

UTA MICROTRANSIT PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION

Monthly Report, May 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.

Overall Health of Pilot Project

Pilot Objective	Key Performance Metric	MAR 2020	APR 2020	May 2020
Ridership	Avg. weekday ridership	275	105	124
	Utilization ¹	1.52	0.67	0.79
Customer Experience	Avg. wait time (minutes)	10	8	9
	Avg. customer rating ²	4.8	4.8	4.8
Overall Performance	Cost per rider	\$23.27	\$52.22	\$44.14
	Days of operation	22	22	21

May update: COVID-19 continued to have a significant impact on the pilot’s performance. However, average weekday ridership recovered slightly (+18%) compared to April 2020. The pilot continues to serve a steady, smaller number of customers taking essential trips during the health crisis. Rides booked on wheelchair accessible vehicles hit a new high of 104 total or about 5 per day.

Note on pre-COVID Key Performance Metrics

Due to the significant effects of the health crisis, the second quarter report evaluating March, April, and May provides greater detail about the pilot’s performance under these unusual circumstances. The second quarter report also offers a hypothetical ‘what if’ scenario projecting the pilot’s normal pre-COVID results over several weeks to illustrate what would have been typical ridership growth trends and regular microtransit operations.

Key:

	= On target		= Approaching 6-month target, on track		= 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 and minimize impact on local hospitals.³ According to the Wasatch Front Regional Council, the pandemic has decreased traffic volumes to transit stations by 38%, reduced congestion and travel times, and limited transit use.⁴

IMPACT TO UTA ⁵

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:

- Encouraging 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 -68% in April and by -66% in May 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



Like other UTA services, the microtransit pilot ridership declined significantly due to COVID-19. Average weekday ridership fell by -30% in March and by -62% in April compared to the previous months. In May ridership recovered slightly (+18%) compared to April 2020. On May 1st Governor Herbert moved most of Utah from the high risk into the moderate risk category, and on May 15th into the low risk category.

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	2,600	104
	Avg. weekday ridership at 6 months	350 – 450	124	5
	Avg. riders per hour per vehicle at 6 months (utilization)	2.5 - 4.5	0.8	N/A
	WAV request %	2.5% - 5.0%	N/A	4.0%
	First mile/last mile connections to transit	25%	36%	N/A
	Shared rides % at 6 months	25%	6%	N/A
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	Avg. customer rating	4.80 out of 5.00	4.85	4.85
	Average wait time	< 15 minutes	9	11
	On time pick up %	95%	93%	88%
	Avg. minutes per ride (trip duration)	N/A	10	10
	Avg. miles per ride (trip distance)	N/A	3.9	3.1
	Avg. travel time (trip speed v. driving)	< 3.0 minutes per mile	2.6	3.2
OVERALL PERFORMANCE	Operating cost budget	\$154,893	\$114,752	N/A
	Operating hours budget	4,207	3,289	N/A
	Operating miles	N/A	32,213	N/A
	Cost per hour ⁷ budget	\$36.82	\$34.89	N/A
	Cost per rider	< \$13.08	\$44.14	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	6%	25%
	Fares from credit cards ⁸	N/A	\$1,482.50	N/A

