

UTA MICROTRANSIT PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION

Monthly Report, July 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.

July Update

Ridership has started to trend up, but COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact on the pilot’s performance. While July is traditionally a lower ridership month for UTA, total ridership held steady compared to June. Costs increased slightly due to an additional operating day and catch-up billing for enhanced cleaning routines in effect since March. Demand from customers requesting accessible vehicles has fully recovered to pre-COVID levels and reached a new daily high of 14 trips on July 30th.

Overall Health of Pilot Project

Pilot Objective	Key Performance Metric	MAY 2020	JUN 2020	JUL 2020
Ridership	Total ridership	2,600	3,556	3,557
	Avg. weekday ridership	124	162	155
	Utilization ¹	0.79	1.05	1.06
Customer Experience	Avg. wait time (minutes)	9	9	9
	Avg. customer rating ²	4.8	4.9	4.8
Overall Performance	Cost per rider	\$44.14	\$33.55	\$34.06
	Days of operation	21	22	23

Key:

	= On target		= Approaching target		= Not on target, requires mitigation or change
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¹ Utilization – Average riders per hour per vehicle

² 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. On June 26th Governor Herbert issued an executive order allowing Salt Lake County to require face masks in most public settings.³ 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.⁴

IMPACT TO UTA⁵

As part of the ongoing effort to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus and ensure fiscal responsibility, UTA implemented temporary service reductions beginning April 5th until further notice. 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
- 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 by 59% in July 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 declined significantly due to COVID-19. Once face masks were required in Salt Lake County, microtransit pilot drivers and riders were alerted of the face covering requirement through the Via app and email.

³ Utah COVID-19 response website: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cabf07b39a6046ee992f1630949a7c80>

⁴ WFRC report: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yfrLHwpmEERRZzXZd-3uATTIUv-ZBLd7vIODi8gmCi0/edit>

⁵ 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 ⁶ ONLY
RIDERSHIP	Total ridership	N/A	3,557	121
	Avg. weekday ridership	350 – 450	155	5
	Avg. riders per hour per vehicle (utilization)	2.5 - 4.5	1.1	N/A
	WAV request %	2.5% - 5.0%	N/A	3.4%
	First mile/last mile connections to transit	25%	29%	N/A
	Shared rides %	25%	9%	N/A
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	Avg. customer rating	4.80 out of 5.00	4.84	4.84
	Average wait time	< 15 minutes	9	11
	On time pick up %	95%	93%	89%
	Avg. minutes per ride (trip duration)	N/A	10	11
	Avg. miles per ride (trip distance)	N/A	3.9	3.4
	Avg. travel time (trip speed v. driving)	< 3.0 minutes per mile	2.6	3.2
OVERALL PERFORMANCE	Operating cost budget	\$169,645	\$121,143	N/A
	Operating hours budget	4,608	3,354	N/A
	Operating miles	N/A	39,530	N/A
	Cost per hour ⁷ budget	\$36.82	\$36.12	N/A
	Cost per rider	< \$13.08	\$34.06	N/A
	Cost per mile	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Safe operations	Avoidable accidents < 1 per 100,000 miles	0 ⁸	N/A
	Trips booked through Via's call center	N/A	5%	31%
	Fares from credit cards ⁹	N/A	\$2,493.75	N/A

⁶ WAV – Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle. Three of the 17 Via vehicles are WAVs.

