

UTA MICROTRANSIT PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION

*Monthly Report, November 2020
Prepared by UTA Innovative Mobility Solutions
Under the Office of Planning and Engagement*



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 Service 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.

November Update

Resurging COVID-19 cases across Utah continue to have a significant impact on the pilot’s performance.¹ Average weekday ridership declined by 16%, while the customer experience remained satisfactory. Even with selective trimming of driver hours, cost per rider did not decrease because of lower ridership.

Overall Health of Pilot Project

| Pilot Objective | Key Performance Metric | JUL 2020 | AUG 2020 | SEP 2020 | OCT 2020 | NOV 2020 |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|
| Ridership | Total ridership | 3,557 | 4,063 | 4,699 | 4,401 | 3,373 |
| | Avg. weekday ridership | 155 | 193 | 214 | 200 | 169 |
| | Utilization ² | 1.06 | 1.50 | 1.59 | 1.71 | 1.65 |
| Customer Experience | Avg. wait time (minutes) | 9 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 12 |
| | Avg. customer rating ³ | 4.8 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 4.9 |
| Overall Performance | Cost per rider | \$34.06 | \$25.01 | \$23.11 | \$21.43 | \$22.86 |
| | Days of operation | 23 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 20 |

Key:

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| = On target | = Approaching target | = Not on original, pre-COVID-19 target |
|---|--|--|

¹ On November 16th Utah's rolling seven-day average number of new daily cases broke 3,000 for the first time since the pandemic began. Utah Dept. of Health COVID-19 case counts website: <https://coronavirus.utah.gov/case-counts/>

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 November 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 | 3,373 | 82 |
| | Avg. weekday ridership | 350 – 450 | 169 | 4 |
| | Avg. riders per hour per vehicle (utilization) | 2.5 - 4.5 | 1.7 | N/A |
| | WAV request % | 2.5% - 5.0% | N/A | 2.4% |
| | First mile/last mile connections to transit | 25% | 31% | N/A |
| | Shared rides % | 25% | 17% | N/A |
| CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE | Avg. customer rating | 4.80 out of 5.00 | 4.86 | 4.86 |
| | Average wait time | < 15 minutes | 13 | 17 |
| | On time pick up % | 95% | 85% | 78% |
| | Avg. minutes per ride (trip duration) | N/A | 12 | 14 |
| | Avg. miles per ride (trip distance) | N/A | 3.8 | 3.2 |
| | Avg. travel time (trip speed v. driving) | < 3.0 minutes per mile | 3.2 | 4.4 |
| OVERALL PERFORMANCE | Operating cost budget | \$147,517 | \$77,106 | N/A |
| | Operating hours budget | 4,007 | 2,045 | N/A |
| | Operating miles | N/A | 31,728 | N/A |
| | Cost per hour ⁸ budget | \$36.82 | \$37.71 | N/A |
| | Cost per rider | < \$13.08 | \$22.86 | N/A |
| | Cost per mile | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| | Safe operations | Avoidable accidents < 1 per 100,000 miles | 0 | N/A |
| | Trips booked through Via's call center | N/A | 2% | 24% |
| | Fares from credit cards ⁹ | N/A | \$2,025 | N/A |

