for the additional benefit select or approve the benefit and how it is divided?

- Other public requirements: Does the proposal meet applicable safety, accessibility, transportation, privacy, consumer-protection, civil-rights, environmental, and other public requirements?

Our illustrative model estimates how much selected charges on robotaxi fares could raise before costs under stated assumptions; it does not establish driver losses, costs, profitability, or local feasibility.[22]

Where law permits, public officials should not authorize new or expanded service if independent review finds that the companies responsible for robotaxi service cannot finance both worker requirements at the proposed amount of service. Responses may include more company funding, less service, continued restrictions, or a revised proposal. Public money may add support or finance a specific public purpose the proposal identifies and justifies—such as transit, infrastructure, or accessibility—but should not reduce required company funding or excuse any other requirement. Local law determines available actions.

Other Approaches

The report also compares approaches that address different questions, including continued restrictions or the decision not to authorize service, limits that preserve human-driven work, license-and-royalty arrangements, debt relief, a fund that invests transition revenue before making payments, pooled driver ownership, trusts that hold company shares for workers, collective bargaining, and cooperatives. The project did not adopt any submitted proposal in full. The project still recommends the two worker requirements. Affected drivers should help decide which approaches a local process develops.

Possible Next Steps

Further work should proceed only where affected drivers and their organizations want to participate. A local effort may oppose service, preserve restrictions, negotiate conditions, compare alternatives, or develop one complete proposal for drivers to evaluate. Claims of public benefit require evidence. Starting or expanding service is not the measure of success.

This report and its method are a starting point—not jurisdiction-specific legal advice or a completed local financial-feasibility model. A local effort based on this report would require a separately defined effort, willing local partners, appropriate expertise, and resources.

Technologies, institutions, laws, workforces, and remedies differ across sectors, so these policies do not transfer unchanged. Working people in each sector should decide what protects or improves their lives and how to share in automation's gains. Broader approaches require separate research and public decisions.

Part One —

Can Robotaxis Benefit Drivers?

Data in this part are current as of September 23, 2026, unless otherwise noted.

Rideshare drivers helped build—and still sustain—the app-based passenger market robotaxi companies seek to serve.[3, 4, 5] Robotaxis use public streets under public rules. Where law grants authority, public officials can decide whether service operates and on what terms; working people and the public can shape those decisions. We ask what enforceable terms would benefit drivers.

If public officials consider authorizing service, we propose two requirements. Enforceable policy should require robotaxi companies to fund both: first, protection against total net robotaxi-related loss across the driver workforce covered by the proposal; and second, a separate, meaningful benefit for drivers who qualify through verified past work. That additional benefit should improve drivers' security, opportunity, or freedom over their time.

What We Mean by Robotaxi Service

This report focuses on commercial passenger service in which an automated driving system performs all driving within specified operating conditions, without a human driver operating the vehicle.[23] The federal government calls this Level 4 automation. Level 4 differs from driver-assistance features that require an attentive driver and from Level 5 automation, which is not limited to defined areas or conditions. Vehicles used only for personal travel are outside this report’s scope.

Current Robotaxi Service and Public Decisions

Waymo reported more than 500,000 fully autonomous trips per week, while Baidu reported 3.2 million fully driverless operational rides during the first quarter of 2026.[24] The companies use different definitions, so the figures are not directly comparable. They show that limited-area services can complete hundreds of thousands of trips, not that they are profitable, beneficial, inevitable elsewhere, or entitled to operate.

Waymo is a subsidiary of Alphabet, Amazon owns Zoox, and Tesla reported operating its own robotaxi service.[9] If robotaxis replace human driving, who receives the revenue, and what happens to the income, stability, flexibility, and independence that driving provides to workers and their families?

A later section presents individual, cooperative, and trust ownership proposals and asks whether they can reach drivers without transferable licenses.

Public decisions have not always followed company plans, and drivers have organized against proposed expansions. In January 2026, Governor Hochul proposed a limited commercial robotaxi program outside New York City; the enacted budget instead extended existing supervised testing with a driver behind the wheel. Atlanta rideshare drivers rallied, and organizing groups petitioned public officials for limits. District of Columbia Bill 26-0684 remained under Council review after a July 13 hearing. As introduced, it would impose a 15-cent tax per commercial autonomous-vehicle mile and cap each permitted company at 200 vehicles until January 1, 2028; increases after that date would require an approved comprehensive plan.[25] Axios reported that Waymo later supported the bill sponsor's stated intent to fund programs for workers whose jobs or incomes may change but opposed the vehicle cap.[26]

The New York City Department of Transportation's public page showed Waymo's supervised-testing permit ending March 31, 2026, with no later permit listed.[27] That permit authorized testing with an operator present, not commercial passenger service; later testing or service would require the approvals applicable at the time.

> During the city's supervised-testing period, a New York driver with fourteen years of experience said, "They're here already, but if they let them loose on New York City, that's the nail in the coffin for the drivers, you know."[17]

Structure of Commercial Robotaxi Service

A commercial robotaxi service combines functions beyond driving the vehicle. How companies divide them affects who receives revenue, who controls records, what work remains, and which businesses bear public obligations.

Part of the service	What it includes	Why it matters for public policy
Vehicle	The vehicle and its road-sensing equipment.	Different businesses may handle ownership, financing, insurance, and safety.
Driving system	Hardware, software, maps, and computing that control the vehicle within its operating conditions.	The provider may control technical records and operating limits.
Fleet operation	Financing, charging, cleaning, maintenance, storage, dispatch, passenger assistance, and incident response.	These activities create work and operating costs.
Trip and payment platform	Rider matching, prices, payment processing, trip records, and customer support.	The platform may control fares, revenue, records, and the rider relationship.
Public systems	Streets, curbs, airports, traffic rules, permits, charging sites, communications, and required data systems.	Public bodies may control access and set conditions, depending on law.

Companies may divide these functions among partners, affiliates, and contractors. A law, permit, or agreement should identify which businesses must provide records, make payments, and guarantee worker benefits. A rule aimed only at the vehicle would miss businesses that control trips, revenue, records, or working terms.

Identifying the responsible businesses is only one part of the public decision. Within their legal authority, public officials should require those businesses to demonstrate before authorization how they will meet all applicable safety, accessibility, transportation, civil-rights, privacy, consumer-protection, environmental, and worker-protection requirements. Meeting one requirement does not show that the service meets the others; officials should evaluate each on its own terms.

Robotaxis may give riders greater independence or availability. They may also remove assistance needed to locate, enter, use, or exit a vehicle safely. Accessible service depends on equipment, operating rules, evidence, and participation by affected riders; the absence of a human driver does not establish accessibility.[8] The U.S. Department of Transportation's Inclusive Design Challenge identifies barriers that require specific equipment and operating practices.[28]

Driverless service still relies on people to clean and charge vehicles, maintain equipment, operate depots, support passengers, respond to incidents, and assist vehicles. Those jobs may benefit current drivers who can obtain them, but the evidence does not show that they will match the driving work the service may displace in number, location, schedule, pay, or durability.[11] The Verge reported that a Waymo representative acknowledged in August 2026 that autonomous vehicles could displace drivers and that their net effect on jobs remained unknown.[26]

The Drivers Whose Work May Change

In 2024, the U.S. Census Bureau recorded about 1.6 million sole-proprietor businesses with no paid employees in taxi, limousine, and ride-hailing services.[29] This figure counts businesses, not unique drivers, and is not a complete workforce count.

Driver workforce: a New York example

New York City's Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) reported 179,670 active taxi and for-hire vehicle driver licenses as of December 31, 2025. A current license does not show whether its holder was working.[30]

In a 2024 survey commissioned by the TLC, among Uber and Lyft drivers who answered each relevant question, 95% identified as male, 91% were born outside the United States, and 86% were non-white. These are New York survey results, not national estimates or this project's participant demographics.[30]

Drivers rely on paid passenger work in different ways. Many use flexible schedules to manage caregiving, medical needs, school, another job, and other responsibilities. In the Federal Reserve’s 2024 household survey, 78 percent of people who performed short-term tasks through an app or website said gig work gave them flexible hours. Only 52 percent said it gave them work-life balance, 61 percent wanted more consistent pay, and 41 percent said they would have trouble making ends meet without the work.[31]

Flexible schedules do not always give drivers control over their time. Low earnings, unpaid waits, and too few trips may keep a driver available for hours before earning enough to stop. WTOP reported that, at a 2026 District of Columbia hearing, a security officer described driving for another five or six hours after a nine-hour shift to pay for

groceries and her phone bill.[32] A fixed depot or maintenance shift may help one driver and be impossible for another.

No single official data source separately identifies the full app-based rideshare, taxi, and black-car workforce, including occasional driving and driving done in addition to another job. Company, survey, and local records use different definitions. They show a large workforce that includes occasional drivers and people who work many hours, but not a precise national count of either group. Hours alone do not show reliance on driving income: a part-time driver may depend on every dollar because of caregiving, health, another low-wage job, or unstable hours.[33]

Hours, trips, earnings, years of driving, location, license ownership, and work performed through more than one app show different forms of reliance and contribution. Current records do not establish one rule for deciding which drivers a local robotaxi proposal covers, but neither do they justify excluding a person solely because their work is part-time or intermittent.

Today's paid passenger market includes taxi, black-car, and app-based rideshare drivers working under different legal and business models. The rise of app-based rideshare did not include a plan for a fair transition for many taxi drivers and owner-drivers. In New York City, it contributed to falling taxi revenue and falling values for taxi medallions—the transferable, city-issued rights attached to vehicles and required for street-hail taxi service. Risky lending and weak oversight left many owners with unsustainable debt, and the city later created debt-relief programs.[1]

That history does not make taxi debt that predates robotaxi service a robotaxi-caused loss. It does show why robotaxi policy should cover taxi, black-car, and rideshare drivers whose work may be affected, while allowing eligibility and support to reflect years of driving, reliance on driving income, and license ownership.

Current Driver Pay and Working Conditions

Robotaxi policy often begins in a passenger market where drivers have organized to improve pay and conditions. In New York, the Independent Drivers Guild helped win in-app tipping and, together with the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, helped win the 2018 minimum-pay standard for app-based drivers. James A. Parrott and Michael Reich's research supplied the analytical basis for the pay rule.[34] Whether or not robotaxis operate, public officials should continue to require adequate pay and enforceable rights in human-driven work.

Research in five large metropolitan areas found that most studied passenger and delivery drivers earned less than the applicable local minimum wage after all working time and expenses were counted.[35]

Minimum-pay standards address the rate paid for covered work. They do not necessarily protect the amount of paid work available if robotaxis reduce it. James A. Parrott's proposal calls for continuing minimum-compensation standards alongside phased robotaxi entry.[36]

We treat continuing minimum-pay standards as a requirement and a minimum fare or other pricing rule as a local option.
Without effective pay and pricing rules, platforms could respond to lower robotaxi fares by cutting driver pay before loss protection or the additional benefit takes effect.

Participating drivers already report lower pay, longer waits, and more hours needed to earn the same income.[37] Jose, a New York driver, said during a group discussion about rising gas costs and falling fares, "They are taking advantage of people like me. We need these jobs. Because the economic situation we are facing right now is killing us."[17]



Jose Gomez, a New York driver, in his van. Photograph by Coral Ortiz.

Platform commissions, expenses, rider demand, driver supply, and local conditions all affect earnings. A 2025 National Employment Law Project review reported that Uber and Lyft kept about 40 percent of passenger fares on average, compared with fixed commissions of 20 to 25 percent a decade earlier.[38]
Participating drivers' accounts document hardship, but they do not establish whether or how much robotaxis caused it. Robotaxis may add to that hardship. Public officials should not judge a robotaxi policy successful merely because it preserves today's poor pay and long waits.

One New York driver said, "You should be able to come out and work 40 hours and earn a living." When he bought his minivan in January 2017, he planned to work six days a week until the car was paid off and then drop to five. His financial responsibilities later increased. "Guess what I've been doing for more than a year, working seven days. So I have no days off, but I own the vehicle."[17]

Evidence and Uncertainty About Effects on Drivers

Our review identified no rigorous published U.S. study that isolates robotaxis' effects on drivers' earnings, trips, or hours.[18] From Q4 2024 to Q4 2025, Gridwise found falling trips per hour in all five markets with robotaxi activity and nationwide. Hourly gross pay excluding tips rose in Atlanta and Austin and fell in Los Angeles, Phoenix, and San Francisco; nationwide, it rose 1.8 percent. Uber reported declines in hourly earnings and in driver utilization (the share of online time spent on trips) in San Francisco and Los Angeles. A later Gridwise web summary, covering Q2 2024–Q2 2026, reports lower platform fee rates in all five markets and higher quarterly pay in San Francisco. These analyses do not isolate robotaxis from other local changes.[19, 39]

A 2026 difference-in-differences study, which compared changes over time in a market with robotaxis and one without them, examined two Wuhan taxi markets. Using daily operating-income records from 1,040 traditional taxis based in Wuchang and Jiangxia, it estimated a 10.9 percent short-run decline in average daily operating income per taxi in Jiangxia, the district where Apollo Go began service.[40] The estimate does not measure individual net earnings or establish what would happen in a U.S. passenger market, but it shows that local operating records can support analysis of income changes across a taxi market.

Driver accounts and comparisons of market data can identify a problem without proving its cause. A study designed to determine cause and effect can strengthen an estimate but may arrive after working people have lost income. A company's analysis can identify facts about its own service without independently verifying what those facts mean for the wider market.

Public officials should require companies to provide the records independent analysts need to estimate changes in work and income across covered drivers and the extent to which robotaxi service contributed to those changes.
With adequate, privacy-protected data, analysis of groups defined in advance may reveal serious losses concentrated in a particular group, type of driving work, or location that an overall estimate may mask. No driver should have to prove that a specific robotaxi caused a specific lost trip or dollar. Part Three explains the recommendations for initial protection, later adjustment, and action when causation remains uncertain.

Different Purposes of Loss Protection and the Additional Benefit

Working fewer hours because paid work disappeared is different from gaining the security to choose less work. Participating drivers wanted different things: to keep driving, retire securely, reduce their hours, share in ownership or revenue, or move into suitable work. They also disagreed about whether robotaxi service should operate.

As noted above, new jobs and voluntary training do not by themselves show that current drivers can obtain suitable work or regain their income and scheduling flexibility. Research on displaced workers has documented long-lasting earnings losses.[10]

The evidence does not establish that robotaxis will benefit drivers. It shows why public officials and affected drivers should evaluate a complete, enforceable proposal before service begins or expands. If no lawful, financially workable design meets both requirements, public officials may preserve restrictions or decline authorization where law permits.

Part Two —

What Participating Drivers Told Us

Who Participated and How We Gathered Input

Our driver research focused on people who earned income through Uber, Lyft, or both. Participants also brought experience in taxi, black-car, and local car-service work. We conducted 26 recorded one-on-one interviews (15 in New York City, 10 in San Francisco, and 1 in Atlanta), held a recorded group discussion in each city, received 36 confidential survey responses, and drew on additional unrecorded conversations. Some drivers took part in more than one format, so these counts do not tell us how many individual drivers participated.[13]

We recruited through project and organizing networks. The interviews, group discussions, and survey responses describe participating drivers' experiences and views; they are not representative estimates for any of the three cities or the wider passenger-driving workforce.

Among the 36 survey respondents, 31 reported more than five years of rideshare driving, 26 reported driving more than 40 hours a week, and 27 reported driving for more than one app.[41]

Most structured interviews began with drivers' current work, earnings, schedules, and responsibilities; we introduced robotaxi service and project-defined policy choices later. The survey listed possible forms of support. Later group discussions combined open conversation with facilitated review of emerging policy ideas. We distinguish ideas drivers introduced from views they expressed after we presented an option.



New York drivers and project collaborators at the May 13, 2026, gathering. Photograph by Coral Ortiz.

We weighed driver input alongside submitted proposals, advisory feedback, outside consultation, published research, and an illustrative revenue model, and we are responsible for the report's conclusions and recommendations.

Robotaxi Rules and Service in Three Cities

We did not select the three cities as a representative sample, but their different laws, testing rules, policy choices, and levels of commercial robotaxi service help explain what participating drivers were responding to.[42]

- New York: Lawmakers did not adopt the governor's proposed commercial pilot in the state's FY 2027 enacted budget and instead extended the state's supervised-testing provisions. The New York City Department of Transportation listed Waymo's city testing permit only through March 31, 2026.

- Atlanta: Public Waymo rides through Uber began in June 2025. Georgia law substantially limits local rules that would restrict autonomous-vehicle operating authority granted by state law.
- San Francisco: California agencies have authorized years of testing and fare-charging driverless passenger service throughout the city. San Francisco agencies have challenged unrestricted expansion and sought more local control.

Where Drivers Stood on Robotaxi Service

Participating drivers did not agree about whether robotaxi service should operate. Some opposed it or supported existing restrictions. Others expected human-driven and autonomous service to coexist under limits. A third group expected expansion and wanted to use drivers' remaining influence to secure protection and a share of the gains while public officials decide whether and how service expands. Expecting expansion was not the same as supporting it.



Alejandra A. Rosa.
Photograph by Tash Diallo.

Alejandra A. Rosa, a San Francisco driver who also organizes with fellow drivers, was asked what she would tell drivers in a city where robotaxi service had not yet arrived. She urged them to resist its arrival and speak publicly: "Be in the news. Speak with the communities."[17]

A part-time San Francisco driver said the technology itself was not the problem: "The enemy is not the technology. I got an Apple Watch and I got an iPhone. Right now I have an electric car. It's not my enemy."[17]

What Drivers Wanted Protected

Four priorities recurred across what participating drivers told us:

- Continued driving: preserving the ability to earn through driving.
- Earnings protection: protection against lower pay and less paid work.
- Recognition for past work: a benefit that recognizes work already performed. Drivers described this in interviews and discussions; survey responses show the idea meant different things to different drivers.
- A say in support: helping decide what support intended for drivers should include.

These priorities informed our proposed requirements. They do not establish that participating drivers collectively endorsed robotaxi service or our recommendations.

Asked what they would tell drivers in cities where robotaxi service had not yet arrived, one Atlanta participant said, “Fight like it's your last day. Fight for your kids, fight for your neighbors, fight for yourself, fight for your job. Because you're not gonna get it back.”[17]

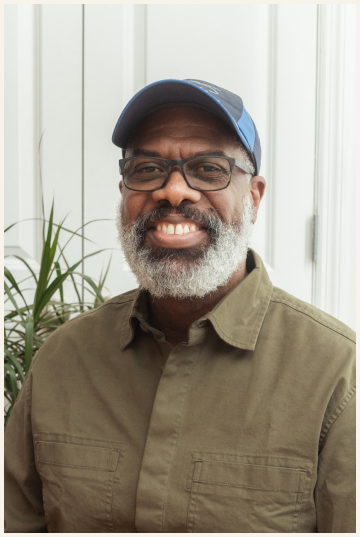
Thirty-three of the 36 survey respondents said driving was their only or main income. Asked how quickly they could find similar income if they had to stop driving, 23 said they did not think they could, and 10 more expected it would take more than six months.[14] Interviews and group discussions also described care responsibilities, health needs, school, other jobs, vehicle expenses, unpaid waiting, and long hours of availability before drivers earned enough to end the workday.

One New York driver said that with self-driving cars, “driver lose everything, always driver losing, Uber cannot lose anything.”[17]

Across interviews and later discussions, drivers introduced policy ideas and evaluated options we presented. Ideas for preserving paid work and human service included limits on the number of robotaxis; limits tied to time or place; a substantial human-driven share of rides; a licensed person in the vehicle; rider choice between human-driven and autonomous service; fare standards; and driver or cooperative ownership of autonomous vehicles. Drivers also discussed retirement income, health coverage, continued revenue, and comparable-pay fleet work. They did not agree on one design. New York’s campaigns for in-app tipping and a minimum-pay standard reinforced our emphasis on written, enforceable protections.[34]



Liakat Ali
New York driver



Shaun Beckles
New York driver



Jose Gomez
New York driver



Asad Iqbal
New York driver



Dachuan Nie
New York driver



Muneeb Rehman
New York driver

New York drivers who participated in the project, listed alphabetically by surname.
Photographs by Coral Ortiz.

A driver in New York City linked participation in the transition to work drivers had already contributed: “But we've put a lot of time and effort into this industry. We have stake in this. Are we going to have the option to be a part of this change and help innovate the industry as it changes towards self-driving if and when that does occur?”[17]

Asked what they would tell company leaders, Liakat, a New York driver, said, “For the betterment of humans — not to eliminate.” In a later follow-up, Dachuan, another driver in the discussion, said, “Technology is meant to serve humans, not replace humans.”[17]

Cash Was One Option, Not a Settled Answer

Survey respondents could select up to two listed forms of support. Of 36 respondents, 20 selected driver ownership or a share of autonomous-service revenue, 14 selected a one-time payment, eight selected temporary monthly payments, and four selected training and help finding new work.[15] A separate question about a proposed temporary monthly payment asked what that idea felt like: nine selected charity, nine severance, six transition support, five recognition of something earned, and seven were unsure.[43] The results do not establish a collective preference.

One Atlanta participant said, “Some of us don't want free money. We just want to know that we're valued.” The discussion also included the view that a basic income could help but would not be enough: “Some of us might be happy to … get the basic income … but we want more. We want to be known that we're valued.”[17] These comments show that cash and recognition were not interchangeable. Together, the comments and survey support treating cash as one possible form of a benefit—not as drivers' single or settled answer.

