

# Air Taxi : Elevating the Future of Urban Mobility



Recently, uber has selected **India** among 5 global locations outside USA for launching UBER ELEVATE. Does this seem to be a reality or dream for India?

Test flights of Uber Air will take place in Dallas-Fort Worth/Frisco Texas and Los Angeles in 2020 with commercial flights starting 2023. One city from among India, Japan, Australia, France and Brazil will be picked as the third, international, destination for Uber Air flights.

## **Why India?**

“The ideal launch city for an urban air taxi is a dense metropolitan area where traffic congestion can mean that even distances of 10-15 kilometres can take an hour. Indian cities qualify quite well.

## **WHAT AIR CRAFT UBER AIR WILL USE**

Since helicopters were found to be costly, high maintenance and noisy, Uber is looking at a new type of aircraft for the Elevate programme. It is planning to use eVTOL aircraft.

This aircraft will be powered by battery, will take off and land vertically, fly the said distance on a single charge and have a certain amount of autonomous ability.

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## **Will the pricing be accessible for regular computer?**

The prices might be prohibitive for the masses. Even if there are a smaller percentage of people that are able to afford at a certain price point, it still can be a very large absolute number (in India).

## **WHAT ARE MAJOR CHALLENGES**

There are many challenges at the moment. To start with, the type of aircraft itself has not been finalized — will it be a winged model, or something that works like a drone? Then there is the challenge around battery which should be able to sustain charge for a 100-km flight.

Then there are the sky ports where the aircraft will take off and land as well as be charged and maintained. These sky ports have to be in central locations for the concept to take off and that will have a huge cost implication.

## **How will air mobility help cut congestion?**

Uber wants to de-hyphenate transportation from surface transport which has always been path-based. Air mobility is node-based and each node can be connected to any of the other nodes. Uber cites the examples of India, where CST to Mumbai airport or a Gurgaon to Connaught Place commute would be reduced to just 10 minutes, thus saving the users at least two hours every day. Uber's estimate is that urban congestion costs India alone \$22 billion a year.