

# UTA MICROTRANSIT PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION

---

*Monthly Report, September 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.

## September Update

Ridership continues to recover, but COVID-19 still has a significant impact on the pilot’s performance. Total ridership increased by 16% over August, and average weekday ridership increased by 10%. Costs per rider fell by 8% thanks to the higher numbers of riders.

## Overall Health of Pilot Project

Pilot Objective	Key Performance Metric	JUN 2020	JUL 2020	AUG 2020	SEP 2020
Ridership	Total ridership	3,556	3,557	4,063	<b>4,699</b>
	Avg. weekday ridership	162	155	193	<b>214</b>
	Utilization <sup>1</sup>	1.05	1.06	1.50	<b>1.59</b>
Customer Experience	Avg. wait time (minutes)	9	9	12	<b>12</b>
	Avg. customer rating <sup>2</sup>	4.9	4.8	4.8	<b>4.8</b>
Overall Performance	Cost per rider	\$33.55	\$34.06	\$25.01	<b>\$23.11</b>
	Days of operation	22	23	21	<b>22</b>

Key:

<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #4CAF50; border: 1px solid black;"></span> = On target	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #FFC107; border: 1px solid black;"></span> = Approaching target	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #F44336; border: 1px solid black;"></span> = Not on original, pre-COVID-19 target
---	--	--

<sup>1</sup> Utilization – Average riders per hour per vehicle

<sup>2</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. On March 27<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

## IMPACT TO UTA<sup>5</sup>

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

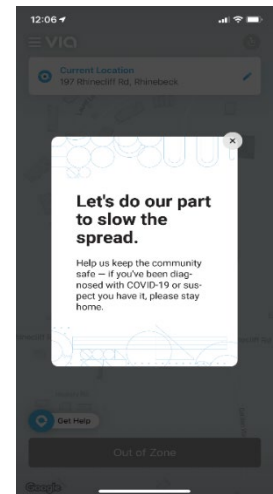


Like other transit agencies across the country, UTA has seen a significant decrease in ridership due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Average weekday ridership declined systemwide by 60% in September compared to last year.

## 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.

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

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

<sup>5</sup> 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 <sup>6</sup> ONLY
RIDERSHIP	Total ridership	N/A	4,699	180
	Avg. weekday ridership	350 – 450	214	8
	Avg. riders per hour per vehicle (utilization)	2.5 - 4.5	1.59	N/A
	WAV request %	2.5% - 5.0%	N/A	3.8%
	First mile/last mile connections to transit	25%	30%	N/A
	Shared rides %	25%	15.4%	N/A
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	Avg. customer rating	4.80 out of 5.00	4.83	4.80
	Average wait time	< 15 minutes	12	13
	On time pick up %	95%	90%	83%
	Avg. minutes per ride (trip duration)	N/A	13	14
	Avg. miles per ride (trip distance)	N/A	3.8	2.6
	Avg. travel time (trip speed v. driving)	< 3.0 minutes per mile	3.4	5.4
OVERALL PERFORMANCE	Operating cost budget	\$162,269	\$108,596	N/A
	Operating hours budget	4,407	2,966	N/A
	Operating miles	N/A	42,924	N/A
	Cost per hour <sup>7</sup> budget	\$36.82	\$36.62	N/A
	Cost per rider	< \$13.08	\$23.11	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%	26%
	Fares from credit cards <sup>8</sup>	N/A	\$2,929	N/A

