

UTA MICROTRANSIT PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION

Monthly Report, October 2020
Prepared by UTA Innovative Mobility Solutions
Under the Office of Communications and Marketing



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Utah Transit Authority’s Innovative Mobility Solutions Team has partnered with Via to deploy a Microtransit Pilot (Pilot) for one year beginning on November 20, 2019. This on-demand, shared-ride Pilot is designed to expand access to UTA services throughout the zone, to improve mobility for all users, and to provide a quality customer experience. In general, the project team is interested in understanding whether Microtransit provides a valuable and cost-effective service to meet the needs of customers in the region as well as future deployment potential for Microtransit Services in UTA’s Five Year Mobility Plan.

Evaluation Process

To evaluate the Pilot, performance metrics as identified in the Microtransit Evaluation Plan will be collected and reported out monthly. Comprehensive quarterly reports will take place at three-month intervals throughout the project. A final evaluation report will be prepared upon Pilot completion.

October Update

Resurging COVID-19 cases across Utah continue to have a significant impact on the pilot’s performance.¹ Ridership declined by 6% in October after a solid September, which is a typical seasonal trend for UTA. Utilization increased by 7% and costs per rider fell by 7% due to selective trimming of driver hours.

Overall Health of Pilot Project

Pilot Objective	Key Performance Metric	JUL 2020	AUG 2020	SEP 2020	OCT 2020
Ridership	Total ridership	3,557	4,063	4,699	4,401
	Avg. weekday ridership	155	193	214	200
	Utilization ²	1.06	1.50	1.59	1.71
Customer Experience	Avg. wait time (minutes)	9	12	12	13
	Avg. customer rating ³	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8
Overall Performance	Cost per rider	\$34.06	\$25.01	\$23.11	\$21.43
	Days of operation	23	21	22	22

Key:

	= On target		= Approaching target		= Not on original, pre-COVID-19 target
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¹ On September 28th Utah's rolling seven-day average number of new daily cases broke 1,000 for the first time since the pandemic began. Utah COVID-19 response website:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cabf07b39a6046ee992f1630949a7c80>

² Utilization – Average riders per hour per vehicle

³ Avg. customer rating – Based on a scale of 1 to 5

HOW COVID-19 HAS IMPACTED UTA AND THE MICROTRANSIT PILOT

UTAH DIRECTIVES, PUBLIC HEALTH AND TRANSPORTATION

These are extraordinary times here in Utah and throughout the world. On March 11th the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. On March 27th Utah Governor Herbert issued a “Stay Safe, Stay Home” directive to all Utahns to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission and minimize the impact on hospitals.⁴ According to the Wasatch Front Regional Council, the pandemic decreased traffic volumes to transit stations by 38%, reduced congestion and travel times, and limited transit use.⁵

IMPACT TO UTA⁶

As part of the ongoing effort to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus and ensure fiscal responsibility, UTA implemented temporary service reductions from April through August. In addition, UTA has taken measures to promote social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect riders and employees. UTA advised people to limit their transit use to the essential trips outlined by local and state leadership. Changes included:

- Requiring passengers to wear a face mask
- Partitions between drivers and passengers
- Rear door bus boarding
- Asking passengers to stay 6-feet back from bus operators
- Daily cleaning and disinfecting of all vehicles



Like other transit agencies across the country, UTA has seen a significant decrease in ridership due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Average weekday ridership declined systemwide by 59% in October compared to last year.

IMPACT TO MICROTRANSIT PILOT

The microtransit pilot adopted social distancing and right-sizing of services similar to UTA’s adjustments in response to the pandemic. Changes included:

- Encouraging passengers to sit in the seat farthest from the driver
- Reduced maximum passengers allowed from 6 to 3
- Reduced vehicle supply to meet demand and achieve cost savings
- Providing face masks to drivers and riders
- Daily cleaning and disinfecting of all vehicles
- Installation of plexiglass partitions between driver and riders



Like other UTA services, the microtransit pilot ridership has declined significantly due to COVID-19. This has made it difficult to achieve the original ridership and ridership-related metrics.

