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Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox Demonstration: Puget Sound First/Last Mile Partnership with Via

Final Report

FEBRUARY 2021

FTA Report No. 0183
Federal Transit Administration

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COVER PHOTO

Courtesy of Sound Transit.

DISCLAIMER

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Metric Conversion Table

SYMBOL	WHEN YOU KNOW	MULTIPLY BY	TO FIND	SYMBOL
LENGTH				
in	inches	25.4	millimeters	mm
ft	feet	0.305	meters	m
yd	yards	0.914	meters	m
mi	miles	1.61	kilometers	km
VOLUME				
fl oz	fluid ounces	29.57	milliliters	mL
gal	gallons	3.785	liter	L
ft^3	cubic feet	0.028	cubic meters	m^3
yd^3	cubic yards	0.765	cubic meters	m^3
NOTE: volumes greater than 1000 L shall be shown in m^3				
MASS				
oz	ounces	28.35	grams	g
lb	pounds	0.454	kilograms	kg
T	short tons (2000 lb)	0.907	megagrams (or "metric ton")	Mg (or "t")
TEMPERATURE (exact degrees)				
°F	Fahrenheit	5 (F-32)/9 or (F-32)/1.8	Celsius	°C

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14. ABSTRACT

This report documents the background, implementation, and evaluation of Sound Transit and King County Metro's Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox Demonstration project, Via to Transit, in the Puget Sound region. As sub-recipients to LA Metro, Sound Transit and King County Metro partnered with private mobility provider Via to test the viability of a partnership with a Transportation Network Company (TNC) to increase access to transit. This project brings a focus on how to enhance access for passengers with travel disabilities, including those who require wheelchair accessible vehicles, people with limited English proficiency, unbanked populations, and people without access to smartphones. The project features providing access to service to all populations.

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ABSTRACT

This report documents the background, implementation, and evaluation of Sound Transit and King County Metro's Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox Demonstration project, Via to Transit, in the Puget Sound region. As sub-recipients to LA Metro, Sound Transit and King County Metro partnered with private mobility provider Via to test the viability of a partnership with a Transportation Network Company (TNC) to increase access to transit. This project brings a focus on how to enhance access for passengers with travel disabilities, including those who require wheelchair accessible vehicles, people with limited English proficiency, unbanked populations, and people without access to smartphones. The project features providing access to service to all populations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

As sub-recipients to LA Metro in the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox Program, Sound Transit and King County Metro partnered with private mobility provider Via to test the viability of a partnership with a Transportation Network Company (TNC) to increase access to transit. This project provided for a test in two markets, LA County and the Puget Sound region. A project overview and impetus, goals, implementation, and evaluation of the project in the Puget Sound region are presented in this final project report.

The service, called Via to Transit, launched on April 16, 2019 and operated through March 23, 2020. It was suspended just before the planned end of the 12-month pilot period at the same time that a series of other public transit service restrictions were implemented because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Service was provided in five areas in the Seattle area. Users could use a smartphone application or call a concierge service (staffed call center) to arrange for on-demand travel to or from one of five Sound Transit Link light rail stations—Mount Baker, Columbia City, Othello, Rainier Beach, and Tukwila International Boulevard, at which riders can connect with light rail or one of 14 King County Metro bus routes.

Via to Transit service was available for use Monday through Saturday from 5:00–1:00 AM in the four Seattle service areas (Mount Baker, Columbia City, Othello, Rainier Beach); on Sundays, it was available from 6:00 AM through 12:00 midnight. These service hours mirrored Link light rail service hours. At the Tukwila International Boulevard station service area, Via to Transit was available only during peak periods on weekdays (6:00–9:00 AM and 3:30–6:30 PM). Seattle service area hours were longer than those in Tukwila because the City of Seattle added funding to the project to extend the hours. Passengers could pay their fare using their ORCA card (regional fare payment card), a Transit Go Ticket, or credit, debit, or stored value/prepaid cards.

Purpose

With an increasing trend toward public/private partnerships to fill first/last mile gaps for access to public transit, Sound Transit and King County Metro tested this concept in a way that would aim to improve access to transit for all subsets of the communities served by public transit, including those who historically have been underserved. Although the pilot project was only for a limited time and scope due to funding availability, it provided meaningful insight into emerging trends in use of a newly-introduced service to complement transit.

Project Goals

The Via to Transit pilot project was designed to achieve four goals— improve mobility by expanding access to transit; test how to develop a partnership with a private sector mobility company, integrating TNC services with existing transit services; broaden TNC access to a wider audience, including populations without smartphones, those who need wheelchair-accessible vehicles, unbanked populations, low-income populations, people of color, and populations with limited English proficiency; and inform best practices and FTA guidance for public-private partnerships and novel transit service delivery models.

This project achieved these four goals through its project design, which included a call center, rudimentary fare payment integration, a partnership structure that provided for robust project monitoring of data through project evaluation, provision of wheelchair-accessible vehicle service on-platform, delivery of robust marketing and community engagement in multiple languages, and establishment and maintenance of clear and consistent communication channels among agencies to be flexible to changes as they emerged throughout the pilot project.

Findings

Findings from this pilot study addressed introducing a new service to a market in which branding was entirely new to the communities it connects, competition vs. complementation with local feeder transit service, changes in travel behavior and mode shift, data collection for monitoring and evaluation, and partnership structures.

The Via to Transit service carried a considerable number of riders, with more than 950 using the service each weekday at the end of February 2020, suggesting that just under 5% of all Link light rail users in the service areas used Via to Transit as their first/last mile choice for accessing the station. Although the greatest use of the service occurred during peak commute periods, it was frequently used during all times of the day, although use after 12:00 midnight was marginal.

Due to changes in ridership season-to-season and because winter 2020 ridership was significantly impacted by construction activity associated with the Sound Transit Connect2020 project,[1] it is unclear whether the Via to Transit service actually produced an increase in Link use. Total Link ridership decreased 23% between winter 2019 and winter 2020, due primarily to Connect2020. When comparing daily ridership on Link and bus in the pilot service areas from winter

[1]Connect2020 was a construction project that took place at the International District station from January 6 to mid-March 2020. It involved reconfiguring the tracks to allow construction of East Link and resulted in a substantial increase in the headway of Link trains, from roughly 7 minutes in the peak to 12–14 minutes. Transfers were also required at the International District station for all trips with origin and destination stations north or south of it.

2019 to summer 2019, Link ridership declined modestly, but much of the observed difference in Link travel could be attributed to school being out of session and to other seasonal effects. The Link station with the highest Via to Transit ridership saw an increase in Link ridership during the summer despite the decrease in student riders. Similarly, although overall Link boardings were down 23% between winter 2019 and winter 2020, ridership declined only 10% at the Rainier Beach station, at which Via to Transit had the largest ridership. Link ridership at the Othello station, the second most heavily-used Via to Transit service area, declined only 16% from 2019 to 2020. Thus, Via to Transit appears to have helped limit Link rider declines due to the disruption caused by Connect2020, but available data do not prove that it increased ridership.

In terms of whether use of Via to Transit changed individual behavior, those who used the service showed a bimodal distribution, with 34% of those who used it at some point during the pilot test showing a decrease in trip-making of more than 10 trips between winter and summer, whereas 21% increased their trip-making by more than 10 trips. It is clear that the more individuals used Via to Transit, the more likely their transit trip-making increased. However, infrequent users of the service were more likely to show a decrease in trip-making from winter to summer. Again, it is difficult to discern the impact Via to Transit had vs. seasonal effects.

Roughly one-quarter of Via to Transit users reported previously using transit to access and egress Link stations. The shift of these individuals to Via to Transit appears to result in a decrease in bus transit use at the stops nearest the Link stations as well as a minor decrease in transfer activity, but Metro transit routes serving the four Seattle Link stations did not show ridership changes from winter to summer that were significantly different than routes operated by Metro in areas not served by the Via to Transit pilot service. More analysis is needed using winter 2020 transit ridership data, which became available only recently.

From an equity perspective, low-income riders made about 7% of Via to Transit trips. This was lower use than that observed for bus service in the pilot study area (10.5%), but it was higher than Link ridership as a whole (5.6%) and close to use by low-income riders of Link at the five stations in the pilot study (8.8%). The general conclusion is that Via to Transit service was accessible to lower-income populations but that they generally did not increase their transit use as a result of the Via to Transit pilot. It is clear from the data that a few low-income ORCA card users were frequent Via to Transit service users and that many youth riders were frequent users.

One group that used Via to Transit extensively was youths. If youth riders were from low-income families (given the demographics of the area, this is likely), then a higher use of Via to Transit by youths than by low-income populations

is suggested by an analysis based on using an ORCA LIFT card[2] passenger type values. Youth riders were highly visible in Via to Transit ridership data, making roughly 20% of all Via to Transit trips. Youth trips constitute about 17% of all conventional transit trips in the Via to Transit service area during months when school is in session but only 11% in the summer. Unfortunately, few Via to Transit youth users responded to the Via Rider survey, so little is known about them.

In terms of ethnicity, the two surveys conducted for this project suggested that Via to Transit service and Link light rail were used less frequently by people of color. Both surveys also suggested that people of color used Via to Transit less frequently than their percentage of the residential population in the Via to Transit service areas and less frequently than the percentage of Link riders at the stations. Those who identified as White constituted 47% of Pre-Via survey respondents and 58% of Via Rider survey respondents but were only 32% of the population in the combined population of the five service areas.

The full report includes more detailed information regarding these findings as well as lessons learned for transportation industry practitioners, both public and private.

[2]ORCA LIFT is a subsidized ORCA card available to individuals whose household income is less than twice the federal poverty level; ORCA LIFT users typically pay half the normal fare.

SECTION

1

Introduction

Project Background

Sound Transit builds and operates regional transit service throughout the urban areas of Pierce, King, and Snohomish counties in the Puget Sound region of Washington State. Its services include Link light rail, Sounder trains, ST Express Bus, Tacoma Link light rail, and, soon, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). As a result of voter approval, Sound Transit is in the process of planning and building the most ambitious transit expansion in the U.S. The agency is governed by an 18-member Board of Directors.

King County Metro Transit provides a wide range of transportation options and choices for King County. Choices include bus, vanpool, and paratransit service, and new on-demand options. Metro also operates Sound Transit's Regional Express bus service and Link light rail in King County, along with the Seattle Streetcar.

Partnership with LA Metro

For the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox Demonstration grant (a Cooperative Agreement), Sound Transit and King County Metro are sub-recipients to Los Angeles Metro (LA Metro). LA Metro applied for the grant as the lead to test the concept in two markets—LA County and partners in the Puget Sound region.

Project Description

Service Overview

The MOD Sandbox project in LA County and the Puget Sound region tested the viability of a public-private partnership with a Transportation Network Company (TNC) in two markets, LA County and the Puget Sound region. Service in the Puget Sound region, called Via to Transit, was a pilot on-demand service that connected riders to and from five transit hubs in SE Seattle and Tukwila. People who lived, worked, or attended school in specified service areas could download an app and request a ride from Via to Transit to get to one of five Sound Transit Link transit hubs—Mount Baker, Columbia City, Othello, Rainier Beach, and Tukwila International Boulevard—from which riders could take light rail or one of 14 King County Metro bus routes. The initial pilot service was provided by King County Metro in partnership with Sound Transit and with additional funding from the City of Seattle. The service launched on April 16, 2019, and extended through March 23, 2020; due to the COVID-19 pandemic, service was suspended just prior to the 12-month pilot period.

Cost Structure and Payment Options

Via to Transit cost structures mirrored those of King County Metro bus fares, as shown in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1
King County Metro Bus Fare Structure

Fare Category	Fare
Adult (age 19 and older)	$2.75
Youth (ages 6–18)	$1.50
ORCA LIFT cardholders (income-qualified)	$1.50
Regional Reduced Fare Pass (RRFP) cardholders (registered seniors, Medicare recipients, persons with disabilities)	$1.00

Passengers could pay their fare using their ORCA card, a Transit Go ticket, or credit, debit, or stored-value/prepaid cards. Payment with an ORCA card allowed a transfer between Via to Transit and Link light rail or Metro bus. Payment with a Transit Go ticket allowed transfer between Via to Transit and Metro bus. Payment via credit, debit, and stored-value/prepaid cards was limited to Adult fare and did not allow transfers to bus or light rail. Cash fare payment and paper transfers were not accepted. (For more information about user and agency costs for Via to Transit, see Appendix E, Subsidy Report.)

Figure 1-1
Payment In-vehicle with ORCA Card

Photo courtesy of Sound Transit

How It Worked

Passengers booked a ride on-demand using the Via app on their smartphone or by phone to the call center; interpreting services were available through the call center. Payment was accepted upon boarding by using an ORCA card, the smartphone app for a Transit GO ticket, or a credit/debit card using the Via app or the call center. Passengers could expect to be picked up within 10–15 minutes of their trip request, and pick-up locations could be a short walk from the location set for the request. Passengers were to expect rides to be shared with

other passengers. One end of the passenger's trip had to be the designated Link light rail station for the service area in which the ride was requested, and a short walk to/from their vehicle may have been necessary. Wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs) were available for request through the call center and the app.

Accessibility

Customers using a wheelchair or with other mobility needs could indicate that they required mobility assistance in their Via app profile by selecting "Mobility Assistance" within "Account Settings," or by notifying the call center, and a WAV would be dispatched directly to the passenger's starting point rather than setting a pickup location a short walk away. The wheelchair ramp of the Via vehicles was located at the rear of the vehicles, was designed to accommodate up to 800 lb, and could accommodate wheelchairs up to 36-in. wide.

Service Areas and Hours

Via to Transit was available for trips in defined service areas only and were shown in the app. Maps were available on the project website and on in-station informational materials. Via to Transit service in SE Seattle was available for the Mount Baker, Columbia City, Othello, and Rainier Beach stations Monday through Saturday 5:00–1:00 AM and Sundays 6:00–12:00 AM, mirroring Link light rail service hours; the service was available for the Tukwila International Boulevard station Monday through Friday 6:00–9:00 AM and 3:30–6:30 PM. Expanded service beyond peak hours was available at Seattle stations under sponsorship by the City of Seattle to fund the expanded service in SE Seattle.

Figure 1-2

Via to Transit SE Seattle Service Area Map

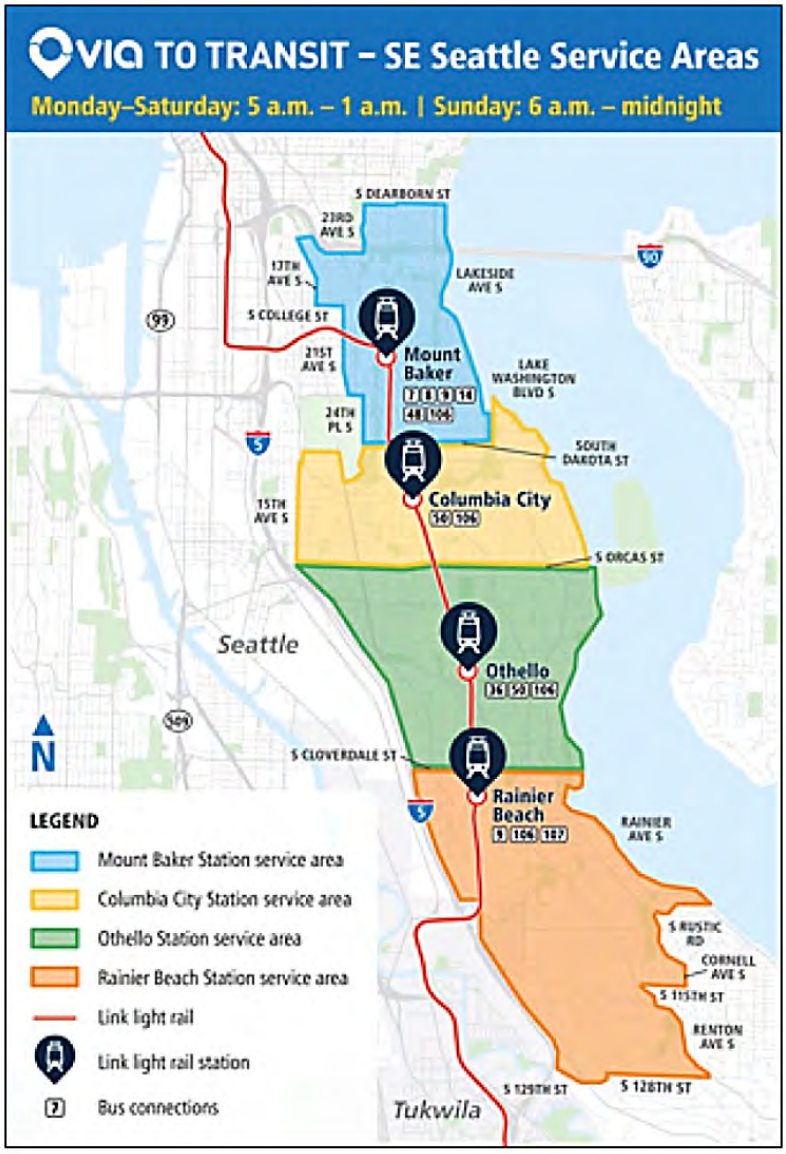
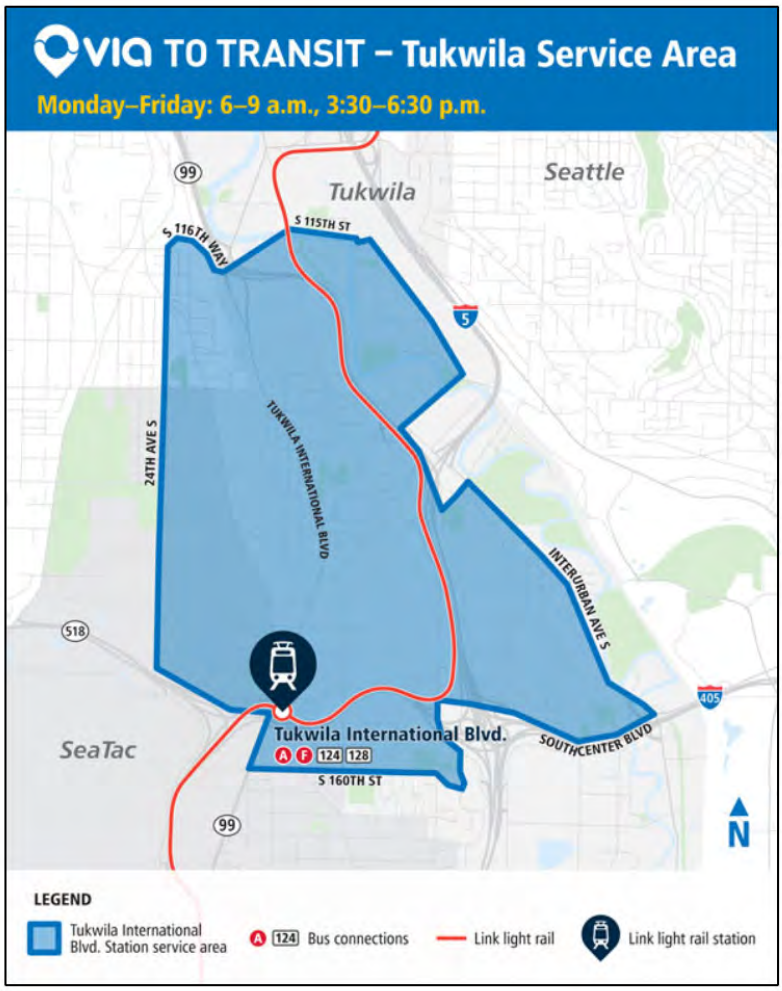


Figure 1-3

Via to Transit Tukwila International Boulevard Station Service Area Map



Project Goals

The Via to Transit pilot project was designed to achieve four goals:

1. Improve mobility by expanding access to transit.
2. Test how to develop a partnership with a private sector mobility company, integrating TNC services with existing transit services.
3. Broaden TNC access to a wider audience, including populations without smartphones, those who need a WAV, unbanked populations, low-income persons, people of color, and populations with limited English proficiency.
4. Inform best practices and FTA guidance for public-private partnerships.

Pilot project elements were designed to test a public-private partnership to achieve these goals. Sound Transit and King County Metro strive to eliminate barriers to access to transit that may otherwise exist without this new on-demand service type, including access regardless of smartphone ownership, use of a bank account, or speaking English as their primary language. The pilot

sought to understand whether the introduction of this new service would provide greater mobility. Research questions included the following:

- Do people make more trips as a result of this new option?
- Do people drive less as a result of this new option?
- Can integrating TNC services provide a more flexible option for customers who need it most, in areas with high concentration of populations that are minority, have limited English proficiency, and/or are low income?
- Can this public-private partnership model open access to an on-demand mode in connection with transit for people for whom an on-demand option would otherwise be too costly?

Several other project outcomes were also anticipated:

- Overall use of Via to Transit would be higher than otherwise expected due to ORCA fare integration between Via, Sound Transit, and King County Metro.
- For most customers, Via to Transit would be free due to integrated transfer with ORCA.
- Use of ORCA, the most commonly-used payment option, would provide ease and familiarity of use, even for a transit service new to the region.
- Tukwila residents would desire increased service hours to match those available in SE Seattle.
- Communities aware of the demonstration would request expanded and new service zones, allowing additional riders to take advantage of Via to Transit service.

Data-Sharing

Data-sharing was a resounding theme in this MOD project. Through this pilot, LA Metro and the Puget Sound agencies developed a robust data-sharing structure to enable thorough evaluation of the project. Data-sharing is discussed at length in the Eno Center for Transportation's "Data on Demand" report.[3]

Marketing and Community Engagement

King County Metro led marketing and community engagement for the service, with support from Via, and these activities focused on reaching the project's priority populations—populations without smartphones, those who need wheelchair accessible vehicles, unbanked populations, low-income people, people of color, and populations with limited English proficiency. As such, materials were translated into many different languages, ads were purchased through ethnic

[3]Grossman, Alice, and Paul Lewis, "Data on Demand: A Case Study in the Los Angeles and Puget Sound Regions," February 2020, https://www.enotrans.org/eno-resources/data-on-demand-a-case-study-in-the-los-angeles-and-puget-sound-regions/.

media outlets, resources were developed specifically for hard-to-reach groups, and partnerships were developed with community-based organizations. More information about community engagement efforts is provided in Appendix C, and more information about marketing efforts is provided in Appendix D.

Project evaluation is discussed later in this report, and additional relevant reports can be found on the Eno Center's website[4] and the FTA website.[5] Evaluation was conducted by the Puget Sound Region's team at the University of Washington and by the Eno Center for Transportation and include addressing the ability of the project to achieve its project goals as described herein. The evaluation used ORCA data, survey data, and a model built to analyze user alternative travel options based on available trip-planner scenarios for trips taken using Via to Transit. FTA's independent evaluation team also evaluated the service as part of the larger MOD Sandbox Program; its findings are not included in this report.

[4] https://www.enotrans.org/resources/research-library/.
[5] https://www.transit.dot.gov/research-innovation/mobility-demand-mod-sandbox-program.

SECTION

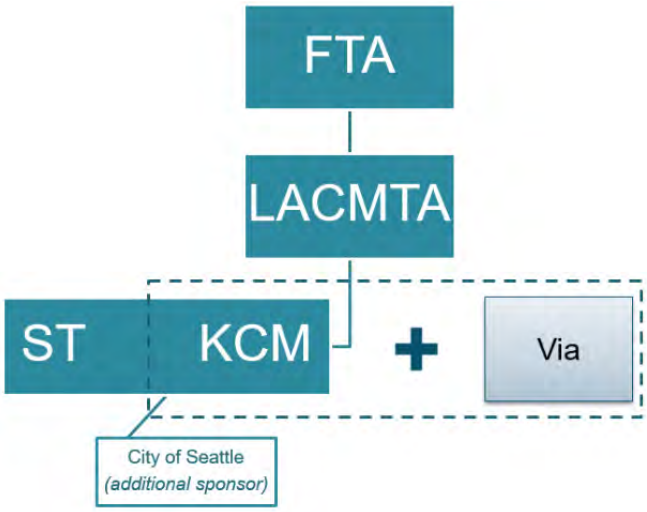
2

Partnership Structure

The Via to Transit project included a robust partnership structure of public agencies, a private mobility provider, an independent evaluation team, local jurisdiction partners, and other funding partners. This section describes the partnerships in place for the project; more information about the contracting structure among parties can be found in the Eno Center's "Contracting for Mobility" report.[6] Project partners include FTA, LA Metro (Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority, LACMTA), Sound Transit (ST), and King County Metro (KCM). The City of Seattle was a funding partner.

Figure 2-1

Via to Transit Project Partners

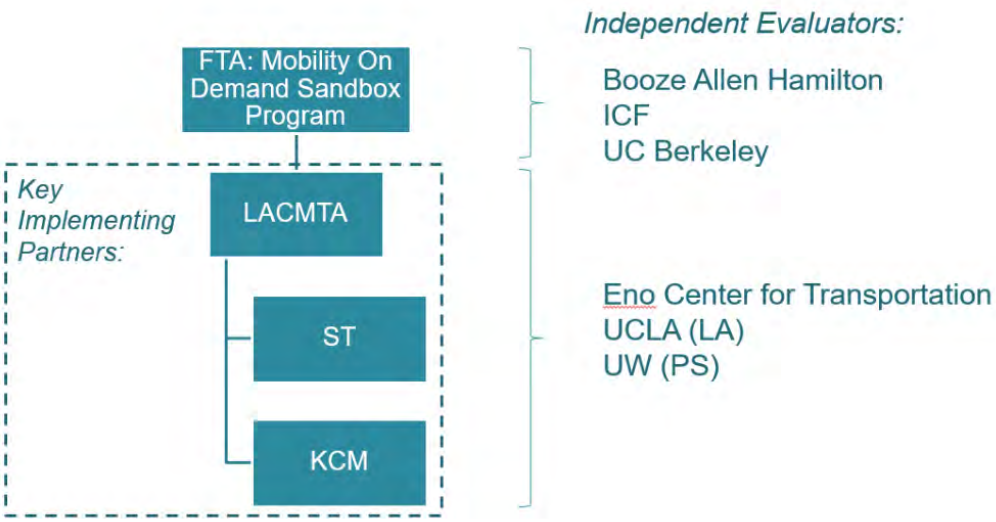


The project's evaluators conducted research on and evaluated the project. The FTA-sponsored independent evaluator is evaluating 11 projects across the MOD Sandbox Demonstration Program overall. The independent evaluator team sponsored by FTA included Booze Allen Hamilton, ICF, and the University of California–Berkeley. At the local region level, evaluation team members include the Eno Center for Transportation, the University of California–Los Angeles (UCLA), and the University of Washington. In addition, evaluation teams are reporting on this project through their own channels; for example, the Eno Center is responsible for policy papers to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and transferability of lessons learned within the transit agency, including public and private mobility providers. FTA will publish a separate evaluation report for the LA Metro and Puget Sound MOD Sandbox Demonstrations developed by the independent evaluator.