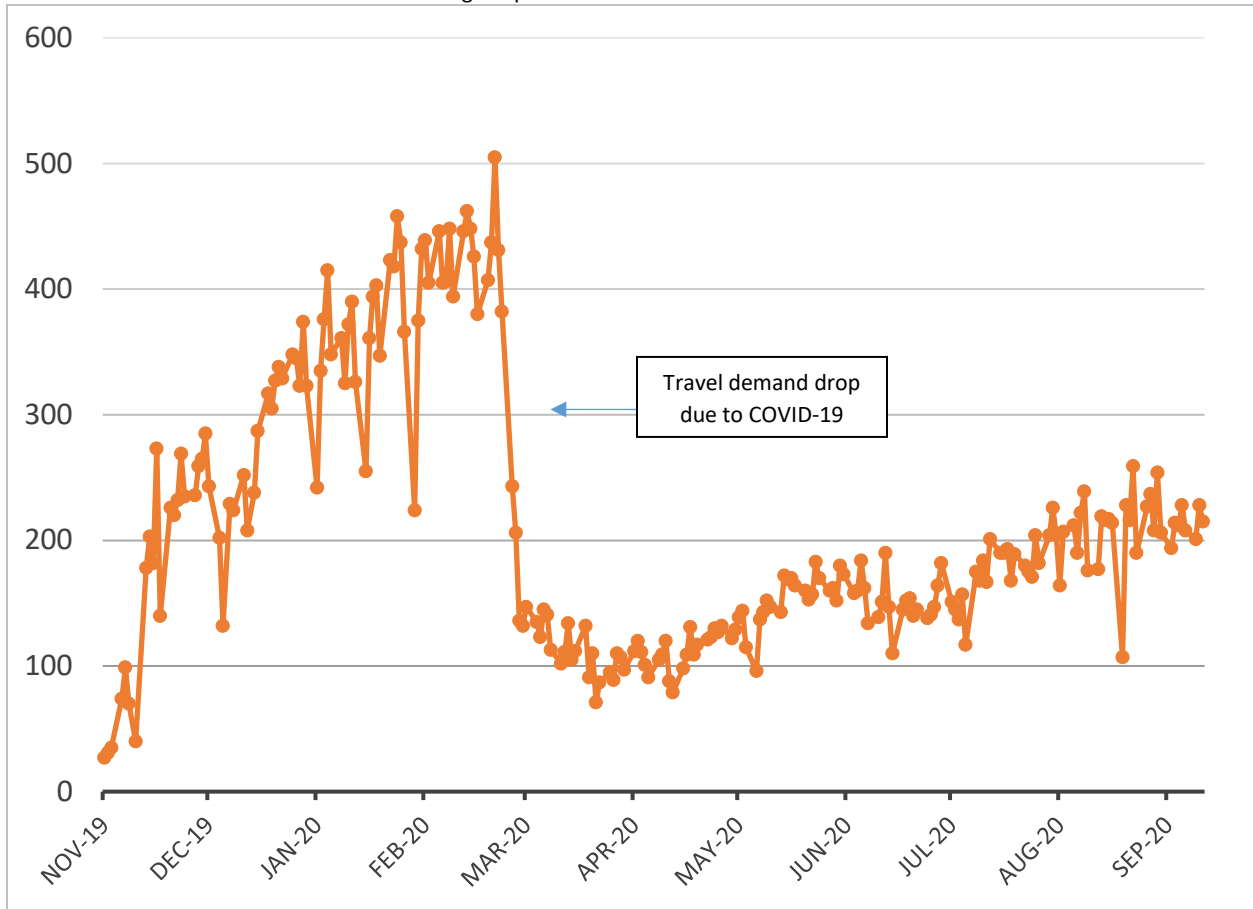
<sup>6</sup> WAV – Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle. Three of the 17 Via vehicles are WAVs.

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

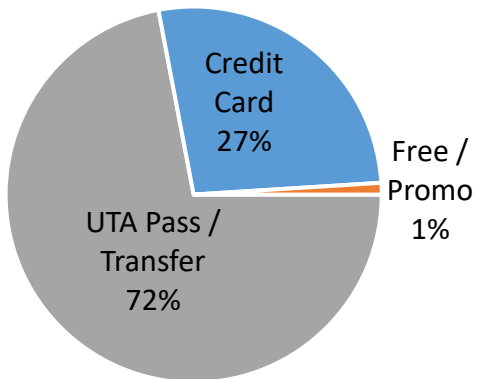
<sup>8</sup> Fares from credit cards – Includes credit card, debit card, Apple Pay and Google Pay.