⁴ Utah COVID-19 response website: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cabf07b39a6046ee992f1630949a7c80>

⁵ WFRG report: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yfrLHwpmEERRzXZd-3uATTIUv-ZBLd7vIODi8gmCi0/edit>

⁶ UTA COVID-19 update website: <https://www.rideuta.com/Rider-Info/Coronavirus-COVID-19-Updates>

PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Monthly Data Table

MICROTRANSIT PILOT OBJECTIVE	METRIC	GOAL	ACTUAL: TOTAL	ACTUAL: WAV ⁷ ONLY
RIDERSHIP	Total ridership	N/A	4,401	117
	Avg. weekday ridership	350 – 450	200	5
	Avg. riders per hour per vehicle (utilization)	2.5 - 4.5	1.7	N/A
	WAV request %	2.5% - 5.0%	N/A	2.7%
	First mile/last mile connections to transit	25%	32%	N/A
	Shared rides %	25%	16%	N/A
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	Avg. customer rating	4.80 out of 5.00	4.84	4.84
	Average wait time	< 15 minutes	13	18
	On time pick up %	95%	88%	76%
	Avg. minutes per ride (trip duration)	N/A	13	13
	Avg. miles per ride (trip distance)	N/A	3.8	3.1
	Avg. travel time (trip speed v. driving)	< 3.0 minutes per mile	3.4	4.2
OVERALL PERFORMANCE	Operating cost budget	\$162,269	\$94,313	N/A
	Operating hours budget	4,407	2,574	N/A
	Operating miles	N/A	37,308	N/A
	Cost per hour ⁸ budget	\$36.82	\$36.62	N/A
	Cost per rider	< \$13.08	\$21.43	N/A
	Cost per mile	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Safe operations	Avoidable accidents < 1 per 100,000 miles	1 ⁹	N/A
	Trips booked through Via's call center	N/A	3%	26%
	Fares from credit cards ¹⁰	N/A	\$2,643	N/A

⁷ WAV – Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle. Three of the 17 Via vehicles are WAVs.