[6]Grossman, Alice, and Paul Lewis, "Contracting for Mobility: A Case Study in the Los Angeles and Puget Sound Regions," October 2019, https://www.enotrans.org/eno-resources/contracting-for-mobility/.

Figure 2-2

Project Independent Evaluators



SECTION

3

Project Evolution

This section describes the evolution of the Via to Transit project, including changes in partnerships, service/business model, technology solutions, and geographic reach. The project timeline set a framework for how the project evolved over time. Project milestones included the following:

- May 2016 – FTA released notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- July 2016 – LA Metro submitted grant proposal as lead agency, with Sound Transit as sub-recipient and King County Metro as project partner
- February 2017 – LA Metro awarded Cooperative Agreement
- February 2018 – LA Metro and Puget Sound teams changed service providers
- December 2018 – King County Metro executed contract with Via
- April 2019 – Via to Transit service launched in Puget Sound region
- March 2020 – Pilot Year 1 concluded three weeks early; service suspension due to impacts of COVID-19 pandemic
- June 2020 – Pilot service Year 2 launched by King County Metro and City of Seattle

Change in Service Provider

As initially proposed to FTA under the MOD Sandbox Program, the Via to Transit project was quite different from the project conducted—in partnership structure, service area coverage, and fare payment integration. When LA Metro reached out to Sound Transit to partner on a project to test the viability of a public-private partnership with a TNC in a second region, Sound Transit brought on King County Metro as an additional local partner. LA Metro named Lyft as its partner in the proposal submitted to FTA, with Sound Transit as a sub-recipient of the grant. However, LA Metro determined that Lyft would be unable to deliver on project data-sharing and WAV requirements, as was later also determined by Sound Transit and King County Metro. The agencies determined it necessary to use the same TNC partner in LA County and the Puget Sound region to be able to test the public-private partnership because of the intricacies in service provision associated with one TNC provider as opposed to another. When LA Metro chose Via as the private service provider, King County Metro took on the role of contracting agency for Puget Sound and entered into a sole-source contract with NoMad, LLC, a holding company of Via, for the purposes of implementing Via to Transit.

Reduced Fare Eligibility and Subsidy Distribution

Initially, the Via to Transit project called for reduced fare eligibility and subsidy distribution to those eligible to be handled through a lookup tool that would be processed on the back-end within the agencies. Sound Transit and King County Metro successfully sought approval from the ORCA Joint Board for provision for third-party mobility providers partnering with Sound Transit and/or King County Metro to validate ORCA Card Serial Numbers (CSNs) to provide qualifying reduced fare ORCA cardholders with a subsidized trip on first/last-mile transit feeder services when the user registered to participate in the pilot. The Joint Board Action (Appendix A) specified that the validation would not allow the TNC/private mobility company direct access to the ORCA system but would allow for the ORCA agency project team to provide a "yes" or "no" validation to the TNC/private mobility provider that the ORCA CSN qualified for a subsidy. Qualifying passenger types were Regional Reduced Fare Permit (RRFP), ORCA LIFT, and Youth. The external dataset resulting from a query of the ORCA database for passenger type would be securely and separately stored at Sound Transit and would include a subset of ORCA card CSNs associated with reduced fare passenger types. User privacy provisions would include a requirement that to participate in the pilot, registrants would be required to accept a "Terms of Use" waiver that would include language allowing an ORCA agency to access the user's ORCA data within a specified time period for planning and research purposes.

The subsidy distribution method did not move forward for this project because King County Metro identified an alternative path that would not require IT development work, which was underway at Sound Transit. King County Metro located approximately 20 ORCA Portable Fare Transaction Processor (PFTP) readers that could be repurposed for use in the vehicles for Via to Transit. Once Via was under contract with the County, the County determined that allowing people to tap their ORCA cards upon boarding a Via to Transit vehicle would be a more seamless adaptation for the service than integration through the Via app for subsidy provision. Tapping an ORCA card is the typical payment method for using transit in Puget Sound. Not only did use of ORCA PFTPs allow reduced-fare customers to easily receive a reduced rate, but by allowing payment using an ORCA card, the PFTPs enabled fare transfers between Via to Transit and buses and light rail and allowed riders to pay through the ORCA system (which is beneficial, as many customer ORCA fares are paid by their employer or school). Use of ORCA cards as a fare payment method more fully integrated the Via to Transit service into the broader transit network.

The limited number of ORCA PFTP devices dictated the need for a fixed fleet of Via vehicles rather than the initial, more classic TNC model planned for the project, in which drivers bring their own vehicles onto the platform. Via arranged

for a relationship with Avis through which a dedicated fleet of branded vehicles was made available to driver partners for rent on a per-shift basis (driver partners pay an hourly rate for the vehicle rental to Avis and the cost of fuel). Although King County Metro explored the option of using Metro vehicles for the service, due to TNC regulations, independent contractor drivers could not be provided with a vehicle and had to use their own vehicle or rent a vehicle from a third party.

Pilot Location Selection

Pilot locations were selected using criteria developed based on those defined in FTA's MOD NOFO and the project's submitted proposal; two service areas were added as a result of funding from the City of Seattle. Pilot location selection is described in detail in Appendix B.

Expanded Service Hours and Locations

The Via to Transit project was initially planned to operate Monday through Friday during peak service hours (three hours AM, three hours PM) at three pilot locations. With the additional funding from the City of Seattle, hours were expanded in pilot zones in Seattle to mirror Link light rail hours (Monday–Saturday 5:00–1:00 AM, Sunday 6:00–12:00 AM). Part of the impetus for expanding locations in Seattle was community engagement and support for a contiguous service area throughout the pilot project to enhance efficiencies of the service provision. The full community engagement report is available in Appendix C.

Late Night Hours and Door-to-Door Pickup

From community feedback, the project team learned that late-night safety concerns were an issue for some riders. A late-night pickup option was implemented that provided door-to-door pick-up or drop-off for trip origins or destinations at the transit hub (i.e. riders did not have to walk a short-distance to/from the vehicle). This was enabled for all riders requesting a trip after 10:00 PM and before 6:00 AM.

Service Suspension and Pilot Conclusion Due to COVID-19

On March 23, 2020, Via to Transit service was suspended as part of broader COVID-19-related transit service reductions in the region. The duration of the service suspension coincided with the conclusion of the 12-month pilot timeframe, which would have wrapped up on April 16, 2020. Declining ridership on Via to Transit in March was due to a reduction in travel by people throughout the region, as travel behavior changed due to the pandemic and a large increase in remote work allowances by employers. King County Metro also implemented a limit to shared rides on the service, leading to the suspension, which led to decreased efficiency overall.

SECTION

4

Evaluation

This section summarizes the local evaluation of the Via to Transit project in the central Puget Sound region. The evaluation was conducted by the Washington State Transportation Center (TRAC) at the University of Washington in conjunction with the Eno Center for Transportation.[7] FTA will publish a separate evaluation report by an independent evaluator as part of the larger FTA MOD Sandbox Demonstration program.

The primary goal of the local evaluation was to understand the use of Via to Transit and how that use resulted in changes in the use of Link light rail and bus services in the five pilot areas. In meeting this goal, evaluation addressed the following:

- Amount of Via to Transit use
- How that use varied over time and by geographic area
- Whether the availability of Via to Transit increased the use of Link light rail
- Whether Via to Transit users previously had used transit to reach the light rail stations, had used other modes for access, or had not previously used light rail
- Whether Via to Transit was a substitute for bus transit in Via service areas or the majority of Via to Transit trips would not have occurred on transit had Via to Transit not been available
- Whether Via to Transit improved the equity of available transit options in the region
- Whether access to Link light rail improved for persons with travel disabilities and the use of Link increased by persons with travel disabilities

Data and Methods

To understand the use of Via to Transit and how that use produced changes in the use of Link light rail and conventional bus and paratransit bus services in the five pilot test service areas, the evaluation team used six major data sets:

1. **A pre-Via intercept survey of riders** conducted before the start of Via to Transit service. The survey was available in multiple languages, although few were completed in a language other than English. The survey was administered at four of the five Link stations; the Rainier Beach station was not included in the pre-Via intercept survey, as this Via to Transit service area was added to the pilot after the survey was planned.

[7]Additional evaluation material will be provided after evaluation of the final "after" data sets, which were delayed, in part, by the need to re-allocate IT support services in response to the COVID pandemic.

2. **ORCA transit farecard data** describing when and where riders who paid with an ORCA card boarded transit vehicles and when and where those riders transferred between transit services. Data were available for January 7–March 22, 2019 (before Via to Transit service started), July 1–August 30, 2019 (after Via to Transit service began operating), and January 7–March 24, 2020 (last three months of Via to Transit service.)
3. **An online Via rider survey** conducted in December 2019, eight months after the start of the Via to Transit pilot. A survey link was emailed to users of the Via app,[8] available only in English and completed only by individuals who had signed up to use the demonstration service, the only service offered by Via in the Puget Sound region.
4. **Via system use data** describing trips taken on the Via system (origin, destination, time of day, etc.) and trips requested but not taken.
5. **Data from the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS)**.
6. **Built environment and transit service data** (e.g., street networks, and estimated transit and walking trip travel times and distances).

These data sources were used to describe the use of conventional transit and Via to Transit in the five pilot service areas as well as attributes of the individuals making those trips, land uses to and from which trips were being taken, and attributes of the services being used.

The survey data sets provided demographic information about survey respondents as well as trip purpose information and perceptions about the services. The surveys included information on rider age, ethnicity, household income, and travel disability (and what those disabilities were). The surveys also provided trip details such as trip purpose, method of payment (e.g., cash, ORCA, Transit Go), method typically used to access a station, method used for this trip, and other attributes about the respondent, including whether they had a smartphone, access to a car, and a bank account. The primary limitation of the survey data was dataset size. For the pre-Via intercept survey, 1,182 riders responded about their trip leading to the station before boarding a Link train; an additional 354 riders completed a basic survey about their trip after arriving by rail. Most surveys were completed before the rider left the station, although some were completed online later in the day.

For the Via rider survey, 1,273 usable surveys were returned. Of those, 262 were about trips to the stations and 429 were about trips from the station; 581 respondents indicated taking Via to Transit both to and from Link stations.

ORCA farecard and Via system use data lacked the descriptive rider information available from the two surveys; however, they covered a much larger proportion

[8]Via to Transit service for this demonstration project was the only service provided by Via in the Puget Sound Region, so only individuals who had signed up received a survey.

of the transit-using public, as roughly 80% of all Sound Transit fares are paid using ORCA.[9] The ORCA data covered all transit trips made with ORCA payments for the three data collection periods. For most comparison analyses, snow days (February 3–12, 2019) from the winter 2019 data set and March 2020 data (impacts of COVID pandemic) were removed from the data.

ORCA must be used to obtain a transfer between King County and Sound Transit services; therefore, the vast majority of transfers involved an ORCA payment. As a result, ORCA data accurately described the number of transit-to-transit transfers that occurred to and from Link and could be used to directly measure how many Link users arrived at and departed from a station by bus.

Because ORCA is used for a large portion of total boarding payments, it allowed for a very robust analysis of the overall use patterns of both Link and King County Metro buses over the course of the Via to Transit study. Using transit use patterns outside the five service areas as controls for the study, the research team was able to examine the effects of Via to Transit on overall transit use. Although ORCA data lacked detailed demographic information about users, they indicated whether a transit rider was in one of five categories of riders (Adult, Senior, Low-income, Youth, or Disability), as these categories were used to apply discounts to the transit fare charged.

Via system use data described all trips made using the Via to Transit service and the number of trip requests that could not be met because of a lack of available seats in deployed vans. These data were uniquely suited for describing the actual use of Via to Transit, including the general location of the start and end of each trip.[10] In addition, for Via to Transit users who paid with ORCA, it was possible to assign the same five basic ORCA rider attributes to those users, thus allowing the research team to examine the use of Via to Transit by low-income, older adult, travel disabled, and youth riders.

Use of Via to Transit

Data were provided from the start of Via to Transit service on April 16, 2019, until February 29, 2020. Although the system operated into March 2020, impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic affected use of the service, so March 2020 data were not included in this analysis.

From April 16, 2019 through February 29, 2020, a total of 247,629 passengers were carried, with 220,939 Via to Transit trip reservations made. Of the completed trip reservations, 90.5% were made for one person, 7.7% were made for two people, and the remaining 1.8% were made for three or more people.

[9]Sound Transit Fare Revenue Report, 2017.

[10]The precision of the latitude/longitude value associated with individual pick-up/drop-off locations was restricted to three decimal places to help protect rider privacy. This level of accuracy still allowed the research team to assign trips to transit stops that would have been used if a bus trip had been used as an alternative to the Via service.

Basic Ridership Trends

Figure 4-1 shows the growth in completed Via to Transit trips from the start of the pilot demonstration through the end of February 2020 by station, using the average number of completed weekday rides for each month. Via to Transit ridership grew steadily from implementation of the service in mid-April through early Fall 2019, followed by a modest decline through the holiday season. Use remained fairly steady through the first two months of 2020, with total weekday numbers across all stations averaging 950 riders per day in February. (Note that Figure 4-1 includes holiday travel occurring on weekdays as part of the weekday ridership.)

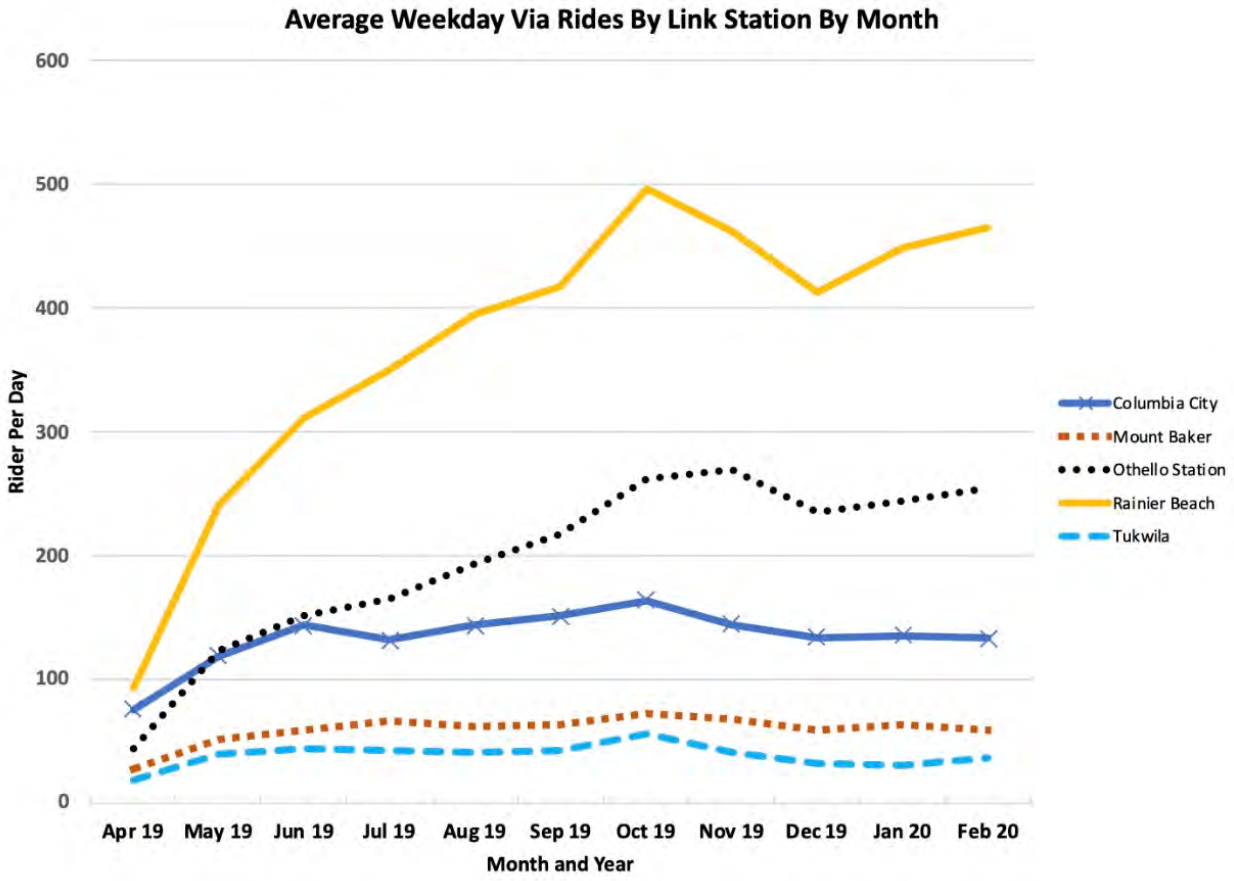


Figure 4-1

Average Number of Via to Transit Rides per Weekday by Station and Month

The largest amount of Via to Transit use occurred to and from the Rainier Beach station. Othello and Columbia City had the second and third greatest use; although these two stations initially had fairly similar use, Othello showed faster growth than Columbia City, whose use flattened over time. All stations showed a modest decline in the use of Via to Transit during December 2019, and Othello and Rainier Beach experienced a modest rebound in ridership during January and February 2020. Tukwila had the lowest ridership but also had fewer hours of Via to Transit service and the availability of a large park-and-ride lot. Ridership in

Mount Baker also was comparatively low, perhaps due to a higher density of local bus service.

Table 4-1 shows average daily Via to Transit ridership per month at all five stations. Unlike Figure 4-1, the average daily ridership in Table 4-1 includes weekend use, which demonstrated parallel trends to weekday ridership over the course of the pilot.

Table 4-1

*Average Daily/ Average Weekday Via to Transit Ridership by Station and Month**

	Columbia City	Mount Baker	Othello Station	Rainier Beach	Tukwila	Total
Apr 2019	67 / 76	26 / 28	40 / 45	81 / 93	15 / 19	229 / 260
May 2019	98 / 119	44 / 52	106 / 124	198 / 242	29 / 39	475 / 576
Jun 2019	113 / 144	49 / 59	130 / 152	244 / 3112	30 / 44	567 / 713
Jul 2019	112 / 132	57 / 66	145 / 166	293 / 350	32 / 43	641 / 758
Aug 2019	119 / 144	54 / 63	166 / 194	325 / 395	30 / 42	696 /840
Sep 2019	124 / 151	56 / 64	190 / 218	341 / 418	30 / 43	742 / 895
Oct 2019	137 / 164	63 / 72	228 / 262	412 / 497	41 / 55	883 /1051
Nov 2019	119 / 145	59 /68	232 / 270	384 / 463	29 / 42	826 /990
Dec 2019	112 / 135	52 / 59	207 / 235	350 / 413	23 / 33	746 /876
Jan 2020	114 / 136	57 / 64	212 / 245	380 / 449	23 / 31	788 /927
Feb 2020	107 / 133	50 / 60	215 / 255	380 / 466	25 / 36	780 /953

*Includes weekend trips.

Figure 4-2 shows the geographic distribution of Via to Transit trips. Trips were aggregated by Census Block Group, where each was assigned based on the non-Link station end of the trip. One geographic pattern not apparent in the Block Group data but called out in Figure 4-2 was a high volume of trips occurring along S Orcas Street. This east/west road experienced a high concentration of trips, but they were distributed among several Block Groups. S Orcas Street has no east/west bus service and is nearly equidistant to the Columbia City and Othello stations. This is an area of Seattle will be served very effectively by the planned Graham Street station; it is a part of the pilot area in which riders frequently chose Via to Transit over the alternatives. The area with the largest overall use of Via to Transit was the SE portion of the city (e.g., Rainier View, Skyway), where the local bus network is less robust, particularly east-west.

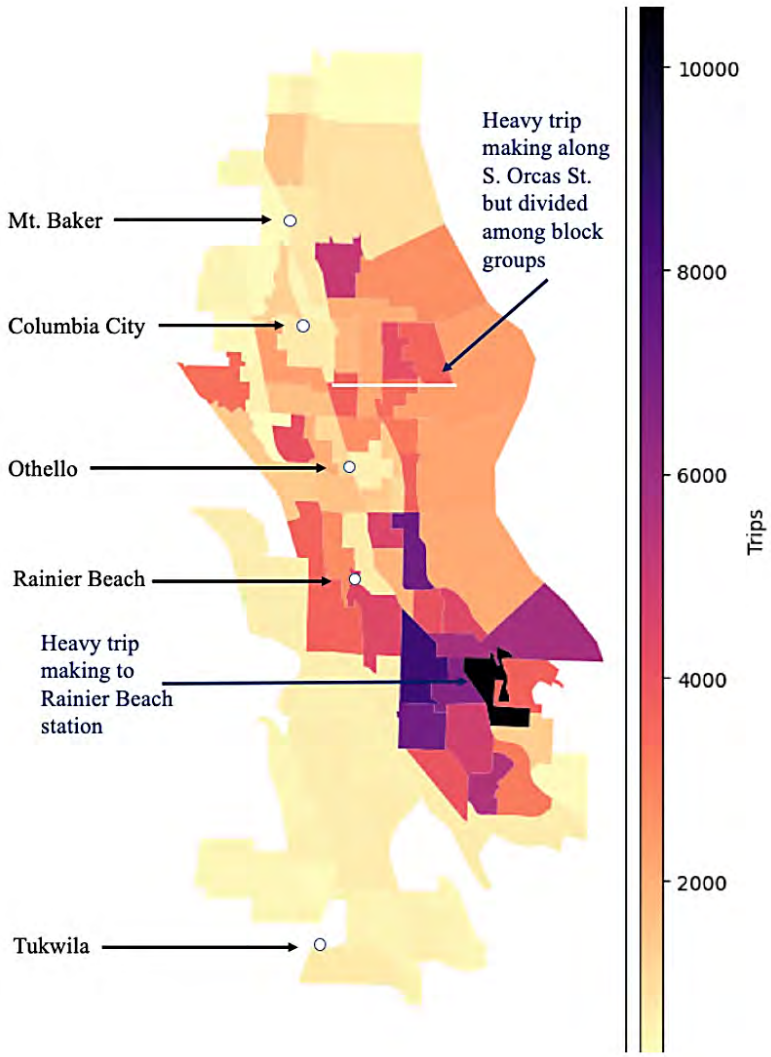
Use by Time of Day

Figure 4-3 shows the time of day distribution of Via to Transit trips by Link station service area. The data shown do not discriminate between station pick-up and drop-off trips. The most obvious difference among the five stations was the effect of the shorter hours of service at the Tukwila station, at which only peak-period service was provided. All four Seattle stations, at which Via to Transit service was provided throughout the day, showed fairly typical commute-oriented travel peaks in the AM and PM periods. The Rainier Beach station had a morning peak period that started about an hour earlier than the other three Seattle stations.

In total, 24% of trips occurred in the AM peak, 5:00–9:00 AM; 33% occurred in the afternoon peak, 4:00–8:00 PM. Midday (9:00 AM–4:00 PM) captured 31% of trips, with the evening carrying the remaining 12%. Figure 4-4 shows the difference between weekdays and weekends for the time of day when travel occurred. (Note that there was no Tukwila service on the weekends.)