Graphic 1. Daily Ridership

From the Pilot launch in November 2019 through September 2020

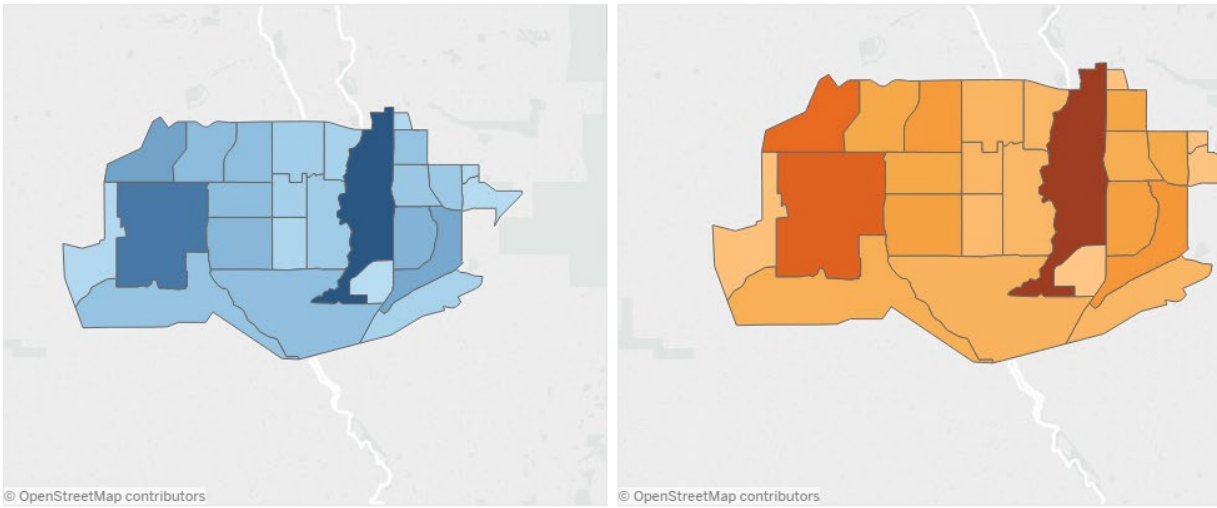


Graphic 2. Fare Payment by Type, September 2020



Graphic 3. Usage Maps by Census Block

Darker blocks = more requests



Top Pick Up Locations	Requests	Top Drop Off Locations	Requests
FrontRunner, Draper	202	FrontRunner, Draper	207
TRAX, Draper Town Center	174	TRAX, Daybreak: Grandville Ave	198
TRAX, Crescent View	146	TRAX, Crescent View	150
Residential Apartments	140	TRAX, Daybreak: Duckhorn Dr.	139
TRAX, Daybreak: Duckhorn Dr.	127	TRAX, Draper Town Center	119

**September travel patterns:** Draper FrontRunner was the top transit station in the service area. After UTA restored most rail service in August and many schools resumed classes in September, riders are returning to more typical trip patterns. These changes – happening in real time – illustrate the customer-centric nature of microtransit’s dynamic routing.