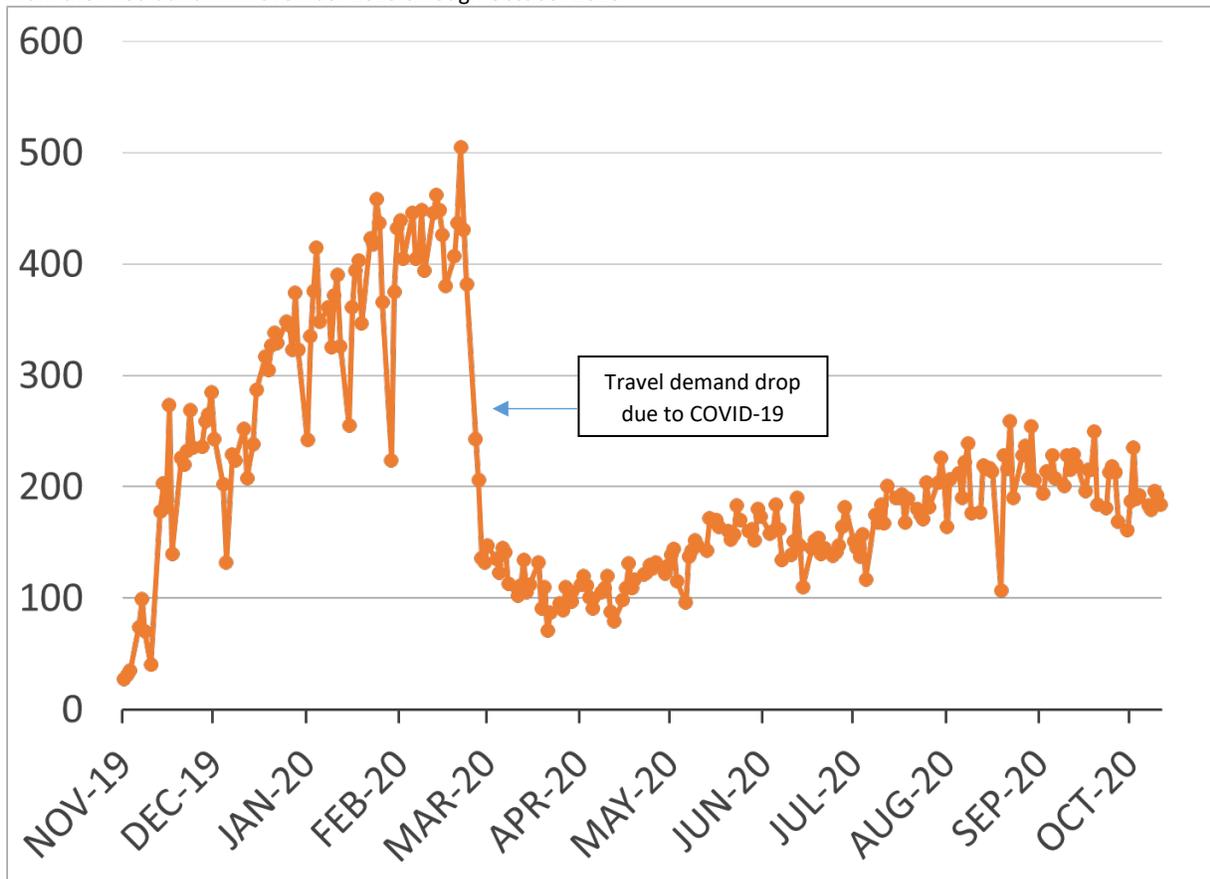
⁸ Cost per hour – Fully allocated; includes operating and capital costs. Excludes marketing expenses.

⁹ Safe operations – One avoidable accident reported by Via on October 8, 2020.

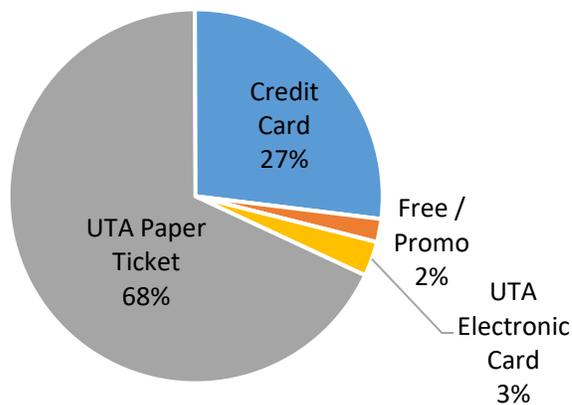
¹⁰ Fares from credit cards – Includes credit card, debit card, Apple Pay and Google Pay.

Graphic 1. Daily Ridership

From the Pilot launch in November 2019 through October 2020



Graphic 2. Fare Revenue by Type

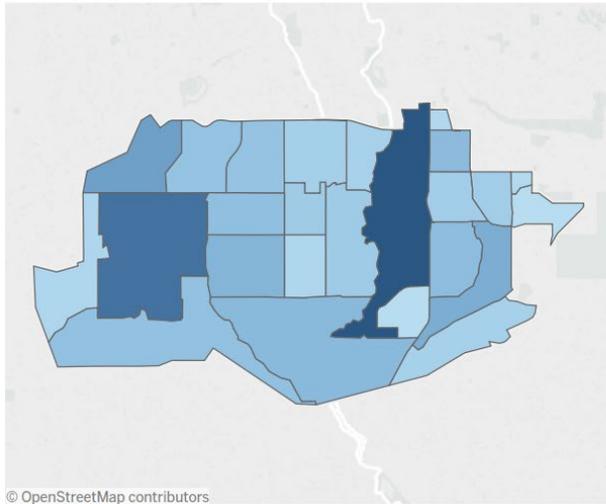


Fare Payment Enhancement: Over the past few months, UTA and Via have developed new software that automatically validates electronic fare cards in the Via app including FAREPAY Cards, Eco Passes, valid Student IDs, and more. This enhancement was released on October 26, 2020. The new fare option is shown as “UTA Electronic Card” while other, mostly paper fares are now “UTA Paper Ticket.”