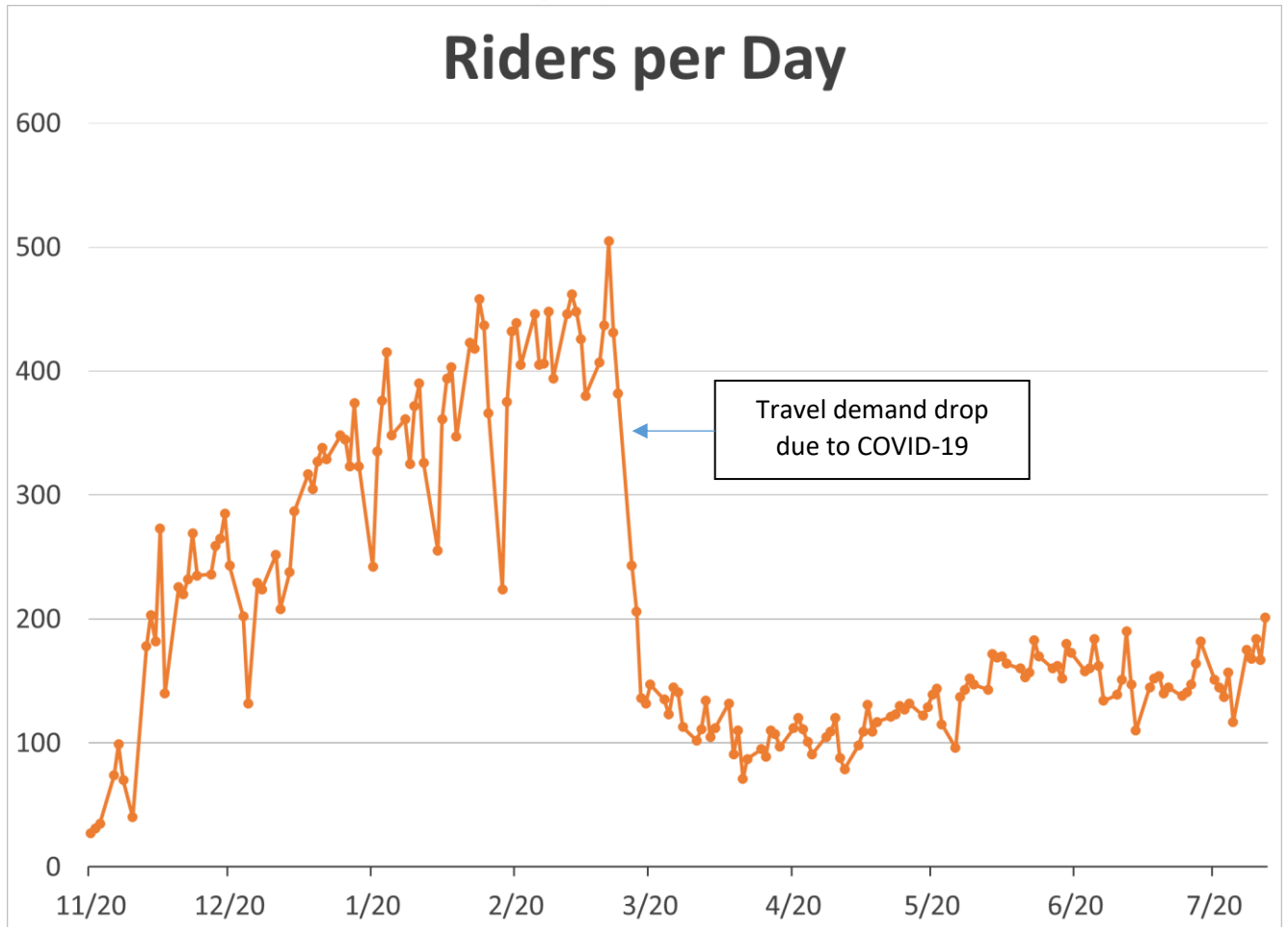
⁷ Cost per hour – Fully allocated; includes operating and capital costs. Excludes marketing expenses.

⁸ Safe operations – An unavoidable accident with no injuries was reported on July 17, 2020.

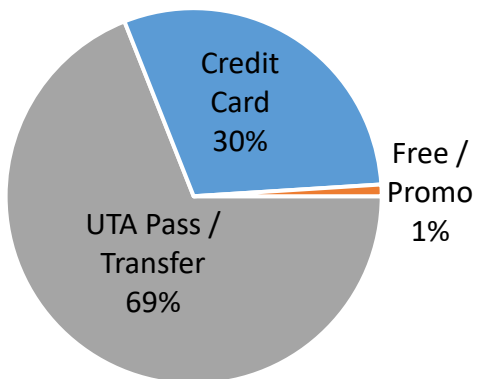
⁹ Fares from credit cards – Includes credit card, debit card, Apple Pay and Google Pay.