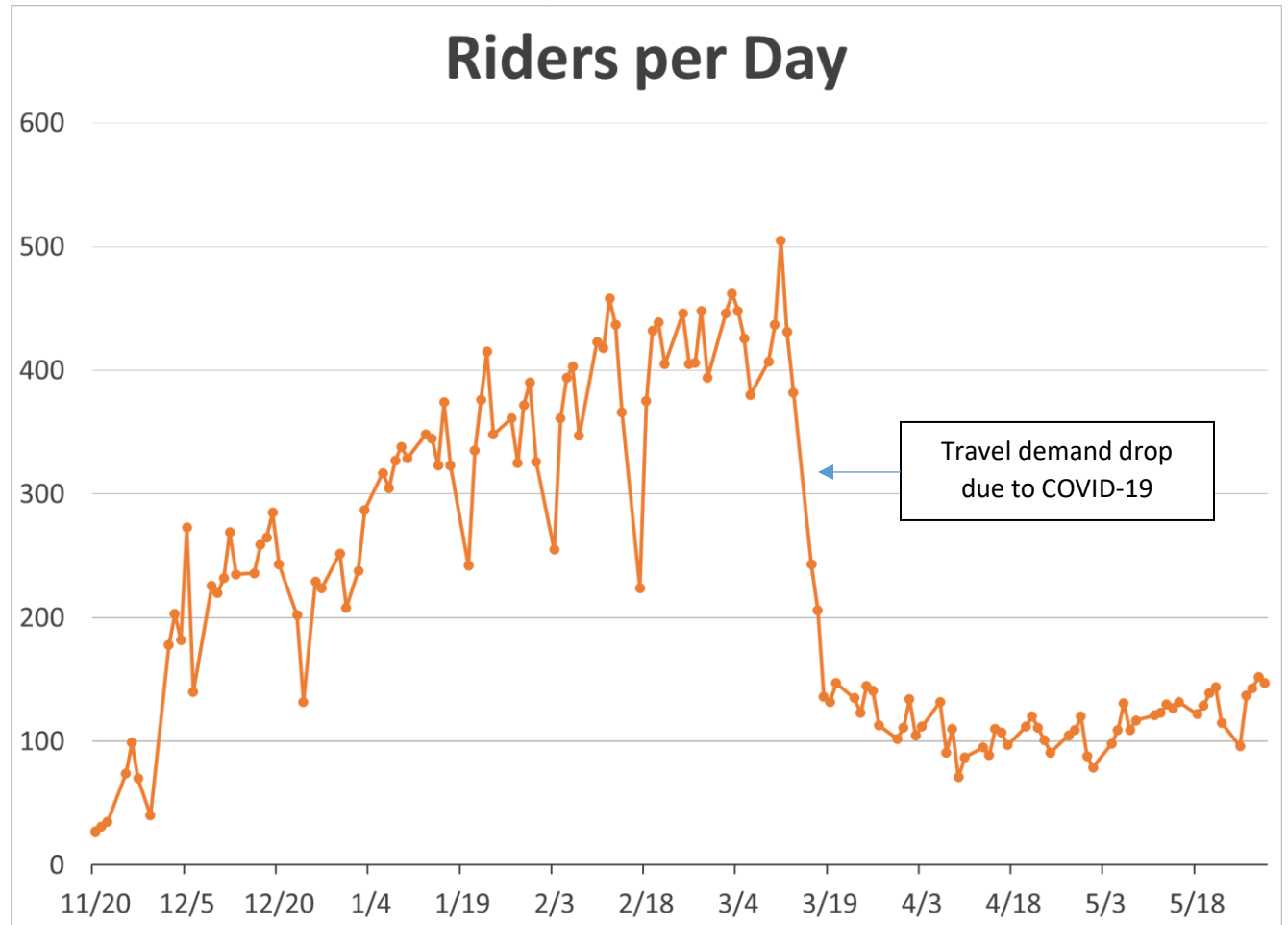
⁶ WAV – Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle. Three of the 17 Via vehicles are WAVs.

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

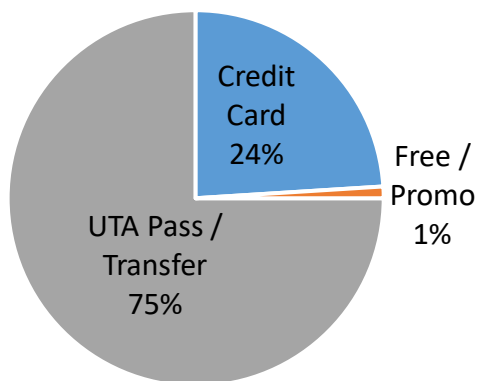
⁸ Fares from credit cards – Includes credit card, debit card, Apple Pay and Google Pay.