Organizing and Driver Voice

Asked what they would tell company leaders, an Atlanta participant said, “Just give us empathy, give us a voice, give us dignity.”[17]

Atlanta participants discussed how drivers could find other drivers and act together to influence a local decision. They described contacting elected officials, circulating petitions, and learning from New York driver protests. They also discussed the platforms' greater ability to reach drivers.[44] These accounts informed the project team's recommendation for paid, accessible driver participation and organizing free from company control. They also informed the team's conclusion that drivers' participation should extend beyond helping administer a benefit program.

One San Francisco driver and organizer described how companies could use supervised testing to satisfy safety requirements and then remove drivers entirely: “Then they go to full auto, and then they get rid of the people … in any moment, and we need to fight like hell.”[17]

Part Three —

Two Worker Requirements and Five Policy Areas

If public officials consider authorizing robotaxi service, we recommend that enforceable policy require robotaxi companies to fund: (1) protection against robotaxi-related losses for the driver workforce covered by the proposal;[45, 46] and (2) a separate, meaningful additional benefit for drivers who qualify based on verified past work. The additional benefit recognizes the value drivers helped create and should improve their security, opportunity, or freedom over their time.[45, 5, 46] Before authorization or expansion, companies should secure enforceable funding for loss protection and the additional benefit. If the secured funding later proves inadequate, loss protection has priority; the additional benefit is still required. Fair pay and enforceable rights in human-driven work remain necessary whether or not robotaxis operate, including in the many cities without independently established minimum-pay standards for app-based drivers.[36]

The project's two worker requirements do not presume authorization of robotaxi service. The report discusses policy options in the context of independent-contractor arrangements commonly used in app-based passenger driving and does not resolve any claim about classification, bargaining, pay, benefits, or other employment rights.

How the Five Policy Areas Work Together

The report organizes the choices a complete local proposal must make into five connected policy areas: evidence about drivers' work and income; company funding for worker protection and benefits; whether, how much, and under what conditions robotaxi service may operate; loss protection and a separate additional benefit; and who qualifies for each payment or benefit, how payments and benefits are divided, what drivers decide, and who administers the rules.

The five policy areas depend on one another. Public officials should adopt enforceable rules stating how they will use existing and new evidence to decide whether to change company obligations, the payments and benefits available to drivers, the amount of robotaxi service allowed, or the conditions under which it may operate. Company funding may become inadequate if robotaxi service expands too fast before public officials adjust the funding requirement; service limits should not replace lost income. The additional benefit may fail its goals if eligibility provisions exclude the drivers the additional benefit is meant to reach or if eligible drivers lack authority over the kind of benefit and how it is divided. Local proposals may put these requirements into effect in several ways under local law.

Three rules must also apply across the five policy areas. Analysis should examine losses across the covered driver workforce without requiring each driver to prove that robotaxis caused each lost trip or dollar. Eligibility for the additional benefit should use a published cutoff based on completed work. Training or jobs that are proposed but not guaranteed cannot replace loss protection or the additional benefit.

Who a Local Proposal Covers

Each local proposal should define four groups that may overlap but are not interchangeable and explain how it treats people who begin driving after adoption.

Group	Purpose in the proposal
Covered driver workforce	Analysts estimate total net robotaxi-related loss across this group. Public officials use that estimate as the starting point for deciding how much companies must provide for loss protection.
Drivers eligible for loss protection	These drivers receive loss-protection payments under a published formula.
Drivers eligible for the additional benefit	These drivers qualify by documenting that they worked before the eligibility date published under Policy Area 5.
Affected drivers	These are the locally defined drivers whose work or livelihood the proposal may change.

What Drivers Decide and What Public Officials Decide

This report makes three independent recommendations. First, affected drivers—the locally defined drivers whose work or livelihood the proposal may change—should shape and evaluate the complete proposal through their union or some other participatory process. That process, with the participation and independence safeguards in Policy Area 5, must establish whether drivers support it. Second, drivers eligible for the additional benefit should select or approve the kind of benefit and how it is divided. Third, public officials decide whether robotaxi service is lawful and should be authorized.

Public officials also retain the rule-making and enforcement duties assigned to them by law, while qualified administrators apply the adopted rules that provide benefits to

drivers. Driver support is necessary but not sufficient. It does not authorize service, and it waives none of the following: the two worker requirements, drivers' existing rights in human-driven work, companies' data obligations, or duties officials cannot legally hand off. Officials may still deny authorization even when affected drivers support the complete proposal.

Policy Area 1 — Evidence About Drivers' Work and Income

We recommend that every local proposal for authorization or expansion require usable company records and independent analysis of changes in drivers' work and income. Initial worker protections and secured funding should be in place before service begins or expands. A local proposal should state in advance how public officials will use later findings to decide whether to change company obligations, the payments and benefits available to drivers, the amount of robotaxi service allowed, or the conditions under which it may operate.

California collects trip data from autonomous passenger-service companies; New York City collects trip, availability, fare, and earnings records from large rideshare platforms.[47]

Uber has committed to support market-specific research. Uber's driver message predicted "minimal driver impact;" its policy paper reported declines in driver utilization and hourly earnings in two markets.[48] Company predictions and descriptive market trends cannot establish causation.

The project's literature and public-record review through September 23, 2026, identified no published U.S. study combining robotaxi-operator and rideshare-platform records to estimate changes in drivers' work and income and robotaxi service's contribution to them.[49]

Before robotaxi service begins, public officials should publish the starting point for comparison, the period each review will cover, and the method for estimating what would have happened without robotaxi service. The published method should explain how it will account for new drivers entering the market, drivers working fewer hours, drivers removed from an app, drivers leaving the work, and changes in who makes up the workforce. It should follow a group of drivers identified before service begins or otherwise keep drivers who reduce or stop driving in the analysis, without presuming

that every reduction or exit was caused by robotaxis. Where service already operates, officials should use the earliest reliable pre-expansion records as the starting point and set the method before any further expansion.

A local proposal should distinguish records companies keep, records they must provide to public officials for independent analysts, and combined totals made public without identifying individual drivers. The proposal should identify the independent analyst and explain how findings affect public decisions. Public officials should publish initial and recurring review dates, deadlines for correcting records or funding gaps, conditions that prompt an early review, and consequences for missing, inadequate, or unreliable data or worsening outcomes. Possible records include operator data about vehicles, trips, hours, miles, and fares, together with protected platform data about drivers' trips, working time, earnings, and work history. Affected drivers should help identify the outcomes that matter and review how the evidence is used.[50]

Public reporting should protect personal information. Drivers should be able to inspect and correct records used for eligibility or benefits. Analysts should publish their methods, assumptions, and uncertainty, account for other market changes, and explain causal limits.

Public officials, with affected drivers' input, should identify the groups of drivers, types of driving work, or locations that independent analysts will examine for serious losses that an overall estimate may mask. Public officials should publish in advance the indicators of a serious decline in paid work or net earnings that would prompt review. Analysts should use protected records only where a reliable comparison is possible and privacy can be protected. Evidence of such a decline should trigger the independent review and public decision described in Policy Area 4; it does not by itself establish a separate funding amount. No driver should have to prove that one robotaxi caused one lost trip or dollar.

Submitted proposals supplied distinct parts of the evidence and review rules. Tash Diallo developed reporting requirements for robotaxi operators and consequences for noncompliance; Devesh Kodnani and Emily Lemmerman developed uses for platform work-history and earnings records; and Laura Beltrán Figueroa developed a charge on commercial autonomous vehicles and related reporting requirements. One submitted proposal would require companies, as a condition of operation, to report each ride's distance and fare to the government and to the fund's governing committee, with the resulting datasets made public. A separate proposal submitted without attribution

developed a review process that adjusts as new data arrive and requires standardized reporting from robotaxi operators.[51] The project combines and changes these contributions without adopting any submission in full.[52]

Policy Area 2 — Company Funding Before Robotaxi Service Begins or Expands

We recommend that every local proposal require robotaxi companies to secure enforceable funding for protection against workforce-wide net robotaxi-related loss and for a separate, meaningful additional benefit before public officials authorize robotaxi service to begin or expand. Officials should publish an initial estimate of the amount needed for both, with the evidence, assumptions, and uncertainty behind it. Affected drivers and their representatives should help define which robotaxi-related losses are covered and how loss-protection payments are calculated.

Companies may secure the funding through initial payments, continuing payments, reserves, guarantees, or a combination. Officials should adjust the required funding as independent evidence improves, and drivers should remain protected while the initial estimate is refined.

How long companies must pay: Officials should set separate funding periods for each obligation. Companies should fund loss protection for as long as independent analysis finds workforce-wide net robotaxi-related loss, and officials may reduce that requirement only to the extent the loss has fallen.
A reduction in robotaxi service does not by itself justify reducing loss-protection funding. Companies should finance the additional benefit for the full period set in the adopted local rules.

If funding falls short: If secured funding proves inadequate, loss protection has first claim on it, and companies remain responsible for financing the additional benefit. Officials should publish deadlines for correcting inadequate funding or nonpayment. Consequences available under applicable law include requiring more funding, fines, maintaining existing restrictions, denying expansion, reducing service, and suspending or revoking authorization, or any other lawful action that preserves both obligations.

What advisors and drivers told us

Advisors urged the project to secure funding before displacement, determine how much funding could realistically be provided before choosing forms of benefit, give working people decision-making power over company-funded support, and consider company profits as a possible funding source.[53]

Drivers pointed to the commissions companies collect from human-driven rides, the public roads robotaxis use, and the neighborhood spending lost when working people's income falls. Muneeb, a New York driver, said, "Apart from the driver, everybody else makes money — from a trillion-dollar city to billion-dollar companies."[17] These concerns inform three separate policy choices: loss protection responds to robotaxi-related harm; the additional benefit recognizes the value drivers helped create; and separate public requirements may address companies' use of public resources.[54]

Requirements for Company Funding

Every method of funding company obligations should meet four requirements:

- **Apply the company-funding obligation to the full robotaxi operation:** The company-funding obligation should cover autonomous passenger service and should exclude human-driven trips. If ownership or control of the vehicle, driving system, fleet, or platform is divided among affiliates or contractors, public officials should identify which business entity pays and prevent the business structure from avoiding the company-funding obligation.
- **Secure enforceable funding before public officials authorize service to begin or expand:** Each company should provide initial payments, continuing payments, a reserve, a guarantee from a financially capable entity, or a combination that keeps both worker obligations enforceable over time, including through any corporate reorganization.
- **Account separately for every use of company funding:** Public accounts should separately identify funding for loss protection, the additional benefit, administration, independent analysis, enforcement, and reserves, and state which obligation each reserve secures. Administration, analysis, and enforcement should be financed without reducing the amounts counted toward either worker obligation, and no money or security should count toward more than one obligation. Officials or an

administrator independent of the companies should control program records and payments.

- **Keep public contributions separate:** A separately justified public contribution may add to driver support or finance infrastructure or transportation services that serve a defined public purpose. It should be disclosed and safeguarded separately and should never count toward or reduce the company funding the two worker requirements demand. It creates no right or presumption in favor of authorization or expansion and excuses no failure to meet another requirement. A legally required company payment remains company funding even when a public body collects or administers it.

One advisor urged the project to consider whether part of the money raised from autonomous service should support roads, infrastructure, or other public needs, and James A. Parrott's proposal reserves part of autonomous fare revenue for mass transit.[55] Such spending remains a separate public choice under the rule above.[53]

Company payments must be additional. They should not replace adequate pay or enforceable rights in human-driven work, or any safety, accessibility, transportation, privacy, consumer, or other obligation that already applies to the company.

Standards for Human-Driven Work

Whether or not robotaxis operate, officials should keep improving pay standards and enforceable rights in human-driven work and examine them alongside robotaxi obligations, because cost differences may influence where companies invest. One purpose of applying worker-protection requirements to robotaxi operations is to keep companies from using automation to avoid standards for human-driven work. Uber warns that robotaxi operators may prioritize markets with higher labor costs because replacing human drivers can be more profitable there. Uber describes this incentive as "regulatory arbitrage," but the white paper does not quantify the effect.[56] Further research should estimate how strongly pay standards affect companies' automation decisions.

Funding Methods to Compare

Before choosing or combining methods, officials should work with drivers and independent financial analysts to evaluate the tradeoffs and the legal and financial consequences of each. The analysis should estimate who is likely to bear each charge, how easily companies or riders could avoid it or shift activity elsewhere, and how it may affect fares, passenger demand, revenue stability, company entry or exit, and human-driven work. It should not assume that whoever is legally required to pay a charge ultimately absorbs its cost.[57]

Charges Tied to Robotaxi Service

Assessments based on autonomous trips, miles, fares, or revenue grow with robotaxi service. The local rule should define each measure precisely and require the operator records needed to calculate and audit the assessment. Independent financial analysts should analyze whether companies pass costs to riders or others.

Laura Beltrán Figueroa developed a per-mile assessment on commercial autonomous vehicles to finance a restricted workforce-transition fund. Her revised proposal places temporary earnings-loss support before training and credential support; includes standardized reporting, appeals, and public oversight; and pairs illustrative per-mile revenue scenarios with the estimated cost of a defined benefit package benchmarked against existing state workforce programs.[58]

Three other proposals took different approaches. Tash Diallo developed trip- and permit-based options with an automatic escalator that would raise the assessment when verified displacement exceeded published thresholds. The Rocky Mountain Employee Ownership Center tied per-trip or per-mile funding to worker benefits and cooperative ownership. Jacob Leibenluft developed a percentage charge on autonomous fares, with a per-trip fee as an alternative, to finance an automation fund directed by a committee on which eligible drivers hold a majority of seats. We present these as distinct options and do not adopt any in full.[58, 59, 60]

Charging Newly Added Robotaxis

A proposal submitted without attribution would charge each newly added autonomous vehicle during its first defined block of trips, with a credit so that replacing an older vehicle would not count as fleet growth. Revenue would finance transition benefits based on drivers' verified work records, and the proposal includes per-vehicle records, records of work across multiple platforms, and an appeals process.

Because each vehicle is required to make payments only during its first block of trips, revenue could fall while displacement continues. The project added its own analysis of that risk and a separate test of whether the charge would fund both loss protection and the additional benefit.[61]

Payments for Robotaxi Operating Rights

Where law permits, officials may require companies to pay for the right to operate autonomous passenger service. Such payments raise money while letting officials control how quickly service expands. How long each right lasts and whether it can be transferred determine how much control officials keep.

Devesh Kodnani and Emily Lemmerman developed a state-managed auction of operating rights to control the pace of market entry and finance a driver transition fund offering wage replacement and retraining to displaced full-time drivers. Their initial March 2026 version used recurring annual payments. The April 2026 version, which advisors reviewed, switched to one-time upfront payments for rights that would not expire and added a wage subsidy for older drivers who take lower-paid work.

The authors estimated what the permits might be worth and whether the revenue could still cover the proposed benefits if key assumptions changed. The report presents the auction as an option and does not reproduce either version's financial terms.[62]

Revenue Sharing and Company Ownership

Revenue sharing or an ownership stake may let drivers share in the gains if robotaxi service grows, but its value may fluctuate. Either method requires rules on how the ownership interest is valued and governed, what information drivers receive, how value is divided, whether it can be converted to cash, and who bears losses.[59]

The Predistribution Initiative (PDI) developed Driver Equity Transition Stakes (DETS): Turning Autonomous Vehicle Deployment Permits into Worker Ownership. Where officials have the necessary authority, DETS would condition an autonomous-service permit on company contributions of fare revenue, profits, or shares, made before displacement, to a driver-owned trust governed by a board with a majority of driver representatives. DETS shares the requirement that funding be secured before displacement; the report does not adopt its trust or contribution formula.[63]

Part Four compares DETS with other ownership structures, including company ownership trusts, driver-owned cooperatives, and collective bargaining.

The amount a company must provide should not depend on whether it reports a profit. These methods may finance or form part of the additional benefit, but if they produce too little value, companies must use another source of funding or financial security to meet both obligations.

One Proposal Combining Funding Methods

Andy Stern, Senior Fellow at the Economic Security Project and President Emeritus of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), developed a driver-dividend framework that considers per-mile charges, revenue-based contributions, fleet-licensing fees, and charges tied to worker displacement. It includes income-stabilization support; lump-sum or continuing payments; education; support for small businesses or cooperatives; housing or relocation assistance; supplemental unemployment benefits and service vouchers; and public matching money, which would remain subject to the public-contribution rules above. We present its contribution methods and benefit types as options and do not adopt the proposal in full.[64]

Existing Funding Precedents

During 2026 negotiations in New York State, Waymo representatives reportedly discussed a roughly $20 million fund for taxi drivers and other workers displaced by robotaxi service; union representatives considered the amount inadequate.[65] The discussion shows that worker support can be part of robotaxi negotiations, but the reported amount does not settle what support is adequate or who should decide how it is allocated.

District of Columbia Bill 26-0684, introduced in 2026, proposed an assessment on autonomous miles, and Massachusetts and Illinois impose per-trip assessments on human-driven rideshare trips.[66] Any assessment used for worker protection and benefits should apply to autonomous passenger service rather than to a shrinking pool of human-driven trips.

The 1960 West Coast longshore agreement allowed greater mechanization while financing income protection, early retirement, and other benefits for registered workers. When recordings and radio displaced live musical work, record companies funded admission-free public performances employing professional musicians through payments tied to record sales.[6]

Both precedents linked technological change to worker protection or paid work. They support the principle—not a particular amount or design—that companies should help finance this transition.

Policy Area 3 — Whether, How Much, and Under What Conditions Robotaxi Service May Operate

We recommend that every local proposal state whether commercial robotaxi service may operate and, if so, how much service is allowed (for example, the number of vehicles, trips, or hours) and under what conditions. Public officials with authority under applicable law should decide whether service may begin; how many vehicles and how much service may operate, where, and when; and what evidence or unmet requirement would justify maintaining, reducing, suspending, ending, or declining to authorize it. Authorization to begin service creates no automatic right to renewal or expansion and does not bar later reduction, suspension, or termination where law permits.

Participating drivers worried about rapid expansion and about how much paid passenger work might shift away from human drivers. In interviews and group discussions, they proposed initial limits on robotaxi service.[67]

Local Choices and Review Rules

Depending on applicable law, public officials may decline to authorize commercial service, preserve an existing restriction, require a licensed human operator, preserve a human-driven share of service, or allow limited robotaxi service under enforceable conditions. Affected drivers and community organizations may advocate for any of these options. Limits may apply to vehicles, passenger trips, hours, service areas, permits, or access to public infrastructure.

If officials consider limited service while evidence remains incomplete, the local proposal should state an initial limit on robotaxi service. Before renewal or expansion, officials should review current company records and independent findings and confirm that companies have secured enough funding for loss protection, the additional benefit, administration, independent analysis, enforcement, and reserves at the proposed amount of service.

Public officials should publish in advance how missing or inadequate data, inadequate funding, worsening driver outcomes, or failure to meet worker or public requirements would affect service. Responses available under applicable law include maintaining restrictions, strengthening conditions, denying expansion, reducing service, and suspending or ending authorization.

Comparing Service Limits

No single type of limit fits every market. Vehicle limits are easier to observe but may let each robotaxi operate more hours or complete more trips. Trip or hour limits measure passenger service rather than vehicle supply but require reliable data. Limits on service areas, permits, or access to public infrastructure may fit local transportation needs and available public authority but require clear boundaries and rules that prevent evasion.

Other tools address different concerns. A licensed-human requirement or preserved human-driven share protects passenger assistance and human work, a rider-choice rule serves riders who prefer a human driver, and a fare standard guards against below-cost or discounted robotaxi service. A local process should state which concern each rule addresses, how officials will measure compliance, and how companies might respond.

Two Proposals Linking Robotaxi Expansion to Driver Protection

Ratio-based limit: Tash Diallo developed an advisor-reviewed proposal that would keep new authorizations within a published ratio comparing projected displacement with the number of drivers the funded support system could serve.[68] Expansion would slow or pause if funded support fell behind projected displacement or the program missed published performance measures. Drivers who lost work would receive defined levels of support, with public targets for how quickly payments are made, and minimum company obligations would remain in force while service stayed limited. We present this as one developed option and do not recommend the same automatic formula for every local proposal.

Decline-based licensing: A proposal submitted without attribution would set an initial service-area limit and review it using verified changes in active human driving, passenger demand, and the relative number of passenger trips completed by human-driven and autonomous vehicles.[69] It accounts for the possibility that one robotaxi completes more trips than one human-driven vehicle, and that this difference changes as a robotaxi network grows. In one version, new robotaxi licenses would equal a published fraction of the verified quarterly decline in active human driving, kept below the full decline so new human drivers could still enter the market. An established limit could stay the same or rise but could not fall. Where a licensing system exists, a local version could count new robotaxi licenses against a wider for-hire vehicle supply limit or expand the approved service area in stages.

The unattributed proposal usefully responds to changing market conditions, but the project does not adopt two of its features. First, declining human-driver hours should not trigger automatic expansion. A decline may reflect falling pay, dispatch changes, or robotaxi service that has already reduced available work, so any local version would need independent records and a published method for distinguishing voluntary exit from involuntary loss of work. Second, the project does not adopt a limit that can only rise; public officials must retain authority under applicable law to maintain, reduce, suspend, or end service.