Figure 4-2

Via to Transit Trip Geographic Distribution by Census Block Group



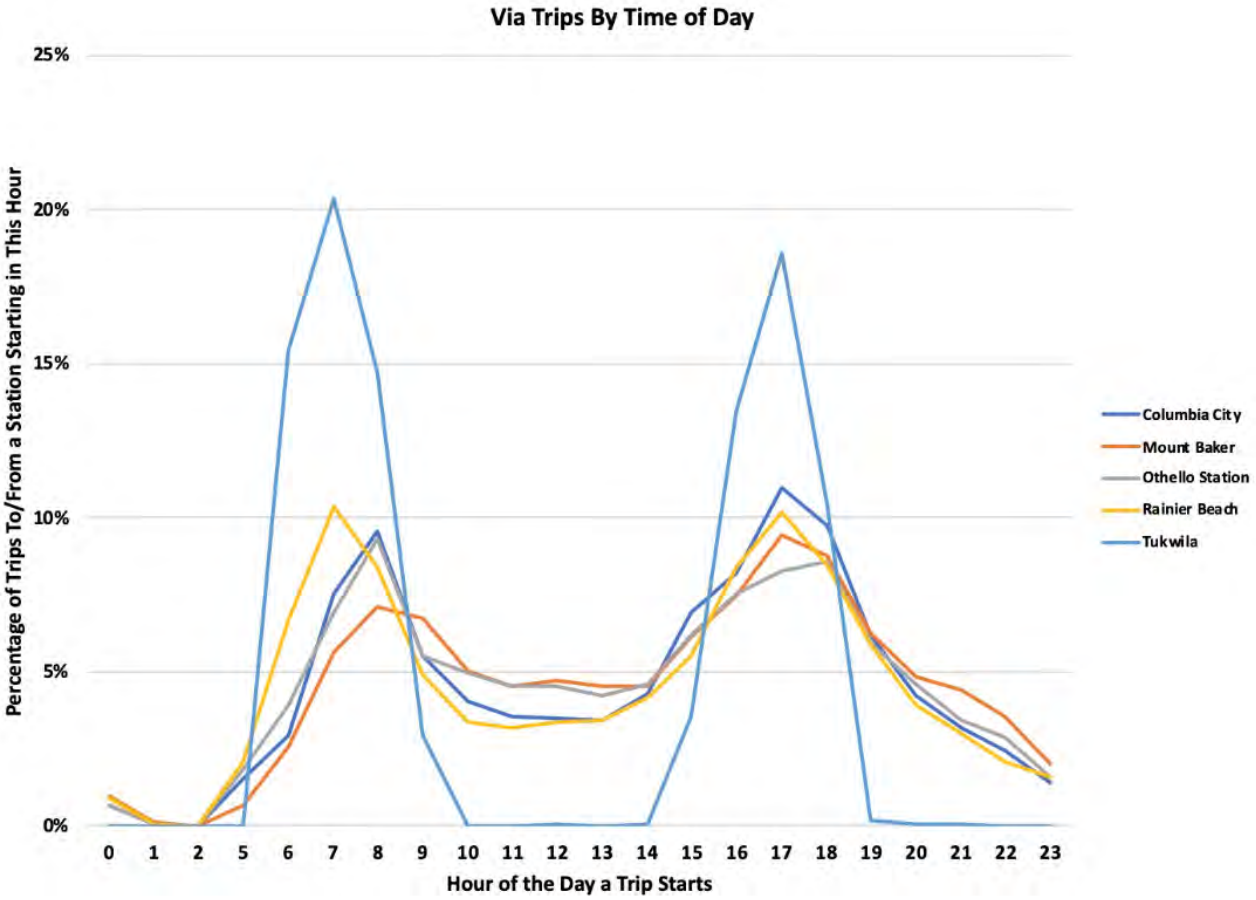


Figure 4-3

Via to Transit Trip Time-of-Day Distribution

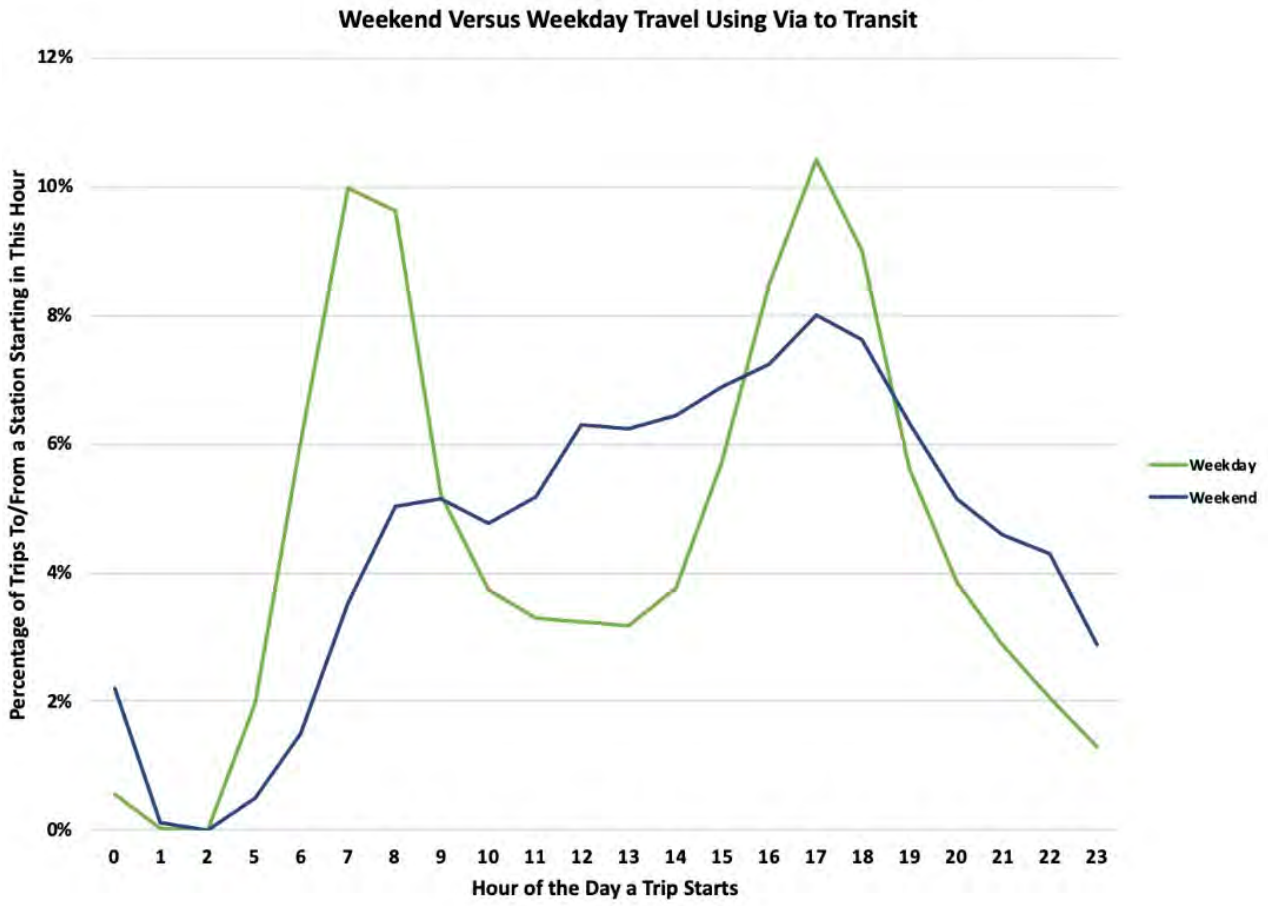


Figure 4-4

Via to Transit Trip Time-of-Day Distribution, Weekdays vs. Weekends

Wheelchair Travel

Ride requests for WAVswere a small percentage of all Via to Transit trips. A total of 701 WAV rides were completed before March 5, 2020, just under 0.32%. A large amount of WAV travel was by a small number of individuals. In total, 45 unique ORCA cards were used to reserve completed WAV rides. The top five WAV users made 66% of the total WAV trips, and 12 WAV users (29%) made only one or two trips. This is similar to the 33% of all users that used Via to Transit only once or twice.

As shown in Figure 4-5, once WAV ridership started, it grew fairly quickly, but weekly ridership levels were highly variable throughout the course of the pilot project. Because of the small number of WAV users, when frequent users were not traveling, WAV use declined measurably. Overall WAV ridership declined heavily during the holiday season (November and December), although WAV trips were made on most holidays. Ridership increased in January and February 2020 before the end of the pilot as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

WAV rides were not evenly distributed among the five service areas. Othello had considerably more WAV rides, both in total and as a percentage of total rides, in comparison to any other service area, with more than twice as many WAV rides (412) and more than twice as high a percentage of total trips that were WAV requests.

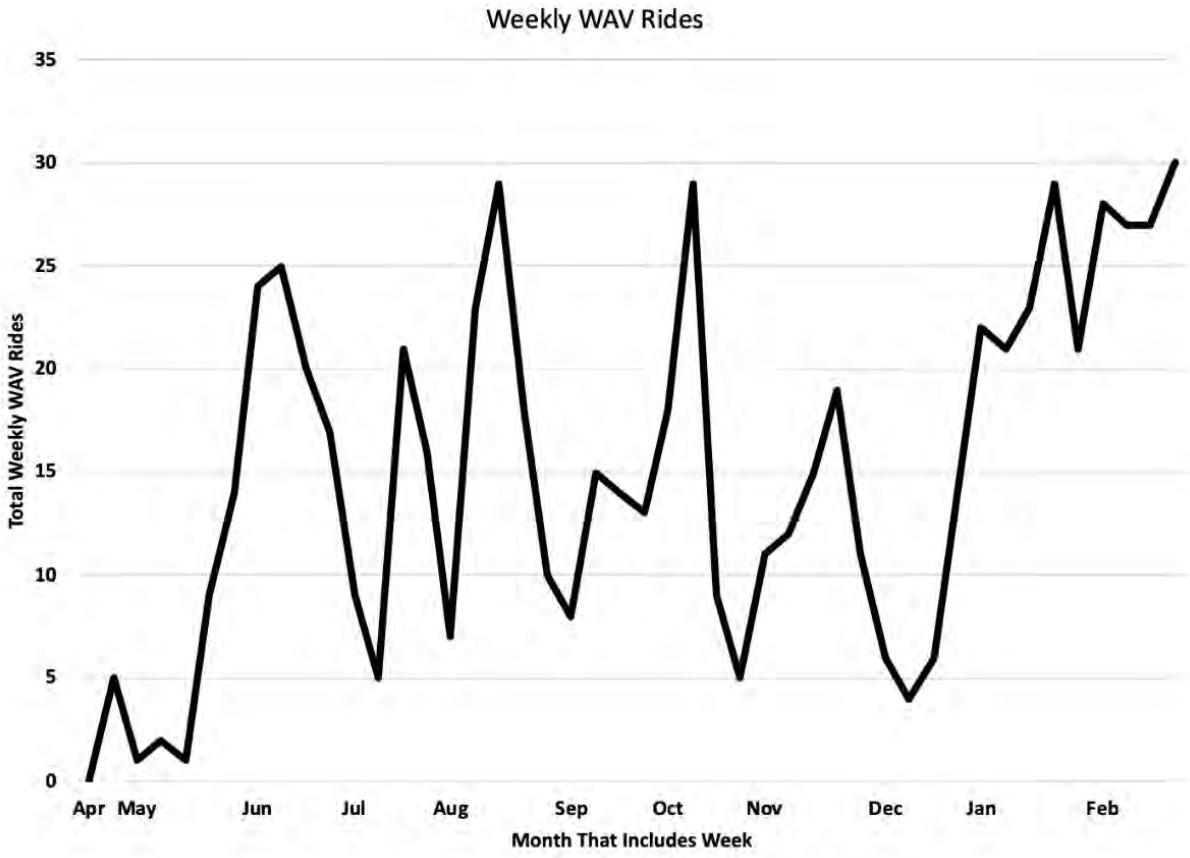


Figure 4-5

Weekly WAV Rides Completed During Pilot

Frequency of Via to Transit Use

Data on the frequency of Via to Transit use were based on reservations made for completed trips, and hashed IDs were used to determine how often riders used the Via system. These data included only individuals making the ride reservation, as the Via data system did not recognize the IDs of other individuals who were part of larger parties and the ORCA readers in the vehicles did not function reliably during the pilot.

In total, 8,154 unique rider IDs were observed completing Via trips during the pilot. (One rider took 790 trips (the highest number), an average of 2.4 trips per day, on Via to Transit over the duration of the study period.) Of the 8,154 riders, 1,734 (21%) used Via to Transit once, 963 (12%) used it twice, and 1,272 used it

3–5 times. Combined, these low-frequency users constituted almost 49% of the unique users of the Via to Transit service but less than 4% of trips. Conversely, the top 1% of Via to Transit users took 27,710 trips, about 12% of the total reserved and completed trips.

Seniors were more likely to use the system very infrequently, and low-income and youth riders were more likely to be high-frequency users (see Table 4-2). Only 1% of seniors used Via to Transit more than 80 times, and 18% of low-income and youth riders used it more than 80 times.

Table 4-2

Via to Transit Users by Passenger Type, Very Low or Very High Frequency

Number of Trips	Adult	Travel Disabled	Low-Income	Senior	Youth	Not Available	All Riders
1	19%	14%	14%	29%	12%	21%	21%
2	13%	8%	10%	19%	7%	11%	12%
3–6	17%	8%	15%	18%	14%	14%	16%
7–80	40%	60%	43%	33%	49%	44%	40%
81–150	6%	7%	10%	0%	9%	7%	6%
>150	5%	3%	8%	1%	9%	3%	5%

Rider Characteristics

The two major sources of information on the ridership of Via to Transit were ORCA card data used for fare payment and Via rider survey data. The survey data provided the most detailed information about riders, but comparing those data to payment information revealed some bias in the survey responses. Therefore, survey response data were used with care. Not surprisingly, the survey over-represented high-frequency Via to Transit users and under-represented low-frequency users; it also under-represented younger users, particularly those young enough to pay with a Youth ORCA card.

Use per ORCA Data

By matching ORCA card numbers used to request Via to Transit rides to those used for bus and rail payments, it was possible to determine an ORCA passenger type (adult, youth, travel disabled, low-income, senior) for roughly 75% of all completed Via to Transit trip reservations, or 67% of all Via riders. Table 4-3 shows the percentage of trips by passenger type and station used, assuming that travelers for whom passenger type information was not available were similar to those for whom information was available and the percentage of conventional transit trips made during the winter 2019 pre-Via period represented the conventional transit population over the course of the pilot.

Table 4-3

Trips by Known Passenger Type by Service Area (Via to Transit/Bus & Link)

	Adult	Disabled	Low-Income	Senior	Youth
Columbia City	72% / 72%	1% /3%	5% / 7%	3% / 4%	20% / 14%
Mount Baker	64% / 60%	3% / 6%	8% / 9%	3% / 6%	22% / 19%
Othello Station	58% / 65%	2% / 4%	8% / 11%	1% / 4%	30% / 16%
Rainier Beach	73% / 65%	1% / 4%	7% / 9%	1% / 3%	19% / 19%
Tukwila	79% / 77%	6% / 4%	2% / 10%	4% / 4%	10% / 5%
Total All Trips	68% / 68%	2% / 4%	7% / 9%	2% / 4%	22% / 15%

Note: When a ride reservation was made for more than one person, all riders in that reservation were assumed to be of the passenger type of the individual making the reservation, as payment data were not reliably collected because of issues with ORCA card readers in Via vehicles. A small amount (less than 0.2%) of trips was not associated with specific Link stations in the Via database.

Adult ORCA users constituted the majority (almost 70%) of all Via to Transit trips, youths were just over 20%, and ORCA LIFT riders (low-income riders) were just under 7%; riders with travel disabilities and senior riders were under 2% each. The primary variations in these overall patterns were as follows:

- Othello had a much higher percentage of youth trips (30%), and Tukwila had low youth use (10%), although in both cases, use of Via to Transit by youth riders was twice that of their use of conventional transit.
- Othello and Mount Baker had a modestly higher fraction of low-income trips (8%).
- Mount Baker and Tukwila experienced a higher percentage of both travel disabled and senior trips (3% for both at Mount Baker; 6% and 3%, respectively, for Tukwila).

Some youth ridership can be attributed to the multiple middle and high schools in the service areas, and many students travel to school using Link. However, an analysis of summer Via to Transit and Link use in the Othello service area showed that youth ridership remained very high during the summer; therefore, students continued to use Via to Transit in the summer even when school was not in session. The primary difference between the make-up of Via to Transit ridership and conventional bus and light rail ridership is that Via to Transit had a higher proportion of youth riders, resulting in modest percentage declines in the other three reduced-fare passenger types. Minor differences in these patterns occurred in the five station areas. Rainier Beach, with the highest Via to Transit ridership, showed the largest increase in adult use; in contrast, Othello showed a decrease in the percentage of adults and a substantial increase in youth trips. Tukwila experienced very low use of Via to Transit service by low-income users (2%) and had a slightly higher-than-average percentage of low-income bus and Link users.

Via Rider Survey Data

The Via rider survey was designed to allow responses that could be linked to anonymized rider IDs to enable basic analysis of how well the responses represented the individuals making Via to Transit trips. Not surprisingly, those

responding to the survey were more likely to be higher-frequency Via to Transit users than the general population of users of the service, as shown in Figure 4-6. Combined Via to Transit trip and ORCA payment information indicated that 33% of those using Via to Transit made fewer than two trips on the service and were less than 20% of the survey sample. Conversely, users who took an average of more than five trips per week made up just over 1% of Via to Transit users but more than 3% of survey respondents; those who used Via to Transit once or twice a week made up 24% of the survey population but only 15% of the user population.

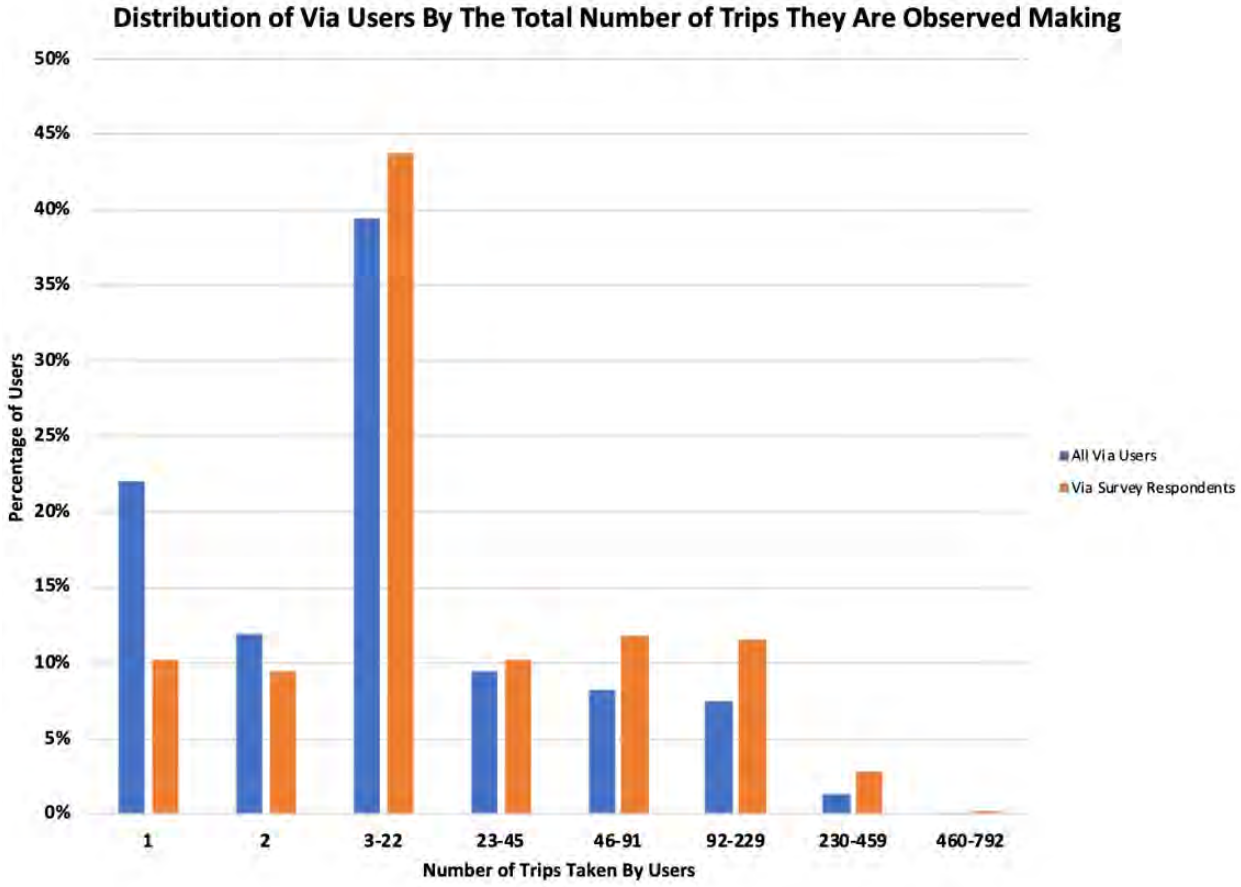


Figure 4-6

Comparison of Frequency of Via to Transit Use, Via Rider Survey vs. Completed Reservations

Gender

Gender information was not available from ORCA data but was from the two surveys. In total, 55% of females, 41% of males, and 4% identifying as non-binary completed a survey (Table 4-4). Responses for all stations were similar, with two exceptions: Mount Baker had nearly as many male respondents (47%) as female (48%), and Othello had a lower number of non-binary responses than the other four stations. These rates differed somewhat from the responses to the pre-Via intercept survey, for which male and female response rates were essentially equal, with 48% female, 49% male, and 2% non-binary.

Table 4-4

Gender, Via Rider Survey/Pre-Via Intercept Survey

Station Last Used	Female	Male	Non-Binary
Mount Baker	48% / 49%	47% / 47%	5% / 3%
Columbia City	56% / 48%	39% / 50%	5% / 1%
Othello	59% / 44%	40% / 53%	1% / 3%
Rainier Beach	55% / NA	41% / NA	3% / NA
Tukwila	58% / 51%	38% / 47%	4% / 2%
Total	55% / 48%	41% / 49%	4% / 2%

Examining gender and frequency with respondent IDs that appeared in the Via trip data,[11] female respondents were somewhat more likely to be infrequent users of Via to Transit (50–55%%) and males were more likely to be high-frequency users (40–52%). Table 4-5 shows the gender ratio for frequency of Via to Transit service use; respondents who did not respond to this question were considered to be the same percentages as those who did.

Table 4-5

Gender and Frequency of Use

Gender Identity	1 Trip	2–4 Trips	5–199 Trips	200 or More Trips	Total Survey Response
Female	50%	55%	56%	44%	55%
Male	45%	40%	40%	52%	41%
Non-Binary	4%	5%	3%	4%	4%
Total Respondents	115	224	728	48	1168

Age

Significant differences were found for rider age in the Via rider survey and the ORCA payment data. Table 4-6 shows distribution by age, indicating that the Mount Baker station had a much higher percentage of seniors (21%) than the other four service areas (4–12%.) However, this pattern was not present in the Via to Transit and ORCA usage data, in which only 9% of trips made to and from Mount Baker were made by seniors, and that percentage was not significantly different from that found for the other Via service areas. When examined across all survey responses, the 11% age 65 or older response was only marginally higher than the percentage of senior card users observed in the ORCA data.

[11]Respondent IDs were anonymized prior to being shared with the evaluation team to ensure the privacy of individuals participating in the demonstration, but the team was able to determine how often each respondent used the Via to Transit service.

Table 4-6

Age Distribution, Via Rider Survey by Station

Station	Age of Survey Respondent								
	13–15	16–17	18–19	20–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
Mount Baker	0%	1%	2%	3%	20%	21%	12%	19%	21%
Columbia City	1%	3%	1%	3%	28%	21%	18%	13%	12%
Othello	0%	4%	3%	10%	26%	21%	16%	11%	8%
Rainier Beach	1%	3%	2%	5%	28%	26%	15%	13%	7%
Tukwila	3%	0%	7%	7%	22%	28%	16%	14%	4%
Total	1%	3%	2%	5%	26%	23%	16%	14%	11%

Looking at data presented Table 4-4, 15% of all winter 2019 ORCA trips were paid for with Youth cards; 22% of Via to Transit trips were made by youth riders, but less than 4% of survey respondents were youths (age 18 or younger). The pre-Via intercept survey showed 10% of respondents were age 18 or younger; only 2% of Via to Transit users and 4% of bus/Link users from winter 2019 used Senior ORCA cards, and 11% of Via rider survey respondents indicated being age 65 or older. The pre-Via intercept survey also showed 4% of Link riders as age 65 or older. Thus, the Via rider survey under-represented youth riders and over-represents senior riders.

Travel Disabilities

In total, 63 of 1,273 respondents reported having one or more travel disabilities. Table 4-7 shows the number of reported travel disabilities by type and the last station used by the respondent. The majority of the "Other" responses described why the individual had difficulty walking long distances, including a variety of physical ailments and pregnancy.

Table 4-7

Via to Transit Travel Disability by Station

Station	Reported Travel Disability						
	Wheelchair Use	No Stair Climbing	Vision	Hearing	Service Animal	Other	Total
Mount Baker	1	4	4	3	0	5	17
Columbia City	1	3	4	4	1	14	27
Othello	0	4	3	2	1	4	14
Rainier Beach	0	1	1	1	0	8	11
Tukwila	0	1	0	0	1	1	3
Total	2	13	12	10	3	32	72

Ethnicity

Of the 1,273 respondents to the Via rider survey, 1,062 (83.4%) indicated one ethnicity, 71 (5.6%) indicated more than one, and the remaining 140 (11.0%) did not indicate an ethnicity. Table 4-8 shows the reported ethnicities by Link station in both surveys and from the 2018 ACS 5-Year summary. This allowed a

comparison of Via to Transit user information and information obtained from the general population and from the general Link user population identified in the pre-Via intercept survey. In cases in which an individual indicated more than one ethnicity, he/she was included in the "Other" category. Note that in the Via rider survey, all individuals who indicated American Indian also indicated at least one other ethnicity.

Table 4-8

Ethnicity (Via Rider Survey/Pre-Via Intercept Survey/Census) by Station

Station	Reported Ethnicity					
	Latino	*Black*	*White*	*Asian / Pacific Islander*	*American Indian*	*Other*
Mount Baker	4% /5% /6%	3% / 14% / 22%	68% / 48% /44%	15% / 21% / 21%	0% / 1% / 1%	9% / 10% / 6%
Columbia City	4% / 4% / 6%	4% / 9% / 15%	67% /60% / 43%	15% / 19% / 29%	0% / 0% / 0%	10% / 8% / 7%
Othello	5% / 7% /8%	6% / 18% / 24%	51% / 43% / 21%	27% / 22% / 41%	0% / 1% / 0%	12% / 10% / 6%
Rainier Beach	4% / NA / 11%	15% / NA / 26%	52% / NA / 24%	21% / NA / 33%	0% / NA / 0%	7% / NA / 6%
Tukwila	7% / 6% / 18%	21% / 15% / 17%	43% / 47% / 33%	22% /22% / 23%	0% / 1% / 1%	7% / 13% / 7%
Total	4% / 6% / 10%	8% / 15% / 21%	58% / 47% / 32%	20% / 22% / 30%	0% / 1% / 1%	9% / 10% / 6%

Note: The pre-Via intercept survey was not conducted at the Rainier Beach station.
Note: Some Census Block Groups fall within two different Link station service areas. For the numbers in Table 4-8, the population of each Block Groups was assigned to the service area with the largest number of trips to that service area from that Block Group

Both the Via rider survey and the pre-Via intercept survey indicated that people of color used transit services at lower rates than those who were White. For both surveys, White individuals were over-represented compared to their percentages reported in Census data.