Graphic 1. Daily Ridership

From the Pilot launch in November 2019 through May 2020

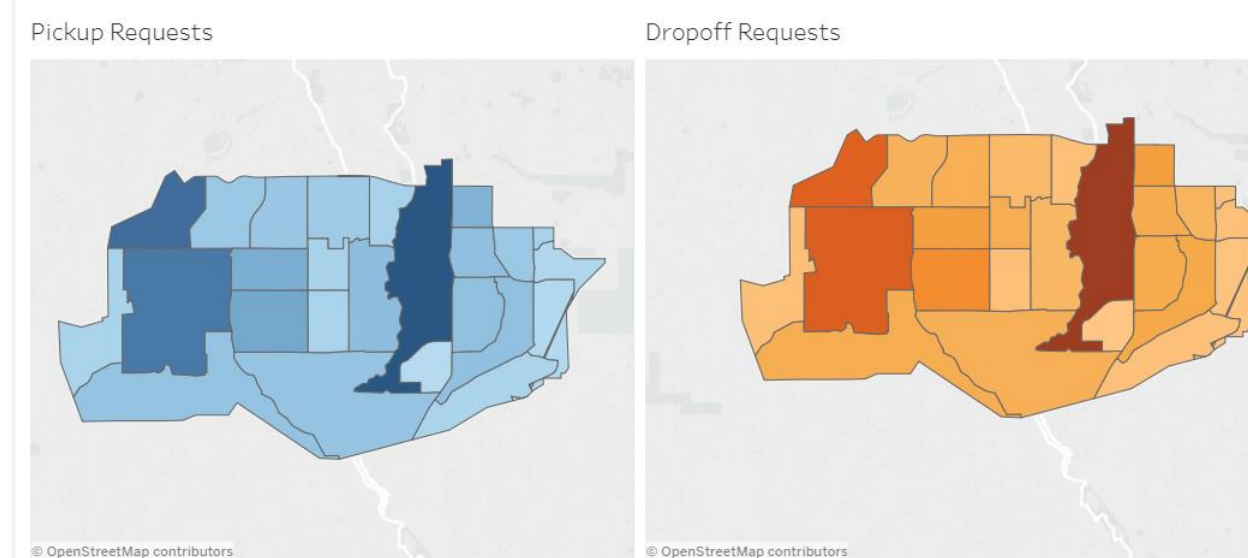


Graphic 2. Fare Payment by Type



Graphic 3. Usage Maps by Census Block

Darker blocks = more requests



Top Pick Up Locations	Requests	Top Drop Off Locations	Requests
TRAX, Daybreak	155	Business, Riverton	110
Business, Riverton	142	FrontRunner, Draper	100
Business, South Jordan	106	TRAX, Crescent View	97
TRAX, Crescent View	95	TRAX, Daybreak	86
FrontRunner, Draper	93	TRAX, Draper Town Center	67

May travel patterns: Rider origins and destinations began to noticeably shift March through May as riders changed their travel habits due to COVID-19. Daybreak TRAX surpassed Draper FrontRunner as the most used transit station. These changes – happening in real time – illustrate the dynamic nature of customer-centric microtransit routing.