Preserving Human-Driven Service

Disability advocates have identified barriers to locating, entering, using, and exiting automated vehicles.[8, 28] A local proposal should state how service providers will address those barriers through equipment, operating practices, human assistance, or a combination. Passenger service may also require judgment or assistance beyond driving, and some riders may prefer a human driver.

Joseph Augusto, a San Francisco driver and organizer, described helping a frail passenger with a cane into his car: “You can’t completely replace what I do.”[17]

Asad, a New York driver, proposed preserving a driving role in autonomous passenger service: “Every person should be allowed to drive that autonomous vehicle and not to be replaced by the autonomous vehicle being termed as a driverless car.”[17]

Depending on applicable law, a local proposal may require a licensed person in specified vehicles; require platforms to offer and clearly display a human-driven option; reserve defined times, routes, service areas, or a share of passenger service for human-driven vehicles; or use a minimum fare or other pricing rule to limit below-cost or discounted robotaxi service. Participating drivers discussed each of these tools. Project records include both ideas participants introduced and their responses to options the project presented.[70]

Preserving human-driven passenger service and creating other work are separate policy choices. Nick Cabalar, a San Francisco driver and organizer, suggested that current drivers could maintain autonomous vehicles: “Let me fix the car.”[17]

Public sources identify continuing work in vehicle cleaning, charging, maintenance, depot operations, passenger assistance, and incident response.

Available evidence does not establish how many jobs robotaxi service would create or whether those jobs would match passenger-driving work in number, location, schedule, pay, flexibility, or durability.[11] Preserving a human role does not by itself ensure adequate pay, benefits, schedule, location, or job security. Neither service limits nor preserved human-driven service replaces loss protection for robotaxi-related harm or the separate additional benefit.

Existing Service-Limit Precedents

In February 2026, the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission reviewed whether to issue new for-hire vehicle licenses using information about congestion, driver pay, vehicle supply, and passenger service.[47, 71] A District of Columbia bill introduced in May 2026 proposed initial operator limits and review before fleet expansion.[71] Both show ways to require data, limit service, and review evidence before expansion. Neither establishes the same public authority everywhere nor determines the right service limit for a local proposal.

Policy Area 4 — Designing Loss Protection and the Additional Benefit

> What drivers told us: Several drivers wanted to keep working. Hector Castellanos, a San Francisco driver and organizer, said, "We're asking for jobs, right? … We don't want to be sitting on the chair and, you know, getting money. We want to keep working."[17]

Participants in interviews and the Atlanta group discussion described payments as recognition of what they had earned through years of driving. Others worried that a buyout could become a way to remove drivers from the market. Both concerns support keeping loss protection separate from a benefit that recognizes past work.[45]

Every local proposal should include two separate company-funded obligations, secured as Policy Area 2 requires. Loss-protection funding is based on independent estimates of robotaxi-related losses across the driver workforce covered by the proposal. The additional benefit, a separate and meaningful benefit for drivers who qualify through verified past work, recognizes the value drivers helped create. Because the two requirements serve different purposes, they may apply to different groups of drivers and

use different rules for dividing payments and benefits; some drivers may qualify for both. Policy Area 5 explains what each local proposal must decide about eligibility and division and distinguishes the roles of drivers, public officials, and administrators.

Measuring Harm and Requiring a Response

Independent analysts should use the published evidence method required in Policy Area 1 to estimate workforce-wide net robotaxi-related loss for each review period, accounting for other market changes and stating what remains uncertain about robotaxi service's contribution. Officials should use that analysis in designing loss protection and explain how uncertainty affects their decisions.

Net earnings: Any dollar estimate should reflect net earnings from covered passenger-driving work. An hourly measure should subtract work costs from driver pay and divide by all working time, including time available for trips, traveling to a pickup, and carrying a passenger; a method covering more than one app must not count the same time twice.[72, 35] Each proposal should state whether it measures total net earnings, hourly net earnings, or both, and how it treats reliable evidence—such as reduced earnings stability—that cannot responsibly be given a dollar value.

Vehicle, license, and borrowing costs: The basic rule: count each vehicle or license loss once, and do not treat loan payments as a separate loss. Local analysis should examine interest, fees, and other borrowing costs, as well as losses involving vehicles or licenses, counting them only to the extent robotaxi service caused or worsened them and the evidence permits a reasonable estimate.

The unrecoverable cost of buying a vehicle or license and the decline in its value may be two ways of measuring the same loss. The published method should state which vehicle and borrowing costs it already subtracted in calculating net earnings, distinguish those from changes in what a vehicle or license is worth, and prevent any loss from being counted under more than one measure or in more than one review period. Debt payments may show a driver's immediate cash needs, but neither paying down a loan nor the remaining balance is itself an additional economic loss. Robotaxi-related borrowing costs and vehicle or license losses belong primarily in loss protection.[1, 20]

Concentrated losses: Policy Area 1 explains how public officials, with affected drivers' input, should identify the groups of drivers, types of work, or locations that independent

analysts will monitor for serious losses that a workforce-wide estimate may mask. Public officials should publish that monitoring plan before service begins or, where service already operates, before further expansion or the first covered review period, whichever comes first.

If credible evidence of a serious concentrated loss appears, independent analysts should assess whether robotaxi service contributed to it and what else may explain it. By the published review date and before any further expansion, officials should publish the findings and explain their decision.

If the evidence supports robotaxi-related harm, public officials should take protective action available under applicable law: adding company funding for loss not already covered, changing how loss protection is divided when the drivers bearing the loss can be fairly identified, protecting human-driven work, or limiting service or expansion. Gains elsewhere in the workforce do not by themselves justify inaction, and missing, withheld, or inadequate company data is not evidence of no harm or permission to expand. Added funding must not count the same loss twice.[20]

Calculating and Distributing Loss Protection

The company obligation: Workforce-wide net robotaxi-related loss is the base measure for the company funding obligation. Before service begins or expands, companies should secure funding sufficient to cover the best-supported estimate of that loss for each review period; initial funding may rest on an estimate or range. Local rules should state how uncertainty affects the obligation, when preliminary evidence warrants temporary payments or stronger service limits before analysis is complete, and how public officials will use later evidence to decide whether to change the loss-protection funding requirement. Shortfall deadlines and consequences follow Policy Area 2.

Local rules should establish loss protection for an initial review period, and public officials should publish the dates and evidence-based criteria for renewing, reducing, or ending it. The rules should distinguish how long an individual may receive payments from how long companies must fund protection across the workforce. Review should consider the pace and amount of robotaxi expansion; verified changes in total paid driving work and net earnings; drivers' reliance on driving; whether drivers who keep working retain enough adequately paid work; and the time drivers need to retire, reduce hours, or move into suitable work.

The funding obligation may end only when independent analysis no longer finds workforce-wide robotaxi-related loss or another enforceable form of company-funded protection fully covers it.
Where law permits, preserving more human-driven work or reducing robotaxi service may lower future obligations under correction rules published in advance, but only if later independent analysis shows that expected future loss has fallen. A later service change cannot erase payments or support already due for harm incurred, and compliance with human-driven pay standards does not substitute for the funding obligation.

Individual payments: Affected drivers help develop the eligibility and distribution formula, and officials adopt it, through the process in Policy Area 5, which also provides for record correction and appeals. The formula distributes workforce-wide protection. It does not promise exact dollar-for-dollar replacement for each driver or require any driver to prove that robotaxis caused each lost trip or dollar.

No driver should have to leave driving, retire, retrain, or accept another job to receive loss protection. Training, job referrals or offers, and projected earnings from other work should reduce neither the company obligation nor any individual payment. Money secured for loss protection but not distributed under the formula should remain dedicated to protection or its reserve; it should not revert to a company or count toward the additional benefit.[20]

Reasons for the Additional Benefit

Loss protection responds to lower income and less paid work across the covered workforce. The additional benefit recognizes the value drivers helped create and gives eligible drivers a share of possible gains from robotaxi service. Uber described how a larger driver network made more rides available and shortened passengers' waits.[4] Several proposals made related arguments: James A. Parrott's, that drivers helped build the market and should share in the gains; PDI's DETS, that drivers should share in productivity gains before displacement and receive a return on value their labor created; and Oyindamola Ijewere's, that drivers built the demand, data, and customer expectations that made autonomous service viable. The report's formulation combines these arguments with driver testimony and other project work.[73, 5, 63] Funding for transit, infrastructure, or other public purposes stays separate, as Policy Area 2 provides.

Standards and Options for the Additional Benefit

The additional benefit could take several forms. Each requires further legal, financial, and administrative review locally.

- **Direct cash or support for working fewer hours:** Predictable payments could provide flexible support for care, fewer work hours, or other needs. Any amount counted as replacing estimated losses is loss protection and should be accounted for separately from cash supplied as the additional benefit.[74]
- **A voluntary retirement benefit:** Secure income and health support could let long-serving drivers leave or reduce work by choice. One driver's retirement should not automatically justify more robotaxi service at the expense of drivers who remain.

The history of elevator operators shows the risk. In 1966, their union described jobs lost through attrition, 'or what has been called "silent firings."' Voluntary retirement is meaningful when workers choose it, but it must not become a way to let an occupation disappear without protecting the people who still depend on the work.[75, 76]

- **Health coverage or shared driver services:** Options include health coverage, driver centers, legal help, financial counseling, and assistance challenging removal from an app.[77]
- **Revenue sharing, ownership, or a guaranteed suitable-work option:** Drivers proposed or expressed interest in revenue sharing, ownership of autonomous vehicles, and support for suitable new jobs. These options require legal and financial review and an assessment of how they would work in practice; the standards for new jobs and training below govern when a suitable-work option counts.[78]

Shaun, a New York driver, described owning a vehicle with a New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission plate as a way to remain part of the market: "Since a driver can own the vehicle, TLC plated … that's likely to be autonomous completely in the future. That's kind of like an avenue for ownership."[17]

Before authorization, proponents should publish and justify the standards for judging whether the additional benefit is meaningful; a positive dollar value or the label "benefit" does not by itself establish that. The proposal should explain the benefit's expected value or practical use; the likely number of recipients or users and their share of the eligible group; when it begins and ends; any rules for reviewing, reducing, or ending it; important conditions or risks; and, where applicable, effects on taxes and eligibility for public benefits.

For an individually allocated benefit, the proposal should give the likely value or range per recipient when analysts can reliably estimate it. For a collective service or asset, it should explain expected reach, access, and practical use.
For a benefit whose value may change or depend on future events, it should identify the rights enforceable now and distinguish today's estimated value under stated assumptions from potential future gains.

Eligible drivers use this information in choosing the benefit and its division, and all affected drivers use it in evaluating the complete proposal, as Policy Area 5 describes.

Conditions for Jobs and Training to Count as the Additional Benefit

A guaranteed suitable-work option may count toward the additional benefit only if each driver may choose it freely and a local rule, contract, or other enforceable agreement guarantees the job's pay, benefits, schedule, location, access, training, retention, and remedies. Pay earned by doing the job is not itself the benefit; only an enforceable opportunity to obtain the job, or support beyond its normal pay and benefits, counts.

Tash Diallo proposed a pathway into jobs supporting autonomous-vehicle operations, including outreach, training partnerships, credentialing, onboarding, job matching, and reporting on hires, wages, and retention. A separate written labor-principles response called for jobs related to autonomous-vehicle services or meaningful financial support and training for new careers. One advisor warned that training should not substitute for reliable support.[79, 53] Laura Beltrán Figueroa's revised proposal similarly put temporary payments for lost earnings before training, reasoning that training works best when workers need not choose between retraining and meeting basic needs. Oyindamola Ijewere's proposal warned that without guaranteed placement, funded retraining can become a box-checking exercise that produces certificates but not employment.[79]

Officials and driver organizations may negotiate hiring preferences for current drivers. Training, a hiring preference, or potential future work may be part of a broader proposal, but none by itself satisfies either the loss-protection or the additional-benefit requirement.

Policy Area 5 — Eligibility, Division of Payments and Benefits, Driver Decisions, and Administration

Local proposals should keep four overlapping driver groups distinct and keep driver decisions separate from the roles of public officials and administrators.[21] In this policy area, "public officials" means officials with authority under applicable law.

Group or role	What it does in this policy area
Covered driver workforce	The drivers within the covered services and geography that each local proposal defines.
Affected drivers	Decide, through the participation process, whether they support the complete proposal. Help develop and evaluate loss-protection rules.
Drivers eligible for loss protection	Receive loss-protection payments under the adopted rules.
Drivers eligible for the additional benefit	Select or approve the kind of additional benefit and how it is divided.
Public officials	Decide whether applicable law permits the proposal and whether robotaxi service may be authorized; adopt and enforce the rules.
Qualified administrators	Apply the adopted rules. They do not make decisions reserved to drivers or officials.

Eligibility for Loss Protection and the Additional Benefit

Because the additional benefit recognizes past contribution, eligibility should depend on verified app-based rideshare, taxi, or black-car work completed before a published cutoff that prevents qualification through work begun only after the benefit becomes known. Loss protection may require a different rule, including explicit treatment of later entrants. Each local proposal should define the covered services, geography, qualifying activity, and any period, cutoff, or minimum-work requirement.

Eligibility rules should account for full-time, part-time, and intermittent work; taxi and black-car work; and work performed through more than one app, without assuming every group receives the same payments or benefits. Opening an account or beginning work after the cutoff should not establish initial additional-benefit eligibility. Later entrants retain every right governing human-driven work; local rules should state their loss-protection eligibility. Any additional benefit for a later group requires a separate public decision. The cutoff should not decide later entry, the pace of robotaxi expansion, or the long-term human-driven share of service. Each local proposal should state those choices separately and explain how they will be reviewed.

Administrators should minimize applications and proof burdens. Devesh Kodnani and Emily Lemmerman's proposal offers one approach: platforms would monitor earnings records against published eligibility rules, notify drivers who appear to qualify, and pre-populate claims from records the platforms already hold.[62]

James A. Parrott's proposal used prior work and years of driving to define eligibility for its license-sale and royalty arrangement.[55] PDI's DETS supplement proposes three eligibility tiers based on trips completed during the previous twenty-four months. Within each tier, a driver's stake would depend on verified lifetime trips, with a possible minimum stake for the tier with the least recent work and possible continued eligibility in the middle tier for drivers with at least 5,000 verified lifetime trips who fall below the recent-work thresholds.[63] Jacob Leibenluft's proposal would set benefits by hours worked in a chosen comparison year and years spent driving, with eligibility depending on work completed before robotaxi service began rather than on continuing to drive.[60]

One advisor urged support for every driver without conditions and with as little proof, monitoring, stigma, or paperwork as possible.

The report accepts the goal of minimizing paperwork and proof but ties additional-benefit eligibility to verified work before a cutoff. A local process may still evaluate unconditional support for every driver. Such a broader program would require separate funding and should preserve the additional benefit for drivers who qualify through past work.[80]

Rules for Dividing Driver Payments and Benefits

Loss protection: Through the participation process below, affected drivers, including those who may receive loss protection, should help develop and evaluate the rules for who receives loss-protection payments and how the money is divided. Public officials should adopt and enforce those rules, and qualified administrators should apply them. The rules should distribute workforce-wide loss protection without claiming to calculate each person's exact robotaxi-caused loss. Receiving a loss-protection payment should not waive any right governing human-driven work.

Additional benefit: Drivers eligible for the additional benefit should select or approve how it is divided, within published legal and funding rules. Support may be the same for every qualifying driver or may give more weight to longer service or reliance on driving income. Measures may include years active, trips or hours, work performed through more than one app, and the share of a driver's earned income that came from driving.

PDI's DETS design relies principally on verified trip records and work history.[63] A design that weighs reliance on driving income should explain how administrators will measure it without requiring unnecessary household tax or employment records. Division rules should rely primarily on verified driving records and remain simple enough to deliver benefits quickly.[81] If the benefit offers individual options, each eligible driver should choose among them.

Spreading the benefit widely limits how large each share can be. Discussing whether a payment to stop driving could work across a large workforce, one New York driver said, "And if you're gonna give, if they're gonna give me like life-changing money, they cannot do it for everyone."[17]

Funding priority: Company funding secured under the two worker requirements should fund loss protection first; the additional benefit remains required. If that funding cannot cover both at the proposed amount of robotaxi service, the responses in Policy Area 2 apply: officials should seek more company funding, preserve more human-driven work, authorize less robotaxi service, or decline to authorize service.

Two Driver Decisions and Public Authorization

A complete local proposal requires two separate driver decisions:

1. Affected-driver support. The participation process must use a rule published in advance to establish whether affected drivers support the complete proposal. Without that support, the proposal does not meet this report's two worker requirements.

2. Additional-benefit design. Drivers eligible for the additional benefit should select or approve the kind of benefit and how it is divided, directly or through representatives selected and held accountable under the participation rules. They decide within published legal and funding limits and under a published rule for determining whether the benefit is meaningful.

Neither decision can replace the other. If either fails, proponents should revise the relevant terms and return them to the appropriate driver process.

Public responsibility: Driver support does not authorize service. Public officials decide whether service is lawful and may begin, expand, continue, or end, and they may deny authorization even when both driver decisions succeed. If officials decline or are unable to adopt or enforce the additional-benefit design selected or approved by eligible drivers, they should give written reasons and return the issue to eligible drivers rather than substitute another benefit.

Participation and Representation

Before asking drivers to participate in either decision, proponents should publish and justify the proposal's definitions of the covered workforce, affected drivers, each eligibility group, and who may participate in each decision. They should also publish the number or best estimate of eligible participants; any minimum participation requirement; what counts as support; how representatives will be selected, held accountable, and removed; what information and independent help participants will receive; and how the process will reach drivers across work patterns and languages. Definitions and rules should not be chosen to produce a favorable result or to let a narrow, self-selected group speak for the wider affected population. Non-participation is not support.

Drivers in both decisions should receive notice, enough information and time, and paid, accessible, multilingual opportunities to shape and evaluate what they are asked to decide. Support for one feature is not support for the complete proposal. If the proposal changes after drivers evaluate it and the change could affect their support, proponents should return the revised proposal to the affected-driver process. If the change affects the kind of additional benefit or how it is divided, proponents should also return the revised proposal to the eligible-driver process before public officials authorize service to begin or expand.

A local proposal should identify a budget and funding source for paid driver time, language and access support, and independent advice. It should distinguish the costs of developing the proposal from participation costs after adoption. Providing funding should not give a company or other funder control over driver participation or decisions. These costs should not reduce funding counted toward loss protection or the additional benefit.[21]

Where a union or worker organization has been certified, elected, or otherwise legally recognized to represent the affected drivers, its established decision-making process satisfies this section's requirements for how the drivers it represents participate and decide. Proponents must still publish the proposal's definitions of the covered workforce, affected drivers, and eligibility groups. Drivers outside the representative's recognized scope, such as taxi or black-car drivers when the representative covers only app-based drivers, still need a participation process that meets these requirements.

Representation: If the affected-driver and additional-benefit groups differ, the proposal should state how their processes connect. A local process may use an existing elected or certified organization, a new representative body, or separate bodies with a defined way to coordinate. Existing unions and worker organizations retain their legal and bargaining rights. The proposal should explain which decisions each representative may make; no organization represents the entire taxi, black-car, and app-based rideshare workforce unless its actual and legal authority does so.
Representatives should disclose and address significant conflicts of interest, remain accountable, and, where applicable, be subject to removal. Public bodies should adopt the rules needed for the chosen structures.

Companies subject to the proposal may supply required records and technical information, but they should not control who counts as affected or eligible, who participates, the selection of driver representatives, or decisions reserved to drivers. No single participant should have a unilateral veto, and the process should not require unanimity.

Businesses subject to the proposal should not retaliate against drivers for participating in driver decisions, supporting or opposing the proposal, organizing around those decisions, seeking loss protection or the additional benefit, correcting records, or using the appeals process. Protection should cover loss of access to driving work as well as exclusion from participation or benefits. Local legal review should identify enforceable protections and remedies, with an independent process to distinguish retaliation from justified action on unrelated conduct or safety grounds.[21]

This report does not prescribe one nationwide group of participating drivers, one minimum turnout, one rule for determining support, one representative body, or one removal process. Nor do these recommendations give current drivers sole authority over safety, accessibility, civil rights, public spending, permanent entry rules, or the future of the transportation market.

Governance models from other proposals: PDI's DETS design and Jacob Leibenluft's worker-inclusive committee both give driver representatives a majority of governing seats, through different structures. DETS uses a driver-owned trust governed by a board with a majority of driver-elected representatives and considers having trust members elect driver nominees for company-board seats through a nomination process negotiated with the platform company.[63] Leibenluft's committee would direct an automation fund

and shape driver support. Eligible drivers would hold a majority of seats, alongside community members and a small minority of company seats unable to outvote worker representatives, and any decision reducing revenue collection or direct payments to drivers would require supermajority approval.[60]

The report adopts the underlying principle: drivers eligible for the additional benefit select or approve its form and allocation, qualified administrators administer records and payments, and public bodies retain authorization and enforcement.

Administration, Privacy, Appeals, and Reporting

Public officials or qualified administrators independent of the companies subject to the proposal should verify records, issue notices, calculate and deliver payments, protect data, manage money held for future payments, and process claims. They should apply published rules without deciding whether drivers support the proposal or choosing the kind of benefit and how it is divided. Drivers should not administer records or payments.