Graphic 1. Daily Ridership

From the Pilot launch in November 2019 through July 2020



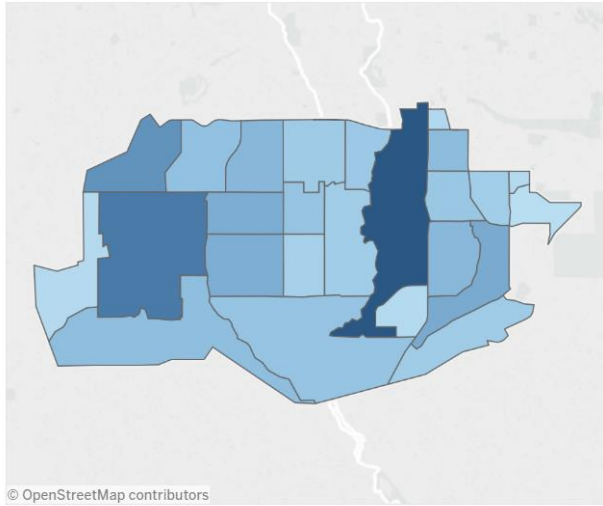
Graphic 2. Fare Payment by Type



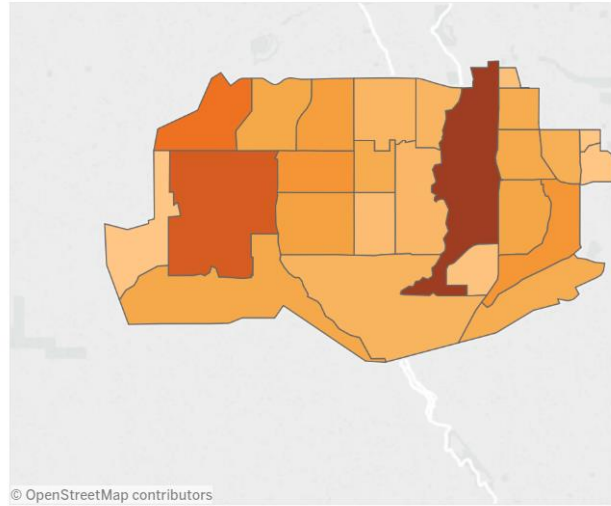
Graphic 3. Usage Maps by Census Block

Darker blocks = more requests

Pickup Requests



Dropoff Requests



Top Pick Up Locations	Requests	Top Drop Off Locations	Requests
TRAX, Daybreak	157	FrontRunner, Draper	130
FrontRunner, Draper	124	TRAX, Daybreak Duckhorn Dr.	105
TRAX, Draper Town Center	121	TRAX, Draper Town Center	101
Business	105	Business	92
TRAX, Crescent View	99	TRAX, Daybreak Grandville Ave.	92

July travel patterns: Draper Town Center TRAX tied with Daybreak TRAX as the most used transit stations. These changes – happening in real time – illustrate the customer-centric nature of microtransit’s dynamic routing.