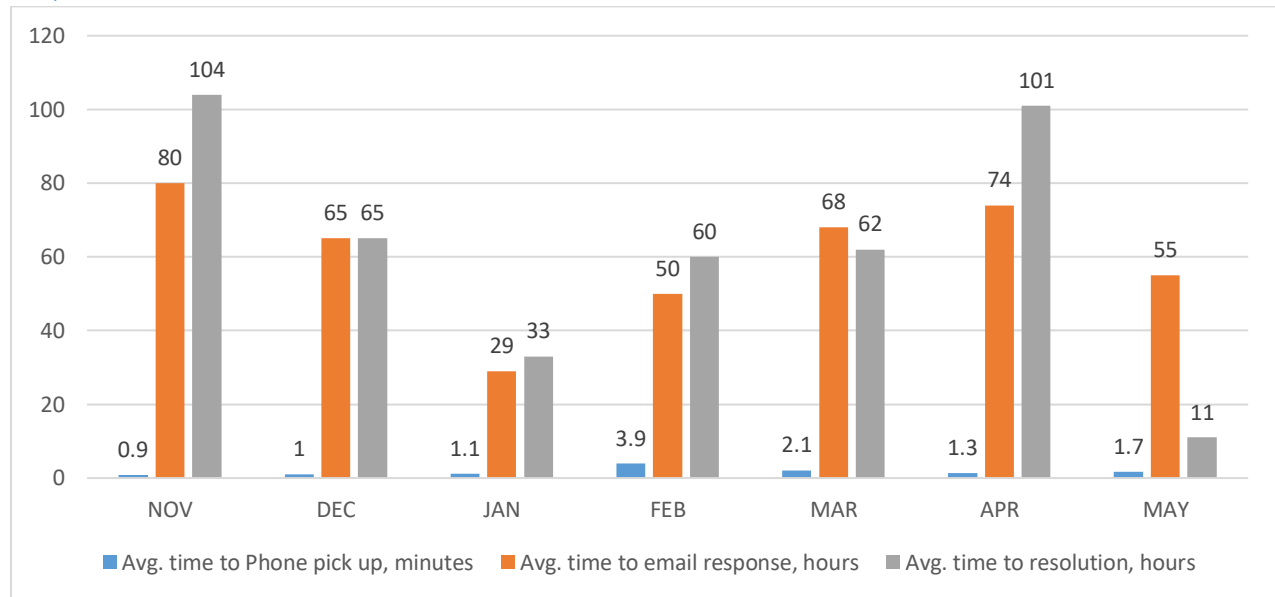
First Mile / Last Mile Rides by Station	MAR 2020	APR 2020	MAY 2020
TRAX, Daybreak	29%	33%	36%
FrontRunner, Draper	33%	21%	20%
TRAX, Crescent View	14%	23%	19%
TRAX, Draper Town Center	11%	11%	15%
FrontRunner, South Jordan	9%	6%	8%
TRAX, Kimball's Lane	3%	4%	2%
TRAX, South Jordan Parkway	2%	2%	1%

Marketing, Communications, and Promotions Summary

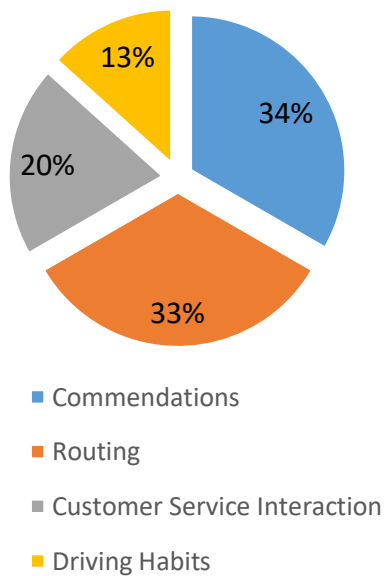
- ON HOLD. All advertising and marketing campaigns have been suspended since mid-March due to COVID-19.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT DATA

Graphic 4. Via Call Center Customer Service Statistics



Graphic 5. Comments by Category



Customer Comment Summary

There were 15 total comments logged. Via's app received 14 and UTA Customer Service received 1.

Category	Sample Comment
Commendations	<p><i>I left my mask on my kitchen table. She gave me a mask.</i></p> <p><i>He was very pleasant and accommodating to our needs.</i></p> <p><i>She's an absolute doll. Love having her as my driver.</i></p> <p><i>The best Via driver hands down!</i></p>
Routing	<p><i>I waited for 20 minutes even though the app said my driver was 4 minutes away.</i></p>
Customer Service Interaction	<p><i>Speaks zero English. Took forever to explain that I needed to change destination.</i></p>
Driving habits	<p><i>Every time I catch a ride with this driver he brakes extremely hard, aggressive turns and hard acceleration.</i></p>