

# OPEN MOBILITY FOUNDATION

## SUMMARY REPORT TO THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION



July 2020

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### OVERVIEW

This report provides a summary of the progress and activities of the Open Mobility Foundation since our interim report in March. We have continued our efforts to build the structure and capacity of OMF while adjusting our approach to adapt to disruptions caused by COVID-19. We have made significant progress in hiring staff and creating a detailed roadmap for our work. Public and private membership growth has continued, though at a slower pace than anticipated earlier in the year. We have continued to expand the capacity of our committees and working groups to deliver outputs, and we have begun to explore several new areas in which to expand our efforts. The next few years is likely to see a great deal of change in urban transportation and we feel prepared to adapt to the needs of our members as long-term trends become clearer.

### KEY ACTIVITIES

#### Hiring

The OMF has successfully filled both of its open positions. [Michael Schnuerle](#) joined as our Director of Open Source Operations in April and [Angela Giacchetti](#) joined as our Member Engagement Manager in July. These two roles are essential for building our capacity and we are very confident that our new hires will create a step change in our ability to implement the OMF vision. No additional hires are planned for the immediate future, however, we will continue to revisit our hiring roadmap as our membership revenues grow.

#### Architectural Landscape and Member Engagement Roadmap

The OMF has finalized our first [Architectural Landscape](#) to document our product vision, technology architecture, and approach to development. The landscape also speaks to the public/societal outcomes we hope are enabled through our work.

This project, led by IBI Group, involved extensive stakeholder engagement and multiple rounds of feedback. Though largely complete in April, the process of getting final consensus from the Technology Council and Board of Directors proved quite a bit longer than

anticipated, and small, but substantive changes were needed in several sections. The final product reflects a great deal of work on both content and in building internal alignment amongst the membership, and we expect it will serve us well. We expect to revisit the document again next year as part of a regular review / revision cycle.

We have also completed a [Member Engagement Roadmap](#) with the help of consultants CityFi. This roadmap provides a path for developing non-technical programming (webinars, content, events, etc.) to benefit our membership and promote our vision for the role of cities, open-source, and public/private collaboration in the management of transportation services. Executing on the roadmap will be the primary responsibility of the Member Engagement Manager.

### **Exploring curb management and passenger services**

At our January Member Meeting, we did a number of breakout sessions to brainstorm how we might work in areas beyond micromobility. We have continued to explore these areas and have focused on passenger services (ridehail, taxi, robotaxi, microtransit, etc.) and curb management as two key areas for future work. We have launched a Passenger Services Exploratory Committee to map out our goals in the space. We are also in the process of launching a curb working group, while simultaneously exploring the potential for a collaboration with [MobilityData](#) in this area.

### **Membership Growth**

We have continued our efforts to recruit new commercial and city members. Since our last update San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), Atlanta Regional Council, and Open Mobility in the Nordics (ODIN) have joined as new public sector members. On the commercial side, Ride Report, Waymo, and Ford AV have joined. The latter two are particularly significant as they both represent private sector participation related to our areas of future work in passenger services and curb management.

### **Focus on data privacy**

Our Privacy, Security, and Transparency Committee has been hard at work on a number of deliverables.

- We have created a “[state of practice](#)” document to collect technical and policy resources related to mobility data privacy.
- We are in the process of finalizing a Privacy Guide for Cities to offer information and advice on key topics for consideration by public agencies working with mobility data. Key topics include:
  - Implementation planning (including use case identification, legal review, and public engagement)
  - Risk management (data minimization, retention, access controls)
  - Sharing with other agencies and researchers
  - Public records and open data disclosure.
- In partnership with NUMO and NABSA, the OMF has embarked on an effort to establish a set of [privacy principles for mobility data](#) that could be adopted by the participating organizations, cities, and private companies in the space. This project is bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders, some of whom have been in public conflict on issues related to data privacy. While the goal of establishing a shared set of principles is ambitious, if successful, it could have a significant positive impact by creating some common ground among all participants in the mobility data ecosystem.

In addition to the work above, there are a number of recent or proposed changes to the Mobility Data Specification itself that would provide more flexibility when it comes to privacy by reducing the amount of data that needs to be captured and retained to achieve certain use cases. We expect privacy to be a continued focus for the OMF, in the design of our technology and the adjacent resources we create.

### **Ongoing delivery of work**

The OMF City Services and Provider Services Working Groups completed a new version of the Mobility Data Specification (1.0.0) on July 1st. It is currently undergoing final review and approval by the OMF Technology Council and Board of Directors. [This new version](#) brings a significant reconciliation of several previously disparate elements of the MDS, adds support for docked bikeshare systems, and gives cities the ability to express pricing/fee policies via API.

## **CHALLENGES AND LEARNINGS**

### **Adapting to a virtual world**

Like organizations around the world, we have had to adapt in light of COVID-19. Our previously robust calendar of in-person meetings, events, and conference participation has gone virtual. We have established a regular cadence of virtual board meetings and have developed, but not yet implemented, an alternative member engagement program without in-person events.

The primary purpose and focus of our work has not changed dramatically. A core part of our mission is to make cities more adaptable through the use of data standards and flexible tools for data exchange, decision-making, and policy analysis. COVID-19 has heightened awareness of the need for agile approaches to city transportation and has accelerated the pace of change in many places, with the rapid reallocation of street space for recreation and dining, and faster growth of on-demand delivery services. We continue to see strong engagement from both the public and private sector, and will continue to adapt our roadmap as the focus and needs of our membership evolve.

### **Membership development**

Dues paying commercial members are a key part of OMF's financial sustainability strategy. We continue to see significant interest, but bringing on new members has been a slow process. This has been made slower by the uncertainty brought about by COVID-19 and the ensuing economic downturn. Two of our existing members who have expressed a desire to renew are still working through their internal budgeting and have not yet made their payment for the coming year.

Given the state of the world, we have chosen to focus the past few months on capacity building (especially hiring) rather than on member recruitment. With the recent addition of several staff, we expect to devote more energy to member recruitment in the coming months. In addition to freeing up the Executive Director to be more focused on growth, staff will allow us to deliver more value to members and strengthen our overall value proposition. Although we have a solid base of member revenue, continued growth is necessary to achieve long-term financial stability without ongoing philanthropic support.

## Consensus building

The OMF is a “big tent” organization with many different voices and perspectives represented. Even within our public sector membership, there is not always alignment on where we should focus, especially related to privacy concerns and areas of potential new work. The prolonged Architectural Landscape drafting process highlighted the time required to build consensus around significant decisions and outputs. We are oriented towards consensus action and we are still learning how to better plan for this time and process necessary to establish a shared perspective.

## KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2020

Our key priorities for this year remain unchanged from our EOY update. As you will note above, we have made substantial progress across each of these areas.

- **Deliver useful outputs:** Continue to ship new versions of the MDS specification and reference implementation, produce outputs that advance the state of practice on mobility data privacy and security, and develop and implement a program of member-focused events and content.
- **Improve financial sustainability:** Grow commercial membership to a level that allows for day-to-day operations to be sustained without extensive philanthropic support.
- **Build capacity:** Hire key staff members to provide sustainable support for working groups and committees, and to ensure momentum on key deliverables.
- **Chart future direction:** Publish an Architectural Landscape document and identify a handful of future projects to which the Board is excited to commit time and resources.