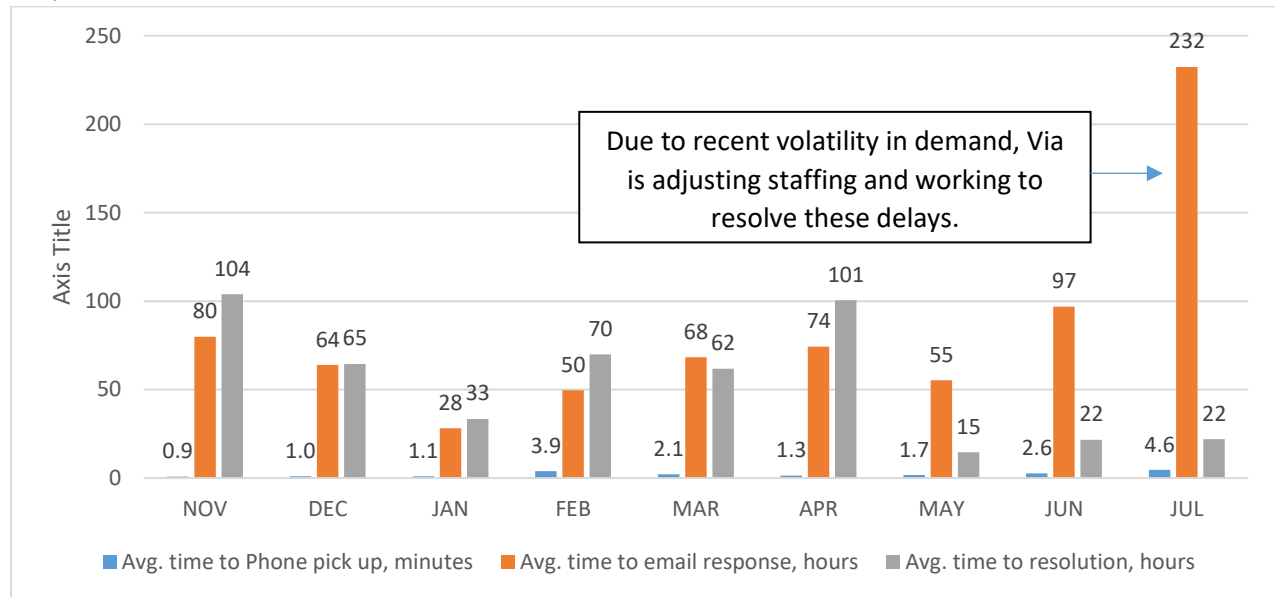
First Mile / Last Mile Rides by Station	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL
TRAX, Daybreak	22%	26%	29%	33%	36%	19%	24%
FrontRunner, Draper	42%	36%	33%	21%	20%	26%	22%
TRAX, Crescent View	13%	13%	14%	23%	19%	17%	15%
TRAX, Draper Town Center	10%	9%	11%	11%	15%	27%	24%
FrontRunner, South Jordan	11%	11%	9%	6%	8%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

Marketing, Communications, and Promotions Summary

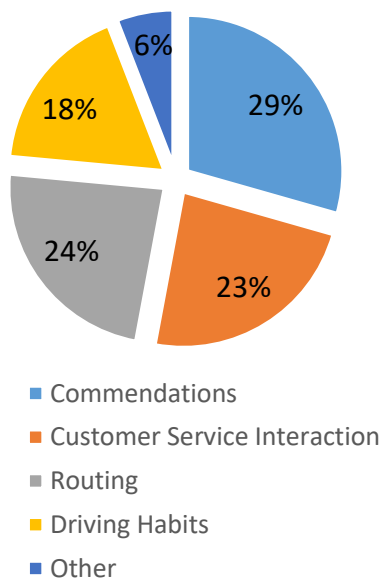
- ON HOLD. All advertising and marketing campaigns have been suspended since mid-March due to COVID-19.
- Riders were invited to take an online survey in late July. The survey’s purpose was to better understand rider demographics, mode switching, potential pilot enhancements, and COVID-19 related changes. Results will be shared in the August report.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT DATA

Graphic 4. Via Call Center Customer Service Statistics



Graphic 5. Comments by Category



Category	Sample Comment
Commendations	<p><i>Best driver you guys have!</i></p> <p><i>He took his time to wait so i can take a bit of my groceries into my home!!!! :D very much appreciated!!!! :D</i></p> <p><i>Very friendly</i></p> <p><i>He is an asset to your company</i></p>
Customer Service Interaction	<p><i>Could have turned on the air conditioner. It's very hot. It's summer</i></p>
Routing	<p><i>She never showed up to my spot and made me super late to work.</i></p>
Driving habits	<p><i>Driving with one hand on the steering wheel?? Not safe.</i></p>
Other	<p><i>it wasn't me they picked up</i></p>

Customer Comment Summary

There were 34 total comments logged, 33 through Via’s app and 1 UTA-filed Customer Feedback Report to document an unavoidable accident with no injuries.