In general, the pre-Via intercept survey results more closely replicated the ethnicities reported in Census population distributions than the Via rider survey. Besides Whites, only the "Other" group, which included all individuals reporting more than one ethnic background, was over-represented in the Via rider survey responses. Pre-Via intercept survey results suggested that people of color used the transit system somewhat less often than Whites; Via Rider survey results indicate the same. That is, the percentage of White Via to Transit users was higher than the percentage of White individuals who live in the Via service areas. This imbalance was even larger than the imbalance observed in the pre-Via intercept survey. If the Via rider survey is a good measure of ridership ethnicity, except the multi-ethnic category, people of color were under-represented users of Via to Transit relative to the demonstration area's residential population.

However, an important caveat to this conclusion is that ORCA data show that Via rider survey responses under-represent youth riders, who made more than 20% of Via trips but supplied only 3% of Via rider survey responses. As more than 73% of youth trips occurred in the Othello and Rainier Beach station service areas, and these areas have the two highest African American population

percentages and the two lowest White population percentages, it is likely that a large percentage of youth riders who did not respond to the surveys were people of color. This suggests that Via to Transit was used by people of color somewhat more than the Via rider survey indicated. In addition, the two station areas with the highest Via to Transit use were Rainier Beach and Othello, which, along with Tukwila International Boulevard, had the highest percentage use of Via to Transit by people of color.

Income

Via rider and pre-Via intercept survey respondents were asked about their annual household income. In total, 32% of Via rider survey respondents either declined to provide the requested information or left the income question blank. For the pre-Via intercept survey, 36% of respondents declined to provide a household income level. Table 4-9 compares survey responses to the income question.

Table 4-9

Household Income Level[1] by Station (Via Rider Survey/Pre-Via Intercept Survey/Census)

Income Level	Mount Baker	Columbia City	Othello	Rainier Beach[2]	Tukwila	Total
$100,000 or more	57% / 34% / 40%	59% / 47% / 44%	48% / 25% / 30%	53% / NA / 32%	53% / 20% / 24%	54% / 32% / 34%
$50,000–$99,999	28% / 26% / 22%	24% / 22% 30%	27% / 30% / 28%	30% / NA / 31%	25% / 24% / 32%	27% / 28% / 29%
$35,000–$49,999[3]	6% / 14% / 13%	7%/ 11% / 7%	8% / 14% / 11%	7% / NA / 11%	6% / 13% / 16%	7% /13% /11%
$25,000–$34,999[3]	2% / 6% / 7%	5% / 7% / 8%	4% / 7% / 9%	3% / NA / 9%	8% /5% / 10%	4% / 6% / 9%
$20,000–$24,999	2% / 6% / 3%	1% / 3% 1%	3% / 7% / 4%	1% / NA / 2%	4% / 12% / 3%	2% / 7% / 3%
$15,000–$19,999[4]	2% / 2% / 3%	0% / 0% 2%	1% / 3% / 6%	1% / NA / 4%	2% / 0% / 5%	1% / 1% / 4%
$10,000–$14,999[5]	0% / 3% / 4%	1% / 3% / 2%	1% / 4% / 5%	2% / NA / 4%	0% / 2% / 3%	1% / 3% / 4%
<$9,9995	3% / 9% / 8%	3% / 7% / 5%	7% / 11% / 8%	4% / NA / 6%	2% / 12% / 7%	4% / 10% / 7%
Mean income[6]	$82,300 / $63,100 / $108,100	$82,200 / $71,500 / $110,500	$74,100 / $57,200 / $86,600	$79,500 / NA / $87,500	$78,300 / $56,600 / $72,800	$79,600 / $62,100 / $92,800

[1] Blanks and choices to not respond were removed from computation of percentages.
[2] Rainier Beach station not included in pre-Via intercept survey.
[3] Pre-Via intercept survey categories were $33,000–$49,999 and $24,000–$32,999
[4] Pre-Via intercept survey lower bound for this category was $16,000.
[5] Pre-Via intercept survey categories were $12,000–$15,999 and <$12,000.
[6] Calculated based on midpoint of each range, except for highest and lowest categories, which were set to $100,000 and $5,000.

Based on Table 4-9, more than 50% of Via rider survey respondents had a household income of more than $100,000 per year, which was higher than for pre-Via intercept survey respondents (32%) and census data (34%). This indicates that the Via rider survey was somewhat biased towards individuals with higher incomes, whereas the pre-Via intercept survey more closely replicates census results. Only 19% of respondents in the Via rider survey lived in households that made less than $50,000 per year; census data showed 37% for this category. There were modest differences in income levels among stations, with Columbia

City and Mount Baker having the highest income levels, and Othello and Tukwila International Boulevard having the lowest.

Bank Account

Both surveys asked respondents to indicate if they had a bank account. Table 4-10 shows that a significant percentage (46%) of pre-Via intercept survey respondents did not have a bank account; Via rider survey respondents had a much lower percentage (13%). It should be noted that in both surveys, roughly 50% of the individuals with no bank account were either youth riders (i.e., likely using a "free" ORCA pass or a family bank account to connect to an ORCA or other mobility account) or had household incomes greater than $50,000, suggesting that they used financial mechanisms other than a bank account. This suggests that, at most, half of the reported unbanked respondents likely had some access to the banking system.

Table 4-10
Respondents with No Bank Account

	Pre-Via Intercept Survey	Via Rider Survey
Mount Baker	10%	1%
Columbia City	6%	2%
Othello	8%	3%
Rainier Beach	NA	3%
Tukwila	13%	2%
Total	9%	2%

Trip Purpose

The two surveys for this study also produced very different distributions of trip purpose (see Table 4-11). In the pre-Via intercept survey, more than 50% of respondents made trips for work and 19% for school. In the Via rider survey, work trips were less than 40% and school trips were less than 8%.

Table 4-11
Trip Purpose

	Via Rider Survey	Pre-Via Intercept Survey
Work	38.9%	56%
School	7.8%	19%
Errands	17.6%	9%
Recreation	30.0%	10%
Other	5.7%	6%

It is unclear if these differences in trip purpose were an artifact of the need to use two different survey methodologies or whether they accurately indicated that Via to Transit users were substantially different from those who agreed to the take the pre-Via intercept survey. Pre-Via survey responses were heavily weighted to the AM and PM peak periods, as ridership was heaviest in those times and, therefore, more survey responses were collected (41% AM, 32% PM, 27% Midday). In contrast, the Via rider survey was conducted as an on-line response to an email prompt and requested information on the rider's "last trip,"

but no time stamp was associated with the trip(s) described, so it is possible that respondents indicated non-work trips because they had not just completed a work trip when they took the survey. It is also known that the Via rider survey under-represented school trips because of the low number of school-age respondents relative to the high level of youth trips observed in the Via and ORCA Link/bus trip databases. It was assumed that students were making trips to school based on the time of day distribution of those trips and the change in distribution during the summer.

Previous Mode

Both surveys showed that the modes used to get to Link stations were similar to those used to depart from stations. However, some significant differences were observed in mode choice between the two surveys. Table 4-12 shows the responses for each mode from the Via rider survey and a comparison of percentages from the pre-Via intercept survey.

Table 4-12

Previous Mode, Access to and Egress from Link

	Via Rider Survey Access to Station		Pre-Via Intercept Survey	Via Rider Survey Egress from Station		Pre-Via Intercept Survey
	#	%		#	%	
Bike	11	1.3%	2.2%	2	0.8%	2.8%
Bus	200	23.8%	18.7%	58	24.6%	25.4%
Did not use this station	91	10.8%	0%	29	12.3%	0%
Drove	125	14.9%	12.4%	39	16.5%	7.9%
Lyft/Uber	64	7.6%	1.3%	14	5.9%	1.4%
Other	45	5.4%	2.2%	19	8.1%	6.5%
Picked up/dropped off	83	9.9%	7.5%	25	10.6%	3.4%
Skateboard	1	0.1%	0.3%	0	0%	0%
Walked/used wheelchair	219	26.1%	54.9%	50	21.2%	51.1%

It is not surprising that access and egress modes differed somewhat among the stations. Rainier Beach had a much higher rate of bus and car access, and Tukwila International Boulevard had a much higher rate of car access. In contrast, Columbia City and, to a lesser extent, Mount Baker had higher rates of pedestrian access. The majority of "Other" responses described either a "compound trip" being used to access or egress the Link station (for example, drove and parked, then walked to the station") or the use of a variety of different modes depending on the day or situation. The fact that Tukwila International Boulevard, the only station that has a park-and-ride facility, showed a high level of "previously drove to the station" suggests that Via opened some spaces in that overcrowded facility to other users, a desired goal of the service.

A big difference observed between the Via rider and pre-Via intercept surveys was a significant reduction in the number of respondents who said they walked to/from the station. In the pre-Via survey, 55% of Link riders said they walked (or used a wheelchair) to get to or from the station, whereas in the Via rider survey, only 26–29% reported walking (or using a wheelchair) to the station. Via to Transit riders also reported using motorized pick-up and drop-off services (combined TNCs and carpools) at roughly twice the rate as the general public in the pre-Via intercept survey (about 18% vs. 8–10%).

Via Performance

Between the start of the pilot and the end of February 2020,[12] a total of 298,697 Via to Transit trip requests were initiated, with 221,127 trips completed that carried 247,845 passengers, an average of more than 690 ride reservations and 776 passengers per day. On weekdays, completed ride reservations exceeded 950 per day by the end of February.

Not all ride requests were successfully completed. Table 4-13 shows the overall outcome of the nearly 300,000 ride requests. "Seat unavailable" requests increased over the course of the pilot, as demand outpaced what was anticipated during the scoping of the service. Table 4-13 also shows how those outcomes differed when the ride request was for a WAV.

Table 4-13
Via to Transit Ride Requests and Request Outcomes

Outcome	Non-WAV Trip Requests		WAV Trip Requests	
	#	%	#	%
Administratively canceled	433	0%	38	4%
Trip completed	223,854	74%	701	67%
Invalid service request	3,531	1%	16	1%
Rider no-shows	3,149	1%	26	3%
Other error*	44,906	15%	136	13%
Rider canceled	21,664	7%	44	4%
Seat unavailable*	4,677	2%	90	9%
Total	302,214	-	1,051	-

* "Other error" are requests for travel to a location outside the service zone or established service hours. "Seat unavailable" is when demand exceeds available supply.

WAV requests were 0.3% of total Via to Transit requests but resulted in 8.1% of all administrative cancellations and 1.9% of seat-unavailable responses; also typically experienced was a lower level of performance. For example, although 0.1% of non-WAV trip requests were administratively canceled, nearly 4% of WAV requests resulted in administrative cancellations. Similarly, 9% of WAV

[12]Most Via ridership data and comparisons are based on data through the end of February 2020. This end date was used for evaluation data collection because the COVID-19 pandemic in March significantly affected all transit use. For evaluation purposes, it was believed that March data created unusual biases in the data; however, Via to Transit service continued into March.

requests were declined because seats were unavailable, whereas only 2% of non-WAV trip requests were not served for this reason. Non-WAV customers were almost twice as likely to cancel a trip request (7% vs. 4%), but individuals who made WAV requests were three times more likely to not show (3% vs. 1%).

The average wait time for all trips was just under 9 minutes, and the expected time of arrival (ETA) differed from the actual arrival by just under 2 minutes (Table 4-14). WAV performance was slightly worse than non-WAV Via to Transit service in these areas, as WAV riders waited an average of 3 minutes more than non-WAV riders for their ride, and there was a higher degree of variability and error in the ETA they were given.

Table 4-14

Via to Transit Trip Length Characteristics

	Non-WAV Trips	WAV Trips
Mean trip distance (mi)	1.57	1.30
Mean trip duration (min)	7.49	8.05
Mean ETA (min)	8.77	11.91
Mean absolute difference ETA minus actual arrival	1.958	2.829
Mean ETA minus actual arrival (min)	0.216	-0.551

Figure 4-7 shows the distribution of Via to Transit trip distances for each service area and for all trips combined. More than 95% of all trips were for less than 3 miles; trips longer than 3 miles were commonly made only in the two larger service areas, Rainer Beach and Tukwila. These two service areas also had the smallest percentage of trips of less than 1 mile, which were common in the Mount Baker service area.

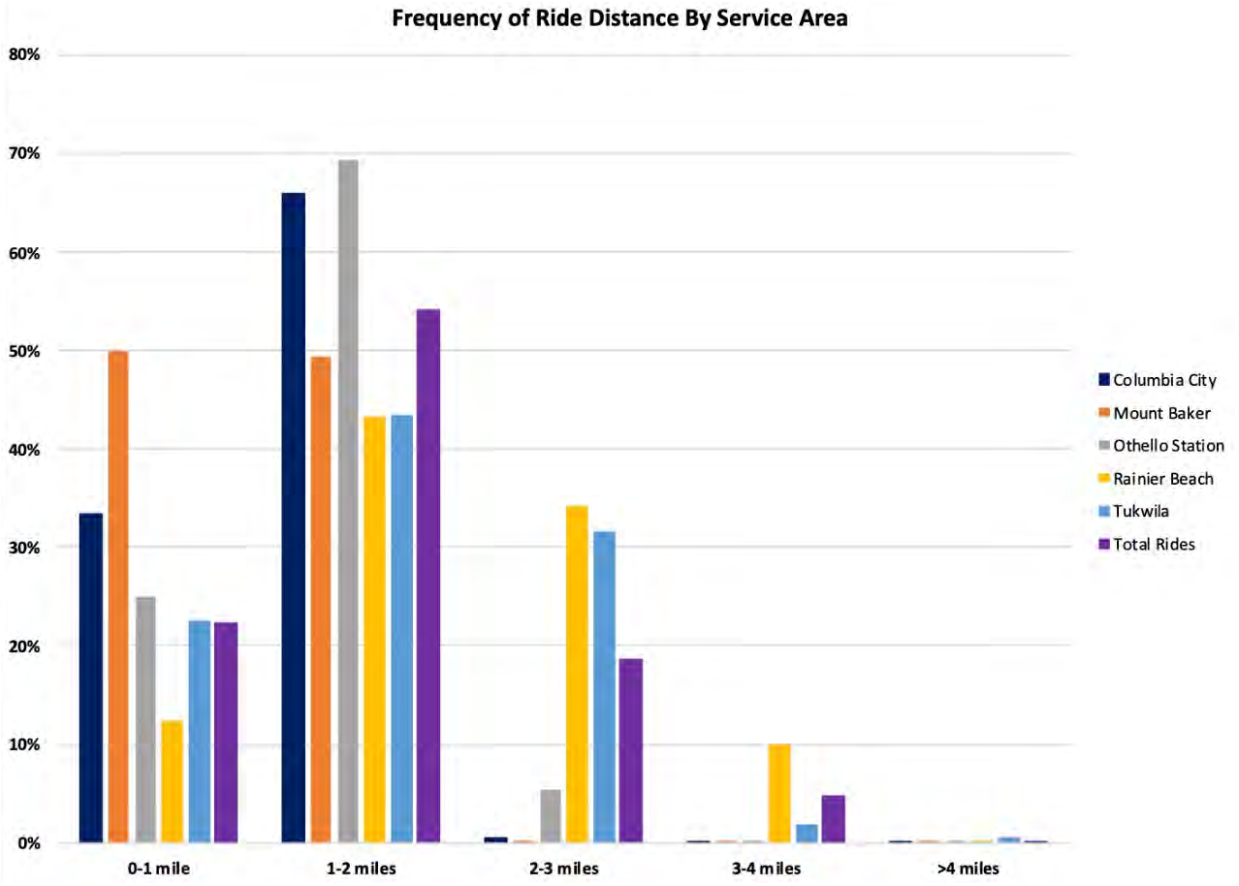


Figure 4-7

Via to Transit Trip Distance

Figure 4-8 is a map that shows areas within the service areas that saved the most time by using Via to Transit instead of walking or using conventional bus service. The map illustrates the mean savings for all trips taken either to or from a Census Block Group and a Link station. Comparing Figure 4-8 with Figure 4-2, it is apparent that Block Groups with the highest ridership (southeast) had good average time savings, but those with the highest time savings were not the highest ridership areas. This illustrates that other factors in addition to time savings played a significant role in user decision-making.

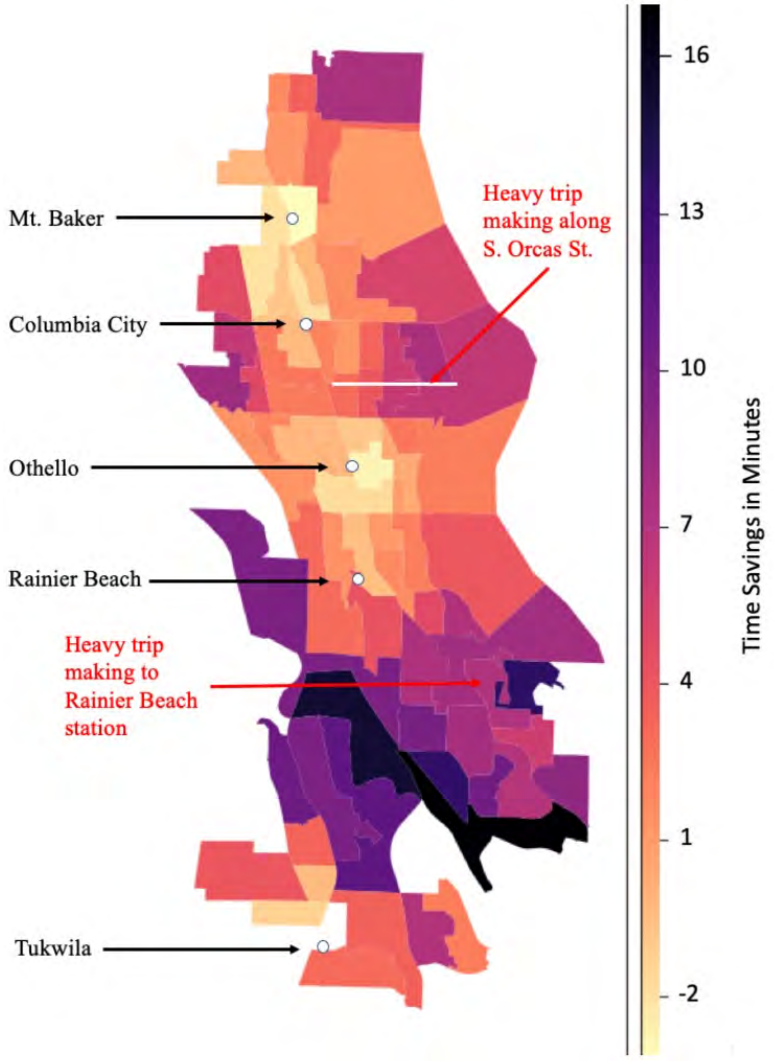


Figure 4-8

Mean Time Savings Using Via to Transit, by Block Group

Overall Use of Rail and Bus Transit

A total of 5,458 unique ORCA cards were used in both the Via to Transit trip dataset and one or both of the ORCA winter and summer datasets, with 4,138 individuals who took Via to Transit at least once during the pilot appearing in the winter ORCA dataset prior to the start of the service. Of these, 430 (10.6%) were not observed to make a non-Via to Transit trip during summer 2019 (July and August); this group ceased using transit in the summer and are referred to as "lost" riders.

In total, use of 5,028 unique ORCA cards was observed in the summer ORCA dataset that also appeared in the Via to Transit trip data. Of these, 1,329 (26.4%) were not observed in the winter dataset. People in this group were considered

to be riders new to bus, Link, or other transit services and constituted almost one-quarter of the Via to Transit riders observed in the ORCA bus and train usage data. This strongly suggests that Via to Transit service either increased the number of transit customers or converted cash-paying customers to ORCA users. Overall, 3,699 individuals were observed in both the summer and winter datasets and are referred to as "continuing" riders.[13]

With one exception, no significant difference in the distribution of observed ORCA passenger types was observed in lost, new, and continuing groups. In all three groups, roughly 75% of ORCA cards used were standard Adult cards, just under 2% were Disability ORCA cards, and just under 5% were Senior ORCA cards; 14% of rider IDs used Youth ORCA cards, and the remaining 4% were -used ORCA (LIFT) (low-income) cards. The one exception was that new riders had a higher percentage of LIFT cards (7.5%) and, consequently, a slightly lower percentage of Youth cards (10.6%.) This suggests that 1) to a limited extent, low-income riders were able to take advantage of the Via to Transit service, and 2) new Youth cards were likely not distributed to students in the Seattle school system until after August; given the heavy use of Via to Transit by youth riders, it is not likely that youths were slow to try using Via to Transit services. Growth in the number of low-income users is a good social equity outcome for the Via to Transit program, although low-income users were a very modest percentage of overall Via to Transit users.

Changes in Link and Bus Ridership

Ideally, the before/after analysis of changes in bus ridership would compare ridership for time periods under similar conditions, often the same part of the calendar year. Unfortunately, winter 2020 Link ridership was significantly impacted by Connect2020 construction, resulting in a substantial decrease in Link service levels and a 23% systemwide ridership decrease for Link during January and February 2020. Also, the COVID-19 pandemic started in March 2020, resulting in even greater ridership reductions. Thus, there were significant complexities in comparing winter 2019 and winter 2020 ridership in the study area. Consequently, the best available ridership comparisons required comparing the winter period before the Via to Transit pilot and the summer period during the pilot. This meant that seasonal changes in ridership affected the before/after comparisons. Whenever possible, the analysis attempted to account for these seasonal and construction changes in ridership.

Link Ridership Changes

Table 4-15 shows the average number of weekday Link boardings paid for using ORCA for winter 2019, summer 2019, and winter 2020 at the five pilot Link

[13]Nine additional ORCA cards were observed in the Via dataset, but no successfully-completed Via to Transit trips were recorded in the Via dataset. Users of these cards made reservations, but the trip was either canceled or a seat was unavailable.

stations. It also shows changes in ridership in both absolute and percentage terms. Snow days in 2019 and COVID days (all of March) were removed from the data; holidays (MLK Day, President's Day, July 4th) were not removed. Winter 2019 data included 46 weekdays and 2 holidays, summer 2019 data included 44 weekdays and 1 holiday, and winter 2020 data included 39 weekdays (including 2 holidays) and 15 weekend days. In addition to the pandemic, Sound Transit started a major construction project in January 2020 called "Connect2020," which significantly depressed Link ridership systemwide.

Table 4-15

Link Average Weekday Boardings

Station	Winter Pre-Via Test	Jan and Feb 2020	Winter 2020–Winter 2019	Change, Winter 2020–2019	Summer During Via Test	Change Summer–Winter 2019	Change, Summer–Winter 2019
Mount Baker	1,853.5	1,462.0	-391.5	-21%	1,496.3	-357.2	-19%
Columbia City	2,091.3	1,777.5	-313.8	-15%	2,195.9	104.6	5%
Othello	2,112.4	1,772.1	-340.3	-16%	2,077.9	-34.5	-2%
Rainier Beach	1,533.5	1,380.8	-152.7	-10%	1,552.2	18.6	1%
Tukwila	1,965.7	1,463.1	-502.6	-26%	1,823.2	-142.5	-7%
Total	*9,556.4*	*7,855.5*	*-1,700.9*	*-18%*	*9,145.5*	*-410.9*	*-4%*

* Change computed as Summer minus Winter or Winter 2020 minus Winter 2019: negative number indicates decrease in ridership.

There was a substantial reduction in Link boardings from winter 2019 to winter 2020, much of which can be attributed to a systemwide reduction in Link ridership.[14] Interestingly, the smallest reduction in Link boardings occurred at the Rainier Beach station, which also had, by far, the largest number of Via to Transit trips. Tukwila and Mount Baker had the largest reduction in Link boardings and the lowest Via to Transit use. This strongly suggests that the high levels of Via to Transit use at Rainier Beach and, to a lesser extent, Columbia City and Othello limited what would otherwise have been larger reductions in Link use.

When comparing winter and summer 2019, three of the five pilot Link stations had lower average weekday Link ridership in the summer than the winter; the other two stations (Columbia City and Rainier Beach) showed modest increases in ridership. Average ridership across all five stations showed a 4.3% drop. A simple computation of total ORCA payments per weekday across all ORCA agencies but not including February snow days showed that weekday Link ridership was down 2% between the winter and summer periods, so the 4% decrease was slightly larger than that found systemwide.

[14]See the full evaluation report for more information about these impacts.

Table 4-16 shows average winter weekday ORCA ridership by passenger type for the five Link stations and the change in ridership that occurred from winter 2019 to summer 2019. The vast majority (96%) of the lost daily ridership was due to a decrease in the number of Youth ORCA cards being used at these stations. Total weekday ridership across all five stations decreased by 411 ORCA boardings per day, and youth ridership decreased by 393 boardings per day. The majority of the decrease in youth riders occurred at Mount Baker, home to Franklin High School; with school out for the summer, this is not surprising.

Table 4-16

Winter Average Weekday Link ORCA Boardings/ Summer Change in Boardings, by Passenger Type

Station	Adult	Youth	Senior	Travel-Disabled	Low-Income	Total
Mount Baker	1,105 / -56	474 / -304	64 / 3	62 / 5	148 / -5	1,854 / -357
Columbia City	1,705 / 111	158 / -18	63 / 5	42 / 0	123 / 8	2,091 / 105
Othello	1,543 / -7	242 / -29	61 / 2	68 / 7	198 / -8	2,112 / -35
Rainier Beach	1,147 / 49	198 / -32	28 / 0	38 / 1	122 / 1	1534 / 19
Tukwila	1,541 / -99	107 / -9	65 / -3	77 / -6	176 / -26	1,966 / -143
Total Riders/Day	*7,042 / -1*	*1,178 / -393*	*281 / 6*	*286 / 7*	*769 / -30*	*9,556 / -411*

* Change computed as Summer minus Winter; negative number indicates decrease in ridership

Examining only Link boardings by Via to Transit users (Table 4-17), average daily Link ridership increased slightly in the summer, due primarily to an increase in weekend use (roughly 36 trips per day), spread across all five stations. Conversely, winter 2020 showed a decrease in ridership, although it occurred only in the Adult and Youth categories. Low-income and travel-disabled Via users showed an increase in Link boardings in the Via to Transit service area despite the Connect2020 construction declines in systemwide Link use. Link use by seniors remained essentially unchanged.