A local proposal should specify which records may be used, who may access them, for what purposes, and how privacy will be protected. A driver whose records are used or whose eligibility or payment is decided should receive notice, be able to inspect and correct the records, and be able to appeal a denied correction or an eligibility or payment decision. An appeals body independent of both the companies and the initial decision-maker should decide appeals under a published process and timetable.

Public officials should establish and enforce the minimum protections, company duties, service limits, data requirements, and rules for representative accountability, and they retain every duty the law does not allow them to delegate.

A local proposal should require public reports showing combined totals without identifying individual drivers. The reports should cover money secured for loss protection and the additional benefit; payments and benefits delivered; administrative costs; delays, corrections, and appeals; and participation, support, and opposition in both driver decisions, including how those results differ among relevant groups.[21]

Questions to Resolve Before Authorizing Robotaxi Service

Before authorizing service under a local proposal, public officials need answers to four questions:

- Legal authority: Do the relevant public bodies have the legal power and practical ability to enact, administer, and enforce the proposal, including the power to require the specified company funding?
- Financial feasibility: Does independent review find that, at the proposed fare, amount of service, and service design, the companies responsible for robotaxi service can finance both worker requirements and every other requirement the proposal places on them? Separately, does every other public requirement that requires funding have an adequate funding source?
- Driver decisions: Through paid, accessible, multilingual participation free from company control and under rules published in advance, did affected drivers support the complete proposal, and did drivers eligible for the additional benefit select or approve the benefit and how it is divided?
- Other public requirements: Does the proposal meet applicable safety, accessibility, transportation, privacy, consumer-protection, civil-rights, environmental, and other public requirements?[21]

Lawyers familiar with local law should determine whether officials may use taxes, fees, permit conditions, government-contract conditions, bargaining obligations, auctions, or negotiated agreements, and should identify which duties may be delegated and any state-law limits on local authority. If state law prevents a city from adopting the worker requirements, state lawmakers may need to establish those requirements statewide or give local governments authority to adopt them.

Public Requirements for Any Authorized Service

Robotaxi service may improve independence, privacy, or transportation access for some riders while removing assistance others rely on. Public officials should define each potential benefit, each harm to be monitored, and the evidence required before service can continue or expand.

Accessibility shows why benefits and harms cannot be judged in the abstract. Blind and low-vision riders who favor autonomous vehicles see them as another option when transit or paratransit is unavailable, or when drivers refuse riders with guide dogs. Other advocates warn about vehicles that cannot accommodate wheelchairs, smartphone-only booking, unresolved wheelchair securement, and the loss of human assistance. Affected

riders and community organizations should help define and evaluate accessibility requirements.[8]

Where law permits and independent evidence supports it, public money may supplement driver support or finance infrastructure or transportation services that serve a defined public purpose. The proposal should require the responsible public body or qualified administrator to disclose and safeguard that contribution separately from company obligations. Public money should not count toward or reduce the company funding the two worker requirements demand, create a presumption in favor of authorization or expansion, or excuse failure to meet another adopted requirement. A legally required company payment remains company funding even when a public body collects or administers it.

Financial Feasibility

Independent analysts should estimate total net robotaxi-related losses across covered drivers and the cost of the proposed additional benefit for eligible drivers. They should also estimate the costs of administration, independent analysis, and enforcement needed to deliver these worker requirements. The project's illustrative revenue model estimates how much selected fare charges could collect before expenses. It does not estimate driver losses, the full cost of benefits and administration, or a robotaxi company's operating or capital costs.[22]

Before authorization, independent reviewers should use verified company information and the specific local requirements to assess whether companies can finance loss protection, the additional benefit, and every public duty assigned to them at a realistic fare and amount of service. Reviewers should assess the financing of other public requirements separately.

If company funding is inadequate, the responses described under Funding priority apply, along with a different service design or continued restrictions, where law permits. A separately justified public contribution should not cure a shortfall in company-funded worker obligations.

Evidence informs the local choice; applicable law determines which actions are available. Financial difficulty alone does not justify weakening worker or public requirements, and favorable answers to all four questions do not by themselves mean service should be authorized.

Part Four —

Other Approaches Worth Considering

Participating drivers and proposal contributors offered several ways to protect livelihoods: preserving human-driven work, voluntary exit, continuing income, debt relief, or ownership. Some drivers favored not authorizing robotaxi service. A complete local proposal that would allow robotaxi service should meet the two worker requirements and address the five policy areas in Part Three.

Naming an approach or contributor does not imply endorsement. The cited sources describe the proposals and ideas; unless the text states otherwise, the project team is responsible for the comparisons, any protections it adds, and any judgments in this report about whether an approach should be used.

Not Authorizing Service, Continuing Existing Restrictions, or a Moratorium

Participating drivers supported different paths: not authorizing service or preserving an existing moratorium, allowing service only under conditions, or keeping human-driven and autonomous service in the market together. Because they did not agree on whether service should operate, the project presents non-authorization as a local choice. Drivers who favored it raised concerns about the adequacy of a payment, retraining, timing, continuing work, human service, and public control, though not every driver raised every concern. Applicable law determines whether public bodies may decline authorization, continue an existing restriction, or impose a moratorium.[82]

Declining to authorize service can preserve existing work and avoid unresolved labor or safety risks, but it can also delay possible transportation benefits or supervised testing. A moratorium needs published criteria for later review so the conditions for keeping or lifting it are clear. Where law and the moratorium allow, supervised testing may continue under enforceable permits with required data-sharing.

Preserving a Human-Driven Market

The proposals below would preserve different forms of human-driven service and work.

Marco Lomuscio of the University of Trento and Simona Ciappei, a Research Fellow at Politecnico di Milano, proposed combining rider choice with time-of-day and ownership options. They identified trips for which human drivers remain essential, including

services for children, older adults, tourists, and riders unable to drive, and proposed alternative vehicles such as e-cargo bikes and light electric vehicles for short urban trips.

Catherine Lynch, an employment-support practitioner in Ireland, proposed employee-owned fleets alongside lanes reserved for manually driven vehicles, zone restrictions on autonomous vehicles, and caps on robotaxi expansion.[83] She also proposed social enterprises that would employ displaced drivers to help older riders and riders with additional needs use autonomous service safely.

Bob Wright proposed keeping drivers in vehicles as autonomous service expands, earning money through backup driving, security, delivery, personal services, and community services on one platform, possibly organized as an employee-owned enterprise.[84]

Each of these options protects a different form of human work and raises different tradeoffs involving job quality, what riders pay, how easily riders can find each option, what limits agencies can administer and enforce, monitoring, and local authority.

Linking Robotaxi Growth to Verified Reductions in Human Driving

In a May 26, 2026, memorandum, Andrew Greenblatt, National Policy Director for the Independent Drivers Union, proposed tying robotaxi growth to verified reductions in active human driving. Companies seeking faster expansion could finance voluntary retirement, and drivers who remain could specialize in accessible trips, trips requiring personal assistance, or trips for riders who prefer a human driver. To set a baseline, companies would disclose their operating data for the previous twelve months.[85]

The report does not use departures from driving as the default rule for allowing expansion, because, as Policy Area 3 in Part Three explains, declines in human-driver hours cannot safely be presumed to be voluntary. A complete local design would need four additions, which are the report's own and not part of the Greenblatt memorandum:

- an independent rule distinguishing voluntary exit from reduced hours caused by falling pay, dispatch changes, or partial automation;
- records from every app a driver uses;

- a clear definition of active driving during the baseline period; and
- payments large enough to let drivers leave by choice.

Voluntary License Sale, Continuing Royalties, and Minimum Pay

James A. Parrott proposed a voluntary license-and-royalty approach. Local officials would determine which long-tenured taxi and app-based rideshare drivers qualify for licenses that autonomous-vehicle operators must acquire. Eligible drivers who choose to retire or pursue other work could receive an upfront payment and continuing per-trip royalties for a defined period. Parrott would pair this exit pathway with independently established minimum pay for drivers who continue working, a cap on active drivers to preserve adequate earning opportunities, and gradual robotaxi entry. Eligibility would rest on prior driving work and years of driving, with thresholds set locally.[55]

The royalties would provide income beyond a one-time payment and recognize the value long-tenured drivers helped create. Parrott's April 2026 version develops an illustrative New York City valuation that divides passenger fares among vehicle costs, network costs, driver royalties, mass-transit support, and other public purposes, and argues that the share of fares now paid to drivers exceeds what an autonomous vehicle would cost to buy and operate. It identifies market consolidation as a risk to the licensing, royalty, and pay arrangements.[55]

Advisors reviewing license approaches pressed a sharp distinction between working drivers and corporate or investor license owners, so the report treats protection for working drivers and returns to non-driving license owners as separate questions.[55, 53] The project presents Parrott's proposal as a developed alternative, not a workforce-wide starting rule. Those developing a local version of the proposal would still need to validate the valuation method, define qualifying work and tenure, address different license types and medallions, and specify enforceable rules for pay, driver supply, monitoring, and market concentration.

One advisor, Jillian Arnold, emphasized that the core of the design is worker choice: a driver can keep working or receive income from the license. She also asked whether a driver could place the arrangement in a trust or pass it by will to build family wealth.[86]

Converting Existing Vehicle Licenses into Continuing Income

Dawood Mian, Founder and Publisher of AutoMarketplace, proposed requiring paid autonomous trips in New York City to operate through existing Taxi and Limousine Commission vehicle licenses, which autonomous operators would lease, acquire, or pay for on a recurring basis. The approach uses the economic value of existing licenses to create continuing income and control how quickly autonomous service enters the market. A phased design could give early priority to existing medallions and voluntary retirement, allow later entry through capped auctions, and limit ownership concentration.[87]

His revised proposal adds several protections. Under the proposal, the licensing board would automatically stop approving new autonomous licenses if the measured income of drivers whose TLC licenses had not been converted for autonomous use fell below a published threshold. The board would apply that rule rather than decide case by case. The industry's existing per-trip fee for driver benefits would continue at a reduced rate, including on autonomous trips already subject to the fee. The revision also sets a limit in law on how many licenses one entity may hold, a minimum period before resale, and a definition of commercial autonomous service based on how the service operates, so the rules also cover cross-border operations and personally owned vehicles.[87]

This approach applies only where a relevant licensing system exists or could be created. Because payments flow to license holders, it does not directly reach the many working drivers who do not own the license through which they earn income, a limit the proposal itself acknowledges. The revision narrows that gap in two ways. License holders exceeding the ownership limit would have to transfer excess licenses with autonomous operating rights to active or recently active TLC-licensed drivers who do not already hold a medallion or TLC vehicle license. Later auctions would give preference based on verified years of driving and trip history. The continuing per-trip fee described above also funds benefits for all drivers. Still open are rules for different license classes and early sales, the treatment of subscription or private-fleet structures that may operate outside the Commission's licensing authority, and the specific thresholds.[87]

Jillian Arnold suggested combining elements of the license-royalty proposal with the license-conversion proposal to offer another approach. The report presents them as related but separate options.[86] Participating drivers in New York separately raised a related pathway: renting a plate paired with an hourly company job, and driver access to autonomous operation through the existing licensing system.[82] Jose, a New York driver, proposed renting a plate for "$2,500 a month after taxes." The discussion compared the arrangement to a retirement plan.[17]

Debt Relief for Vehicles and Licenses

Where law permits, local officials could help drivers refinance, reduce, or pay off debt on vehicles or licenses used for passenger driving. A local proposal would need to say who qualifies, who pays, and what lenders must agree to. The case for asking a particular company or public body to contribute may be stronger when that entity required the investment, holds the debt, or benefited from it. Older debt that robotaxi service did not worsen is a separate policy question, and the proposal should account for drivers who rent vehicles or who have similar losses without debt. Robotaxi-related vehicle and borrowing losses belong in loss protection under Policy Area 4; debt relief funded from other sources cannot reduce required company funding. One payment should not count as both loss protection and the additional benefit.[20, 1]

Investing Trip-Fee Revenue Before Making Payments

Under a proposal submitted without attribution, a state would charge platform companies a small fee on each rideshare trip. The proposal expects companies to pass the fee on to riders. A state fund would invest the proceeds in a diversified portfolio. Unlike the report's company-funding obligation, which excludes human-driven trips, the invested-fund design draws on both human-driven and autonomous trips. The proposal makes that choice deliberately, arguing that a uniform charge on all rides avoids singling out the new technology and is likelier to be enacted. The fund would reinvest its earnings before making payments under a published formula based on drivers' work history. Payments would begin when a measure written into law showed a decline in the total demand for human-driven passenger service, rather than on a preset date or a change in market share alone. The proposal's starting measure compares paid autonomous miles across all platforms with total demand for passenger trips.[88]

A board with a legal duty to driver beneficiaries, accountable to them and the public, would oversee investments and payments, for example with driver-elected members. Part of the fund's investments would be reserved for in-state projects, including infrastructure, housing, and financing for employee-owned businesses, giving fee payers a visible public return. The fund could also hold shares in publicly traded platform companies on drivers' behalf.[88]

The design builds a pre-funded, ongoing asset rather than distributing revenue immediately. If displacement arrives early, the fund may have too little time to grow, so distributions could be small relative to losses, and the charge on human-driven trips places part of the transition cost on the existing service. The submission itself supplies the payment trigger, the board's duty, and the payment formula. A complete design would still need to show that the trigger works in practice and that the charge raises enough money. It would also need added protections against the fund being used for other purposes.

Worker Ownership, Trusts, Bargaining, and Cooperatives

The project archive contains proposals using four approaches to worker ownership and control: pooled driver ownership, company ownership trusts, driver-owned fleets and service cooperatives, and collective bargaining or worker-owned enterprises.

Pooled driver ownership: The Predistribution Initiative's (PDI) Driver Equity Transition Stakes (DETS) proposal, which Policy Areas 2 and 5 discuss further, would condition autonomous-service permits on company contributions to a driver-owned trust before displacement.[63] PDI's advisory supplement tested contribution rates against the estimated gap between current driver compensation and projected autonomous operating costs, and proposed raising the rate as autonomous trips grow. It also proposed dividing contributions three ways: cash paid now; shares, or units that track an app company's share price and pay out in cash; and individually owned, diversified accounts that drivers keep if they change jurisdictions, leave rideshare work, or the trust winds down. Drivers would receive current income, a share in possible gains, and longer-term wealth.

Angelina Grigoryeva, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto, separately proposed direct worker shares, or a managed ownership fund, with each

driver's share based on how much and how long they worked and with drivers helping govern the fund.[89]

Company ownership trusts: Graeme Nuttall OBE and the Institute for the Future of Work (IFOW) developed a driver ownership trust, an adapted employee ownership trust they conclude could be created under existing United States trust law without new legislation. The trust would collectively hold a meaningful stake in an autonomous operator for all its workers, whether part-time, full-time, occasional, contractors, or employees, with a trustee board made up mainly of elected or selected worker representatives. Profit-sharing would reach current and former workers, and part of any sale proceeds would benefit workers if the company were taken over. For Nuttall and IFOW, the shareholding keeps worker benefits and voice tied to continuing ownership rights rather than to contracts or regulation alone. Their revised proposal adds anti-dilution protection, protected information rights, and enhanced voting and veto powers for a minority stake.[90]

Oyindamola Ijewere separately proposed a permanent employee ownership trust holding a meaningful company stake, with worker-elected board members, anti-dilution protection, funded retraining and paid apprenticeships, and a required minimum share of annual dividends distributed to eligible drivers.[91]

Jillian Arnold asked what the ownership-trust proposal meant by a "meaningful and significant stake," a "good work experience," and "a share in profits."[86]

Driver-owned fleets and service cooperatives: Fleets and cooperatives could preserve operating work in maintenance, charging, cleaning, accessibility, safety, and compliance. Renan Magalhães proposed a worker-benefit trust funded by a minority equity stake in large autonomous operators and a levy on autonomous trip revenue. It would pay dividends, stabilize income during the transition, and finance cooperative development, creating a pathway from minority-stake dividends toward full cooperative ownership. He also proposed requiring large operators to give certified driver cooperatives priority for contracts covering non-driving work.[92]

The Rocky Mountain Employee Ownership Center (RMEOC) proposed using a charge on autonomous trips to support cooperative membership, training, and worker services, and giving cooperative and human-driven providers preference in public transportation contracts, including paratransit and non-emergency medical transport, to create stable

demand that does not depend on competing with autonomous pricing. It cites the Drivers Cooperative-Colorado, which it reports operates at scale and returns 80 percent of fares to driver-owners.[92] Catherine Lynch's employee-owned fleet model and Lomuscio and Ciappei's ownership options, described above, are variants, and participating drivers separately discussed cooperative and small-fleet approaches.

Collective bargaining and worker-owned enterprises: Ariana R. Levinson, Frost Brown Todd Professor of Law at the University of Louisville's Brandeis School of Law developed a three-part approach. Driver unions or other bargaining bodies could seek company ownership or control where law permits; form a worker-owned cooperative that organizes drivers and bargains with platform companies to hire drivers through the cooperative; or build a fully worker-owned enterprise. For drivers with collective-bargaining rights, she argues that an ownership stake tied to income, job security, or retraining may be a mandatory subject of bargaining, one the employer must bargain over in good faith though it need not agree. For drivers without bargaining rights, she proposed the cooperative and worker-owned paths.[93]

Comparing ownership structures

These approaches solve different problems. A pooled fund can spread risk through diversified investment but may give little influence inside a company unless, as DETS proposes, it also secures board representation. A company ownership trust can provide that influence, but workers' expected benefits stay tied to one firm's value. A small stake may give little influence without protected information and voting rights, and it can shrink if new shares are issued; the Nuttall–IFOW and Ijewere proposals address these risks.[90, 91] A cooperative can preserve work but needs capital, licenses, insurance, access to the technology and systems it depends on, management capacity, and enough market share to survive. A bargaining strategy depends on organizing and legal rights. Whatever the structure, we recommend that ownership and transition programs not require individual drivers to take on large debts or bear the risk of losses on autonomous-vehicle assets whose future value they do not control.[20]

Any of these structures can distribute benefits unevenly. Grigoryeva's research on employee ownership finds that men have been more likely than women to receive employer stock and gain wealth from it, and her proposal cautions that workers who cannot afford to hold their shares may miss later gains.[89]

Choosing Among Approaches

Each approach changes what a local proposal protects, who receives payments or benefits, or how robotaxi service may enter. Applicable law determines which public bodies may act. Affected drivers should help decide which approaches a local process develops.

Part Five —

Next Steps for Local Work and Broader Research

Local Work With Affected Drivers and Their Organizations

Further work should proceed only where affected drivers and their organizations want to participate. The goal may be to oppose service, preserve or strengthen restrictions, negotiate enforceable conditions, compare alternatives, or develop a complete local proposal. Whether robotaxi service begins or expands is not itself the measure of success.

New York City's September 15, 2026, Vision Zero Reimagined plan shows why this work is timely. The plan calls for state and federal legislation enabling local oversight of autonomous vehicles and says the City will support strong worker protections. It assigns the legislative effort to the Vision Zero Task Force, which includes the Department of Transportation and the Taxi and Limousine Commission, but does not say which workers would be covered, what those protections would require, or whether officials already have authority to require and enforce them or would need additional legislation.[94]

What a local effort needs

Where a community chooses to develop a proposal, the main goal should be one complete local proposal for affected drivers to evaluate. That requires four kinds of support:

- **Paid and accessible driver participation:** Drivers should be paid for their time and have accessible, multilingual ways to participate. They should be able to participate directly—by setting goals, evaluating options, organizing, building coalitions, reaching public officials, shaping public communications, and rejecting the options presented—or through a legally recognized driver representative's own process.
- **Local evidence, legal analysis, and financial analysis:** Researchers should describe drivers' current work and the passenger market and state what the evidence cannot establish. Lawyers should identify the laws, permits, fees, and other tools officials may use and whether the resulting requirements would be enforceable under applicable law. Financial analysts should estimate the cost of both worker requirements and any public requirements needing funding. They should also assess companies' ability to finance both worker requirements and every other requirement assigned to them, and identify funding sources for the remaining public requirements.

- **Drafting and review:** Drivers and their organizations should help develop and review every part of the proposal: service limits, funding guarantees, loss protection, the additional benefit, rules for who qualifies for each payment or benefit and how payments and benefits are divided, data requirements, enforcement, and public obligations.
- **Shared tools for other communities:** The people and organizations developing a local proposal should preserve reusable legal research, financial methods, draft policy provisions, source notes, organizing lessons, and public explanations that other communities can adapt to their own law, market, workforce, and goals.

This report, its cited sources, and its research method can serve as a starting point. They do not provide jurisdiction-specific legal advice or a complete model of whether a local proposal is financially feasible. Any further support from the project team would require a separately defined effort, willing local partners, appropriate expertise, and resources.

Coordination across jurisdictions

Local efforts should also consider coordinating across jurisdictions. As Policy Area 2 notes, differences in requirements may influence where companies invest. The Predistribution Initiative's advisory supplement examined the risk that companies could concentrate service in places without worker requirements, and proposed agreements under which several cities adopt requirements at the same time, along with state laws giving local governments authority to act.[95]

A Research Method for Other Sectors

Other sectors involve different technologies, institutions, laws, workforces, and remedies, so the policy choices in this report do not transfer unchanged. Researchers and working people should begin with the conditions of work and the best available evidence about the role automation or AI may play. They should identify who controls the relevant decisions and economic gains, develop policy options, test those options with affected working people and outside experts, make recommendations, and state what remains unknown. Working people in each sector should decide what it would mean for technological change to protect or improve their lives and how they should share in its gains.