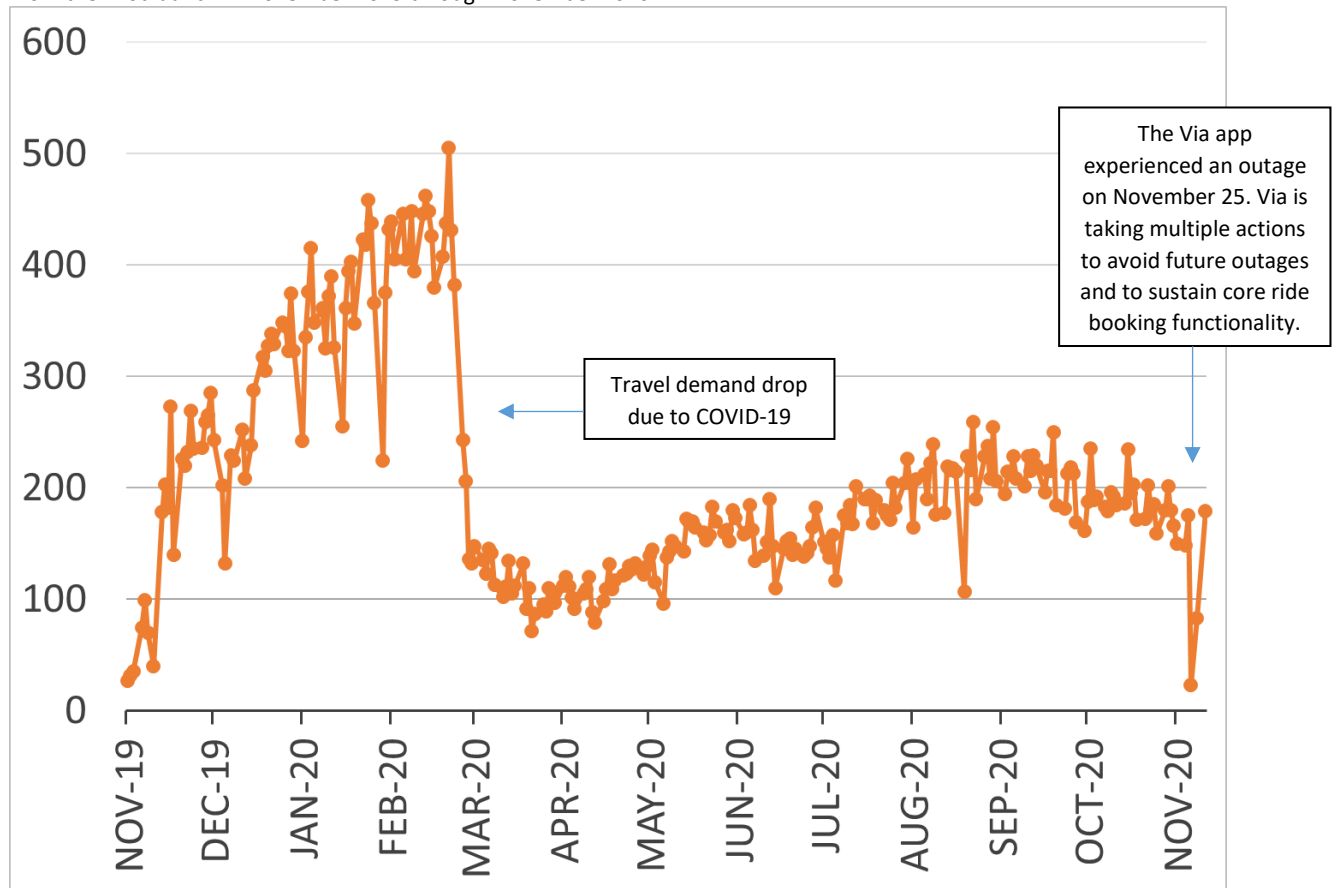
⁷ WAV – Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle. Five of the 17 Via vehicles are WAVs.

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

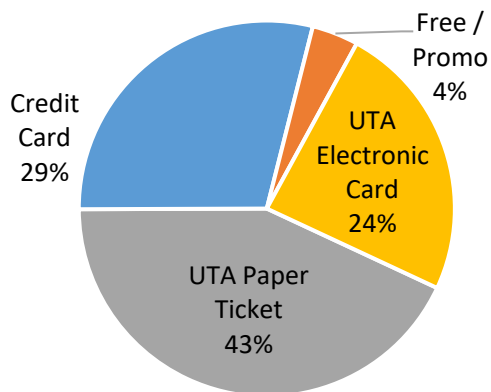
⁹ Fares from credit cards – Includes credit card, debit card, Apple Pay and Google Pay.