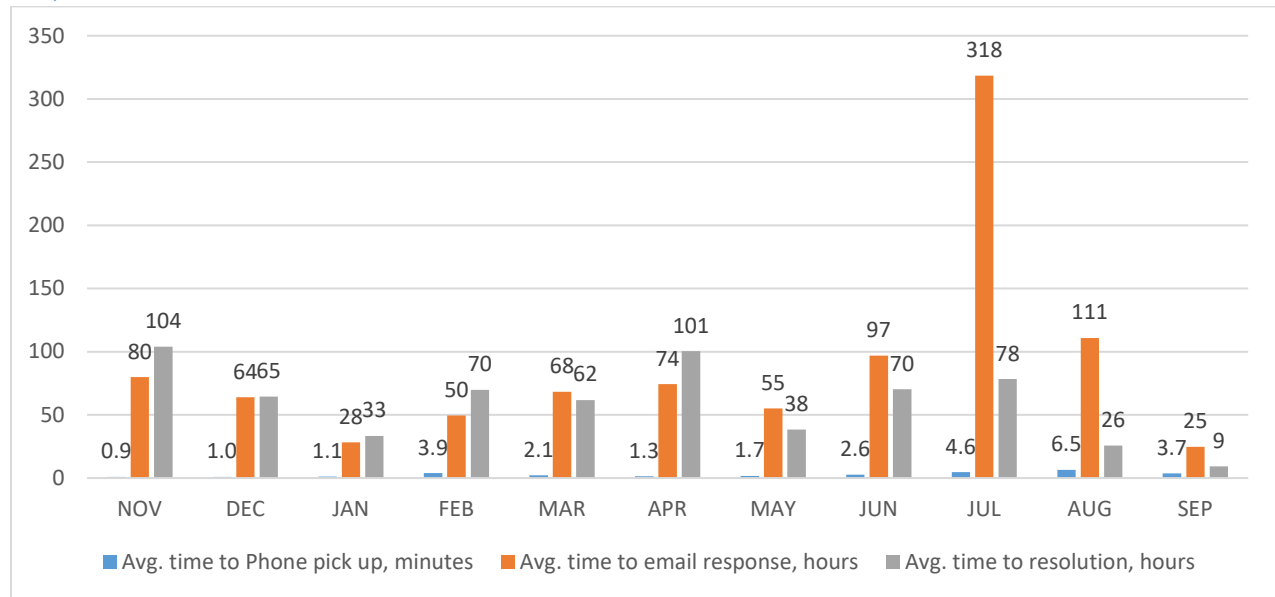
Rides by Station	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
TRAX, Daybreak	22%	26%	29%	<b>33%</b>	<b>36%</b>	19%	<b>24%</b>	16%	18%
FrontRunner, Draper	<b>42%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>33%</b>	21%	20%	26%	22%	<b>27%</b>	<b>27%</b>
TRAX, Crescent View	13%	13%	14%	23%	19%	17%	15%	17%	20%
TRAX, Draper Town Center	10%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

Marketing, Communications, and Promotions Summary

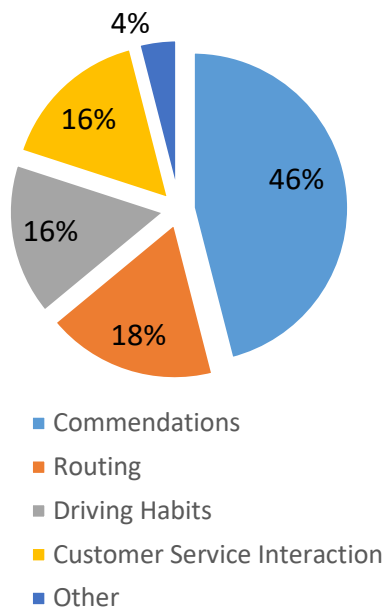
- ON HOLD. All advertising and marketing campaigns have been suspended since mid-March due to COVID-19.
- Riders continue to be prompted daily in the Via app to, “Do your part to help keep your driver and other passengers healthy” with specific health and safety reminders. Drivers were reminded of health and safety guidelines as well in September.

# CUSTOMER SUPPORT DATA

Graphic 4. Via Call Center Customer Service Statistics



Graphic 5. Comments by Category



### Customer Comment Summary

There were 50 total comments logged, 48 through Via’s app and 2 through UTA Customer Service.

Category	Sample Comment
<b>Commendations</b>	<p><i>Was excellent! He was concerned about me making the train in time because there was another pick-up, but he got me here with time to spare. Thanks for excellent service.</i></p> <p><i>This driver is by far the best driver I have ever encountered...</i></p> <p><i>I had my little wagon full of groceries and he helped me load it into the wheelchair spot in the van! It was perfect! Thanks!</i></p> <p><i>...I truly appreciate everything about VIA and what an asset you are to my life!!!</i></p>
<b>Routing</b>	<p><i>He was sitting at a gas station and showed up late. I missed my train and had to order an Uber because of it...</i></p>
<b>Driving Habits</b>	<p><i>He didn't follow the GPS and delayed my arrival.</i></p>
<b>Customer Service Interaction</b>	<p><i>Driver did not wear a face mask.</i></p>
<b>Other</b>	<p><i>I have a maintenance request needed. #2 &amp; #5 have only a strap to hook to the wheelchair that pulls me into the van.</i></p>