Sharing Automation's Gains Over the Longer Term

Robotaxi service produces a countable unit of activity: the paid trip. Reporting rules can require companies to measure it, and where applicable law allows, officials may require worker protections as a condition of operating. Many automated and AI systems do not produce a similarly countable unit of activity, such as a paid trip, and do not require local permission. That difference raises a broader question: How should working people and the public share in the economic gains from automation?

In 1966, the National Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Progress concluded that technological change could support economic progress while its burdens and benefits still needed to be distributed fairly.[96]

Possible national approaches include taxation, ownership shared broadly among working people or the public, public funds, bargaining, and policies that give working people a continuing share in the gains from automation. Each requires separate research and public decisions. Research on national approaches should proceed alongside local efforts to protect working people and help them share in automation's gains. Those efforts can proceed where officials can identify how automation may cause job or income losses, which working people may be affected, which companies control the relevant decisions or receive the gains, and which legal tools officials may use.

Conclusion

Where applicable law gives public officials authority, whether commercial robotaxi service may operate—and under what conditions—is a public decision, not a force of nature. That makes the report's central question public: if robotaxi service comes to a city, who bears its costs, and who shares in its gains? Drivers and riders should be able to help shape the rules before public officials make that decision.

Rideshare drivers helped build—and still sustain—the app-based passenger market robotaxi companies seek to serve.[3, 4, 5] Thirty-three of the 36 drivers we surveyed said driving was their only or main income. Asked how quickly they could find similar income, 23 did not think they could and 10 more expected it would take more than six months.[14] The evidence cannot yet say how much robotaxis have changed drivers' work, and it may not be able to say so until the harm has already happened. That uncertainty is a reason to put protections in place first, not a reason to wait.

Where public officials consider authorizing or expanding service, we recommend that enforceable policy require robotaxi companies, before service begins or expands, to secure funding for: (1) protection covering the best-supported estimate of total net robotaxi-related loss across covered drivers; and (2) a separate, meaningful additional benefit for drivers who qualify through verified past work. Loss protection responds to harm; the additional benefit recognizes the value drivers helped create. Where law permits, public officials should not authorize new or expanded service if independent review finds that the companies responsible for robotaxi service cannot finance both worker requirements at the proposed amount of service.

The five policy areas identify what a local proposal must address to make both worker requirements enforceable. Evidence alone does not secure the funding needed to protect drivers against losses. Funding without service limits may let expansion outpace the evidence needed to show whether the funding remains sufficient. Limits without loss protection leave existing harm unresolved. The complete proposal is not legitimate unless affected drivers support it and drivers eligible for the additional benefit decide what the benefit will be and how it will be divided. Public officials still decide whether to authorize robotaxi service. California's 2020 Proposition 22 shows why promises to drivers need clear terms and real enforcement.[97]

Participating drivers did not speak with one voice. Some asked that robotaxi service not come at all; others asked for limits, study before expansion, or a share of the gains. Across those differences, recurring priorities were to keep earning, protect pay and work, be recognized for what drivers helped build, and help decide what comes next.[3]

> As a New York driver put it, “But what I want to highlight is that before taking someone's livelihood, give them something.”[17]

Success is not measured by whether robotaxis arrive. It is measured by whether the people who helped build this market are protected and share in what comes next.

> In the Atlanta discussion, one participant asked only this: “Just do not give up on us.”[17]

Get in Touch

We welcome feedback on this report and conversations about using it in your community, contributing expertise, or funding further work with drivers. Email us at hello@workersfirst.ai.

How We Developed the Policy Recommendations

The recommendations combine driver testimony, survey results, and drivers' later evaluation of policy ideas with published research, an illustrative revenue model, submitted proposals, advisory review, and outside consultation. Part Two explains how we gathered driver input; this section explains how proposals and outside review shaped the recommendations. We made the final structural and policy decisions.

We invited proposals publicly and contacted contributors directly. We selected twelve submitted proposals for further development; selection did not mean adoption. We credit ideas used, explain material changes, and present other developed approaches for local consideration.

A twelve-member advisory panel reviewed different subsets and versions of unfinished proposals and policy ideas at different stages. Drivers later evaluated policy ideas, not every submitted proposal. The panel did not review the final report as a panel.

Advisors urged us to combine related ideas rather than present them as competing plans. Their feedback clarified how funding, benefits, service limits, eligibility, and duration fit together; which decisions drivers and public officials make; how money might be used for public needs; and how the rules could work in practice and apply beyond passenger driving.

Advisors also exposed unresolved tradeoffs. They pressed for disclosure of robotaxi service and driver-earnings data, independently verifiable earnings measures, and analysis of passenger demand and worker displacement, including gradual earnings loss. Some questioned why human-driven rides should finance the transition.[53, 98]

A separate written labor-principles response emphasized a substantive role for drivers in shaping autonomous-vehicle rules and decisions, independent safety evidence, and local control. It also called for company-funded support, standards protecting drivers' access to paid trips alongside earnings protections, continuing human roles, transition support, and contributions to public transit.[79]

We also received comments from worker organizations, companies, researchers, advocates, public officials, and people with experience implementing labor and public programs. Their feedback increased our caution about causal claims and informed the report's treatment of human work, accessibility, local authority, data, service design, eligibility, and company obligations.

Project Contributors and Credits

Participating Drivers

Drivers participated through one-on-one interviews and recorded group discussions in New York City, San Francisco, and Atlanta; 36 written survey responses; and additional unrecorded conversations. They described how driving supports their lives, identified pressures in the work, disagreed about whether robotaxis should operate, and told us what a fair response would need to accomplish. In later group discussions, drivers evaluated policy ideas against their experience. Their experience and judgment were foundational to the report's questions and the two worker requirements it proposes.

We recognize ten participants who agreed to be named. The six New York participants, listed alphabetically by surname, are Liakat Ali, Shaun Beckles, Jose Gomez, Asad Iqbal, Dachuan Nie, and Muneeb Rehman. The four San Francisco participants, also listed alphabetically by surname, are Joseph Augusto, Nick Cabalar, Hector Castellanos, and Alejandra A. Rosa. Other participants are recognized collectively. Their contributions were equally important. The six named New York participants separately approved use of their portraits in this report. Among the named San Francisco participants, only Alejandra separately approved use of her portrait. Portraits and this credit recognize participation; quotations attributed by name represent individual views, not endorsement of the report. Portrait permission does not authorize audio or video use.



Drivers and project collaborators at the May 13, 2026, New York gathering. Photograph by Coral Ortiz.

Advisory Panel

The advisory panel substantially improved the report's reasoning, structure, and practical usefulness. We are grateful to all twelve people who served on the advisory panel. Eleven are listed below; one member chose not to be named publicly. Members participated at different stages and in different ways. Participating members reviewed different subsets and versions of work still in development; the panel did not review the final report as a panel. The feedback we received helped the project distinguish the recommendations it could support from options that deserved continued consideration. Advisors who reviewed selected proposals tested the proposals' assumptions, identified strengths and weaknesses, exposed gaps in the evidence, showed where ideas could work together, and raised unresolved questions and practical risks.

Advisors are listed alphabetically by surname.

Jillian Arnold, Labor & Technology Intelligence Officer, IATSE, brought experience in labor leadership and in addressing technology, artificial intelligence, and contract standards for entertainment workers.

Roy Bahat, Head of Bloomberg Beta, brought experience in technology investment, worker ownership, and the future of work.

Juliana Bidadanure, Associate Professor of Philosophy at NYU Arts & Science and Affiliate Faculty of Law at NYU School of Law, brought experience in political philosophy, inequality, basic-income policy, and the design of universal support.

Ron Bloom, Co-Chair, Center for State Labor Innovation (CSLI), brought experience in industrial restructuring, economic policy, and worker transitions.

Adrian Brown, Founder and CEO of Windfall Trust, brought experience in governance structures designed to serve the public interest and equitable technological transitions.

Laphonza Butler, Partner at Actum and former U.S. Senator for California, brought experience in labor leadership, public service, worker power, and women's political participation.

Eric Gertler, Executive Chairman and CEO of U.S. News & World Report, brought experience in public administration, economic development, technology, and data systems used by governments and other civic institutions.

Pamela Mishkin, former head of the Economic Research Team at OpenAI, brought experience in artificial-intelligence policy, research, accountability, and governance structures designed to serve the public interest.

Andrew Salkin, Founding Principal of Resilient Cities Catalyst, brought experience in city administration, transportation policy, urban resilience, and public-sector innovation.

Brendan Sexton, President of the Independent Drivers Guild, brought experience organizing app-based drivers and representing workers in industries affected by technology.

April Verrett, International President of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), brought experience in national labor leadership and advancing worker justice and economic equity.

Titles and affiliations are provided for identification only. Service on the advisory panel does not imply endorsement of this report's analysis, conclusions, or recommendations by any advisor or affiliated organization. The report credits an advisor's published research or submitted proposal where it shaped a specific passage. Individual advisory feedback is otherwise summarized collectively in this report. The report names an advisor's private feedback only where the advisor approved the exact wording.

Policy Proposal Contributors

We invited policy proposals and selected twelve submissions for further development. The contributors below developed those selected submissions. Participating advisors reviewed different subsets and versions at different stages. The contributors' work gave reviewers concrete choices to examine and widened the range of policy options for supporting drivers that we considered. The report credits ideas it uses directly, explains where it changes a proposal, and presents other developed approaches as alternatives. Other proposals also informed the project and receive credit where a distinct idea appears. Selection did not mean that the project adopted a proposal.

Titles and affiliations identify contributors. An individual's affiliation does not mean that the organization submitted or endorsed the proposal. We name an organization as a contributor only when the proposal itself identifies the organization as the contributor, identifies the person and organization jointly, or gives a specific instruction about public credit. Selection for advisory review, use of an idea, and inclusion in these credits do not imply endorsement of this report's analysis, conclusions, or recommendations by any contributor or affiliated organization.

Contributors are listed alphabetically by the first named contributor's surname or by organization.

- **Laura Beltrán Figueroa**, Policy, Research, and Legislative Strategy Director at the Pennsylvania Policy Center and Research Associate at the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations, developed a proposal for an autonomous-vehicle workforce transition assessment.
- **Tash Diallo**, a rideshare driver, driver advocate, and project leader, developed a proposal for a mobility transition and resilience fund.
- **Devesh Kodnani and Emily Lemmerman**, PhD students in the Institute for Work and Employment Research at the MIT Sloan School of Management, developed a proposal for a managed permit auction and driver transition fund.
- **Jacob Leibenluft**, a Visiting Fellow at the Washington Center for Equitable Growth who previously served at the White House Office of Management and Budget and the Treasury Department, developed a proposal for an automation fund governed through a worker-inclusive committee.
- **Renan Magalhães**, PhD candidate in economics at European University Viadrina and Research Coordinator at Kelso Institute Europe, developed a proposal for collective ownership, a worker-benefit trust, and driver-owned fleets and service cooperatives.
- **Dawood Mian**, Founder and Publisher of AutoMarketplace, developed a proposal to convert existing New York City vehicle licenses into continuing income and a tool for pacing autonomous entry.
- **Graeme Nuttall OBE and the Institute for the Future of Work (IFOW)** developed a joint proposal for a driver ownership trust. Nuttall serves as an IFOW trustee and as International Ambassador for the Employee Ownership Association.
- **James A. Parrott**, Senior Advisor and Fellow at the Center for New York City Affairs at The New School, developed a proposal combining gradual robotaxi entry with a locally administered licensing and royalty system for qualifying long-tenured taxi and app-based rideshare drivers, independently established minimum-pay standards, and a driver cap intended to preserve adequate earning opportunities.
- **Predistribution Initiative (PDI)** developed *Driver Equity Transition Stakes (DETS): Turning Autonomous Vehicle Deployment Permits into Worker Ownership* and an advisory supplement on its financing and governance.

Proposals Submitted Without Attribution

Proposals are listed alphabetically by topic.

- A proposal on adjusting service limits as conditions change was submitted without attribution.
- A proposal on an invested transition fund for displaced passenger drivers was submitted without attribution.
- A proposal for a trip-surcharge transition fund was submitted without attribution.

Project Leadership and Report Authorship

The Workers First AI project was led by Andy Stern, Rayan Semery-Palumbo, and Tash Diallo.

Andy Stern led the project and advised its strategy. He helped build financial and institutional support, recruited proposal contributors and advisors, and connected the work with leaders in labor, government, economics, and technology. His final editorial review helped shorten the report, expand its recognition of contributors, and strengthen the conclusion.

Andy Stern is President Emeritus of the Service Employees International Union, which he led from 1996 to 2010. He is a Senior Fellow at the Economic Security Project and the author, with Lee Kravitz, of *Raising the Floor: How a Universal Basic Income Can Renew Our Economy and Rebuild the American Dream*.

Rayan Semery-Palumbo is the report's primary author. He led the research, policy development, analysis, writing, and document production. He integrated driver testimony, published research, submitted proposals, financial modeling, and advisory review into the report's two worker requirements and five policy areas.

Rayan Semery-Palumbo grew up in poverty and experienced homelessness with his family in Arizona. He graduated from Yale University and completed his doctorate at the University of Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. His doctoral research examined American meritocracy and how the United States decides who deserves what. He is a Fellow at the Economic Security Project. At One Fair Wage, he has helped build Living Wage For All, a national coalition working to raise minimum wages. He co-authored *What Has Democracy Done for You Lately?* (The New Press, 2026).

Tash Diallo led the project and its driver engagement. He also reviewed the report and contributed to policy development.

Tash Diallo has driven for Uber and Lyft and is a veteran organizer. He organized app-based drivers with the Independent Drivers Guild, including campaigns for in-app tipping and New York City's first-in-the-nation minimum-pay standard for app-based drivers. He has also worked on how automation will affect drivers and what a fair transition should require.

Photography and Film

Coral Ortiz photographed the May 13 New York driver gathering.

Tash Diallo photographed Alejandra A. Rosa in San Francisco.

Dakarai Kongela filmed the New York driver gathering.

Paul Ferguson and Susan Robinson filmed the Atlanta driver gathering.

Research, Organizing, and Project Support

We are grateful to the organizers and worker organizations that recruited drivers and convened group discussions, and to the people and driver networks that circulated the request for policy proposals. Written materials reflecting the perspectives of organized drivers and labor groups also informed the project. Researchers, worker advocates, public officials, policy experts, and industry participants helped us test evidence and examine implementation risks. Editors, designers, photographers, filmmakers, and other production contributors documented driver gatherings and helped complete the report. Many of these contributions are credited collectively. We are equally grateful for them.

Institutional Support and Independence

Omidyar Network provided funding for the project. Economic Security Project collaborated on the work, hosted Andy Stern and Rayan Semery-Palumbo as fellows, and contributed funding that supported Rayan Semery-Palumbo's fellowship. Assets Under Movement (formerly Amalgamated Foundation) provided fiscal sponsorship.

We thank in particular Taylor Jo Isenberg, Shafeka Hashash, Mike Konczal, Adriane Brown, and Maya Tellman at Economic Security Project, and Mike Kubzansky, Anmol Chaddha, and Judy Alterado at Omidyar Network, among many others at each organization who supported this work.

These institutional roles do not imply endorsement of the report's findings or recommendations. The project team is responsible for the report's analysis, conclusions, and recommendations.
All three project leaders used Claude and Codex during the project. Project leaders reviewed and revised the report and are responsible for its final substantive judgments and recommendations.

Bibliography and Project Materials

The bibliography identifies the publicly available sources and unpublished project materials cited or consulted in developing the report. Company figures and plans are cited as company reports, not as independent findings. Access dates are given where relevant. Submitted proposals, interviews, group discussions, advisory materials, and the financial model are held in the project archive and are not public unless the project and any relevant rights holders authorize their release.

Academic Research, Data, and Surveys

Aladangady, Aditya, Andrew C. Chang, and Jacob Krimmel. "Greater Wealth, Greater Uncertainty: Changes in Racial Inequality in the Survey of Consumer Finances." FEDS Notes, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, October 18, 2023. https://doi.org/10.17016/2380-7172.3405.

Bessen, James E. "How Computer Automation Affects Occupations: Technology, Jobs, and Skills." Boston University School of Law, Law and Economics Research Paper no. 15-49, 2016. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2690435.

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. Report on the Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2024. May 2025. https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/2025-economic-well-being-of-us-households-in-2024-employment-and-gig-work.htm.

Cook, Cody, Rebecca Diamond, Jonathan V. Hall, John A. List, and Paul Oyer. "The Gender Earnings Gap in the Gig Economy: Evidence from over a Million Rideshare Drivers." Review of Economic Studies 88, no. 5 (2021): 2210–38. https://doi.org/10.1093/restud/rdaa081.

Economic Security Project. The Guaranteed Income Blueprint. March 14, 2024. https://economicsecurityproject.org/resource/gi-blueprint/.

Gridwise Analytics. Autonomous Vehicles Impact Report 2026: How Rideshare Activity and Earnings Are Shifting in AV-Active Markets. 2026. https://7021468.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/7021468/2026%20AV%20Impact%20Report.pdf.

Gridwise Analytics. Q2 2026 AV Impact Report. Online summary, reviewed October 23, 2026. https://gridwise.io/analytics/2026-av-impact-report.

Grigoryeva, Angelina. "The Shift to Stock-Based Compensation and Gender Inequality in Wealth in the United States." *Socio-Economic Review* 23, no. 2 (2025): 541–566. https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwaf009.

Hall, Jonathan V. and Alan B. Krueger. "An Analysis of the Labor Market for Uber's Driver-Partners in the United States." NBER Working Paper 22843, November 2016. https://doi.org/10.3386/w22843.

Jacobs, Ken, Michael Reich, Tynan Challenor, and Aida Farmand. Gig Passenger and Delivery Driver Pay in Five Metro Areas. UC Berkeley Labor Center, May 2024. https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/gig-passenger-and-delivery-driver-pay-in-five-metro-areas/.

Jacobson, Louis S., Robert J. LaLonde, and Daniel G. Sullivan. "Earnings Losses of Displaced Workers." American Economic Review 83, no. 4 (1993): 685–709.

JPMorgan Chase Institute. The Online Platform Economy in 2018. September 2018. https://www.jpmorganchase.com/institute/all-topics/labor-markets-and-workforce/report-ope-2018.

Kaplan, Leah, Lola Nurullaeva, and John Paul Helveston. "Modeling the Operational and Labor Costs of Autonomous Robotaxi Services." Transport Policy 159 (2024): 108–19. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2024.10.010.

Lee, KyungSun, and Madeline Neighly. The Power of Cash: How Guaranteed Income Can Strengthen Worker Power. Economic Security Project, May 1, 2023. https://economicsecurityproject.org/resource/the-power-of-cash/.

Ocampo, Dan. "Unpacking Uber and Lyft's Predatory 'Take Rates.'" National Employment Law Project. May 19, 2025. Updated July 2025. https://www.nelp.org/insights-research/unpacking-uber-and-lyfts-predatory-take-rates/.

Parrott, James A. Revised Expense Model for the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission's High-Volume For-Hire Vehicle Minimum Pay Standard. December 2024.

Parrott, James A. and Michael Reich. An Earnings Standard for New York City's App-Based Drivers. Center for New York City Affairs and UC Berkeley Center on Wage and Employment Dynamics, July 2018. https://www.centernyc.org/an-earnings-standard.

Parrott, James A. and Michael Reich. *Rideshare Driver Pay in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Portland.* UC Berkeley Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, January 14, 2026. https://irle.berkeley.edu/publications/irle-policy-brief/rideshare-driver-pay-in-chicago-philadelphia-and-portland/.

Pew Research Center. The State of Gig Work in 2021. December 8, 2021. https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/12/08/the-state-of-gig-work-in-2021/.

Rud, Juan Pablo, Michael Simmons, Gerhard Toews, and Fernando Aragón. "Job Displacement Costs of Phasing Out Coal." Journal of Public Economics 236 (2024): 105167. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2024.105167.

Semery-Palumbo, Rayan. "Approaching Structural Equality: Reshaping American Meritocracy towards Greater Fairness for Essential Workers." DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2025. https://doi.org/10.5287/ora-vmn0dongp.

Semery-Palumbo, Rayan. Recovering Wages and Wealth: What We Deserve in the Age of AI. Economic Security Project, May 5, 2026. https://economicsecurityproject.org/resource/recovering-wages-and-wealth/.

Tarduno, Matthew. "Elasticities and Tax Incidence in Urban Ridesharing Markets: Evidence from Chicago." Journal of Urban Economics 150 (2025): 103809. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jue.2025.103809.

Yu, Zhen, et al. "Robotaxis Reduce Taxi Drivers' Income." Humanities and Social Sciences Communications 13, art. 629 (2026). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-026-07366-x.

Government, Legislation, Regulation, and Public Programs

Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation. "History" and "Performance." Accessed July 27, 2026. https://apfc.org/.

Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend Division. "Historical Timeline." Accessed August 3, 2026. https://pfd.alaska.gov/division-info/historical-timeline.