Graphic 1. Daily Ridership

From the Pilot launch in November 2019 through November 2020



Graphic 2. Fare Revenue by Type

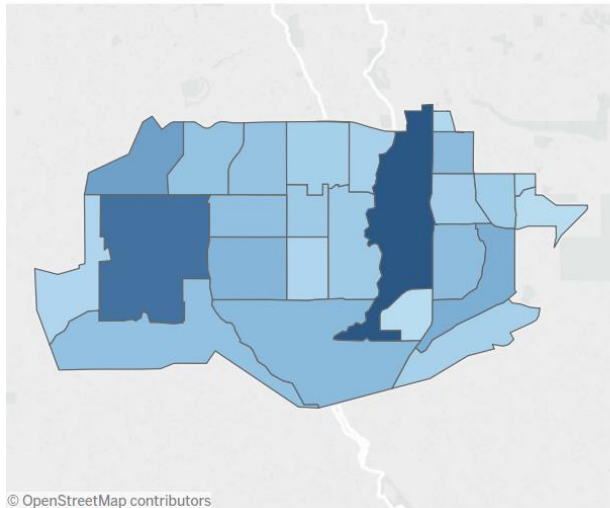


Fare Payment Enhancement: Over the past few months, UTA and Via have developed new software that automatically validates electronic fare cards in the Via app including FAREPAY Cards, Eco Passes, valid Student IDs, and more. This enhancement was released on October 26, 2020. The new fare option is shown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

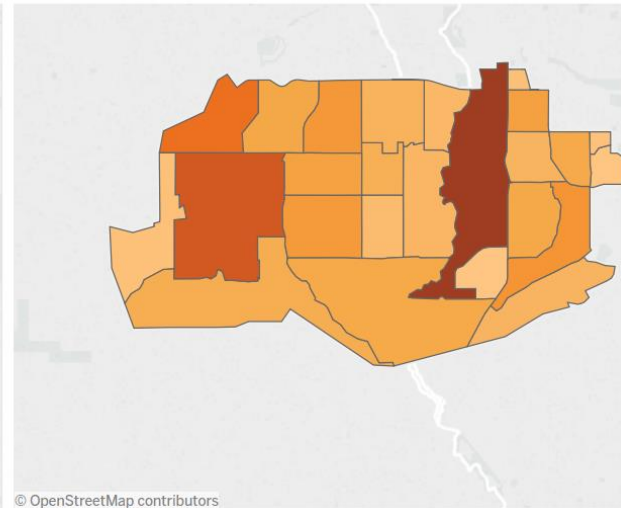
Graphic 3. Usage Maps by Census Block

Darker blocks = more requests

Pickup Requests



Dropoff Requests



| Top Pick Up Locations | Requests | Top Drop Off Locations | Requests |
|------------------------------|----------|------------------------------|----------|
| FrontRunner, Draper | 176 | TRAX, Daybreak: Duckhorn Dr. | 192 |
| TRAX, Daybreak: Duckhorn Dr. | 164 | FrontRunner, Draper | 163 |
| TRAX, Crescent View | 129 | TRAX, Crescent View | 145 |
| Business, Riverton | 101 | TRAX, Draper Town Center | 109 |
| Residential Apartments | 94 | Business, Riverton | 81 |

Travel patterns: In November TRAX Daybreak 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.

