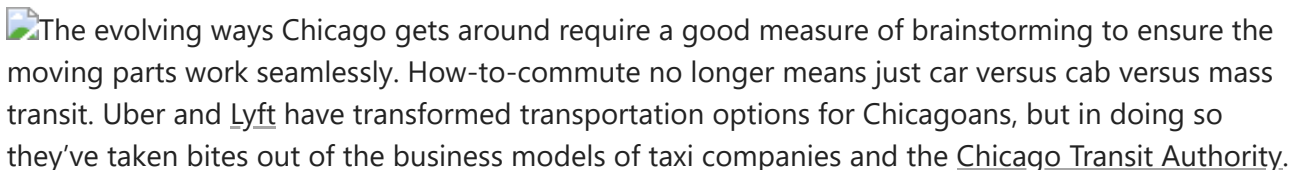


Will Chicago's next mayor exploit an opportunity to improve transit?

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Editorial Board

The evolving ways Chicago gets around require a good measure of brainstorming to ensure the moving parts work seamlessly. How-to-commute no longer means just car versus cab versus mass transit. Uber and Lyft have transformed transportation options for Chicagoans, but in doing so they've taken bites out of the business models of taxi companies and the [Chicago Transit Authority](#).

Then there's car sharing, [Divvy](#), dockless bike-share, scooter mania and the eventuality of driverless vehicles — and who knows, maybe some sort of low-altitude, airborne transportation. Hey, should Chicago resurrect trolleys? Will our grandchildren ride monorails or zip through tunnels in pods? Without smart planning to separate winning ideas from losers, Chicago risks worsening its gridlock — and squandering limited resources.

Way back on Aug. 31, before we knew he was leaving office, Mayor [Rahm Emanuel](#) said former U.S. Transportation Secretary [Ray LaHood](#) would lead a task force to set goals and guidelines for emerging modes of transportation.

The group will include Brenna Berman, executive director of City Tech Collaborative, the city's technology innovation arm, and people from government, academia, business and neighborhood development. "We are going to bring the best and brightest together to help inform Chicago on how to move forward and maintain our status as a leader in transportation," Emanuel said.

If this works well, a Chicago task force will render some unified, coherent view of this city's transportation future. As is, the Chicago Department of Transportation oversees much of how we all get from A to B. The City Council legislates on transportation issues. Even as ride-share siphons ridership from the CTA, the agency struggles to improve service and security so Chicagoans stick with mass transit. And when it comes to brainstorming, the region's Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning seeks solutions to today's and tomorrow's transportation conundrums.

Task forces like the one Emanuel is convening can help if they incubate the strongest ideas to pursue and incinerate the weakest. Too often, though, task forces produce reports that sit on shelves and grow dust.

To keep that from happening as Emanuel leaves City Hall:

Let's first thank LaHood and everyone on his task force for their future months of thoughtful work.

But the mission of delivering transportation solutions will rise or fall on the ambition and vision of Emanuel's successor. Although Emanuel won't be around, he's done Chicagoans a favor by interjecting transportation planning into Chicago's civic conversation at the same time a mayoral campaign plays out.

Note to candidates: Transportation infrastructure is the vascular system of this metropolis. Yes, you already have plenty of topics — city finances, education, street violence — to discuss with Chicago voters. Yet the ways in which officials of us-uber-lyft-lahood-rahm-20180905-story.html is just as vital to the Chicago future

that one of you will guide.

In this campaign, we anticipate hearing your bold transportation ideas. And we hope the next mayor exploits this opportunity to improve how all of us navigate Chicago.

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