Table 4-17 shows that those who had used Via to Transit at some point during the pilot increased their use of Link at the five pilot Link stations from winter to summer; conversely, the total population of ORCA card users decreased their use of Link from winter to summer. However, not all Via to Transit user behavior was the same. In general, the more an individual used Via to Transit, the more likely he/she was to increase their transit use from winter to summer. However, by winter 2020, the two largest groups of Link users (adults and youths) had decreased their use of Link. This could be due to degradation of Link service during the Connect2020 construction project, when peak-hour headway increased from 7 to 14 minutes.

Table 4-18 compares the frequency of Via to Transit use in July–August with changes in Link use between the winter–summer time periods, with Via users categorized based on the number of completed Via to Transit trips reserved during those months. Data are included in the table only for Via to Transit users who appeared in both the winter and summer ORCA datasets, which limited

the effect of migration of individuals into or out of the Via to Transit service area on changes in Link use. Via to Transit riders were categorized based on their July–August Via to Transit trip-making activity. Individuals who used the service frequently in July and August made more Link trips in the summer than in the winter, and the more Via to Transit trips made, the more Link trips they were likely to make. Conversely, individuals who made few Via to Transit trips in the two summer months typically showed a decline in Link trip-making when compared to their winter transit activity levels. Finally, only 464 summer Via to Transit users did not make a Link trip, and 760 who appeared in both the summer and winter datasets and used Via to Transit at some point during the pilot did not make a Link trip in the winter. Thus, it can be concluded that the availability and use of Via to Transit encouraged Link use.

Table 4-17

Change in Average Daily ORCA Link Boardings in Via to Transit Service Area

	Total (non-COVID) Winter 2020 Link Boardings (54 days)	Total Summer Link Boardings (62 days)	Total (No Snow) Winter Link Boardings (65 days)	Average Daily Winter 2020 Link Boardings	Average Daily Summer 2019 Link Boardings	Average Daily Winter 2019 Link Boardings	Change in Daily Boardings (Winter 2020–Winter 2019	Change in Daily Boardings (Summer – Winter)	Winter 2020–Winter 2019 Percentage Change*	Summer–Winter 2019 Percentage Change*
Adult	2,8037	35,730	35,573	519.2	576.3	547.3	-28.1	29.0	-5%	5%
Disabled	632	723	636	11.7	11.7	9.8	1.9	1.9	19%	19%
Low-income	1,732	1,886	1,612	32.1	30.4	24.8	7.3	5.6	29%	23%
Senior	730	822	846	13.5	13.3	13.0	0.5	0.2	4%	2%
Youth	4,788	6,003	6,339	88.7	96.8	97.5	-8.8	-0.7	-9%	-1%
Total	*35,919*	*45,164*	*45,006*	*665.2*	*728.5*	*692.4*	*-27.2*	*36.1*	*-4%*	*5%*

* Change computed as Summer minus Winter; negative number indicates decrease in ridership.

Table 4-18

Frequency of July–August Via to Transit Use vs. Change in Link Boardings

Frequency of Via to Transit Use	Winter Link Boardings at Pilot Stations	Individuals in Via Category, Winter 2019	Trips per Person, Winter 2019	Summer Link Boardings at Pilot Stations	Individuals in Via Category, Summer	Trips per Person, Summer	Change* in Link Boardings
No Via trips	14,076	1,026	13.7	11,879	1,057	11.2	-2,197
1 Via trip	5,564	462	12.0	5,228	521	10.0	-336
2–3 Via trips	5,595	405	13.8	5,182	452	11.5	-413
4–9 Via trips	6,476	412	15.7	6,564	469	14.0	88
10–21 Via trips	5,182	285	18.2	5,828	330	17.7	646
22–43 Via trips	4,718	219	21.5	5,800	258	22.5	1,082
44+ Via trips	3,395	139	24.4	4,683	148	31.6	1,288
No Link trips (only bus trips)	-	760	0.0	-	464	0.0	-
Total	*45,006*	*3,699*	*12.2*	*45,164*	*3,699*	*12.2*	*158*

* Change computed as Summer minus Winter; negative number indicates decrease in ridership.

Bus Ridership Changes

A major concern about adding Via to Transit service was that it could reduce the use of existing local bus service in the area as bus riders switched from using buses to using Via to Transit. Responses to the Via Rider survey suggested that about 24% of Via to Transit users previously took buses to access or leave Link stations. Table 4-19 shows the average weekday winter and summer bus boardings at bus stops next to the four Seattle area Link stations in the pilot study (Tukwila International Boulevard station data were not included in the analysis due to data errors). Weekday bus boardings declined 20–30% from winter to summer at transit stops used by individuals transferring from Link to bus.

Table 4-19

Average Weekday ORCA Bus Boardings at Link Stations

Station	Average Weekday Winter Bus Boardings	Average Weekday Summer Bus Boardings	Change in Average Weekday Bus Boardings	Change* in Average Weekday Bus Boardings
Mount Baker	1,304.4	911.3	-393.1	-30%
Columbia City	198.6	160.2	-38.4	-19%
Othello	563.5	452.6	-110.9	-20%
Rainier Beach	474.2	367.0	-107.2	-23%
Total	*2,540.7*	*1,891.1*	*-649.6*	*-26%*

*Change computed as Summer minus Winter; negative number indicates decrease in ridership.

Use of ORCA data also enabled analysis of transfer activity. Transfer activity from Link to bus at these stops decreased by 23% from winter to summer, slightly lower than the observed change in total boarding activity occurring at stops located next to the Link station. (This change was also roughly equal to the change in transfers from buses to Link.) On an average weekday in winter, 1,286 transfers occurred from Link to buses at these stops; in summer, only 987 transfers took place on an average weekday. This resulted in a decrease of 300 boardings each weekday at these stops, equivalent to just under half of the total ridership decrease occurring in the summer.

Importantly, 130 (43%) of the 300 "missing" transfers were by Youth ORCA cardholders. Youth transfer activity from Link to bus at these four Link stations decreased 50% from winter to summer, from 257 to 129 transfers per weekday. Youths comprised 20% of all transfer activity to buses at the Seattle Link station bus stops in the winter but decreased to 13% in the summer. In the winter, Youth ORCA cardholders comprised 10.1% of all boardings (transfer and non-transfer) at these Link stations; in the summer, this decreased to 6.3%. Total weekday bus boarding activity at these stops that did not include a transfer (i.e., riders boarding at these stops originated from local residences or activities) declined by 19% from winter to summer. Youth boardings on weekdays at these stops that did not involve a transfer decreased by 55%. In total, the decrease in youth

ridership accounted for 50% of the decrease in bus boardings at the Seattle Link station stops in the summer, with about 40% due to a decrease in transfer activity from Link.

The conclusion is that the decrease in youth ridership due to school being out of session and the significant use of the transit system by youths as a means to get to and leave from school played a large role in the decrease in observed bus boarding activity at the stations. However, with or without consideration of the decrease in transit use caused by school being out of session, there was a decrease in weekday transit use at the four Seattle Link stations that ranged between 330 boardings per day (not including youths) and 650 boardings per day (including youths.)

To examine the potential impact of Via to Transit on bus ridership, the next step was to examine Via to Transit ridership for summer. Table 4-20 shows average weekday Via to Transit ridership to and from the Link stations. Note that the bus boardings discussed above were all trips leaving the station, thereby representing only half of the movements shown in Table 4-20.[15] Approximately 400 riders used Via to Transit to leave the four Seattle Link station areas each weekday in the summer (half of the 800 non-Tukwila Via users in Table 4-20.) This can be compared to the 300-transfer reduction from Link to buses that occurred at these stations. If all reduction in transfer activity was caused by a shift to Via to Transit, the 300 transfers would represent 75% of total Via to Transit ridership. Removing the 130 youth transfers not occurring because school was not in session, the 170 remaining "lost" transfers were 42.5% of all Via to Transit trips. This estimate is larger than the 100 transfer (24%) estimate the Via rider survey indicated should have occurred, given the modes used previously by Via to Transit users. This suggests that either other factors (e.g., seasonal changes in ridership) were driving down transfer activity or that the Via rider survey underestimated the replacement of bus use by Via users.

Table 4-20

Average Weekday Via to Transit Ridership, July and August, by Link Station

	Adult	Travel Disability	Low-Income	Senior	Youth	Type Not Available*	Total All Via Users	Total ORCA Users	Total w/o Youth or NA
Mount Baker	42.1	2.5	5.0	2.0	13.6	8.8	73.9	72.6	51.6
Columbia City	102.9	1.4	6.7	3.0	21.8	19.5	155.4	150.8	114.0
Othello Station	112.3	3.3	10.7	2.3	47.1	27.6	203.3	196.7	128.6
Rainier Beach	250.7	4.3	17.9	3.7	60.9	57.7	395.3	386.8	276.7
Tukwila	29.6	2.3	0.4	1.4	2.8	6.4	43.0	41.3	33.7
Total	*537.6*	*13.8*	*40.8*	*12.4*	*146.2*	*120.0*	*870.8*	*848.0*	*604.6*

* Type Not Available includes individuals who pay with a method other than ORCA and ORCA cards not observed in winter or summer ORCA transit datasets; as a result, no data were available on passenger type associated with an ORCA card.

[15]ORCA data points are obtained only when payment "taps" are made. For buses, this occurs only when buses are boarded, although the transfer feature in ORCA makes it possible to determine when a trip was taken prior to a Link boarding, or vice versa, even without a "tap off" being performed.

An analysis of bus ridership on routes that serviced the pilot Link stations and for all routes operated by King County Metro show that the change in average weekday bus ridership experienced on routes serving the four Seattle pilot stations was similar in size and pattern to that experienced systemwide in King County. That is, a modest decline (11%) in systemwide ridership (as measured using ORCA data) between winter and summer was similar to reduction in ridership (9%) measured on routes serving the four Seattle Link stations. Thus, a significant portion of the decline in bus ridership at the Link stations was due to seasonal change in ridership, not the effects of the Via pilot. Although Via to Transit contributed to some decrease in bus ridership by removing some transfers from Link, those changes were modest relative to ridership on the complete route.

Analysis of bus ridership patterns indicates that Via to Transit service did attract current bus riders to the Via service; as a result, transfers between buses and Link declined. The shift appears to be as suggested by the Via rider survey (~25% of Via riders) but the reduction in ridership did not result in a significant decrease in bus ridership on routes serving the Link stations.

Changes in Transit Trip-Making Behavior

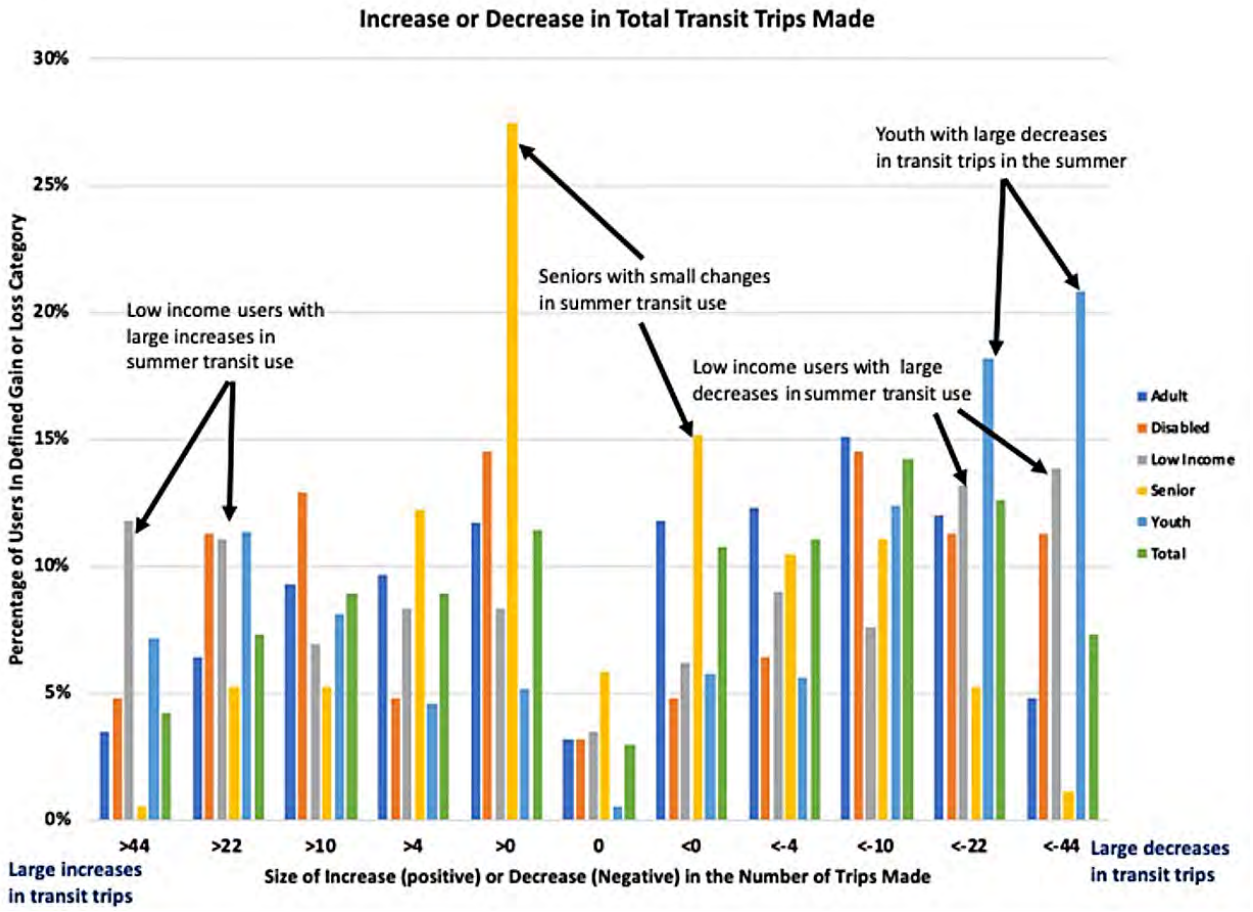
Another way to examine the impact of Via to Transit on transit use was to examine changes in transit use. To determine if access to Via to Transit caused its users to use conventional transit service more or less often, the following analyses compared the amount of transit trip-making behavior observed in the winter and summer ORCA datasets for the 3,699 individuals who used Via to Transit at least once and were observed in both the winter and summer ORCA datasets. It is important to note that there were large seasonal effects that influenced these data, and changes observed cannot be attributed solely to the presence of Via to Transit. To simplify changes in trip-making, riders were classified into several categories that describe where transit trip-making increased or decreased and whether those changes were large or small:

- No change
- Increase or decrease of 1–4 trips over July-August period compared to winter period (January 7–March 23), no snow days
- Increase or decrease of 5–9 trips
- Increase or decrease of 10–21 trips
- Increase or decrease of 22–43 trips
- Increase or decrease of 44+ trips

For this analysis, as total travel activity was being compared, no data modifications were made to account for the winter dataset having 65 days of trips (46 weekdays, 2 holidays, 17 weekends) and the summer dataset having 62 days of trips (44 weekdays, 1 holiday, 17 weekends.) Thus, there should be a slight bias

towards lower trip-making in the summer because there were slightly fewer days on which trips could be made.

Data indicate that slightly more Via to Transit users had a decrease in transit trip-making[16] than an increase when comparing winter and summer travel. Figure 4-9 shows the distribution of changes in the frequency of trip-making between winter and summer by passenger type. Although there were differences in behavior by passenger type, all five passenger types had the same pattern, showing more users decreasing their trip-making compared to those increasing their trip-making.



Categories: 0 = no change, <0 = decrease of 1–4 trips, <-4 = decrease of 5–9 trips, <-10 = decrease of 10–21 trips, <-22 = decrease of 22–43 trips, <44 = decrease of 44 or more trips. The same categories apply for the "increase" side of the figure.

Figure 4-9

Change in Total ORCA Trip-Making by Via to Transit Users, Winter to Summer 2019

[16] For this analysis, a "transit trip" counts only the first boarding of a linked trip. Transfer boardings are not counted as "trips," as they represent a second boarding of a trip, not a separate trip.

Because of the decrease in school trips in the summer, Youth cardholders showed the largest percentage of decrease of more than 10 trips (51%.) Interestingly, 27% of youth riders showed an increase in travel in the summer. Seniors had the smallest decrease in trip-making of more than 10 trips (18%) and also the smallest increase in 10 or more trips (11%.) Adult cardholders made up 75% of users; 32% decreased their trip-making in the summer by more than 10 trips, and 19% increased their travel by more than 10 trips. Low-income users substantially increased transit-trip making (more than 12% showed an increase of greater than 44 trips from winter to summer); however, a substantial percentage (27%) decreased their trip-making by more than 22 trips in the summer.

Link Boardings in the Service Area

Figure 4-10 shows Link boardings at the five pilot stations. Unlike total trips shown in Figure 4-9, this distribution is more normal in shape, with many Via to Transit users showing fairly modest changes in the number of Link trips made at the pilot stations between winter and summer and only a few showing major changes in travel behavior. The percentage of users who increased their Link usage in the Via to Transit service areas was almost equal to the percentage of users who decreased their use at these Link stations. In fact, the percentage of Via to Transit users who increased Link use by more than 10 trips (12.4%) is equal to the percentage of Via users who decreased Link boardings by more than 10 trips at those stations (12.4%.)

When examined by passenger type, Via to Transit users with ORCA LIFT cards were more likely to show a significant increase (22%) in Link use in the pilot area than a decrease (15%), and Youth cardholders were more likely to show a significant decrease (18%) in Link use than an increase (21%). Other passenger types showed more equal distributions.

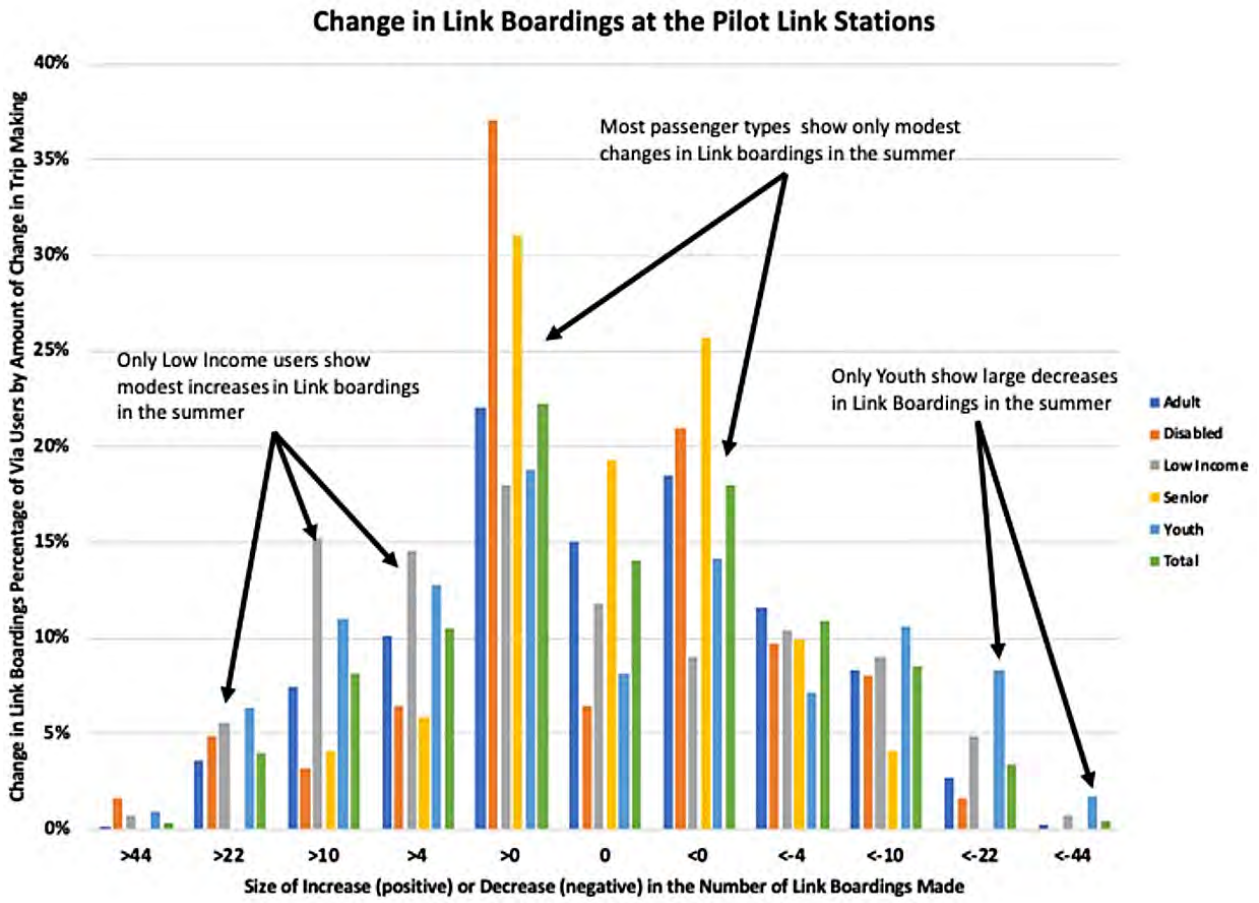


Figure 4-10

Change in Total Link Boardings, Winter to Summer 2019

Transfer to Link from Bus in Service Area

Data show a decrease in the use of bus service as the means to access Link. Based only on ORCA cards associated with at least one Via to Transit trip, in the summer, 8,955 transfers were made from bus to rail by 1,467 users and 55,749 Link boardings were made at the five pilot area Link stations by 4,293 unique users. After Via to Transit service began (and summer travel patterns prevailed), 34% of Link riders at the five study locations transferred from bus to rail at least once during the 10-week summer period, which made up 16% of Link boardings in the study area.

In the (non-snow day) winter period, 1,427 riders made 11,969 bus-to-Link transfers, and 49,149 Link boardings were made at the five pilot stations by

3,261 unique users. Riders who transferred from bus to Link at least once made up 43% of the user base but 24% of the Link boardings in the winter. Both of these values were larger than those for the summer; that is, more transfers from bus to Link and a higher percentage of users made transfers from bus to Link during the winter. Therefore, it can be concluded that after Via to Transit service was implemented, there was a modest decrease in the number and percentage of riders arriving at the Link station via bus.

Figure 4-11 shows the degree to which user behavior changed. A total of 290 users decreased their transfer activity (going to Link from bus) by more than 10 trips, and 130 increased their transfer activity by 10 or more trips.

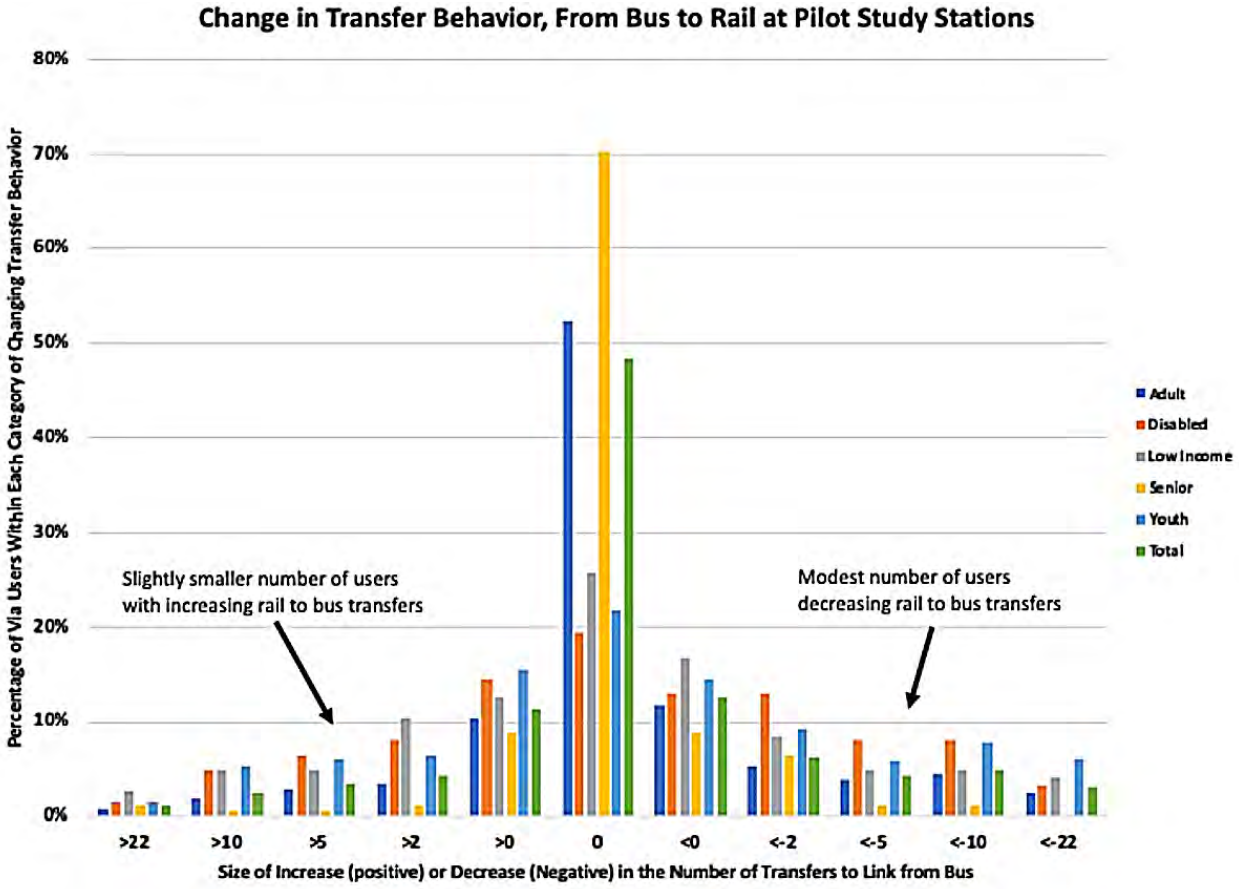


Figure 4-11

Changes in Transfer Activity from Bus to Rail at Pilot Link Stations

Evaluation Conclusions

Use of Via to Transit

The Via to Transit service carried a considerable number of riders, with over 950 riders using the service each weekday at the end of February 2020. This suggests that nearly 5% of all Link users in the service areas used Via to Transit as their first/last mile choice for accessing a station. Although the greatest use of Via to Transit occurred during peak commute periods, it was frequently used during all times of the day, although late-night use (after 12:00 midnight) was marginal.