Boston, City of. Docket no. 1432, Commercial Autonomous Vehicle Operations Ordinance. Filed August 6, 2025. https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/file/2025/10/Docket%20%231432.pdf.

California Department of Motor Vehicles. "Autonomous Vehicle Testing Permit Holders." Accessed September 15, 2026. https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/vehicle-industry-services/autonomous-vehicles/autonomous-vehicle-testing-permit-holders/.

California Public Utilities Commission. Decision 24-11-002. November 7, 2024. https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M546/K031/546031802.PDF.

California Public Utilities Commission. "CPUC Approves Permits for Cruise and Waymo to Charge Fares for Passenger Service in San Francisco." August 10, 2023. https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/news-and-updates/all-news/cpuc-approves-permits-for-cruise-and-waymo-to-charge-fares-for-passenger-service-in-sf-2023.

California Public Utilities Commission. "Quarterly Reporting." Accessed August 4, 2026. https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/regulatory-services/licensing/transportation-licensing-and-analysis-branch/autonomous-vehicle-programs/quarterly-reporting.

California Public Utilities Commission. "Autonomous Vehicle Program Permits Issued." Accessed September 15, 2026. https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/regulatory-services/licensing/transportation-licensing-and-analysis-branch/autonomous-vehicle-programs/autonomous-vehicle-program-permits-issued.

California. Assembly Bill 1340, Transportation Network Company Drivers Labor Relations Act, ch. 335. Approved October 3, 2025. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB1340.

Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. "Transportation Network Company" and INFO no. 23B. Accessed August 4, 2026. https://cdle.colorado.gov/dlss/labor-laws-by-topic/transportation-network-company-tnc.

Colorado. Senate Bill 24-075. 2024. Codified at Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-4-127.

Council of the District of Columbia. Bill 26-0684. Filed May 1, 2026. Under Council review following a July 13, 2026, public hearing. Legislative record accessed September 23, 2026. https://lims.dccouncil.gov/Legislation/B26-0684.

Georgia. Senate Bill 219. Enacted 2017. Codified at O.C.G.A. § 40-8-11. https://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20172018/170801.pdf.

Illinois General Assembly. Public Act 104-0788, Transportation Network Driver Labor Relations Act. Approved and effective August 7, 2026. https://www.ilga.gov/ftp/Public%20Acts/104/104-0788.htm.

Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations. Certification of Exclusive Bargaining Representative, TCR-26-12010. May 22, 2026. https://www.mass.gov/doc/certification-of-exclusive-bargaining-representative-tcr-26-12010-certification/download.

Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities. Rideshare Data Report. Accessed August 4, 2026. https://tnc.sites.digital.mass.gov/.

Massachusetts. An Act Giving Transportation Network Drivers the Option to Form a Union and Bargain Collectively. Question 3, 2024.

Massachusetts. Acts of 2016, ch. 187, § 8, https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2016/Chapter187; and Acts of 2026, ch. 101, §§ 27–28, https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2026/Chapter101.

Medicare.gov. “When Does Medicare Coverage Start?” Accessed August 3, 2026. https://www.medicare.gov/basics/get-started-with-medicare/sign-up/when-does-medicare-coverage-start.

Minnesota. House File 4216, 94th Legislature. Introduced March 12, 2026. https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/94/2026/0/HF/4216/.

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. “Protections for Transportation Network Company Drivers.” Accessed August 4, 2026. https://dli.mn.gov/tnc.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. “Automated Vehicle Safety.” Accessed August 3, 2026. https://www.nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/automated-vehicle-safety.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. National AV Safety Forum. March 10, 2026. https://www.nhtsa.gov/events/av-public-meeting-2026.

National Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Progress. Statements Relating to the Impact of Technological Change. Appendix vol. 6 of Technology and the American Economy. February 1966.

National Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Progress. *Technology and the American Economy*. Vol. 1. February 1966. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED023803.pdf.

New York City. *Vision Zero Reimagined: A New Action Plan for Road Safety*. Released September 15, 2026. https://www.nyc.gov/assets/visionzero/downloads/pdf/Vision-Zero-Reimagined-2026.pdf.

New York City Department of Transportation. “Autonomous Vehicles in New York City.” Accessed September 23, 2026. https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/motorist/autonomous-vehicles.shtml.

New York City Mayor’s Office. “Mayor Adams, DOT Announce Approval of First Application to Test Autonomous Vehicles in New York City With Trained Safety Specialist Behind Steering Wheel.” August 22, 2025. https://www.nyc.gov/mayors-office/news/2025/08/mayor-adams--dot-announce-approval-of-first-application-to-test-.

New York City Council. *Report of the Taxicab Medallion Sale Prices Task Force*. January 31, 2020. https://council.nyc.gov/data/taxis/.

New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission. 2024 Annual Report. 2025.

New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission. “Data and Research,” “Driver Pay,” “Get a For-Hire Vehicle License,” “Green Rides,” “TLC Trip Record Data,” and high-volume for-hire service rules. Accessed August 4, 2026. https://www.nyc.gov/site/tlc/about/data-and-research.page.

New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission. February 2026 For-Hire Vehicle License Review: Report and Determination. February 2026.

New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission. “Taxi Medallion Owner Relief Program.” Accessed August 26, 2026. https://www.nyc.gov/site/tlc/about/taxi-medallion-owner-relief-program.page.

New York State Assembly. S.9008, FY 2027 enacted-budget record. Accessed August 18, 2026. https://nyassembly.gov/leg/?bn=S.9008.

New York State Senate. “Chair Cooney Highlights Transportation Investments Made in FY 2027 Enacted Budget.” May 28, 2026. https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2026/jeremy-cooney/chair-cooney-highlights-transportation-investments-made.

New York, Office of Governor Kathy Hochul. "Governor Hochul Unveils Proposals to Fuel Innovation and Create Good-Paying Jobs." January 13, 2026. https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-unveils-proposals-fuel-innovation-and-create-good-paying-jobs.

New York. Assembly Bill A11500, 2025–2026 Regular Sessions. Introduced May 28, 2026. https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2025/A11500.

San Francisco City Attorney. "San Francisco Seeks Reprieve from CPUC Decision Allowing Unfettered Autonomous Vehicle Expansion." August 11, 2023. https://sfcityattorney.org/san-francisco-seeks-reprieve-from-cpuc-decision-allowing-unfettered-autonomous-vehicle-expansion/.

Seattle Office of Labor Standards. "Transportation Network Company Minimum Compensation Ordinance." Accessed August 3, 2026. https://www.seattle.gov/laborstandards/ordinances/tnc-legislation/minimum-compensation-ordinance.

Social Security Administration. "Your Retirement Age and When You Stop Working." Accessed August 4, 2026. https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/stopwork.html.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "FAQs about Data on Electronically Mediated Employment." Accessed September 23, 2026. https://www.bls.gov/cps/electronically-mediated-employment-faqs.htm.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Frequently Asked Questions." Accessed September 23, 2026. https://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Taxi Drivers, Shuttle Drivers, and Chauffeurs." Last modified August 27, 2026. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/transportation-and-material-moving/taxi-drivers-and-chauffeurs.htm.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Impact of Automation: A Collection of 20 Articles about Technological Change. Bulletin no. 1287. 1960.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Wage Chronology: Pacific Longshore Industry, 1934–70. Bulletin no. 1568. 1968.

U.S. Copyright Office. *Performance Rights in Sound Recordings*. 1978. https://www.copyright.gov/reports/performance-rights-sound-recordings.pdf.

United States Code. Title 26, §§ 4121 and 9501.

U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office. *Providing Public Workforce Services to Job Seekers: 30-Month Impact Findings on the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs*. 2017. https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/research/publications/providing-public-workforce-services-job-seekers-30-month-impact.

U.S. Department of Transportation. "Inclusive Design Challenge." Accessed August 3, 2026. https://www.transportation.gov/accessibility/inclusivedesign.

United States Maritime Alliance and International Longshoremen's Association 2024–2030 Master Contract. 2024.

Volkswagenwerk Aktiengesellschaft v. Federal Maritime Commission, 390 U.S. 261 (1968).

Company, Labor, and Public-Interest Materials

AFL-CIO. “John L. Lewis.” Accessed August 3, 2026.

Alphabet Inc. 2025 Form 10-K. February 5, 2026. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1652044/000165204426000018/goog-20251231.htm.

Amazon. “Amazon Subsidiary Zoox Reveals First Look at Autonomous Robotaxi.” Accessed August 26, 2026. https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/innovation-at-amazon/amazon-subsidiary-zoox-reveals-first-look-at-autonomous-robotaxi.

American Council of the Blind. “Accessing Autonomous Vehicles.” June 2, 2025. Updated March 23, 2026.

American Federation of Musicians. “AFM Evolves to Meet Needs of Today’s Music Industry.” Accessed August 3, 2026.

Baidu. First Quarter 2026 Results. 2026. https://ir.baidu.com/news-releases/news-release-details/baidu-announces-first-quarter-2026-results/.

Black Car Fund. “History” and “F.A.Q.s.” Accessed August 3, 2026. https://www.nybcf.org/history.

Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities Transportation Task Force. Comments to the U.S. Department of Transportation, DOT-OST-2024-0049. August 1, 2024.

Greszler, Rachel. “How the ILA’s Demands for Striking Port Workers Stack Up to Other American Workers.” Economic Policy Innovation Center, October 3, 2024. https://epicforamerica.org/education-workforce-retirement/how-the-ilas-demands-for-striking-port-workers-stack-up-to-other-american-workers/.

Independent Drivers Guild. “About Us,” campaigns page, “IDG Victory in NY,” and “Stop Driverless Cars from Taking Over New York Streets.” Accessed July 29, 2026.

International Brotherhood of Teamsters. National Master United Parcel Service Agreement, August 1, 2023–July 31, 2028. 2023.

International Brotherhood of Teamsters. “Teamsters-Backed Autonomous Vehicle Human Operator Bill Heads to Newsom.” August 30, 2024.

International Brotherhood of Teamsters. “Teamsters Call on Colorado Gov. Jared Polis to Sign HB 25-1122.” May 7, 2025.

International Longshore and Warehouse Union. “The ILWU Story.” Accessed August 3, 2026.

Justice for App Workers. “Keep Georgia’s Streets Human—Stop Driverless Cars in Atlanta and Beyond.” 2026.

Lyft, Inc. 2024 Form 10-K. February 14, 2025. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1759509/000175950925000025/lyft-20241231.htm.

Music Performance Trust Fund. “Our Story” and “75th Anniversary Supplement.” Accessed August 3, 2026. https://musicpf.org/; https://musicpf.org/about/75th-anniversary-booklet/.

New York Taxi Workers Alliance. “NYTWA Statement on Taxi & Limousine Commission Vote on First-Ever Minimum Pay Standard for Uber Drivers.” December 5, 2018. https://www.nytwa.org/statements/2018/12/4/december-5-2018-nytwa-statement-on-taxi-amp-limousine-commission-vote-on-first-ever-minimum-pay-standard-for-uber-drivers.

New York Taxi Workers Alliance. “All Drivers Come Out for TLC Public Hearing on Driver Pay.” October 2, 2018. https://www.nytwa.org/home/2018/10/2/all-drivers-come-out-for-tlc-public-hearing-on-driver-pay.

SEIU 32BJ. “Our History.” Accessed August 3, 2026.

Transport Workers Union. “Stopping AVs from Replacing Bus Operators, Mechanics and Other Transit Workers.” February 23, 2024.

Tesla. *Q4 and FY 2025 Update*. January 28, 2026. https://ir.tesla.com/_flysystem/s3/sec/000162828026003837/tsla-20260128-gen.pdf.

Uber. “Autonomous Vehicles Are Coming to More Cities.” May 13, 2026.

Uber. “Atlanta: The Future Is Here with Waymo and Uber.” June 24, 2025. https://www.uber.com/us/en/newsroom/waymo-on-uber-atl/.

Uber. “Driving Autonomous Forward,” “Road Data Collection Privacy Hub,” and “Uber AV Labs: Where Autonomy Meets Reality.” Accessed July 30, 2026.

Uber. “Safety Guidelines for Autonomous Mobility and Delivery on the Uber Platform.” April 20, 2026.

Uber. “Uber Unveils Uber Autonomous Solutions to Accelerate Autonomous Mobility & Delivery Worldwide.” February 23, 2026.

Uber. Unlocking the Promise of Autonomy. May 2026.

Uber Technologies, Inc. Registration Statement (Form S-1). April 11, 2019. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1543151/000119312519103850/d647752ds1.htm.

Uber Technologies, Inc. 2025 Form 10-K. February 5, 2026. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1543151/000154315126000015/uber-20251231.htm.

Uber Technologies, Inc. Fourth Quarter 2025 Prepared Remarks. February 4, 2026. https://s23.q4cdn.com/407969754/files/doc_earnings/2025/q4/transcript/Uber-Q4-25-Prepared-Remarks.pdf.

Waymo. “Advice, Not Control: The Role of Remote Assistance in Waymo’s Operations.” February 17, 2026. https://waymo.com/blog/shorts/advice-not-control-the-role-of-remote-assistance/.

Waymo. “Partnering with TechForce to Support the Workforce behind Fully Autonomous Ride-Hailing.” February 19, 2026. https://waymo.com/blog/2026/02/partnering-with-techforce/.

Waymo. “Sustainability at Waymo.” Accessed September 23, 2026. https://waymo.com/sustainability/.

Waymo. “Accelerating Our Global Growth: Waymo Raises $16 Billion Investment Round.” February 2, 2026. https://waymo.com/blog/2026/02/waymo-raises-usd16-billion-investment-round/.

Journalism

Axios. “Exclusive: Uber Tries a Different Playbook with Robotaxi Policy Push.” May 8, 2026. https://www.axios.com/2026/05/08/uber-trobotaxi-policy-paper.

Berger, Justin. “Atlanta Rideshare Drivers Rally against Waymo Expansion.” Atlanta News First, July 9, 2026. https://www.atlantanewsfirst.com/2026/07/10/atlanta-rideshare-drivers-rally-against-waymo-expansion/.

Dil, Cuneyt. “Exclusive: Waymo Expects D.C. Robotaxi Talks to Continue This Summer.” Axios D.C., July 20, 2026. https://www.axios.com/local/washington-dc/2026/07/20/waymo-robotaxi-approval-charles-allen-dc-council.

Henn, Steve. “Remembering When Driverless Elevators Drew Skepticism.” NPR, July 31, 2015.

McCabe, David. “Why Waymo’s Driverless Taxis Won’t Be on Your Streets Anytime Soon.” New York Times, June 17, 2026.

Molla, Rani. “Robotaxis Are Real Now — So Is the Pushback.” The Verge, August 24, 2026. https://www.theverge.com/transportation/983765/robotaxi-waymo-zoox-tesla-rules-pushback-nhtsa.

Rosenthal, Brian M. “‘They Were Conned’: How Reckless Loans Devastated a Generation of Taxi Drivers.” New York Times, May 19, 2019.

Shepardson, David, and Zaheer Kachwala. “New York Governor Hochul Pulls Robotaxi Pilot Expansion Proposal.” Reuters, February 19, 2026. https://www.reuters.com/world/us/new-york-governor-hochul-pulls-robotaxi-expansion-proposal-2026-02-19/.

THE CITY. “Women Take the Wheel in NYC’s For-Hire Vehicles, Even as Male Drivers Predominate.” April 21, 2026.

WTOP. “Independence and Protection among Themes at Monday’s DC Autonomous-Vehicle Hearing.” July 14, 2026. https://wtop.com/dc/2026/07/independence-and-protection-among-themes-discussed-during-mondays-hearing-on-autonomous-vehicles-in-d-c/.

Unpublished Project Materials and Submitted Proposals

Greenblatt, Andrew. Memorandum developing an attrition-linked autonomous-vehicle transition model. May 26, 2026. Transmitted through the Independent Drivers Guild advisory process. Unpublished project archive.

Workers First AI Project. Submitted policy proposals on measurement, funding, service limits, loss protection, cash, retirement, ownership, worker services, and governance. 2026. Unpublished project archive. Contributors to proposals selected for advisory review are listed in “Project Contributors and Credits.” Other proposals receive credit where a distinct idea appears in the report. Public references use “submitted without attribution” when a contributor is not named.

Workers First AI Project. Advisory panel roster and available advisor review records. 2026. Unpublished project archive.

Workers First AI Project. Driver Interviews and Group-Discussion Records. 2026. Unpublished project archive.

Workers First AI Project. Driver Survey. Thirty-six responses, 2026. Unpublished project archive.

Workers First AI Project. Research Foundation: The Status and Future of Autonomous Vehicles and Rideshare Driving. 2026. Unpublished project archive.

Workers First AI Project. Driver Support Fund Model, version 1.2. 2026. Unpublished project workbook.

Notes

1. New York City Council, *Report of the Taxicab Medallion Sale Prices Task Force*, January 31, 2020, https://council.nyc.gov/data/taxis/; New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, "Taxi Medallion Owner Relief Program," accessed August 26, 2026, https://www.nyc.gov/site/tlc/about/taxi-medallion-owner-relief-program.page; Black Car Fund, "History," accessed August 26, 2026, https://www.nybcf.org/history. The City Council reported that the growth of app-based rideshare contributed to falling taxi revenue and lower values for taxi medallions, the transferable city-issued rights attached to vehicles and required for New York City street-hail taxi service, while risky lending and weak oversight left many owners with unsustainable debt. The relief program documents the later public response; the Black Car Fund documents the distinct history and benefits structure of black-car service. The report's characterization of the earlier shift as a transition that failed to protect many taxi workers is the project team's judgment.

2. Waymo, "Cities, freeways, airports: How we've built a scalable autonomous driver," May 18, 2022, https://waymo.com/blog/2022/05/howwevebuiltascalableautonomousdriver/, section "Using Machine Learning to Build a Generalizable System"; National Institute of Standards and Technology, "Artificial Intelligence," CSRC Glossary, https://csrc.nist.gov/glossary/term/artificial_intelligence (accessed October 10, 2026). Waymo describes machine-learning models used in perception, behavior prediction, and motion planning and explains that trained models form part of a larger system. NIST's definitions include machine learning, perception, planning, predictions and decisions. The report does not claim identical company architectures or that every component of an automated driving system is AI.

3. Workers First AI Project, driver interview, survey, and group-discussion records, 2026. The synthesis describes recurring priorities among participating drivers; it is not a representative estimate or an endorsement of robotaxi service or every recommendation.

4. Uber Technologies, Inc., *Registration Statement (Form S-1)*, April 11, 2019, https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1543151/000119312519103850/d647752ds1.htm; Lyft, Inc., *2024 Form 10-K*, February 14, 2025, https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1759509/000175950925000025/lyft-20241231.htm. Uber described drivers as part of the network that produced more rides and shorter waits as it grew. Lyft stated that its marketplace connects drivers and riders, that substantially all its revenue came from that marketplace, and that more accepted rider leads increased rides and revenue. The filings support the factual point that drivers' participation helped build and sustain the app-based passenger market. The conclusion that past contribution supports an additional benefit is the project team's policy judgment.

5. James A. Parrott, *Rideshare AVs: A Model for Sharing the Fruits of New Technology with Workers*, March 2026 submission, and *License Royalty and Minimum Compensation*, April 2026 advisor-packet version, unpublished project archive. The proposal argues that drivers helped build the market and should share in the gains while minimum compensation continues. The report's final rationale is a project synthesis.

6. *Volkswagenwerk Aktiengesellschaft v. Federal Maritime Commission*, 390 U.S. 261, 303–05 (1968); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Wage Chronology: Pacific Longshore Industry, 1934–70*, Bulletin no. 1568 (1968); United States Maritime Alliance and International Longshoremen's Association, 2024–2030 Master Contract, art. XII, §§ 1 and 3; Music Performance Trust Fund, "Our Story," https://musicpf.org/, and "75th Anniversary Supplement," https://musicpf.org/about/75th-anniversary-booklet/, accessed August 3, 2026; U.S. Copyright Office, *Performance Rights in Sound Recordings* (1978), https://www.copyright.gov/reports/performance-rights-sound-recordings.pdf; AFL-CIO, "John L. Lewis"; 26 U.S.C. §§ 4121 and 9501; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Impact of Automation: A Collection of 20 Articles About Technological Change*, Bulletin no. 1287 (1960), 62–64. These sources document distinct historical arrangements; they do not establish that one design fits rideshare drivers.

7. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "Automated Vehicle Safety," https://www.nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/automated-vehicle-safety (accessed October 10, 2026), sections "Safety" and "Mobility." NHTSA describes potential safety and mobility benefits as automated driving systems mature. This supports a statement of possible benefits, not a claim that every current robotaxi service is safer than human-driven service or accessible to every rider.

8. American Council of the Blind, "Accessing Autonomous Vehicles," June 2, 2025, updated March 23, 2026; Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities Transportation Task Force, comments to the U.S. Department of Transportation, DOT-OST-2024-0049, August 1, 2024; U.S. Department of Transportation, "Inclusive Design Challenge," accessed August 3, 2026, https://www.transportation.gov/accessibility/inclusivedesign.

9. Alphabet Inc., *2025 Form 10-K*, February 5, 2026, https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1652044/000165204426000018/goog-20251231.htm; Amazon, "Amazon Subsidiary Zoox Reveals First Look at Autonomous Robotaxi," accessed August 26, 2026, https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/innovation-at-amazon/amazon-subsidiary-zoox-reveals-first-look-at-autonomous-robotaxi; Tesla, *Q4 and FY 2025 Update*, January 28, 2026, 11–12, https://ir.tesla.com/_flysystem/s3/sec/000162828026003837/tsla-20260128-gen.pdf.