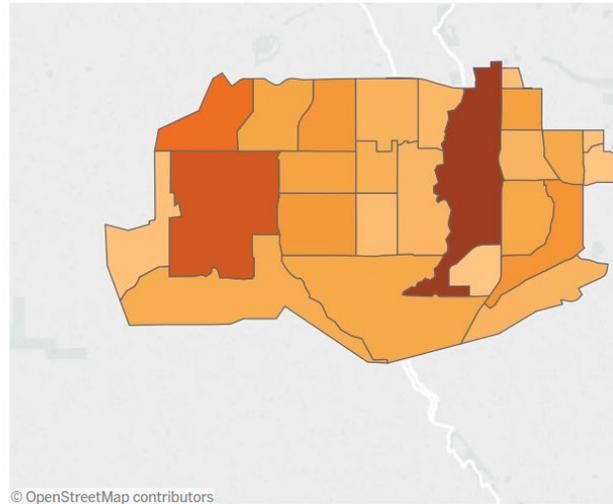
Graphic 3. Usage Maps by Census Block

Darker blocks = more requests

Pickup Requests



Dropoff Requests



Top Pick Up Locations	Requests	Top Drop Off Locations	Requests
FrontRunner, Draper	205	FrontRunner, Draper	200
TRAX, Crescent View	166	TRAX, Daybreak: Grandville Ave	157
TRAX, Draper Town Center	156	TRAX, Crescent View	141
TRAX, Daybreak: Duckhorn Dr.	146	TRAX, Daybreak: Duckhorn Dr.	134
Residential Apartments	109	TRAX, Draper Town Center	126

October travel patterns: Once again Draper FrontRunner was the top transit station in the service area. After noticeable shifts in spring and summer, first/last mile travel patterns have been stable since August.