In total, 5,028 unique ORCA cards were observed in the summer ORCA dataset that also appeared in the Via to Transit trip data; 1,329 (26.4%) were not observed in the winter dataset. This group is considered to be new riders to bus, Link, or other transit services and constituted almost one-quarter of Via to Transit riders observed in the ORCA bus and train use data. This strongly suggests that Via to Transit service either increased the number of transit customers or converted cash-paying customers to ORCA.

Impact of Via to Transit on Link Use

Although the Via to Transit pilot appears to have helped increase the number of ORCA users, it is unclear if it produced an increase in Link use. Daily ridership on Link and bus routes in the pilot service areas declined modestly from winter 2019 to summer 2020 and decreased more heavily in winter 2020, but much of the observed difference in Link travel between winter and summer 2019 can be attributed to school being out of session and to other seasonal effects. A major portion of the decrease in ridership in winter 2020 appears to be due to the impact of the major service reduction caused by the Connect2020 construction project. At the same time, in summer 2019, the Link station with the highest Via to Transit ridership had an increase in Link ridership during the summer despite the decrease in student riders, and in winter 2020, the smallest decrease in ridership occurred at the Link station with the highest Via to Transit use. These results suggest that Via to Transit had a modest but positive effect on Link ridership. The ridership increase appears to be largest in the parts of the city that did not have strong bus connections to the Link stations and where the distances were long enough to provide strong travel time advantages for using Via to Transit but not so long as to make the transit trip non-competitive for modes that do not include Link.

In terms of whether use of Via to Transit changed individual behavior, those who used the service showed a very bimodal distribution. In total, 34% of those who used Via to Transit at some point during the pilot test showed a decrease in trip-making of more than 10 trips between winter and summer, and 21% increased their trip-making by more than 10 trips. It is clear from the analysis

of ORCA use that the more individuals used Via to Transit, the more likely their transit trip-making increased from winter to summer; however, infrequent users of Via to Transit were more likely to show a decrease in the number of transit trips made from winter to summer. Individuals who used Via to Transit infrequently had behavior similar to that of non-Via to Transit users who decreased their use of Link from winter to summer in 2019.

Impact of Via to Transit on Bus Use

Via to Transit attracted current bus riders to its service and captured a measurable amount of bus ridership that would otherwise have transferred between Link and bus service. Roughly one-quarter of Via rider survey respondents reported previously using transit to get to and from Link stations, which observed transfer behavior confirmed. However, although the shift of these individuals from bus to Via appeared to result in a decrease in bus use at stops nearest the Link stations, the Metro transit routes serving the four Seattle Link stations did not show ridership changes from winter to summer that were significantly different from the Metro routes serving the parts of the county not served by Via.

Equity

For this demonstration, to promote equity, Via to Transit first/last mile service was delivered as an integrated part of the regional transit system. This included integrating Via with the region's ORCA fare payment system to both provide discounted travel to disadvantaged groups and to allow transfers to and from Via to Transit with the same fare benefits as conventional bus trips; that is, when using ORCA, most Via to Transit trips were "free" when the traveler transferred to or from Link. The impacts of the demonstration were examined with respect to specific disadvantaged groups, including low-income users, people of color, seniors, people with travel disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, persons without smartphones, and unbanked populations.

Low-Income Populations

Low-income riders made about 7% of Via trips, a level of use that was lower than that observed for bus service in the study area (10.5%) but was close to the observed use of Link at the five pilot area stations (8.8%) and higher than the overall use of Link across the entire Link system (5.6%.). Although low-income rider use was modest, the number of new Link riders (those observed in summer 2019 but not in winter 2019 prior to Via to Transit) that used ORCA LIFT cards was higher than the number of low-income transit riders in the service area.

Low-income users who took advantage of Via to Transit service appeared to increase their use of transit; they were more likely to show a significant

increase (22%) in Link use in the pilot area than a decrease (15%), and other rider types either showed a decrease in use (youth riders) or their use held fairly steady. In winter 2020, adult and youth riders showed a decrease in Link use, but low-income Via to Transit users showed an increase of 29% in the number of Link boardings per day in the Via to Transit service area. This suggests that low-income riders were aware of the Via to Transit service and took advantage of it at rates slightly above their norm.

As a result, the general conclusion is that Via to Transit service was accessible to lower-income populations and benefited a number of low-income users. However, it only marginally increased the use of transit by low-income populations, who remain under-represented users of the transit system relative to their numbers.

Although the pilot specifically attempted to support use of transit by low-income populations, 50% of Via rider survey respondents had a household income of more than $100,000 per year. This result was higher than was reported by the pre-Via intercept survey, in which only 32% of respondents had a household income greater than $100,000, or by the census (34%.) This indicates that the Via rider survey—and likely overall Via to Transit ridership—was biased towards individuals with higher incomes, whereas the pre-Via intercept survey—which should more closely represent the Link ridership population in the service area—more closely replicated census results.

Youth Riders

Youth riders were highly visible in the Via to Transit ridership data, making roughly 20% of all Via to Transit trips. Youth trips constituted about 17% of all conventional transit trips in the service area during months when school was in session but only 11% in the summer. Unfortunately, few youth Via to Transit users responded to the Via rider survey, so little is known about this group. Othello had the highest percentage of youth trips (30%), and Tukwila had the lowest (10%), although at both stations, the percentage of Via to Transit trips made by youths was twice that of their use of conventional transit.

Persons of Color

Persons of color used Via to Transit less frequently relative to their population than those who identified as White, who made up 47% of pre-Via intercept survey respondents and 58% of Via rider survey respondents but were only 32% of the combined population of the five service areas. The lower presence of non-Whites in the Via Rider survey could be attributed, at least in part, to the low survey participation of youths and other survey biases. However, adjusting the survey results for these low participation rates lowered the percentage of Via to Transit riders identifying as White to 54%. This suggests that although Via to Transit provided additional, valued transit services to people of color, it was still used more heavily by those who were White.

Seniors

Seniors made up a modest portion of Via to Transit ridership; ORCA Senior cards were used for less than 2% of Via to Transit trips and for only 4% of trips on bus and light rail in the demonstration service area.

In total, 262 unique ORCA Senior cards were used for Via to Transit during the demonstration project. However, detailed analysis of the survey data suggests that more than half of eligible ORCA Senior card users used an ORCA Adults card instead of a Senior card, which would lower their cost of using transit. Thus, more seniors were using Via to Transit than reported in the trip database if using ORCA Senior cards as the performance measure. Based on the Via rider survey (adjusted using ORCA data use statistics to account for bias in survey response rates), it appeared that persons age 65 or older made up roughly 7% of the Via to Transit user population.

Seniors were more likely than Adult ORCA card users to use Via to Transit infrequently; the mean number of trips per ORCA ID for Senior ORCA cards was 9.5 trips; Adults ORCA card users were the next lowest category of Via to Transit users, with more than 27 trips per rider ID.

People with Travel Disabilities

Ride requests for WAVs were a small percentage of all Via to Transit trips, with only 701 WAV rides completed prior to March 2020. These completed WAV rides were just under 0.3 percent of completed Via to Transit trips. Only 45 unique riders reserved and completed WAV rides during the demonstration. Interestingly, fewer than half of these rides were paid using an ORCA Disability card. The number of WAV trips made during any given week was highly variable, as the top five WAV users made 66% of all WAV trips. When these individuals were actively traveling, the number of WAV trips made during the week was high; when they were not traveling (e.g., out of town), few WAV rides were made.

Only 1.7% of Via trips were made using an ORCA Disability card. In summer 2019, twice as many Link boardings (3.4%) in the service area were paid for with an ORCA Disability card, and bus service had an even larger percentage of ORCA Disability use. This indicates that although individuals using an ORCA Disability card used the Via to Transit service, their use was lower, in percentage terms, than their use of existing bus and light rail services in the Via to Transit service area.

As noted with how WAV trips were paid for, many people with travel disabilities do not use an ORCA Disability card. In the Via rider survey, 63 of 1,273 respondents reported having one or more travel disabilities (5%), but only 12 used an ORCA Disability card, although 14 others used a Senior ORCA

card and 2 used a Youth card. This suggests that the Via to Transit service was used by this population but many individuals with travel disabilities continued to rely on existing transit services.

People with Limited English Proficiency

Although considerable effort was made to assist individuals with limited English proficiency in using Via to Transit service, it was difficult to assess their actual use. For example, the call center's interpreter service was used only a few times, but this may be due to resources that Metro produced to assist English language learners for using the app (e.g., step-by-step guides). No individuals completing the pre-Via intercept survey used an alternative language version of the surveys, and the Via rider survey was available only in English.

Individuals without Smartphones

Although most individuals used the Via app, access to the call center was heavily used by a limited subset of the user population. A total of 3,884 ride reservations were made through the call center during the study, 1.8% of all reservations made. However, 61% of all WAV rides were reserved through the call center, as were 25% of all rides paid for with an ORCA Disability card. In total, 29% of Via to Transit riders using an ORCA Disability cards used the call center at least once; one person used it 212 times.

In total, 12% of all ride reservations made using an ORCA Senior card were through the call center rather than through the Via app; 25% of those using an ORCA Senior card used the call center at least once, and one person used it 51 times. Thus, the call center provided a useful service for reserving rides.

Unbanked Populations

Via to Transit had two payment methods for people who are unbanked: an ORCA card that can be loaded using cash, or a stored value card. According to Via, no trips were paid for using a stored value card. Metro estimates that approximately 5% of ORCA fares are loaded with cash and approximately 10% of ORCA users load their ORCA card with cash.

Both the pre-Via intercept survey and Via rider survey asked if respondents had a checking account. The pre-Via survey reported that 9% of respondents did not, and the Via rider survey reported that 2% did not. However, further review indicated that a substantial percentage of those reporting no checking account were either youths (perhaps with access to family bank accounts) or those with a reported income greater than $50,000. Use of Via to Transit by the unbanked is likely small, but provisions were made to ensure that they had access to the Via to Transit service.

SECTION

5

Conclusions, Lessons Learned, and Next Steps

Conclusion

The Puget Sound Via to Transit pilot successfully demonstrated that transit agencies can improve and increase access to transit by integrating TNC services and broaden TNC access to people without smartphones, those who need WAVs, unbanked populations, and populations with limited English proficiency. Although significant effort and inter-agency, intra-agency, and public-private coordination was required to provide this new service, the pilot provided valuable lessons to inform how transit agencies can leverage on-demand first/last mile services to enhance mobility.

Lessons Learned

Numerous lessons were learned from the Via to Transit pilot:

- **Customers liked and used Via to Transit**. Riders rated the service 4.8 stars out of 5 and wrote more than 200 letters advocating for the service to continue. Customers credited Via to Transit with drastically reduced commute times, increased personal safety vs. walking to transit, greater access to the region without needing to own a car, and more independence for young riders or those with a travel disability. In total, more than 200,000 trips were made over the course of the 11-month pilot.
- **On-demand first/last mile service can complement fixed-route transit and facilitate new transit riders**, although modest reductions in local bus service ridership may result from the first/last mile service. The pilot was successful in facilitating access to transit; approximately 95% of trips transferred to/from buses or trains. (The remaining 5% may have been riders using Via to Transit to access destinations near stations or using two connected Via to Transit trips to travel between locations in the service area.) This may be partially attributed to the fact that the stations generally

> "Via has cut my commute time significantly and allows me a warm seat on the Light Rail, which I cannot access from the bus route closest to me. This service has significantly impacted my quality of life and that of others living in my previously under-serviced area of unincorporated King County."
>
> *– Katherine, Via to Transit customer*

are not located in commercial/activity centers, so there are limited reasons why someone would use the service to not connect to transit. Perhaps more interesting is the fact that service areas with the greatest Via to Transit use were also the areas with the least local bus service and where the time savings of Via to Transit were significantly greater than walking or taking the bus, demonstrating that Via to Transit can fill a vital gap in local bus service. ORCA data showed that Via to Transit may have helped increase overall transit ridership and encouraged new transit riders, but Via to Transit also contributed to a modest reduction in the use of local bus service to access Link light rail stations. ORCA data showed that approximately one-quarter of Via to Transit riders were new transit riders (or new ORCA users). Due to seasonality and major construction/Link light rail service changes, it is difficult to assess the impact of Via to Transit on overall transit ridership, but it appears that Via to Transit helped prevent potentially larger decreases in ridership than would have occurred otherwise.

- **Contiguous service areas increase efficiency of service and allow for flexibility.** Because Via to Transit's service areas were contiguous, drivers and vehicles could be used across all service areas, thus allowing for greater efficiency. Additionally, although the Othello and Rainier Beach stations were not initially identified as the most viable stations for the service, they ended up serving 75% of all trips. Because the service areas were contiguous, much of the vehicle/driver supply originally scoped to serve the other stations (e.g., Mount Baker, Columbia City) could easily be reallocated to higher-ridership areas.
- **On-demand first/last mile services can be relatively cost-effective.** Via to Transit was not only very cost-efficient for most riders (as most riders paid with an ORCA card, which allowed for fare transfers, thus making the ride essentially free), the service was also relatively cost-effective for the agencies. The total cost per ride was less than $12, which, although twice the cost per ride as King County Metro buses ($6), was less than some low-productivity bus routes and much less expensive than other flexible services. The cost of the service was a function of both contract cost with Via and the efficiency (rides/vehicle/hour) of the service.
- **Providing equitable access is important, needs to be addressed earlier and more broadly, and needs to be promoted.** A primary goal of the pilot was to expand TNC access to people who historically have been excluded, and many provisions were made to increase access to these populations (providing WAVs, a call center, interpreter services, payment options for those without credit/debit cards, increased marketing and communications, and discounted fares for low-income riders, seniors, youths, and people with travel disabilities). After launch, feedback from the community noted that although WAVs and some app accessibility features are valuable, other accommodations should be considered to make the service more usable for people experiencing a range of disabilities, including

people with limited vision and hearing. Additionally, although accessibility accommodations were made, they were not always well-used. For example, the call center's interpreter services were used only a few times. Even when equitable access is sought, historically-underserved users are not guaranteed to use the service. Although difficult to discern due to lack of accurate representation of Via to Transit riders in survey responses, particularly youths and likely limited English proficiency riders (survey available only in English), there were differences in Via to Transit user demographics and Link light rail users/census data for the service areas. Via rider survey respondents were more likely to be White, higher-income, and speak English. Earlier and more robust engagement with underserved communities could help inform service features and increase use by those populations.

> "I had a severe lower motor neuron injury in early January that resulted in needing a walker to get around. To continue using Link, I have relied on Via to get me to the station. The drivers are super-friendly, and the service is reliable. I'm so grateful that it is there when I need it."
>
> *– Julie, Via to Transit customer*

- **People who walked to a station before Via to Transit was available were less likely to switch to Via to Transit than people who had previously used motorized options.** Although approximately one-fourth of Via to Transit riders previously walked and another one-fourth previously took the bus, 33% of Via to Transit riders had either previously driven, been dropped off, or used a TNC to access the station, and approximately 20% did not use the station at all. For those who had previously walked or took the bus to access Link light rail, it is likely Via to Transit offered a faster option, with time savings of more than 15 minutes in some areas. Future advancements in trip-planning capabilities can encourage greater use of local buses when and where they are time-competitive with a first/last mile service, therefore ensuring less mode shift from local bus service and preserving first/last mile resources for those who would benefit most.

> "When Via launched, I immediately tried it the following day, to work and from work. My morning commute went from one-and-a half-hours to an easy 40-minute commute. I've been able to meet and connect with neighbors during each ride. It's a joy to see familiar drivers each day and be able to catch up. My partner and I have significantly been driving around town less and less."
>
> *– Pauline, Via to Transit customer*

- **Leveraging other agency contracts can expedite contracting**. King County Metro used the contract between LA Metro and Via as the basis for its own contract with Via. Rather than starting from scratch, making modi ications to an already-negotiated contract enabled Metro to complete contract negotiations within four months. The pilot contract between King County Metro and Via can further be leveraged by other transit agencies.
- **Robust data and evaluation are important for assessing efficacy.** Detailed data from Via (as outlined in the contract) and from the ORCA system were critical to adequately evaluating the pilot. This reporting, along with survey data and customer/stakeholder feedback from focus groups, interviews, and direct customer communications, were all leveraged to determine how well the service worked and for whom and how user travel behavior changed. The evaluation led to changes throughout the pilot as well as changes beyond the initial pilot period. Contracting with external researchers provided a skillset and resources for a more robust evaluation than could have been achieved with in-house resources alone. Future research should consider how surveys can be conducted to achieve more accurate representation of users.
- **Driver feedback is as important as rider feedback.** Although the independent contractor drivers that partnered with Via were paid at least minimum wage, as independent contractors they were also responsible for expenses associated with providing the service (e.g., vehicle rental, gas, taxes) and did not directly receive bene its (e.g., health insurance, retirement, paid time off, etc.). Additionally, driver feedback revealed that drivers were not paid for their travel time between the vehicle base and the service areas (although based on feedback, part-way through the pilot a higher hourly rate was provided to account for this travel time). Although these factors contributed to lower pilot costs, they also that suggest that more could be done to align driver pay with living wage policies.

Next Steps

After concluding the pilot on March 23, 2020, several weeks short of its 12-month scope due to COVID-19, King County Metro, in partnership with the City of Seattle, decided to launch Via to Transit for a second-year pilot at selected stations starting on June 22, 2020. As a result of budget reductions, the agencies reduced the scope of the service to the three transit hubs in areas where needs are greatest—Rainier Beach, Othello, and Tukwila International Boulevard light rail stations —which also provided the most rides per service hour. In addition to reducing the areas served, other changes to the service were as follows:

- **COVID-19 mitigations** – Social distancing and hygiene best practices have been incorporated into Via to Transit operations as the region continues to fight the spread of COVID-19. Protocols are in place for the four phases identified in the Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" plan; phases 1 and 2 include the following:
  - Private rides until further notice (multiple people from the same booking can ride together).
  - Passengers asked to sit at back of van to increase social distancing.
  - Barrier between driver and passengers.
  - Driver and passengers required to wear face coverings or masks if able.
  - Driver provided with EPA-approved disinfecting product to wipe down vehicle throughout shift; vehicles have enhanced sanitization daily.
  - In-app wellness checks for riders and drivers to confirm they are symptom free before using Via.
  - In-app notifications to riders reinforcing local guidance on personal protective equipment (PPE), seating spacing, and hygiene.
  - Drivers directly affected by COVID-19 have access to paid sick leave.
- **Improved customer service, including for people with disabilities** – Additional driver sessions will be provided to increase customer service skills, including better serving of riders with disabilities and defensive driving practices.
- **Safer virtual pick-up/drop-off locations** – Via will conduct a systematic review of virtual stops to eliminate pick-up/drop-off locations in areas designated as "No Parking" by the City of Seattle.
- **Enhanced driver pay** – Drivers will receive a higher minimum pay rate, a $200 bonus for drivers who work 30+ hours per week (to compensate for insurance, retirement, and time off), resources for obtaining benefits, and pay for driving time between the vehicle base and service area.

Other modifications being considered in Year 2 and beyond include the following:

- **Prioritization of rides in areas of unmet need** – To enhance mobility options particularly for areas of unmet need (as defined in Metro's Mobility Framework), Metro is exploring prioritizing rides that start or end in Census Block Groups considered to have high unmet needs. Rides that start or end in other Census Blocks will still be provided but may result in longer wait times.
- **Higher level of service for seniors and people with travel disabilities** – To increase safety for seniors and people with travel disabilities, Metro is exploring prioritizing rides and/or eliminating walking requirements for these riders.

- **More accurate fares depicted in Via app and ride receipt** – Because fare integration of Via into the ORCA system was a rudimentary set-up that did not enable the Via app to identify a rider's fare category, the Via app and ride receipt defaulted to an Adult fare. As a result, reduced fare riders (Senior, Youth, Disability, Low-Income) were shown incorrect fare information, which created confusion. Metro is exploring the ability for riders to self-select their fare category in the app so accurate fares can be shown.
- **Trip planning and prioritization** – To reduce service redundancy with local bus service and provide more seamless trip-planning capabilities, Metro and Via are exploring adding trip-planning functionality to the Via app that would include both Via to Transit and fixed-route transit options. In cases when a Via to Transit trip is requested but a bus is less than 10 minutes away or the bus would provide a shorter trip time, the rider would be directed to that bus service. This would optimize vehicle capacity and operations by reducing service redundancy between on-demand and fixed-route service and free up Via to Transit vehicles for riders who would otherwise have much longer wait times.
- **Deep fare integration** – When the ORCA system is updated (next-gen ORCA), Metro seeks to incorporate deeper fare integration with its contracted services. This would mean that customers could link their ORCA account to the Via app and fares would automatically be deducted from their ORCA account when a trip is completed rather than requiring customers to tap an ORCA card on a reader in the vehicle. This would increase direct fare collection while facilitating a more seamless customer experience.

Additional Research Opportunities

More research about first/last mile services could be conducted to better understand their viability:

- **Sustainability** – net greenhouse gas emissions associated with first/last mile services (expected from the FTA-sponsored independent evaluation)
- **Equity** – measures that can be taken so first/last mile ridership can better reflect the demographics of the community and how can this be effectively assessed

Using data from the first year as well as early data from the second year, Metro will determine whether on-demand first/last mile service should be recommended to continue as a permanent program in SE Seattle/Tukwila. If recommended to continue, funding will be needed and a procurement process conducted, as Metro's sole-source waiver with Via is scheduled to end in April 2021. Regardless of whether service continues beyond its two-year pilot period, Metro will continue to leverage lessons learned from Via to Transit in future iterations of MOD services.

APPENDIX

A

Joint Board Action

401 S Jackson
Seattle WA 98104
orcacard.com
888-988-6722

RFCS ORCA Joint Board
Memorandum of Decision

Meeting Date: May 14, 2018

Subject: Authorize Agency Use of ORCA Card Serial Numbers (CSN) for Two On Demand First/Last Mile Pilot Projects

Record of Decision:

The undersigned hereby certifies that at its meeting on the above-referenced date, the RFCS ORCA Joint Board, by unanimous vote, authorized agency use of ORCA Card Serial Numbers to validate reduced fare subsidy for two on-demand first/last mile pilot projects. ORCA card and cardholder data will be securely stored at Sound Transit.

The third-party would not have access to the ORCA database directly or any personally identifying information related to the ORCA card or cardholder other than information provided to the third-party directly by the cardholder at the time of registration for the on demand service.

Acting Chair, RFCS ORCA Joint Board

Joint Board Meeting
May 14, 2018

Action item: Authorize Agency Use of ORCA Card Serial Numbers (CSN) for Two On Demand First/Last Mile Pilot Projects

Purpose: Provide for third-party mobility providers partnering with Sound Transit and/or King County Metro to validate ORCA Card Serial Numbers (CSN) to provide qualifying reduced fare ORCA cardholders a subsidized trip on a first-/last-mile transit feeder services at the time a user registers to participate in the pilot.

Validation does not allow the Transportation Network Company (TNC)/private mobility provider direct access to the ORCA system. Qualifying passenger types are: Regional Reduced Fare Permit, ORCA LIFT, Access (KCM) and Youth.

The ORCA agency project team will provide "yes or no" validation to the TNC/private mobility provider that the ORCA CSN qualifies for a subsidy.

ORCA Data Management: The ORCA team would query the ORCA database and pull the passenger type data set to be securely and separately stored at Sound Transit that includes a subset of ORCA card CSNs associated with reduced fare passenger types.

The external data set would be stored securely and housed within the agencies.

User Privacy: The third-party would not have access to the ORCA database directly or any personally identifying information related to the ORCA card or cardholder other than information provided to the third-party directly by the cardholder at the time of registration.

In order to participate, registrants will be required to accept a 'Terms of Use' waiver that will include language allowing an ORCA agency to access the user's ORCA data within a specified time period.

Proposed Projects: (1) Sound Transit and King County Metro on-demand first/last mile service to transit hubs through a Transportation Network Company (TNC); and (2) King County Metro on-demand first/last mile service to overcrowded park and rides through a private mobility provider. As part of these projects, agencies will track frequency of and validate intermodal transfers between third party service and transit.

Recommendation: The Site Managers recommend authorization of these pilot projects.

APPENDIX

B

Location Selection Memo Deliverable

Mobility on Demand Sandbox Project:
Puget Sound Pilot Location Selection Memorandum

Overview

Sound Transit (ST) and King County Metro (KCM) are sub-recipients of an FTA Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox grant. The MOD Sandbox project in the Puget Sound is a pilot project to test the viability of a transportation network company (TNC) partnership to increase transit access through first and last mile ride hailing service.

Sound Transit and King County Metro staff analyzed potential stations to serve through this pilot project. Based on the analysis, staff from Sound Transit, King County Metro and TNC service provider, Via, recommend the following five stations for selection for the purposes of this pilot:

- Mount Baker Station
- Columbia City Station
- Othello Station
- Rainier Beach Station
- Tukwila International Boulevard Station (TIBS)

This memorandum documents the analysis that led to the recommendation of these stations. It is worth noting that the initial project proposal for the Mobility on Demand Sandbox project in the Puget Sound region called for three pilot locations. An additional sponsorship from the City of Seattle provided for the ability to close the station gap along the Link light rail alignment between Columbia City and Tukwila International Boulevard stations to include pilot service to and from the Othello and Rainier Beach stations. The sponsorship also provided for expanded service hours at stations within the City of Seattle than otherwise would have been feasible with available funding.