10. Louis S. Jacobson, Robert J. LaLonde, and Daniel G. Sullivan, "Earnings Losses of Displaced Workers," *American Economic Review* 83, no. 4 (1993): 685–709; Juan Pablo Rud, Michael Simmons, Gerhard Toews, and Fernando Aragón, "Job Displacement Costs of Phasing Out Coal," *Journal of Public Economics* 236 (2024): 105167, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2024.105167; U.S. Department of Labor, Chief Evaluation Office, *Providing Public Workforce Services to Job Seekers: 30-Month Impact Findings on the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs* (2017), https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/research/publications/providing-public-workforce-services-job-seekers-30-month-impact. The Department of Labor's randomized evaluation found intensive services effective; its evidence on training was inconclusive and did not show positive impacts within 30 months. The evidence supports treating training as a possible option rather than a substitute for loss protection or a guaranteed suitable job.

11. Waymo, "Partnering with TechForce to Support the Workforce behind Fully Autonomous Ride-Hailing," February 19, 2026, https://waymo.com/blog/2026/02/partnering-with-techforce/; Ryan McNamara, Waymo, "Advice, Not Control: The Role of Remote Assistance in Waymo's Operations," February 17, 2026, https://waymo.com/blog/shorts/advice-not-control-the-role-of-remote-assistance/; Leah Kaplan, Lola Nurullaeva, and John Paul Helveston, "Modeling the Operational and Labor Costs of Autonomous Robotaxi Services," *Transport Policy* 159 (2024): 108–19, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2024.10.010. These sources identify remaining operational roles and costs; they do not establish how many jobs robotaxi service will create or whether those jobs will replace drivers' income, schedules, locations, or job security.

12. Black-car service is a legally defined category of prearranged for-hire service; the exact definition varies by jurisdiction. Each local proposal should state which services it includes.

13. The Workers First AI Project's 2026 recruitment, intake, interview, survey, group-discussion, and project-lead records support this description of the participants and methods. The records show that the project's work with drivers focused on people who earned income through Uber, Lyft, or both. Participant records also document taxi, black-car, and local car-service experience. The project conducted 26 recorded one-on-one interviews: fifteen in New York City, ten in San Francisco, and one in Atlanta. The project also held recorded group discussions in each city, received 36 unique survey response IDs, and documented additional unrecorded conversations. The recorded San Francisco group discussion is supported by Rayan Semery-Palumbo's dated project-lead identification and confirmation. Individual drivers appear in more than one set of records. Adding the figures together would count those drivers more than once.

14. Workers First AI Project, Driver Survey, 36 responses, 2026, unpublished project archive. Twenty-eight respondents selected "It is my only income" and five selected "It is my main income." In response to a question about how quickly they could find similar income if they had to stop driving, 23 chose "I do not think I could" and ten chose "More than 6 months." Responses were selections from listed choices and describe participants only.

15. Workers First AI Project, Driver Survey, 36 responses (2026), unpublished project archive. Respondents could select up to two answers; 20 selected driver ownership or a share of autonomous-service revenue, 14 selected a one-time payment, eight selected temporary monthly payments, and four selected training and help finding new work.

16. The Workers First AI Project's 2026 driver interview, survey, group-discussion, and project-lead records support this description of the methods. The project conducted 26 recorded one-on-one interviews: fifteen in New York City, ten in San Francisco, and one in Atlanta. The project also held recorded group discussions in each city, received 36 unique survey response IDs, and documented additional unrecorded conversations. The recorded San Francisco group discussion is supported by Rayan Semery-Palumbo's dated project-lead identification and confirmation. Individual drivers appear in more than one set of records. Adding the figures together would count those drivers more than once.

17. Workers First AI Project, New York City recorded group discussion, May 12, 2026, at 57:31–58:33, 63:36–63:50, 89:19–89:36, 97:14–99:26, and 108:48–109:21; seven New York City driver interviews, at 4:25–4:50, 6:41–6:59, 10:57–11:12, 13:43–14:36, 14:09–14:28, 15:31–16:19, and 25:14–25:26; six San Francisco driver interviews, at 4:45–4:55, 8:34–8:54, 10:40–11:03,

16:26–16:52, 18:27–18:45, and 29:38–29:45; Atlanta recorded group discussion, May 29, 2026, at 36:42–37:36, 50:05–50:15, 51:21–51:35, 61:27–61:31, and 72:45–74:09; unpublished project archive. Jose's hardship passage uses the public rendering Rayan Semery-Palumbo expressly settled; the continuous transcript at 58:00–58:12 contains oral connective and intensifier words omitted from that rendering. Ellipses in the Atlanta basic-income passage omit transcript disfluency and repetition without substituting words. Asad Iqbal's established public rendering removes one repeated oral phrase as a confirmed stutter trim. Dachuan Nie's quotation comes from a September 16, 2026, follow-up; the exact words were reported by project co-lead Rayan Semery-Palumbo, not transcribed from the May 12 recording. Some New York and San Francisco participants are identified by name in the text; other drivers remain unnamed. The quotations illustrate individual views; they are not representative estimates or endorsements of the report.

18. Workers First AI Project, literature and public-record review updated through September 23, 2026, documented in the project source archive. The earlier foundation for the review appears in *Research Foundation: The Status and Future of Autonomous Vehicles and Rideshare Driving* (January 2026).

19. Gridwise Analytics, *Autonomous Vehicles Impact Report 2026: How Rideshare Activity and Earnings Are Shifting in AV-Active Markets* (2026), 13, 17, https://7021468.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/7021468/2026%20AV%20Impact%20Report.pdf. Source update: Gridwise Analytics, *Q2 2026 AV Impact Report*, online summary, https://gridwise.io/analytics/2026-av-impact-report, reviewed October 23, 2026. The later summary covers Q2 2024–Q2 2026 and also reports gains, including higher quarterly pay in San Francisco. Both analyses compare market trends without isolating robotaxis' effects. The later full PDF was not reviewed; the broader literature-review cutoff remains September 23, 2026.

20. Workers First AI Project, August 13, 2026, co-lead discussion record, and September 7–23, 2026, internal-review and policy-decision records, unpublished project archive. The August 13 discussion distinguished how much companies must fund for all drivers included in the proposal's loss estimate from how that money is divided among individual drivers but did not settle how to address serious losses concentrated in a particular group, type of driving work, or location. The present requirements for reviewing those concentrated losses and protecting company funding and individual payments against reductions based on job offers or projected earnings are later project judgments accepted by Rayan Semery-Palumbo. The rules limiting borrowing costs and vehicle or license losses to harms that robotaxi service caused or worsened, and preventing overlap among measures of earnings, available paid work, borrowing costs, and vehicle or license value, are also later project judgments accepted after a September 10 external review and a September 23 internal financial-logic review raised the issues. These records do not establish endorsement of the combined rule by participating drivers, advisors, proposal contributors, the co-leads collectively, or the reviewing institution.

21. Workers First AI Project, August 13, 2026, co-lead discussion record, and September 7–14, 2026, internal-review and policy-decision records, unpublished project archive. The August 13 discussion supports separate affected-driver and additional-benefit decisions, representative and multilingual participation, limits on which decisions drivers make, administration by qualified independent professionals, a rule that does not require unanimous support, and duties public officials must keep. The August 13 discussion did not settle one

nationwide group of drivers whose support would be measured, a participation or support threshold, a representative body, the process when officials cannot adopt a benefit decision, or rules for conflicts, appeals, or reporting. The later requirements that both driver decisions succeed, eligible drivers select or approve the benefit in practice, affected drivers shape loss-protection rules, companies cannot manufacture or control driver support, proposals changed in an important way return to the relevant driver process, an independent body hears appeals, and public reporting is required are project policy judgments accepted by Rayan Semery-Palumbo after internal review. The explicit participation-budget requirement is a further project judgment accepted by Rayan Semery-Palumbo during the October 2026 finishing review. The express protection against retaliation is a further project judgment accepted by Rayan Semery-Palumbo during the October 2026 finishing review. The records do not establish that participating drivers, advisors, proposal contributors, or the co-leads collectively endorsed the complete combined rule.

22. Workers First AI Project, *Workers First AI—Driver Support Fund Model*, version 1.2 (2026), unpublished project workbook; Leah Kaplan, Lola Nurullaeva, and John Paul Helveston, "Modeling the Operational and Labor Costs of Autonomous Robotaxi Services," *Transport Policy* 159 (2024): 108–19, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2024.10.010. The project workbook illustrates the total revenue a charge on robotaxi fares could raise before costs. The project workbook does not estimate complete program costs, the total benefits the program would owe, company costs or profit, or financial feasibility. Kaplan, Nurullaeva, and Helveston model day-to-day operating costs and upfront investments under stated assumptions; they do not report any company's current costs or include this report's complete worker and public requirements.

23. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "Automated Vehicle Safety," accessed August 3, 2026, https://www.nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/automated-vehicle-safety. NHTSA describes Level 4 high automation as a system that performs all driving within limited operating conditions without requiring an attentive human driver; the report separately defines the types of commercial passenger service it covers.

24. Waymo, "Sustainability at Waymo," accessed September 23, 2026, https://waymo.com/sustainability/; Baidu, *First Quarter 2026 Results*, May 18, 2026, https://ir.baidu.com/news-releases/news-release-details/baidu-announces-first-quarter-2026-results/. The figures are company-reported and use different definitions.

25. Governor Kathy Hochul, proposal announcement, January 13, 2026; New York State Senate, FY 2027 enacted transportation-budget summary, May 28, 2026; New York State Assembly, S.9008 enacted-budget record, accessed August 18, 2026; Justin Berger, "Atlanta Rideshare Drivers Rally against Waymo Expansion," *Atlanta News First*, July 9, 2026; Council of the District of Columbia, Bill 26-0684, under Council review following a July 13, 2026, public hearing, legislative record and introduction text accessed September 23, 2026, https://lims.dccouncil.gov/Legislation/B26-0684.

26. Cuneyt Dil, "Exclusive: Waymo Expects D.C. Robotaxi Talks to Continue This Summer," *Axios D.C.*, July 20, 2026, https://www.axios.com/local/washington-dc/2026/07/20/waymo-robotaxi-approval-charles-allen-dc-council; Rani Molla, "Robotaxis Are Real Now — So Is the Pushback," *The Verge*, August 24, 2026, https://www.theverge.com/transportation/983765/robotaxi-waymo-zoox-tesla-rules-pushback-nhtsa. Dil reports Waymo's support for the intent to fund programs for workers whose jobs or incomes may change and its objection to the proposed fleet cap. Molla reports a Waymo representative's acknowledgment that autonomous vehicles could displace drivers and that the net effect on jobs remained unknown. These are positions reported in July and August 2026, not commitments to a specific rate, fleet limit, benefit, or this report's two worker requirements.

27. New York City Department of Transportation, "Autonomous Vehicles in New York City," accessed September 23, 2026, https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/motorist/autonomous-vehicles.shtml; New York City Mayor's Office, testing-permit announcement, August 22, 2025, https://www.nyc.gov/mayors-office/news/2025/08/mayor-adams--dot-announce-approval-of-first-application-to-test-.

28. U.S. Department of Transportation, "Inclusive Design Challenge," accessed August 3, 2026, https://www.transportation.gov/accessibility/inclusivedesign. The department identifies barriers involving locating and entering an automated vehicle, securing passengers and mobility equipment, entering information, interacting with the system in routine and emergency situations, and exiting the vehicle.

29. U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 Nonemployer Statistics, "The Gig Picture," released September 29, 2026, https://cdn.www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/visualizations/2026/econ/2024-nes-gig-picture.pdf; "About This Program," https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/nonemployer-statistics/about.html; and "Frequently Asked Questions," questions 1–3, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/nonemployer-statistics/about/faq.html (accessed October 10, 2026). The publication records 1,578,508 individual proprietorships in Taxi and Limousine Service, NAICS 4853, including ride-hailing/ridesharing. Nonemployer businesses have no paid employees, are subject to federal income tax, and generally have annual receipts of at least $1,000. Their work can provide a principal or secondary source of income. Each distinct business income-tax return is counted as a business; these records are not a de-duplicated count of people and do not encompass all passenger-service employment. Couriers and messengers are reported separately and are not included in this figure.

30. New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, *2025 Annual Report*, January 2026, https://www.nyc.gov/assets/tlc/downloads/pdf/annual_report_2025.pdf, PDF page 7, "By the Numbers: Calendar Year 2025"; James A. Parrott, *Revised Expense Model for the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission's High-Volume For-Hire Vehicle Minimum Pay Standard*, December 2024, https://home4.nyc.gov/assets/tlc/downloads/pdf/driver_expense_report.pdf, section 3 and Exhibit 5, PDF pages 12–13. The 179,670 figure covers active taxi/FHV driver licenses as of December 31, 2025, not confirmed working drivers, Uber/Lyft-only drivers, or licenses for vehicles, paratransit or commuter vans. The voluntary survey was emailed to 89,000 drivers with at least 100 trips between November 2023 and May 2024 and received 6,757 responses. Demographic-item totals differ: 3,357 gender responses, 3,337 country-of-birth responses and 3,305 race/ethnicity responses. The report discusses higher-hour drivers' overrepresentation. These local survey findings are not a national profile or this project's participant demographics.

31. Workers First AI Project, driver interview and group-discussion records concerning scheduling, caregiving, health, school, and other work, 2026, unpublished project archive; Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, *Report on the Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2024*, "Employment and Gig Work," table 6 (May 2025), https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/2025-economic-well-being-of-us-households-in-2024-employment-and-gig-work.htm. The project records support the driver-specific examples; the Federal Reserve supports the percentages, which refer to people performing short-term tasks through an app or website.

32. Testimony of Crystal Middleton and Jaime Contreras, SEIU 32BJ, Council of the District of Columbia hearing on Bill 26-0684, reported in "Independence and Protection among Themes at Monday's DC Autonomous-Vehicle Hearing," WTOP, July 14, 2026, https://wtop.com/dc/2026/07/independence-and-protection-among-themes-discussed-during-mondays-hearing-on-autonomous-vehicles-in-d-c/.

33. Workers First AI Project, *Research Foundation: The Status and Future of Autonomous Vehicles and Rideshare Driving* (January 2026), unpublished planning document, project archive. The review synthesizes national surveys, local administrative data, and research on work performed through more than one app. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook reported 455,700 taxi-driver, shuttle-driver, and chauffeur jobs in 2025, including 204,200 taxi-driver jobs; it says the taxi-driver category includes ride-hailing drivers and that 86 percent of taxi drivers were self-employed. Those categories do not separately identify the full app-based rideshare, taxi, and black-car workforce. BLS explains that its Current Population Survey questions were not designed to measure rideshare drivers specifically and that occupation-based estimates do not include rideshare work performed in addition to another job. The Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics program excludes self-employed workers. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Taxi Drivers, Shuttle Drivers, and Chauffeurs," last modified August 27, 2026, https://www.bls.gov/ooh/transportation-and-material-moving/taxi-drivers-and-chauffeurs.htm; "FAQs about Data on Electronically Mediated Employment," accessed September 23, 2026, https://www.bls.gov/cps/electronically-mediated-employment-faqs.htm; and "Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Frequently Asked Questions," accessed September 23, 2026, https://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm.

34. New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission rulemaking records and Independent Drivers Guild campaign records concerning IDG's 2017 tipping petition and 2018 minimum-pay campaign; New York Taxi Workers Alliance, "NYTWA Statement on Taxi & Limousine Commission Vote on First-Ever Minimum Pay Standard for Uber Drivers," December 5, 2018, https://www.nytwa.org/statements/2018/12/4/december-5-2018-nytwa-statement-on-taxi-amp-limousine-commission-vote-on-first-ever-minimum-pay-standard-for-uber-drivers, and "All Drivers Come Out for TLC Public Hearing on Driver Pay," October 2, 2018, https://www.nytwa.org/home/2018/10/2/all-drivers-come-out-for-tlc-public-hearing-on-driver-pay; James A. Parrott and Michael Reich, *An Earnings Standard for New York City's App-Based Drivers* (Center for New York City Affairs and UC Berkeley Center on Wage and Employment Dynamics, July 2018). The TLC granted IDG's tipping petition in 2017 and adopted the minimum-pay standard in 2018. The records support crediting both IDG and NYTWA for the pay campaign; they do not identify NYTWA as the source of the tipping petition.

35. Ken Jacobs, Michael Reich, Tynan Challenor, and Aida Farmand, *Gig Passenger and Delivery Driver Pay in Five Metro Areas* (UC Berkeley Labor Center, May 2024), https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/gig-passenger-and-delivery-driver-pay-in-five-metro-areas/; James A. Parrott and Michael Reich, *Rideshare Driver Pay in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Portland* (UC Berkeley Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, January 14, 2026), https://irle.berkeley.edu/publications/irle-policy-brief/rideshare-driver-pay-in-chicago-philadelphia-and-portland/. The five-metro study found that most studied drivers earned less than the applicable minimum wage after expenses when all working time was counted. The cited research supports counting time logged in and available for trips in an hourly pay measure. It does not establish a nationwide prevalence estimate, measure robotaxi-caused loss, or decide whether a local proposal should use total earnings, hourly earnings, or both.

36. James A. Parrott, *Rideshare AVs: A Model for Sharing the Fruits of New Technology with Workers*, proposal submitted to the Workers First AI Project, March 4, 2026, unpublished project archive. The proposal argues that minimum-compensation standards for human drivers should continue alongside phased robotaxi entry. The report's broader worker-protection approach is the project team's synthesis.

37. Workers First AI Project, driver interview and group-discussion records from San Francisco, Atlanta, and New York City, 2026, unpublished project archive; Justin Berger, "Atlanta Rideshare Drivers Rally against Waymo Expansion," *Atlanta News First*, July 9, 2026, https://www.atlantanewsfirst.com/2026/07/10/atlanta-rideshare-drivers-rally-against-waymo-expansion/.

38. Dan Ocampo, "Unpacking Uber and Lyft's Predatory 'Take Rates,'" National Employment Law Project, May 19, 2025, updated July 2025, https://www.nelp.org/insights-research/unpacking-uber-and-lyfts-predatory-take-rates/.

39. Uber, *Unlocking the Promise of Autonomy* (May 2026), 10. Uber's market comparisons are descriptive and do not isolate robotaxi effects.

40. Zhen Yu et al., "Robotaxis Reduce Taxi Drivers' Income," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 13, art. 629 (2026), https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-026-07366-x. The study analyzed 206,949 daily operating-income observations from 1,040 traditional taxis in two Wuhan districts from January through August 2024 using a difference-in-differences design, which compared changes over time in a district with robotaxis and one without them. It estimated a 10.9 percent short-run reduction in average daily operating income per taxi in Jiangxia, the district where Apollo Go began service.

41. Workers First AI Project, Driver Survey, 36 responses (2026), unpublished project archive. Thirty-one selected "More than 5 years" for rideshare-app driving tenure; 26 selected "More than 40 hours" for approximate weekly driving hours; and 27 answered yes to driving for more than one app. All three questions have 36 nonblank responses. Hours and experience are self-reported; the results do not measure paid or engaged hours, simultaneous app use or national prevalence.

42. Workers First AI Project, recruitment, interview, survey, and recorded group-discussion records, 2026; California Department of Motor Vehicles, "Autonomous Vehicle Testing Permit Holders," accessed September 15, 2026, https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/vehicle-industry-services/autonomous-vehicles/autonomous-vehicle-testing-permit-holders/; California Public Utilities Commission, "Autonomous Vehicle Program Permits Issued," accessed September 15, 2026, https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/regulatory-services/licensing/transportation-licensing-and-analysis-branch/autonomous-vehicle-programs/autonomous-vehicle-program-permits-issued; California Public Utilities Commission, "CPUC Approves Permits for Cruise and Waymo to Charge Fares for Passenger Service in San Francisco," August 10, 2023; San Francisco City Attorney, "San Francisco Seeks Reprieve from CPUC Decision Allowing Unfettered Autonomous Vehicle Expansion," August 11, 2023; Uber, "Atlanta: The Future Is Here with Waymo and Uber," June 24, 2025; Georgia Senate Bill 219, enacted 2017, O.C.G.A. § 40-8-11; New York City Department of Transportation, "Autonomous Vehicles in New York City," accessed September 23, 2026; New York State Senate, FY 2027 enacted transportation-budget summary, May 28, 2026. The fieldwork was not representative.

43. Workers First AI Project, Driver Survey, 36 responses (2026), unpublished project archive. The survey included two descriptions of a proposed temporary monthly payment and instructed that each driver see one before answering what "this idea" felt like. The exported survey data do not identify which description each respondent saw, so these responses do not show whether the wording changed respondents' answers. Nine respondents selected charity, nine selected severance, six selected transition support, five selected recognition of something earned, and seven were unsure.

44. Workers First AI Project, Atlanta recorded group discussion, May 29, 2026, 24:07–25:00, 39:58–41:18, 57:51–58:03, and 60:13–61:01, unpublished project archive. The passages support the participants' discussion of finding others, contacting officials, petitions, New York driver protests, and unequal platform reach. The recommendations for paid, accessible participation and organizing free from company control are the project team's synthesis, not a claim that participants endorsed the final design.