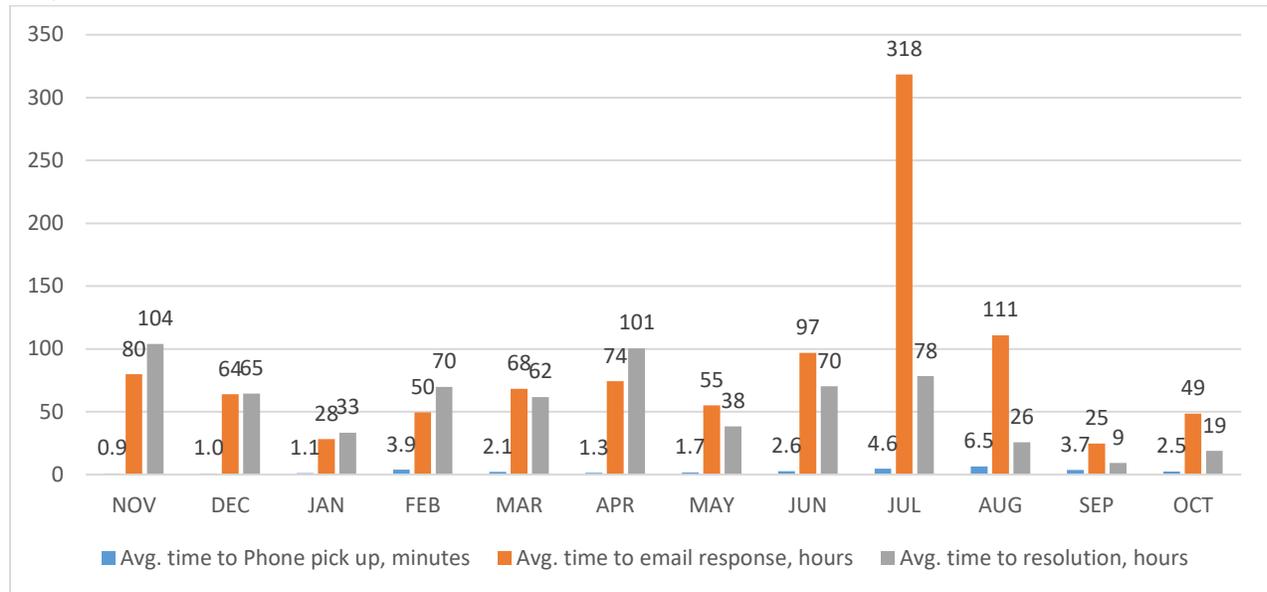
Rides by Station	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT
TRAX, Daybreak	22%	26%	29%	33%	36%	19%	24%	16%	18%	19%
FrontRunner, Draper	42%	36%	33%	21%	20%	26%	22%	27%	27%	27%
TRAX, Crescent View	13%	13%	14%	23%	19%	17%	15%	17%	20%	20%
TRAX, Draper Town Center	10%	9%	11%	11%	15%	27%	24%	23%	22%	22%
FrontRunner, South Jordan	11%	11%	9%	6%	8%	6%	9%	10%	7%	8%
TRAX, Kimball's Lane	2%	3%	3%	4%	2%	4%	5%	4%	4%	3%
TRAX, South Jordan Parkway	0%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	0%	1%	2%	1%

Marketing, Communications, and Promotions Summary

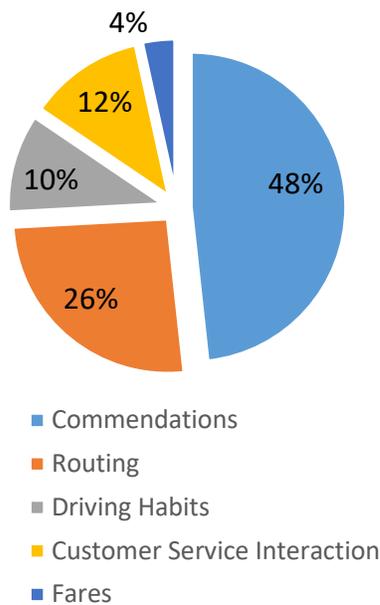
- ON HOLD. All advertising and marketing campaigns have been suspended since mid-March due to COVID-19.
- Riders were educated about the new electronic fare option through email and in-app messages. The UTA FAREPAY Card is now accepted and FAREPAY promotional rates apply.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT DATA

Graphic 4. Via Call Center Customer Service Statistics



Graphic 5. Comments by Category



Customer Comment Summary

There were 58 total comments logged, 54 through Via’s app and 4 through UTA Customer Service.

Category	Sample Comment
Commendations	<p><i>Van is by far the best UTA-VIA driver. I love when I find out he is my driver. He is so courteous and respectful. This driver is by far the best driver I have ever encountered... (10/20)</i></p> <p><i>Was very kind and informed me that we had to pick up someone else. (10/30)</i></p> <p><i>I liked his music (10/23)</i></p> <p><i>Iona is amazing!! Pay him more money. (10/29)</i></p>
Routing	<p><i>The app took a long time to find me a ride then it was over a 30-minute wait until I was picked up. Thaibe was great but you need more vans. (10/20)</i></p>
Driving Habits	<p><i>Left pick up spot before I buckled my infant in. (10/21)</i></p>
Customer Service Interaction	<p><i>Wasn’t wearing his mask, otherwise it would have been a higher rating. (10/9)</i></p>
Fares	<p><i>Didn’t know how i could scan my U of U pass so paid out if pocket (10/26)</i></p>