Location Selection Criteria

The Mobility on Demand Sandbox pilot location criteria were developed based on the criteria defined within the FTA's MOD notice of funding opportunity and the project's submitted proposal. The following criteria were evaluated to determine the recommended stations:

1. **Equity and Access for Title VI and Environmental Justice Populations**. The primary goal of this partnership is to increase mobility options for minority and low-income groups. Using census data, staff performed a screening to identify which transit stops served by Sound Transit and King County Metro are located in areas where the proportion of sensitive groups within the nearby population (census tracts within two miles) is greater than that of the Sound Transit district as a whole.
2. **Geographic Diversity**. In order to provide access to a diversity of populations, staff selected locations representative of the geographic diversity in our broader region. Staff took into account the transit agency partners collaborating on the delivery of the project in this region to ensure locations are within King County and the Sound Transit district. Geographic diversity was considered in identifying locations with diverse nearby land use patterns. Staff ruled out transit facilities where other similar programs are likely to be tested in the near future. Staff identified

locations where service through this project could be funded by potential additional project partners to create opportunity for increased value.

3. **Current First and Last Mile Access and Feasibility**. Staff identified transit facilities served by both King County Metro and Sound Transit with a diversity of modes, parking availability and demographic landscape.
4. **Where Via can provide the greatest value**. Via evaluated a narrowed subset of pilot location options to identify which locations Via's service would afford the maximum value and use the project budget most efficiently. Considerations included high daily rider activity, high employment density, high population density and limited access to public transit.

Based on these criteria, staff recommended Mount Baker, Columbia City, Othello, Rainier Beach and Tukwila International Boulevard stations. This memo provides an overview of the quantitative and qualitative data considered in the pilot location selection and the proposed service catchment areas. Table 1 describes recommended pilot locations and characteristics. Map 1 shows the pilot stations and their service areas proximate to one another.

Table 1: Recommended Pilot Locations and Characteristics

Characteristics	Recommended Pilot Locations				
	Mount Baker Station	**Columbia City Station**	**Othello Station**	**Rainier Beach Station**	**Tukwila International Boulevard Station (TIBS)**
Transit Service	ST Link light rail KCM bus	ST Link light rail KCM bus	ST Link light rail KCM bus	ST Link light rail KCM bus	ST Link light rail, KCM bus, KCM Rapid Ride bus, ST Express bus
City	Seattle	Seattle	Seattle	Seattle	Tukwila
Population (2mi buffer)	61,848	66,057	62,139	53,519	35,924
Employment Density (jobs/sq mi)	9,757	8,284	7,279	3,467	3,996
Population Density (people/sq mi)	7,060	6,895	6,511	5,360	3,060
Minority %	60%	64%	70%	75%	69%
Low Income %	15%	18%	21%	23%	21%
Parking Spaces	None	None	None	None	600
Total Daily Ridership (weekday boardings + alightings)	7,060	5,523	6,645	4,936	13,379
Via Score*	0.89	0.74	0.71	0.49	0.61

**Score weights Employment Density, Residential Density, and Daily Ridership equally.*

Mount Baker Station

Mount Baker Station is situated south of Interstate-90, one stop and approximately three minutes north on the Link light rail from Columbia City Station. The station is located on the west side of Rainier Ave. S., a principal north-south arterial highlighted by the City of Seattle as having frequent collisions (on average one crash per day that takes 45 minutes to clear), especially as compared to other corridors (double), even those that carry almost twice the vehicle volume (Aurora Ave. N. and Lake City Way NE). The Mount Baker Transit Center is situated across Rainier Ave. S. from the Mount Baker Station. The

pick-up and drop-off area is on the same side of Rainier Ave.as the Link station. King County buses serve the transit center across from the light rail station. Routes 8, 7, 9 and 106 connect south and downtown Seattle with Renton. Mount Baker Station is situated amidst residential uses on the edge of the Mount Baker and Beacon Hill neighborhoods. Motor vehicle parking is not available at Mount Baker Station.

Columbia City Station

Columbia City Station is situated in south Seattle, south of Interstate-90, three Link station stops and approximately 16 minutes (by Link) north of TIBS. The station is located in the center median of Martin Luther King Boulevard, a four-lane principal north-south arterial. The station sits at the edge of the Columbia City and Beacon Hill neighborhoods and is connected by King County Metro buses 106 (connecting Renton and downtown Seattle) and 50 (connecting West Seattle and Seward Park). Motor vehicle parking is not available at Columbia City Station. Residential uses surround the immediate station area. The commercial Columbia City Historic District is less than a half mile to the east of the station.

Othello Station

Othello Station is situated approximately four minutes south of Columbia City Station (by Link), and approximately 11 minutes north of TIBS by Link. Like Columbia City Station, Othello Station is located in the center median of Martin Luther King Boulevard, a four-lane principal north-south arterial. The station sits in the Rainier Valley on the edge of the Brighton and Holly Park neighborhoods. The station is connected by King County Metro buses 106 (connecting Renton and downtown Seattle), 36 (connecting Beacon Hill with Othello Station and Downtown Seattle) and 50 (connecting West Seattle and Seward Park). Motor vehicle parking is not available at Othello Station. Transit oriented developments are in construction and recently opening directly east of the station. Parcels directly adjacent to this station are designated Neighborhood/Commercial zones, with Multi-Family and Single Family zones within a quarter mile.

Rainier Beach Station

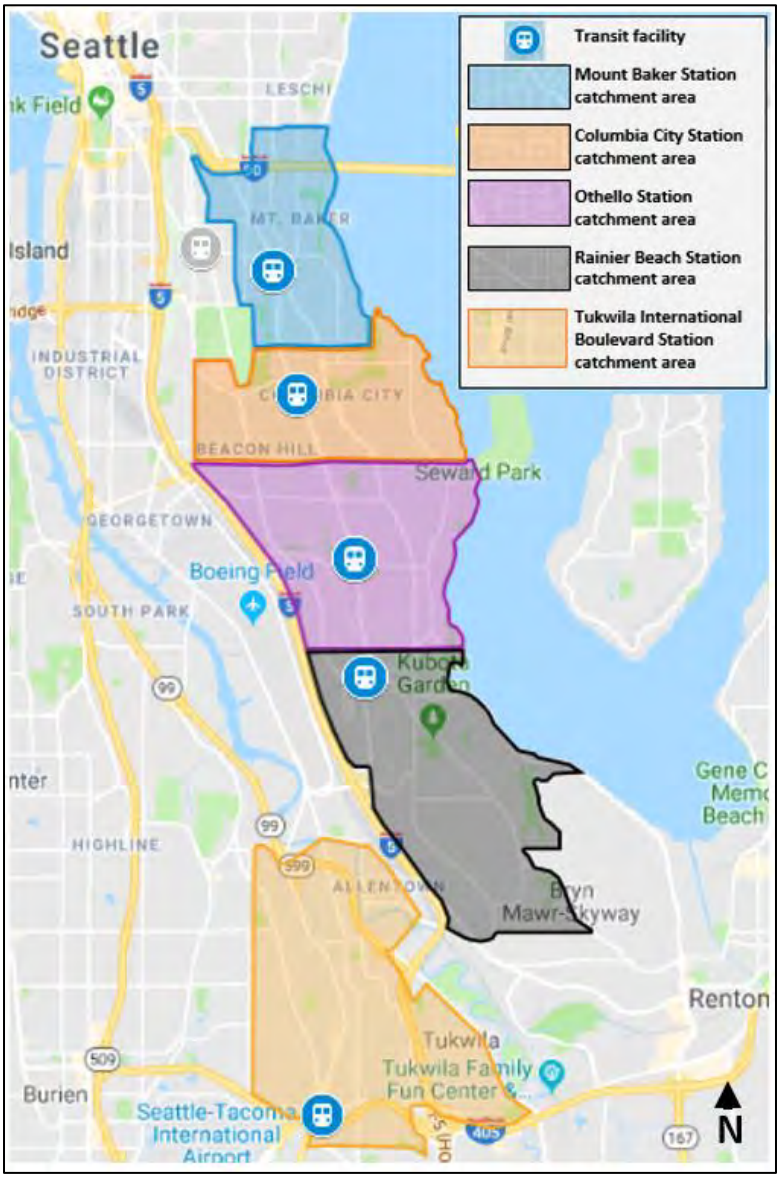
Rainier Beach Station is situated approximately three minutes south of Othello Station (by Link), and approximately nine minutes north of TIBS by Link. Like Othello Station, Rainier Beach Station is located in the center median of Martin Luther King Boulevard, a four-lane principal north-south arterial. The station sits in the Rainier Valley in the Rainer Beach neighborhood. The station is connected by King County Metro buses 106 (connecting Renton and downtown Seattle), 9 (connecting Capitol Hill and Rainier Beach) and 107 (connecting North Beacon Hill and Renton). Motor vehicle parking is not available at Rainier Beach Station. Transit-adjacent developments have recently opened west of the station. Parcels directly adjacent to this station are designated Neighborhood/Commercial zones, with Multi-Family and Single Family zones within a quarter mile.

Tukwila International Boulevard Station (TIBS)

Tukwila International Boulevard Station is situated three minutes (by Link) and approximately two miles north of SeaTac/Airport Station and the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, the original terminus of the Central Link light rail line that opened for service in 2009. TIBS is the transfer point for the King County Metro RapidRide F line, which connects Burien to Tukwila and Renton. The station is also served

by King County Metro bus and STExpress bus service. TIBS has 600 parking spaces, and the parking facility is included in Sound Transit's permit parking program through which carpool parking permits are currently offered to transit riders for $5 per month per 24-hour period. TIBS is situated amidst a mix of land uses, within regional commercial zoning and near high and low density residential zones.

Map 1. Pilot Locations and Service Areas



Methodology

Initial list and screening

Staff first compiled an initial list of transit facilities served by Sound Transit and King County Metro representing service through a range of modes including Sound Transit's Sounder Commuter Rail, Sound

Transit's Link Light Rail, Sound Transit's ST Express Bus, King County Metro RapidRide and King County Metro bus service (Table 2). Information compiled for consideration included modes serving the facilities, presence or absence of parking for transit users, nearby land uses and demographics including minority, low-income and limited English proficiency populations within approximately two miles of the transit facilities

Table 2. Initial List of Potential Pilot Locations

Potential Pilot Locations	Modes						Parking		Land use	Demographics		
	ST-SCR	ST-LRT	ST-Exp	KCM-RR	KCM-Bus	Other	Regular Parking	Kiss and Ride	Res/ Com/ MxdUse /Ind/ Other	Minority	Low-Income	LEP
UW Station		Y	Y		Y		N	N	Institutional	Y	Y	Y
Mt Baker		Y			Y		N	Y	Mixed use	Y	Y	Y
Columbia City		Y			Y		N	N	Residential	Y	Y	Y
Othello		Y			Y		N	N	Mixed use	Y	Y	Y
Rainier Beach		Y			Y		N	N	Mixed use	Y	Y	Y
TIBS		Y		Y			Y	Y	Mixed use	Y	Y	Y
Angle Lake		Y		Y			Y	Y	Commercial	Y	Y	Y
Federal Way Transit Center			Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Mixed use	Y	Y	Y
Kent Station	Y		Y	Y			Y	Y	Commercial	Y	Y	
Auburn Station	Y						Y	Y	Commercial		Y	
Issaquah Highlands			Y		Y		Y	Y	Mixed use			
Issaquah Transit Center			Y		Y		Y	Y	Commercial			
Redmond Transit Center			Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Mixed use	Y		
South Kirkland Park and Ride			Y		Y		Y	Y	Mixed use			
Lynnwood Transit Center			Y				Y	Y	Mixed use	Y		

Facilities serving only one mode (Auburn Station), those that did not meet two or more demographic thresholds (Issaquah Highlands, Issaquah Transit Center, South Kirkland Park and Ride), or those that have known upcoming site conflicts, such as planned construction activities, in the nearby vicinity (UW Station) were screened out.

Staff then compiled data for census tracts within two miles of potential pilot locations within Sound Transit's district. Data collected included percentage of the population at the census tract level that was minority, low income or limited English proficiency, within two miles of potential pilot locations. All census tracts that were fully within a two-mile radius of each transit facility were included. Demographic data was collected from the American Community Survey, 2016.

For the purposes of this analysis, definitions of the aforementioned populations are as follows:

- Minority: Non-white populations (as defined by Census)
- Low Income: At or below poverty level
- Limited English Proficiency: Ability to speak English less than "very well"

Transit facilities were then evaluated on whether populations within a two mile buffer of the facility had higher percentages of minority or low income than those of the Sound Transit district as a whole (Table 3).

Table 3. Potential Pilot Locations and Demographic Thresholds

Potential Pilot Locations	2-Mile Buffer				
	Population	Minority	Minority %*	Low Income	Low Income %**
Mt Baker	61,848	37,024	60%	9,536	15%
Columbia City	66,057	42,453	64%	11,978	18%
Othello	62,139	43,478	70%	13,268	21%
Rainier Beach	53,519	40,239	75%	12,470	23%
TIBS	35,924	24,656	69%	7,684	21%
Angle Lake	39,189	22,056	56%	6,387	16%
Federal Way Transit Center	48,553	23,875	49%	6,668	14%
Kent Station	43,439	24,907	57%	8,618	20%
Redmond Transit Center	44,324	18,934	43%	3,041	0%
Lynnwood Transit Center	58,974	23,490	40%	6,676	11%

**Avg. minority % population across ST district is 38.1%; **Ave. low income % population across ST district is 11.8%.*

Population Density, Employment and Best Service Value

Staff compiled data about population and employment density at the census tract level within a two mile buffer around each potential pilot location. All census tracts that were fully within a two-mile radius of each transit facility were included. Table 4 provides a comparison of population and employment density around potential pilot locations.

Table 4. Potential Pilot Locations and Population and Employment Density

Potential Pilot Locations	2016 Estimates	2-Mile Buffer	2016 Estimates	2-Mile Buffer
	Jobs	Area (sq mi)	Job Density	Pop Density
Mt Baker	85,480	8.76	9,757	7,060
Columbia City	79,366	9.58	8,284	6,895
Othello	69,472	9.54	7,279	6,511
Rainier Beach	34,618	9.98	3,467	5,360
TIBS	46,907	11.73	3,996	3,060
Angle Lake	41,586	11.49	3,617	3,409
Federal Way Transit Center	22,055	11.86	1,858	4,091
Kent Station	33,469	11.35	2,946	3,824
Redmond Transit Center	42,517	10.59	4,013	4,183
Lynnwood Transit Center	28,981	12.53	2,312	4,704

Population and employment data, along with daily boardings and alightings ridership data was provided to Via for their consideration in ranking which locations would provide the agencies with the best service value as a pilot location. With the Via score, the project team was able to identify preferred pilot locations for this project (Table 5).

Table 5. Potential Pilot Locations and Via Scores

Station	Service Options	Employment Density (jobs/sq mi)	Residential Density (pop/sq mi)	Total Daily Ridership (weekday boardings + alightings)	Score
Mt Baker	Link light / KCM	9,757	7,060	9,140	0.89
Columbia City	Link light / KCM	8,284	6,895	5,523	0.74
Othello	Link light / KCM	7,279	6,511	6,645	0.71
Rainier Beach	Link light / KCM	3,467	5,360	4,936	0.49
TIBS	Sounder Lakewood-Seattle / KCM / Amtrak	3,996	3,060	13,379	0.61
Angle Lake	Link light / KCM	3,617	3,409	8,985	0.50
Federal Way Transit Center	Buses 574, 577, 578 / KCM / Pierce Transit	1,858	4,091	8,546	0.46
Kent Station	Sounder Lakewood-Seattle / KCM / Buses 566, 567	2,946	3,824	8,361	0.48
Redmond Transit Center	Buses 542, 545 / KCM	4,013	4,183	7,146	0.51
Lynnwood Transit Center	Buses 511, 512, 535 / Community Transit	2,312	4,704	2,736	0.37

Note: Score weights Employment Density, Residential Density, and Daily Rider Activity equally. Data provided by King County Metro and Sound Transit.

Qualitative Analysis: Geographic Diversity and Scenarios for Comparison

Staff then conducted a qualitative analysis to determine of these facilities, which transit facilities on the list would be best complemented by additional first and last mile connections. Per the pilot location selection criteria outlined in this memo, staff analyzed potential locations to represent geographic diversity and first and last mile access feasibility. These criteria, in combination with budget options presented by Via to deliver a level of service within project budget that would result in wait times of less than 10 minutes led the project team to decide on a project with two zones and four pilot station locations. These zones are geographically diverse. One zone is in the heart of the Rainier Valley in south Seattle, and one in Tukwila, outside of the City of Seattle.

All five recommended pilot locations present interesting studies for a test of first and last mile access and viability of TNC service to increase mobility at and around these locations. TIBS presents a scenario with parking for transit users. Columbia City, Othello and Rainier Beach stations present a scenario for station access and local jurisdictional coordination for pickup and drop-off activity at the curb managed by an agency or jurisdiction other than Sound Transit. While there is no kiss-and-ride currently at these stations as part of the Sound Transit facility, riders have been observed to engage in pick-up and drop-off most frequently along the nearby street network, and there are nearby designated 3 minute load and unload areas along curbs on nearby streets. Notably, feeder service to/from Columbia City and Othello stations (route 50 bus) is infrequent and sometimes unreliable, presenting a case for comparison with before/after ridership numbers and how ride hailing may affect local potentially competing service.

Finally, Mount Baker Station has been known for access challenges, particularly with respect to the situation of the light rail station across a busy principal arterial from the bus transit center. Mount Baker has a pick-up/drop-off area on the same side as the station. This presents a scenario that could shed light on behavior and reasons for adoption to use of ride hailing services with designated pick-up and drop-off available directly at the Link station.

APPENDIX

C

Community Engagement Report

Via to Transit

Community Engagement Report

Year 1 outreach and engagement activities conducted between January 2019 and January 2020, and recommendations for changes to service based on community feedback.

Contents

Executive Summary

Between January 2019 and January 2020, Metro staff conducted and participated in a variety of activities with organizations and communities in southeast Seattle including Via to Transit drivers, and interacted with nearly 300 individual community members. These activities and moments of participation were designed with the goal of better understanding if and how Via to Transit can be improved or changed to better serve communities of color, low-income communities, immigrants and/or refugees, and people with disabilities.

Common comments/suggestions across communities:

- Improve customer experience by providing customer service driver trainings and trainings for working with riders with disabilities;
- Improve accessibility of the app itself (e.g. expanding app languages, increasing font size, etc.)
- Confusion related to ORCA use and fare payment in general
- Via to Transit offers a safer option than walking to/from Link light rail station
- Improve communication regarding travel to/from drop off location
    - In-app directions to pick up and drop off locations
    - Driver phone communication with customers
- More collaboration needed between Via to Transit and community organizations to make it an accessible service
    - With enough time, Via/Metro staff should have collaborated with community-based organizations that serve English language learning audiences and other transit-dependent yet transit-underserved audiences during the development stages of the program. Doing this would have allowed space for quality assurance from customers and the time to make small changes to the app and service that could have positively affected customer experience (e.g. large vinyl numbers on each vehicle rather than just identifying vehicle by license plate).

Recommendations

Based on community engagement and outreach, we recommend that Via to Transit and/or similar first/last mile services make a number of changes ranging from vehicle visibility to customer service training.

Drivers

- Training
    - Customer service
    - Driving/road safety
        - Incentivize safe driving, penalize unsafe driving
    - Communicating with disabled customers (e.g. fingerspelling)
- Professional development/resources
    - Tax form assistance
    - Tutorials on how to apply for state and federal assistance
    - Informational interviews/introduction to other opportunities within Metro Transit, pathways to employment with Metro Transit as a regular employee

- Clock in as soon as they pick up the car from lot

Accessibility/Safety

- Large vehicle numbers on hood and sides of vans in contrasting color
- App access
    - Option to create an account that does not require the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle but still notifies the driver that the customer requires assistance.
    - Option to increase text font size
    - Increase language options (Spanish, Traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, Amharic, Somali, Tigrinya, and Oromo)
- Pick up and drop off locations
    - Established pick up and drop off locations with tactile signage for recognized community based organizations (e.g. Lighthouse for the Blind)
    - If picking up a disabled customer, app identifies a location with curb and/or safe pedestrian conditions
    - Locations that do not require customer to cross lanes without safe crossings
    - Curb to curb journeys during inclement weather and after dark

Fare Payment

- Accept paper transfers
- Email receipts that show correct fare payment (youth, adult, LIFT, RRFP, etc.)
- Encourage drivers to continue to ask for fare payment even when PFTP is not functional in order to build the expectation in the customer to present fare upon entering the vehicle

Communications/Marketing

Participants in the Rainier Vista listening sessions, the Rainier Beach Action Coalition listening session, and the polling at Kandelia classes indicated the use of a car as why they do not use Via to Transit. This suggests that convenience is an important factor in the transportation choices for these participants, and that a marketing campaign focused on the convenience of Via to Transit versus driving a car would be of value.

Before the design and development of a first mile and last mile service, a partnership should be fostered between the service provider and community via community-based organizations to evaluate the development and participate in co-creation of the program. This encourages buy in from the community and allows staff to make changes to the program that are potentially easier to make before implementation and improve customer experience.

While Metro staff did not seek relationships with the community before the development of the pilot program, Via to Transit and Metro Transit staff were able to be nimble and responsive to customer feedback during the pilot. Relationships formed during the pilot, specifically with East African Community Services, Lighthouse for the Blind, and Rainier Beach Action Coalition allowed Metro staff to hear directly from affected communities about the service. Two changes made to the service based on community feedback were the inclusion of the Rainier Beach service area and a curb-to-curb service after 10 PM and before 6 AM (i.e. riders didn't need to walk to a pick-up/from a drop-off point). The

former change to the service has been lauded by community because it has expanded safe transportation choices for youth.

Community Engagement

Metro staff organized, facilitated, and participated in a variety of activities for Via to Transit outreach and engagement. The two activity categories depending on purpose and depth of interaction:

1. Marketing/Outreach/Education: activities meant to raise awareness about and encourage use of Via to Transit.
2. Engagement: activities meant to build relationships with community and foster two-way stream of feedback and information related to Via to Transit.

A language assessment was completed and materials were developed in recommended languages which included Spanish, traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, Amharic, and Somali. While the language assessment included the recommended languages and approach, ultimately materials and products were developed based on a combination of Census language data, community recommendations, and Metro staff capacity. Additionally, Metro Transit engaged with two of the organizations listed in the assessment; however, staff did actively pursue communications and relationships with the other organizations. [See Appendix A]

Marketing/Education/Outreach

Tabling Events

- April 20, 2019: Rainier Beach Action Coalition Open Spaces Town Hall
    - Event sharing City of Seattle and other organizations' open spaces projects and resources
    - Approximately 100 attendees, and 25 one-on-one interactions
    - Highlights/stand out stories:
        - Participant expressed gratitude having Via to Transit in Rainier Beach "because it's safer than walking home". They also shared that even though it is convenient, they wished it could do door-to-door service after dark; they cited shootings and other criminal activity on their block.
        - Most participants had heard of Via but had not tried it yet. Eight participants with whom Metro staff interacted were surprised to learn that it was a fare transfer to use the service and indicated they would try the service since it was "free". This suggests the communication related to fare payment needed to expand and/or communication related to fare payment was unclear or misleading.
- May 2, 2019: Emerald City Commons Health and Resource Fair
    - Hosted by Urban Impact
    - Approximately 10 one-on-one interactions, all with English language learner adults and school-age children.
    - Highlights/stand out stories:
        - No one had heard of Via to Transit, and no one committed to trying the service.
        - All adults Metro staff spoke with rode Metro Route 7 exclusively.
- July 26, 2019: Night Out at Lake Washington Apartments

    - 384-unit affordable housing community in the Rainier Beach neighborhood
    - Approximately 20 one-on-one interactions
    - Highlights/stand out stories:
        - A disabled resident had heard of Via to Transit, but they were hesitant to try it because they also have an emotional support animal
        - Three families had heard of and used Via to Transit. One family shared that it is convenient and provides a safe alternative for their children to get to and from Lake Washington Apartments. One teen with the family did share that sometimes the drivers can be pushy. When asked more about this, the teen said that the drivers will sometimes not let them in the van until they tap their ORCA card.
- August 10, 2019: Rainier Beach Coalition Back 2 School Bash
    - Resource and activity fair for families with school-age children in southeast Seattle
    - Approximately 50 one-on-one interactions
    - Highlights/stand out stories:
        - A customer left a Via to Transit rider confused about fare payment. They and their family rode the Link light rail and they each paid their fare with their own ORCA cards. The same customer ordered the Via ride and indicated how many was part of their party. The Via driver insisted that they just tap one card, and the customer was worried they would be charged for all five in their party.

Miscellaneous Events

- Hopelink Education and Outreach Field Trip for Via to Transit and Ride2 – June 7, 2019
    - Educational event catered to social service and transportation providers to learn about both services and how they can be tools for their clients
    - Twenty-four participants [See Appendix B for Field Trip Q&A]

Engagement Activities

Station Walking Tour

- Lead by Rainier Beach Action Coalition (RBAC) leadership at the Rainier Beach Link light rail station – February 14, 2019
- Highlights:
    - RBAC staff described the limitations that riders are bound by only having fixed route transit service and recommended different locations for Via vehicle pick up and drop off
    - Metro staff observed Link light rail customers rushing to transfer to a bus that RBAC staff described as “late all the time”

Vehicle Demonstration and Q&A

- Hosted at Lighthouse for the Blind – July 31, 2019
- Interacted with seven deafblind individuals, most of whom are transit riders
- Highlights/stand out stories from interactions:
    - Drivers should be provided training about service to disabled or deafblind customers
        - Similar to bus operators, Via drivers should assist customers in entering and exiting the vehicle.

        - Perhaps drivers could use Fingerspelling with deafblind customers
    - Visibility of vehicle
        - The van is dark in color, which can be difficult to spot for customers with vision impairment.
        - Have large vehicle numbers in addition to identifying the van by the license plate number
    - Accommodations for disabled riders
        - Larger app text, perhaps when a customer makes their account and indicates that they are a disabled customer, the option to make the app text a larger size is presented.
        - Established pick up and drop off locations with tactile signage at least around Lighthouse for the Blind.