45. Workers First AI Project, driver interview, survey, and group-discussion records concerning continued work, loss protection, recognition, and transition benefits, 2026. Unpublished project archive; synthesized without identifying individual participants.

46. Workers First AI Project, August 13, 2026, co-lead discussion and decision record, unpublished project archive; Tash Diallo, *Mobility Transition & Resilience Fund*; Laura Beltrán Figueroa, *Autonomous Vehicle Workforce Transition Assessment Act*; Predistribution Initiative (PDI), *Driver Equity Transition Stakes (DETS): Turning Autonomous Vehicle Deployment Permits into Worker Ownership* and advisory supplement; and Oyindamola Ijewere, *Retraining and an Employee Ownership Trust*, proposals submitted to the Workers First AI Project, 2026, unpublished project archive; Rayan Semery-Palumbo, *Recovering Wages and Wealth: What We Deserve in the Age of AI* (Economic Security Project, May 5, 2026), https://economicsecurityproject.org/resource/recovering-wages-and-wealth/; and *Approaching Structural Equality: Reshaping American Meritocracy towards Greater Fairness for Essential Workers* (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2025), https://doi.org/10.5287/ora-vmn0dongp. Diallo and Beltrán Figueroa developed distinct elements for stabilizing income and supporting workers. PDI, Ijewere, and Semery-Palumbo's prior work separately contribute to the rationale for recognizing drivers' past contribution. The project team developed the two worker requirements, the funding timing and priority, and the test that the benefit should improve drivers' security, opportunity, or freedom over their time. Citing a source does not imply endorsement.

47. California Public Utilities Commission, Decision 24-11-002 (November 7, 2024), https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M546/K031/546031802.PDF, and "Quarterly Reporting," accessed August 4, 2026, https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/regulatory-services/licensing/transportation-licensing-and-analysis-branch/autonomous-vehicle-programs/quarterly-reporting; New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, "Data and Research," accessed August 4, 2026, https://www.nyc.gov/site/tlc/about/data-and-research.page, high-volume for-hire service reporting rules, and driver-pay rules.

48. Uber, "Autonomous Vehicles Are Coming to More Cities," May 13, 2026; Uber, *Unlocking the Promise of Autonomy* (May 2026), 9–10; Axios, "Exclusive: Uber Tries a Different Playbook with Robotaxi Policy Push," May 8, 2026, https://www.axios.com/2026/05/08/uber-trobotaxi-policy-paper.

49. Workers First AI Project, literature and public-record review updated through September 23, 2026, documented in the project source archive. The review identified no published U.S. study combining records from robotaxi operators and rideshare platforms to estimate changes in drivers' work and income and robotaxi service's contribution to them.

50. Workers First AI Project, August 13, 2026, co-lead discussion and decision record on workforce measurement, how support should be divided, and driver participation; New York City group discussion, May 12, 2026, concerning data, accountability, and driver representation; and Atlanta group discussion, May 29, 2026, concerning fare transparency and collective voice,

unpublished project archive. The project team synthesized the co-lead decision record and the New York City and Atlanta group discussions into the recommendation that affected drivers help identify relevant outcomes and review how evidence is used. The group-discussion participants were not a representative sample, and participation in a group discussion does not imply endorsement of the report or its recommendations.

51. A proposal submitted without attribution concerning a review process that adjusts as new data arrive and requires standardized reporting from robotaxi operators, submitted to the Workers First AI Project, 2026, unpublished project archive.

52. Tash Diallo, *Mobility Transition & Resilience Fund*; Devesh Kodnani and Emily Lemmerman, *Optimal Gradualism: A Managed Transition to Autonomous Vehicles*; Jacob Leibenluft, *An Automation Fund for Rideshare Worker Transition*; and Laura Beltrán Figueroa, *Autonomous Vehicle Workforce Transition Assessment Act*. Proposals submitted to the Workers First AI Project, 2026, unpublished project archive. The report combines and changes elements of those sources and a proposal submitted without attribution cited separately; none supplied the complete approach.

53. Workers First AI Project, advisory review records concerning funding, benefits, licensing, service limits, eligibility, governance, worker control, public uses, applying the approach to other sectors, and putting it into practice, May–June 2026, unpublished project archive. The report uses or presents parts of this feedback without adopting every position.

54. Workers First AI Project, driver interview and group-discussion records concerning company responsibility, public resources, and neighborhood effects, 2026. Unpublished project archive; synthesized without identifying individual participants.

55. James A. Parrott, *Rideshare AVs: A Model for Sharing the Fruits of New Technology with Workers*, March 2026 submission, and *License Royalty and Minimum Compensation*, April 2026 advisor-packet version, unpublished project archive. The proposals develop voluntary license sale, continuing royalties, minimum compensation, and gradual autonomous entry. The April version supplies the valuation and market-concentration discussion used in the text.

56. Uber, *Unlocking the Promise of Autonomy* (May 2026), 11.

57. Matthew Tarduno, "Elasticities and Tax Incidence in Urban Ridesharing Markets: Evidence from Chicago," *Journal of Urban Economics* 150 (2025): 103809, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jue.2025.103809. The study estimates who ultimately bore the cost of a tax in Chicago's human-driven rideshare market. The Chicago study does not estimate the effects of a robotaxi charge; the report uses it only to show that the person or company legally required to pay may pass some of the cost to someone else.

58. Laura Beltrán Figueroa, *Autonomous Vehicle Workforce Transition Assessment Act*; Tash Diallo, *Mobility Transition & Resilience Fund*; Jacob Leibenluft, *An Automation Fund for Rideshare Worker Transition*; and Rocky Mountain Employee Ownership Center, *Democratizing Progress: Leveraging Autonomization to Fund Cooperative Membership, Job Retraining, Health Insurance, and Preferential Procurement*. Proposals submitted to the Workers First AI Project, 2026, unpublished project archive. The report presents ways the proposals would calculate company contributions and does not adopt any proposal in full.

59. Predistribution Initiative, *Driver Equity Transition Stakes (DETS): Turning Autonomous Vehicle Deployment Permits into Worker Ownership*; Kate Swain-Smith, *Driver Transition Funds: From Stakeholder to Shareholder*; Graeme Nuttall OBE and the

Institute for the Future of Work, proposal for a driver ownership trust; Renan Magalhães, proposals concerning collective ownership and driver cooperatives; Ariana R. Levinson, *Driver Ownership of Passenger Transportation Companies*; and Rocky Mountain Employee Ownership Center, proposal concerning an equity fund and cooperatives. Proposals submitted to the Workers First AI Project, 2026, unpublished project archive. The report treats the proposals as distinct revenue-sharing and ownership routes and does not adopt any proposal in full.

60. Jacob Leibenluft, *An Automation Fund for Rideshare Worker Transition*, March 2026 submission, and *Worker-Elected Automation Committee*, April 2026 advisor-packet revision, submitted to the Workers First AI Project, unpublished project archive. The proposal developed a worker-inclusive committee to direct a dedicated automation revenue stream and shape the support available to drivers. The report's division of authority among driver representatives, qualified administrators, and public officials is the project team's later synthesis and does not adopt the proposal in full.

61. A proposal submitted without attribution concerning a charge on each newly deployed autonomous vehicle during its first defined block of trips, submitted to the Workers First AI Project, 2026, unpublished project archive.

62. Devesh Kodnani and Emily Lemmerman, *Optimal Gradualism: A Managed Transition to Autonomous Vehicles*, March and April 2026 versions, unpublished project archive; Brian M. Rosenthal, "'They Were Conned': How Reckless Loans Devastated a Generation of Taxi Drivers," *New York Times*, May 19, 2019; New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, "Taxi Medallion Owner Relief Program," accessed August 26, 2026, https://www.nyc.gov/site/tlc/about/taxi-medallion-owner-relief-program.page. The March proposal used annual auctions with recurring payments for each vehicle. The advisor-packet revision used one upfront payment for an operating right that would not expire. The report does not combine those terms or reproduce the proposal's figures.

63. Predistribution Initiative, *Driver Equity Transition Stakes (DETS): Turning Autonomous Vehicle Deployment Permits into Worker Ownership* and advisory supplement. Unpublished project archive, 2026. The DETS materials identify PDI as the public author.

64. Andy Stern, *Capturing Automation Windfalls: A Driver Dividend Framework for Autonomous Mobility*, proposal submitted to the Workers First AI Project, 2026, unpublished project archive. Stern developed several ways of calculating what companies would contribute and flexible forms of driver support. The report credits the supplied design without implying that Economic Security Project or SEIU submitted or endorsed it.

65. David McCabe, "Why Waymo's Driverless Taxis Won't Be on Your Streets Anytime Soon," *New York Times*, June 17, 2026. McCabe reported that Waymo representatives floated a roughly $20 million fund for taxi drivers and other workers displaced by the technology and that union representatives considered the amount too small.

66. Council of the District of Columbia, Bill 26-0684, introduced May 1, 2026; Massachusetts Acts of 2016, ch. 187, § 8, https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2016/Chapter187, and Acts of 2026, ch. 101, §§ 27–28, https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2026/Chapter101; Illinois Public Act 104-0788, approved and effective August 7, 2026.

67. Workers First AI Project, driver interview and group-discussion records concerning fleet expansion, paid work, and proposed initial service limits, 2026. Unpublished project archive; synthesized without identifying individual participants.

68. Tash Diallo, *Mobility Transition & Resilience Fund*, March 2026 submission, and *The Deployment Gate*, April 2026 advisor-packet version, submitted to the Workers First AI Project, unpublished project archive. The April proposal compares projected displacement with the number of drivers the funded support system could serve, slows or pauses expansion when that comparison or published performance measures are missed, provides defined levels of support with targets for payment speed, and keeps minimum company obligations in force while service remains limited. The report presents the proposal as one option and does not adopt its automatic formula as a rule for every local proposal.

69. A proposal submitted without attribution concerning service limits tied to verified active human driving, passenger demand, and the relative number of passenger trips completed by human-driven and autonomous vehicles, 2026, unpublished project archive. The proposal develops an initial service-area limit, periodic review, a correction for the difference in passenger trips completed per vehicle, standardized company reporting, worker consultation, continued entry for new human drivers, separate transition funding, and a rule under which an established limit may stay the same or rise but not fall. The test for involuntary reductions in human driving and the requirement that applicable law allow public officials to maintain, reduce, suspend, or end service are project additions.

70. Workers First AI Project, participating-driver interviews and group discussions in New York City, San Francisco, and Atlanta, 2026, unpublished project archive. Participating drivers discussed service requiring a licensed human driver, rider choice, reserved human-driven service, and fare standards. The record includes both ideas participants introduced and responses to choices presented by the project. The report credits the views collectively; no individual attribution is made.

71. New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, "Green Rides," *February 2026 For-Hire Vehicle License Review: Report and Determination*, and "Get a For-Hire Vehicle License"; Council of the District of Columbia, Bill 26-0684, introduced May 1, 2026, §§ 3a-2(a), (d)–(e), https://lims.dccouncil.gov/downloads/LIMS/61803/Introduction/B26-0684-Introduction.pdf. The sources document specific New York City and District of Columbia examples; the report does not use them to establish public authority in another place.

72. James A. Parrott, *Revised Expense Model for the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission's High-Volume For-Hire Vehicle Minimum Pay Standard* (report for the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, December 2024), https://www.nyc.gov/assets/tlc/downloads/pdf/driver_expense_report.pdf. Parrott's report estimates vehicle expenses for New York City's minimum-pay standard. It does not provide a method for measuring robotaxi-related loss, deciding whether to use total net earnings, net earnings per hour, or both, or resolving overlap among the measures used here.

73. Rayan Semery-Palumbo, *Recovering Wages and Wealth: What We Deserve in the Age of AI* (Economic Security Project, May 5, 2026), https://economicsecurityproject.org/resource/recovering-wages-and-wealth/; Rayan Semery-Palumbo, "Approaching Structural Equality: Reshaping American Meritocracy towards Greater Fairness for Essential Workers" (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2025), https://doi.org/10.5287/ora-vmn0dongp. Semery-Palumbo's cited sources support the conceptual distinction between loss compensation and recognition of past contribution; the cited sources do not establish that the report's specific benefit design will work. Oyindamola Ijewere, *Retraining and an Employee Ownership Trust*, proposal submitted to the Workers First AI Project, 2026, unpublished project archive, separately develops the argument that drivers helped build the market. The report's policy judgment does not treat past work by itself as an existing legal ownership interest or as a right to any particular form of benefit.

74. A proposal submitted without attribution concerning a fund and cash payments, submitted to the Workers First AI Project, 2026, unpublished project archive; Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend Division, "Historical Timeline," accessed August 3, 2026, https://pfd.alaska.gov/division-info/historical-timeline; Economic Security Project, *The Guaranteed Income Blueprint*, March 14, 2024, https://economicsecurityproject.org/resource/gi-blueprint/; KyungSun Lee and Madeline Neighly, *The Power of Cash: How Guaranteed Income Can Strengthen Worker Power* (Economic Security Project, May 1, 2023), https://economicsecurityproject.org/resource/the-power-of-cash/. The public sources support general properties of cash payments, not endorsement of this robotaxi proposal.

75. Building Service Employees' International Union, statement prepared for the National Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Progress, in *Statements Relating to the Impact of Technological Change*, Appendix vol. 6 (February 1966), 57.

76. Building Service Employees' International Union, statement prepared for the National Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Progress, in *Statements Relating to the Impact of Technological Change*, Appendix vol. 6 (February 1966), 57. The union described jobs left unfilled after incumbents departed as losses through attrition, "or what has been called 'silent firings.'"

77. Colorado S.B. 24-075 (2024), codified at Colo. Rev. Stat. § 8-4-127; Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, "Transportation Network Company" and INFO no. 23B, accessed August 4, 2026, https://cdle.colorado.gov/dlss/labor-laws-by-topic/transportation-network-company-tnc; Black Car Fund, "History" and "F.A.Q.s.," accessed August 3, 2026, https://www.nybcf.org/history. These programs illustrate driver services and benefits; they do not determine which services a robotaxi policy should provide.

78. Workers First AI Project, driver interview, survey, and group-discussion records, 2026, unpublished project archive. The detailed ownership routes and their proposal sources appear in "Other Approaches Worth Considering." Training and new-work standards have separate sources; this note does not imply that the report adopted every submitted ownership or training design.

79. Tash Diallo, *Mobility Transition & Resilience Fund*, March 2026, unpublished project archive; Laura Beltrán Figueroa, *Autonomous Vehicle Workforce Transition Assessment Act*, April 2026 advisor-packet version; Oyindamola Ijewere, *Retraining and an Employee Ownership Trust*, March 2026, unpublished project archive; Workers First AI Project archive, written labor-principles response concerning a substantive role for

drivers in shaping autonomous-vehicle rules and decisions, independent safety evidence, local control, company-funded support, jobs related to autonomous-vehicle services or meaningful financial support and training for new careers, standards protecting drivers' access to paid trips alongside earnings protections, public-transit contributions, and disabled-vehicle responsibilities, May 15, 2026, unpublished.

80. Advisory review concerning support for every driver without conditions, dignity, simple administration, and the risks of burdensome paperwork, proof, and stigma, June 2026, unpublished project archive. The report adopts the principle that drivers should face as little paperwork and proof as possible without making every driver eligible for every payment or benefit the two requirements provide.

81. Workers First AI Project, available advisor review records concerning how benefits should be divided, May 15–June 1, 2026, unpublished project archive; Semery-Palumbo, *Recovering Wages and Wealth*; Semery-Palumbo, "Approaching Structural Equality." These sources inform those questions; they do not establish that any one formula will work.

82. Workers First AI Project, interviews and group discussions with participating drivers in New York City, San Francisco, and Atlanta, 2026, unpublished project archive. The report credits these views collectively.

83. Workers First AI Project, participating-driver records; Marco Lomuscio and Simona Ciappei, proposal on worker participation, rider choice, and service design; Catherine Lynch, proposal on employee-owned fleets, lanes reserved exclusively for manually driven vehicles, zone restrictions, and caps on robotaxi expansion; and a written labor-principles response calling for continuing human routes within a mixed human and autonomous network. Unpublished project archive, 2026.

84. Bob Wright, *Helping Hand*, proposal concerning service diversification for drivers. Unpublished project archive, 2026.

85. Andrew Greenblatt, National Policy Director for the Independent Drivers Union, memorandum developing a proposal linking robotaxi growth to verified reductions in active human driving, May 26, 2026, unpublished project archive. The memorandum was transmitted through the Independent Drivers Guild advisory process. Greenblatt developed the proposal. Neither organization is presented as its author or as endorsing the report.

86. Jillian Arnold, advisory review record, May 2026, and approval of the proposed named-credit sentences, August 31, 2026, unpublished project archive.

87. Dawood Mian, Founder and Publisher of AutoMarketplace, original submission and April 2026 advisor-reviewed revision concerning conversion of existing New York City vehicle licenses, unpublished project archive. The revision supplies the differentiated payments, medallion and retirement priority, oversight board, income-based pause, ownership limits, divestiture, and continued fee on each trip that funds driver benefits described in the text.

88. A proposal submitted without attribution concerning an invested transition fund, submitted to the Workers First AI Project, 2026, unpublished project archive.

89. Angelina Grigoryeva, "The Shift to Stock-Based Compensation and Gender Inequality in Wealth in the United States," *Socio-Economic Review* 23, no. 2 (2025): 541–566, https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwaf009; and Grigoryeva, proposal concerning employee ownership and equity stakes, unpublished project archive, 2026. The published article supports the statement about gender differences in receipt of employer stock and wealth gains; the proposal supports the caution about workers who cannot afford to hold shares.

90. Graeme Nuttall OBE and the Institute for the Future of Work, proposal for a driver ownership trust and advisor-packet revision, unpublished project archive, 2026. The proposal adapts the employee ownership trust so that the trust holds shares collectively — with no individual share awards — for workers and former workers regardless of employment classification. It specifies protection against new shares shrinking the trust's percentage ownership, enhanced voting and veto rights, a trustee board mainly of elected or selected worker representatives, profit-sharing, and worker benefit from sale proceeds on a takeover. The report describes the proposal and does not adopt it in full. Nuttall serves as an IFOW trustee and as International Ambassador for the Employee Ownership Association.

91. Oyindamola Ijewere, *Retraining and an Employee Ownership Trust*, proposal submitted to the Workers First AI Project, March 2026, unpublished project archive. The proposal conditions commercial autonomous operating permits on an equity transfer to a permanent employee ownership trust and a funded retraining, apprenticeship, and placement program. The report describes the proposal and does not adopt it in full.

92. Renan Magalhães, proposals concerning collective ownership and driver-owned service; Catherine Lynch, employee-owned fleet proposal; Marco Lomuscio and Simona Ciappei, proposal concerning rider choice, service design, and platform cooperatives; Rocky Mountain Employee Ownership Center, proposal concerning an equity fund and cooperatives; and participating-driver records. Unpublished project archive, 2026.

93. Ariana R. Levinson, proposal concerning bargaining for ownership, a worker-owned cooperative that organizes drivers and bargains with platform companies to hire them, and a worker-owned enterprise, unpublished project archive, 2026.

94. New York City, *Vision Zero Reimagined: A New Action Plan for Road Safety* (released September 15, 2026), 22, 69, 96, https://www.nyc.gov/assets/visionzero/downloads/pdf/Vision-Zero-Reimagined-2026.pdf.

95. Predistribution Initiative, *Driver Equity Transition Stakes: Rate Sensitivity Analysis, Governance Enforcement Mechanisms, Multi-Jurisdiction Portability, and Hybrid Equity-Wealth Structure*, April 19, 2026, advisory supplement to *Driver Equity Transition Stakes (DETS): Turning Autonomous Vehicle Deployment Permits into Worker Ownership*, unpublished project archive. The supplement proposes agreements under which several cities adopt worker requirements at the same time, along with state laws giving cities authority to adopt them, in response to companies choosing the most permissive jurisdiction and cities struggling to act together. The DETS materials identify PDI as the public author.

96. National Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Progress, *Technology and the American Economy*, vol. 1 (February 1966), 32–33, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED023803.pdf. The Commission concluded that technological change could support economic progress while its burdens and benefits still needed to be distributed fairly. This report draws only that general historical

principle; it does not adopt the Commission's complete analysis or recommendations.

97. California Proposition 22, approved November 3, 2020, codified at California Business and Professions Code §§ 7448–7467; *Castellanos v. State of California*, 16 Cal. 5th 588 (2024); Workers First AI Project, San Francisco driver-interview and recorded group-discussion records, 2026, unpublished project archive. Proposition 22 created an independent-contractor framework with benefit guarantees for qualifying app-based drivers. The California Supreme Court held that Business and Professions Code § 7451 did not conflict with article XIV, § 4 of the California Constitution. Drivers described living through the campaign and its aftermath; their accounts, the public record, and the co-leads' assessment inform the report's characterization. The report takes no position on employment classification.

98. Workers First AI Project, advisory review records concerning ways to combine or separate policy choices; combinations of funding, the pace of robotaxi service, ownership, and verification; data disclosure; passenger demand and worker displacement; who ultimately bears the cost of company charges; independently verifiable earnings measures; and gradual earnings erosion, May–June 2026, unpublished project archive. The project team made the final structural and policy decisions.