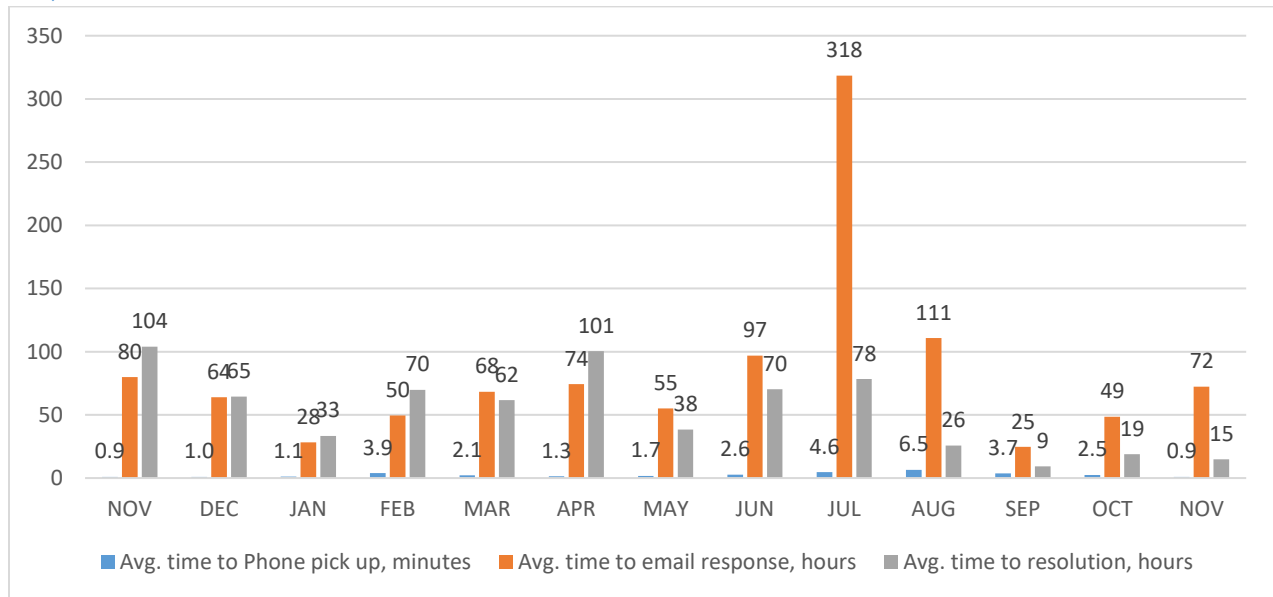
| Rides by Station | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| TRAX, Daybreak | 22% | 26% | 29% | 33% | 36% | 19% | 24% | 16% | 18% | 19% | 32% |
| FrontRunner, Draper | 42% | 36% | 33% | 21% | 20% | 26% | 22% | 27% | 27% | 27% | 29% |
| TRAX, Crescent View | 13% | 13% | 14% | 23% | 19% | 17% | 15% | 17% | 20% | 20% | 24% |
| TRAX, Draper Town Center | 10% | 9% | 11% | 11% | 15% | 27% | 24% | 23% | 22% | 22% | 5% |
| FrontRunner, South Jordan | 11% | 11% | 9% | 6% | 8% | 6% | 9% | 10% | 7% | 8% | 6% |
| TRAX, Kimball's Lane | 2% | 3% | 3% | 4% | 2% | 4% | 5% | 4% | 4% | 3% | 3% |
| TRAX, South Jordan Pkwy | 0% | 1% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 2% | 0% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 1% |

Marketing, Communications, and Promotions Summary

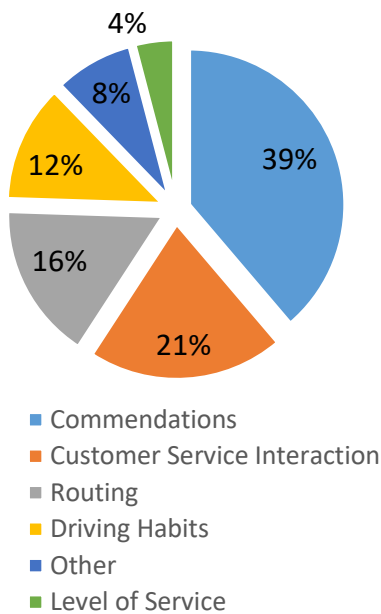
- ON HOLD. All advertising and marketing campaigns have been suspended since mid-March due to COVID-19.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT DATA

Graphic 4. Via Call Center Customer Service Statistics



Graphic 5. Comments by Category



Customer Comment Summary

There were 49 total comments logged, 39 through Via’s app and 10 through UTA Customer Service.

| Category | Sample Comment |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Commendations | <i>Totally awesome!!!!!! (11/5)</i> <i>Dropped me off right in front of TRAX, thoughtful. (11/2)</i> <i>Brian met me before my stop and got me home safely. (11/2)</i> |
| Customer Service Interaction | <i>His sons request a VIA pick up and when the driver arrives, they don't leave right away. They stay parked there for up to 30 minutes sometimes. (11/25)</i> |
| Routing | <i>The driver was fine but the navigation system you use always gives me the wrong wait time (11/3)</i> |
| Driving Habits | <i>Driver makes very abrupt stops (11/10)</i> |
| Other | <i>I accidentally left my water bottle in the car (11/13)</i> |
| Level of Service | <i>The customer is upset that the Via service does not service her area, around 9800 S 2200 W. (11/18)</i> |