Listening Session with Rainier Beach Action Coalition Corner Greeters (youths aged 16-22) – September 30, 2019

Metro staff met with 10 Rainier Beach Action Coalition youth staff to listen to their experiences using the Via service and any feedback they have about improving it. Most teens receive ORCA cards through school or through employer. Eight participants had used Via to Transit before this meeting; everyone had heard of it.

Staff asked the youth who had heard of the service but not tried it yet why they had not tried it, and the reasons included having a car, being confused with the app, needing to travel outside of the service areas, and living too close to a station.

Criticisms of the service:

- Improve safety aspects of service
    - Pick up and drop off locations (e.g. a driver stopping on Rainier Ave to do a pick up)
    - Cameras on the inside or outside of vehicles
    - Drivers can make unsafe decisions on the road
        - Incentivize good driving and penalize bad driving
- Drop off/pick up locations
    - Value of the service depends on where you live
    - They are inconsistent. “Sometimes I get dropped off at my house, but sometimes it’s a walk away.”
- Fare payment
    - One person thought they were charged through the app.
    - Confused that sometimes you pay with ORCA and sometimes the driver does not ask.
- Customer service
    - Some participants hesitant to use service because they have heard of drivers being unfriendly

Positive comments/benefits of service:

- Access/Convenience:
    - Good for people with disabilities.

- "It's great not to walk sometimes."
- One youth uses it every day because the bus stop is far away from their house.
- Via is a good option to have in addition to the bus.

Polling/Feedback Gathering at Kandelia (formerly Vietnamese Friendship Association)

- Homework Help for school-age English language learners at Seattle World School (25 participants; languages spoken: Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Oromo, Somali, Soninke, Spanish, Swahili, Tigrinya, Vietnamese) – October 22, 2019
- Job Readiness program for Spanish-speaking adults (15 participants) – December 7, 2019
- English Language Learning program for Vietnamese-speaking adults (30 participants) – December 7, 2019

Metro staff developed an image-based activity accessible for English language learners to understand with assistance from their tutors [See Figure 2 and 3]

- Polling questions:
  - Where do you travel? (School, work, library, home, recreation, other)
  - How do you travel there? (Bus, car, rideshare like Lyft or Uber, bike, walk, Via)
  - Have you heard of Via to Transit? (Following explanation of service, students were asked what they like/dislike about the service based on what they now and if they will try it out.)

Kandelia Polling Data and Quotes Table

	Where do you travel?	How do you travel there?	Likes	Dislikes
Homework help	Work: 8 School:25 Home: 25 Recreation/Library: 14 Other: Downtown (3), Capitol Hill (3)	Bus:15 Car: 10 Rideshare:6 Bike: 2 Walk: 5 Via: 1	"I can use my school ORCA." "It's not extra money because I don't have a job."	"It looks like my house is outside of the area, so I can't use it"
Job readiness class	Work: 15 School:15 Home: 15 Recreation/Library: 7 Other: Doctor/clinic (5)	Bus:10 Car: 5 Rideshare: 0 Bike: 3 Walk: 3 Via: 0	"Seems good but I have a car." "I like that my daughter than use it with the card she gets from her school."	"I don't use ORCA, I only use cash." "I can't take it to where I want to go – I can't use it to go to work."
English language class	Work: 20 School:30 Home: 30 Recreation/Library: 9	Bus:10 Car: 12 Rideshare: 0 Bike: 2 Walk: 5 Via: 0		"It doesn't take transfers?" "I don't take the train, so I wouldn't use this."

Driver Engagement: Tabling at Avis (where drivers pick up and drop off Via to Transit vehicles) and collecting feedback from drivers – November 21, 2019

Metro staff visited the Avis parking lot in Tukwila, WA in November 2019 to have conversations and hear directly from Via drivers about their experience as drivers. Staff engaged with approximately 12 drivers and collected more than 50 comments regarding issues from driver professional development to customer experience. The most common comments were about the Via to Transit smartphone application/technology, driver trainings and professional development, and contractor fees. [See Appendix D]

- Highlights/stand out stories:
    - App/Technology
        - PFTP rarely works, so many drivers do not bother with asking for fare payment from customers
        - The app's GPS does not account for road closures or construction.
    - Driver training
        - Several drivers requested training to improve ability to serve disabled customers
        - Resources with taxes and other paperwork necessary for independent contractors
    - Contractor status and driver experience
        - "Car maintenance affects when I can clock in even though I show up on time."
        - "Avis should treat us like customers."

Listening Sessions at Rainier Vista Boys & Girls Club

Two listening sessions were conducted with youth and adults at the Rainier Vista Boys & Girls Club to understand awareness of and experience with Via to Transit in addition to preferences for other types of transportation and experience with ORCA and various types of fare payment. [See Appendix I]

Partnership with East African Community Services

To learn more about the experience using Via to Transit for English language learning communities and immigrants and refugees, Metro Transit partnered with East African Community Services (EACS). Through phone and in person conversations, EACS leadership and Metro staff established goals and deliverables, which included engagement- and marketing-related activities. They also provided guidance and recommendations to Metro staff on what languages to develop products and materials in. The illustrated guide for how to install and use the smartphone app was especially useful to participants in EACS's activities [See Appendix E].

East African Community Services staff engaged with community members and program participants between July and August 2019 including their Wadajir Parent Support Group and Citizenship Classes and their Parent Leadership Training Institute. They also convened five listening sessions totaling over 120 New Holly and Rainier Valley residents, most of whom were of East African descent.

Standout sentiments from these activities were that

- Via to Transit drivers should have more customer service training.
- Transferring to and from Metro service and Link light rail is helpful.

- Via to Transit should be available in more languages; however, the app is still useable by youth who are tech-savvy. This request for an in-language app pertains to elders and adults in the community.
- Please see EACS's report [Appendix G]

Photos and Data

Rainier Beach Action Coalition listening session

Figure 1: Listening session with Rainier Beach Action Coalition Corner Greeters, September 20, 2019

Kandelia homework help at Seattle World School

Figure 2: Student indicates the modes of transportation they use.

Figure 3: Group of three students and one tutor discussing the different places they travel to.

Appendix A: Language Assessment

On-Demand First/Last Mile Mobility In-Language Engagement Outline

Service to/from SE Seattle Light Rail Stations and the Tukwila International Boulevard Light Rail Station

Based on the language distribution data[1] summarized below, and consistent with King County's Executive Order on Written Translation, Metro will translate public communication materials and vital documents into Spanish when feasible within available resources. Metro will translate materials into other commonly spoken non-English languages when those are the primary language spoken by 5 percent or more of the target audience. Metro will use alternative forms of language assistance when the alternative is more effective or practical.

[1] Sourced from: King County Demographic Maps https://www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/tools-resources/maps.aspx; Access to King County Metro Transit Services for People with Limited English Proficiency Implementation Plan: http://metro.kingcounty.gov/am/reports/2012/metro-limited-english-plan-2012.pdf

SE Seattle Catchment Areas

Census Tract	Zone	% Speak English Less Than Very Well	% Speak Spanish	% Speak African Languages[2]	% Speak Chinese	% Speak Vietnamese	% Speak Tagalog
89	Mount Baker	2.5 - 4.9	5 – 7.4	<1	<1	1 – 2.4	1 – 2.4
95	Mount Baker	10+	5 – 7.4	<1	1 – 2.4	5 – 7.4	1 – 2.4
100.01	Columbia City/Mount Baker	10+	5 – 7.4	10+	10+	10+	2.5 – 4.9
101	Columbia City	10+	10+	5 – 7.4	2.5 – 4.9	2.5 – 4.9	5 – 7.4
102	Columbia City	10+	2.5 – 4.9	<1	1 – 2.4	2.5 – 4.9	<1
103	Columbia City	10+	2.5 – 4.9	7.5 – 9.9	2.5 – 4.9	5 – 7.4	7.5 – 9.9
104.01	Columbia City	10+	2.5 – 4.9	5 – 7.4	10+	10+	<1
104.02	Columbia City	10+	<1	2.5 – 4.9	10+	5 – 7.4	10+
110.01	Othello	10+	1 – 2.4	10+	7.5 – 9.9	10+	1 – 2.4
110.02	Othello	10+	7.5 - 9.9	7.5 – 9.9	10+	10+	5 – 7.4
111.01	Othello	10+	2.5 – 4.9	7.5 – 9.9	10+	10+	7.5 – 9.9
111.02	Othello	10+	10+	7.5 – 9.9	<1	10+	5 – 7.4
Total	Total	10+	10+	10+	10+	10+	5 – 7.4

Note: this assessment was completed before the Rainier Beach Link light rail station was included in the pilot.

Tukwila International Boulevard Station Catchment Area

Census Tract	% Speak English Less Than Very Well	% Speak Spanish	% Speak African Languages	% Speak Chinese	% Speak Vietnamese	% Speak Korean
262	10+	7.5 – 9.9	<1	1 – 2.4	5 – 7.4	5 – 7.4[3]
263	10+	<1	<1	5 – 7.4	+10	<1
271	10+	+10	2.5 – 4.9	1 -2.4	2.5 – 4.9	<1
272	10+	7.5 – 9.9	<1	<1	7.5 – 9.9	<1
273	10+	10+	5 – 7.4	<1	1 – 2.4	<1
281	10+	10+	10+	<1	1 – 2.4	<1
282	10+	10+	10+	1 – 2.4	1 – 2.4	<1
Total	10+	10+	5 – 7.4	<5	<5	<1

[2] Priority African languages according to community contact are Somali, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Oromo.

[3] This tract in the TIBS catchment area is largely residential (northeast of I-5/I-405 junction) and there seem to be no Korean community services or organizations in the entire TIBS area; therefore, engagement through ReWA, the Tukwila Community Center, and/or Tukwila School District Administration/local schools' PTSAs is necessary

SE Seattle and TIBS Language Assistance Measures and Appropriate Transcreation

Language Assistance Measure	In-language	Interpreter Services Available w/ Statement[4]	Notes/Rationale
Via First/Last Mile Website	English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese	All	Accessible for Screen Readers; include information about getting ORCA. Data: literacy rates and oral communication of East African community[5].
Brochure	English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, Amharic, Chinese	All	Brief description of service, map of services areas, hours, payment, etc.
Facebook campaign	Spanish, Somali, Amharic, Chinese, Vietnamese	All	If not a campaign, then posts in language. Post video? Eastgate Chinese – traction; East African community anecdotally active on Facebook
A-boards/Sandwich boards/ORCA reader signs	English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Somali, Amharic	All	Specific to light rail station Census tract languages? (e.g. Mt Baker has Spanish, Othello has all)
Flyer w/ app instructions	English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Somali, Amharic	All	For use at future focus group meetings, for service ambassadors, Public Transit Educators, etc. Pictographic/infographic of how to use service, screenshots w/ steps
Video	English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Somali, Amharic	All	In-language dubbing and subtitles. Adaptable to variety of languages. Metro videographer or outside contractor TBD
NextDoor app			KCM has account, Alta recommends sending content to community partners w/ account.

[4] Interpreter Statement – to be translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Somali, Amharic, Tigrinya, Oromo, Tagalog, and printed next to Interpreter Symbol "For more information about connecting to transit or getting a ride to the [XXXXXXX] Light Rail station, please call 206-553-3000 and reference [XXXXX]."

[5] "English and digital literacy were most frequently named as barriers to participation." From "Voices of Seattle's East African Communities," by Aileen Balahadia Consultation, 2016, p. 32. City of Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs.

Engagement

Metro is seeking engagement with community-based organizations and social services organizations in the SE Seattle areas around Mount Baker, Columbia City, and Othello Light Rail Stations. This engagement will involve a two-way exchange of information between Metro and CBOs and community members. It may include focus group facilitation, recruitment and training of service information ambassadors, and/or other methods of communication and engagement as deemed appropriate by Metro and the corresponding organizations/service providers.

SE Seattle - Organization	Contact	Service/Population	Notes
East African Community Services	Amir Noir	East African refugee and immigrant families, family services, education	Contacted main email, Amir, and education coordinator.
Asian Counseling and Referral service	info@acrs.org	American Americans and Pacific Islanders, API immigrant community	Waiting for response
People of Color Against AIDS Network	Preston Credit	Multicultural awareness, public health	Waiting for response.
Ethiopian Community Center	Senait Tilahun c/o Dr. Jeffery Perkins		Recommendation: prioritize Amharic and Somali for transcreation; Tigrinya and Oromo for interpreter statement
Filipino Community Center		Seattle's Filipino-Am. Community, families, education	Tagalog/Ilocano outreach
Got Green		Climate justice, environmental justice, food access	
FAST Father and Sons Together		Educational resources, economic development for boys and men	Alta suggestion – have contact?
Rainier Beach ABSPFY		Youth engagement, crime prevention, community engagement	Alta suggestion – have contact?

TIBS - Organization	Contact	Service/Population	Notes
Refugee Women's Alliance	Susan Lee, Director ECE Ops and Volunteer Services	Refugee/Immigrant women, families, early childhood	
Tukwila Community Center			Possible venue for focus group meeting? Events to plug into
KC Housing Authority			Perhaps distribution of outreach/marketing materials?

Appendix B: Hopelink's field trip Q&A

Via to Transit / Ride2 Field Trip

Questions & Answers

Is a monthly pass available as well as the e-purse?

Both services, Ride2 and Via to Transit, accept ORCA-based payments, including monthly passes and e-purse. In the case of Via to Transit, when you create a profile with the app, it also asks you to put your ORCA card number into your profile, but this is just for data tracking purposes. The vehicles have ORCA readers in them, and transactions only begin when a rider beeps their card. All discounted fare options are offered and ORCA's two-hour transfer windows are honored.

When does these pilots end? What happens next.

All projects have been conceived as 12-month pilots, for Metro (and partners like SDOT and Sound Transit) to evaluate performance and make decisions about their longer term feasibility. Ride2 Eastgate's 12-month pilot period concludes in October 2019, Ride2 West Seattle's in December 2019, and Via to Transit's in April 2020.

Are the service hours based upon when a rider initiates request or completes a trip?

When it is initiated. So, if a rider begins a trip within the service hours and is still traveling in a vehicle past the service hours, the rider is not penalized.

What happens if someone calls the Via or Ride2 interpreter line? What would happen if they just called the Metro General line instead?

If a caller uses the Via/Ride2 interpreter line directly, a representative who speaks English will ask the caller what language they want and they will be patched through to an interpreter. If a caller started with the Metro General line, a representative would just give the caller the Via/Ride2 phone numbers. To cut down on extra steps, it's best if someone calls the Via/Ride2 lines first.

Are the apps in other languages?

No, only in English, so the messaging is really to call in order to book rides if someone speaks another language.

How was the advertisement/marketing different between both Ride2 service areas?

Metro made very similar marketing efforts in both service areas (online, street teams, community outreach events, others). They are learning from this to improve and tweak for future promotion efforts. Any ideas on this front would be helpful in the future.

What do the vehicles look like?

Via to Transit vehicles are 6-passenger all black Toyota Siennas and Ride2 vehicles are 12-passenger blue vans; both have distinct Metro branding (see pictures below). Wheelchair accessible vehicles look the same, but accommodate fewer seated passengers. When requesting rides through the apps, customers will be provided a specific vehicle ID number so that people get into the correct vehicle (license plate for Via, vehicle number for Ride2).

How many vehicles does Via have and what are the wait times like?

There are 18 total vehicles, 3 of which are wheelchair accessible (however, all 18 vehicles do not always provide service at the same time). Via's goal is to pick up riders within 10 minutes or less.

How are you going to tweak and improve service and service provision after the pilots end?

All projects have been conceived as 12-month pilots so that Metro (and partners like Seattle Department of Transportation and Sound Transit) can evaluate performance measures and make decisions about longer-term feasibility. On a daily basis, Metro makes tweaks and improvements to these services using aggregated operational data and customer feedback.

Ride2 and Via to Transit is first-mile/last-mile so the trip must begin or end at a transit hub. But, if a customer wanted to take a trip that was 'end-to-end' – from their origin directly to their destination – could they do that?

These services are designed to connect people to and from transit centers and light rail stations, but there is no policy mandating a rider must transfer to fixed route transit. Customers' ORCA cards (or other payment methods) are not reviewed to see if a transfer to fixed route service indeed took place.

Do you have data on how many people with disabilities use this service?

We would have to look at the data. Not off-hand.

In customer surveys, are you also asking about how the service can be further improved?

We could certainly do this. We are seeing the challenges right now and working through improvements.

How long do the vehicles wait at the pick-up point for the rider?

Ride2 drivers will wait three minutes. They cannot expand this because it's considered public transit and any further wait times would also impact other customers. With Via, drivers will wait two minutes.

Are these Metro drivers?

No. Via drivers are private independent drivers. Ride2 drivers are Hopelink employees.

You suggest that people order ahead of time, however what if their plans change?

Both services offer the option to cancel a trip request. As of right now, there is no cancellation penalty.

Via to Transit describes their service as corner to corner. Is this fundamentally different from other services that are door-to-door?

In certain circumstances, riders may need to walk a bit to access the vehicle. It may not come straight to their door like Metro Access does.

How far away from the light rail/transit hub do you have to be for this service to work?

All service areas are designed like a donut. There is a ¼ mile radius from the transit hub where Via to Transit doesn't pick riders up. However, if a rider selects a wheelchair accessible vehicle, there is consideration of the rider's level of disability and mobility limitations. Riders also must specify through the app if they need help from the driver to get into the vehicle.

How many people can you ride together with?

You can add up to 5 passengers through app, even after the request is submitted. Each person must pay.

If a rider has children and needs a car seat, do you supply them?

Car seats and booster seats are required when applicable on Ride2 vehicles and must be provided and installed by the parent/guardian. On Via to Transit, parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to bring a car seat and booster seat when appropriate.

Metro allows children under 5 to ride for free. When you're booking a ride, do you count child as well in the passenger section?

For insurance purposes, all passengers need to be accounted for, though riders will not be charged for children under 5 years of age.

Do the services accept Human Services Bus Tickets, the discounted tickets that social service agencies buy to provide to people with income insecurity, and who are experiencing homelessness?

Ride2 does, but Via to Transit doesn't. However, the policy to have no fare disputes is aligned with Metro's. So, if someone cannot pay, a driver cannot force someone out of the vehicle. Additionally, fare enforcement isn't allowed on Via to Transit and Ride2.

A Hopelink Mobility staff member noticed that at the Columbia City light rail, there were no benches for the Via to Transit stop. Updating these areas with seats would greatly incentivize ridership.

Sound Transit and Metro worked together to identify safe locations near the light rail stations, even if they lacked amenities. If these were to be more permanent, these are things that Via to Transit, Metro and Sound Transit would work on.

Point of Feedback

A community member noted that the service needs a few changes for them to consider it to be successful. However, they still see time-of-day and marketing strategy to be wanting. They emphasized that when this pilot is over, if the service continues, there should be expanded hours and a broader swath of promotion done to make sure Ride2 serves all people in its West Seattle service area.

Ride2
Your ride connected

VIA
TO TRANSIT

Appendix C: Lighthouse for the Blind feedback (email correspondence)

Lighthouse for the Blind

Via to Transit Demonstration and Q&A, July 31, 2019

Notes and email correspondence with David Miller, Employee and Community Services

Training/Engagement

Trainings for drivers specifically around interacting and providing customer service to deaf, blind, and/or Deafblind customers

- Include scenarios related to seating arrangements
- Yellow cards indicating to drivers that the customer is waiting for Via
- Reiterate that drivers must come out and assist customers in getting in vehicle (same standards/protocol as bus operators)
- How to communicate with deafblind customers

    - Build toolkit with notepad and pen for customers who have some visual capability, handbook with tips, diagram of how to use print on palm, etc.
    - Best practices when communicating related to emergency

Possibility of working with The Lighthouse to organize focus group/listening session with Lighthouse clients/community members.

Physical improvements to the service:

Make text larger in app

Possibly a feature that an account holder chooses when making an account

Text at current size very difficult to read

Tactile stop landmark (both at the Via pick up locations at Link stations, and possibly other places?)

A designated seat in the van for customers with disabilities (the front passenger was suggested, but this lacks space for a service animal) similar to how the front of the bus is prioritized for seniors and those with disabilities.

The vans are quite dark in color and so difficult to spot especially after dark; can they have a light on top (similar to a taxi) or be painted a different color?

If a customer is riding with a service animal, there isn't a lot of space near the customer's knees.

Communications/Marketing

How does Metro communicate that using the MAV/WAV means the customer has curb-to-curb service? This feature is unclear/unknown to many who might benefit.

Fare payment

If a customer with a Support Service Provider indicates that two people are on the ride request, does the SSP need to provide fare payment?

If a customer requests a ride for two people and has a RRFP card with an e-purse, can they tap twice for themselves and their companion? Conversely, if both customers are transferring from Link light rail where they pay per person, does the driver know to have them all tap their own ORCA cards even though the primary rider indicated more than one rider?

Email correspondence

On Wed, Aug 7, 2019 at 12:25 PM David Miller <DMiller@lhblind.org> wrote:

Hi Folks! Just to illustrate the need for more training and more personal information on the account details. Today I worked with Virginia Freeland who has been using Via with "mobility assistance" for two weeks. Via has been a godsend for getting her to the LINK Station so she can get to the Sounder Station before the last run of the morning King Street Station to Lakewood train at 7:55. Until today, the booked ride occurred in minutes with confirmation and a pick up time. Today, that didn't happen – she received a reply that said "we are looking for a ride and will call you soon to confirm." Virginia is a Deafblind person, she will not reply to a "phone call." Today it took over 30 minutes to book her ride. The ride didn't arrive on time for her to get to the Mt Baker Station on time – I had to driver her to the ID Station.

The communication in this case between the operations center and Virginia was ineffective. I sent text to clarify and to insist on text not voice communication. She will use her app again tomorrow to book a ride – I'm hoping she gets a timely ride as has been provided for the past two week – arriving at the Mt Baker station in time to catch the 7:24 LINK train to Downtown, no later. She starts the booking process at 6:45 AM daily. If she misses the train, she can't get home. Friday, I will be working with her on Plan B – what to do when Via doesn't deliver on time and she arrives late to King Street Station.

Hopefully this will add context to our discussion. Let's solve these problems! ☺

Thanks again!

David

From: David Miller [mailto:DMiller@LHBlind.org]
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 9:04 AM
To: Adeline Reiser <adeline@ridewithvia.com>

Cc: Cramer, Shelby <scramer@kingcounty.gov>; Gifford, Casey (Catherine) <cgifford@kingcounty.gov>; Chazanow, Abby <abby.chazanow@soundtransit.org>; Rochford, John <John.Rochford@kingcounty.gov>
Subject: RE: Via to Transit @ Lighthouse - follow up

Hi Adeline. This afternoon will be working with a Lighthouse Deafblind employee and Braille user. In fact this employee will become our braille instructor soon. We will be retesting his ability to use his Braille display and iPhone to place a ride. Virginia has taken a pause this week from using Via but, she has commented on drivers lack of attention to pulling up to the curb for her. I think in general this is an accommodation issues that will come up repeated for blind and Deafblind riders. She has asked me to request that drivers be more responsive to his issue. Two other issues from surveying the availability assistance vehicles, I've noticed the response time hasn't been the same. Often the mobility assistance vehicle will be a 20 – 30 minute wait compared to the 4-6 minute wait for the standard van. I think it's fair to say, that's not equal access. The only reason people are asking for the mobility assistance van is because they need curb to curb service. A blind or Deafblind person doesn't need to ramp or wheel chair access. It seems to me people should be able to request the standard vehicle and still get curb to curb. I think this is an easy fix and should include a change to the Account Details. A person should be able to include personal information that will assist the driver. Some suggestions:

1. Text only option – this could be for any person who prefers text over speech and would eliminate the confusion of a call center person responding to a booking delay with a phone call. For Deaf and Deafblind users, text will likely be either the only option or the preferred option.
2. Disability category – if a person can indicate they are blind or Deafblind and need curb to curb but not a "mobility assistance" van, that should be an option to reduce the pickup time and increase the van availability for both the mobility assistance people due to less competition and because there would then be more vans available. It would also require that all drivers receive sensitivity training and know how to interact with a blind or Deafblind person. Just adding this option would at least give the driver a "heads up" regarding the need for assistance and a curb pick up not stopping in the middle of the street or on the wrong side of the street for the special needs person.
3. Getting a formal pickup drop off location at the Lighthouse will be a big help – drivers still seem unsure of where to drop off people and specifically for Deafblind riders, this should be designated and clearly marked so drivers don't have to ask the question, "where do you want to be dropped off?"

Hi David,

One other thing that we *may* be able to advance in the near term is your suggestion to add roof top lights for easy identification for night travelers. Could you provide some examples so that we can better explore whether this is feasible?

Thanks,

Casey

Casey Gifford

Pronouns: she/her

Innovative Mobility Project Manager
King County Metro Transit
201 South Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104
(206) 263-0118 | cgifford@kingcounty.gov

From: Gifford, Casey (Catherine)
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 9:36 AM
To: David Miller <DMiller@LHBlind.org>; Adeline Reiser <adeline@ridewithvia.com>
Cc: Cramer, Shelby <scramer@kingcounty.gov>; Chazanow, Abby <abby.chazanow@soundtransit.org>; Rochford, John <John.Rochford@kingcounty.gov>
Subject: RE: Via to Transit @ Lighthouse - follow up

Hi David,

Thank you for your feedback.

Metro will work with Via on how we can make the service more accessible. I also think it's important to note that this is scoped as a limited duration pilot service and that resources may not be available to implement all improvements at this time, particularly significant app development work or extensive driver training. That said, we can certainly do what we can within the time and resources available.

To follow-up on a few of your suggestions:

- Changing the app or how vehicles are deployed will require development work and the timeline for completion of that work has not yet been scoped. In the meantime, when riders book their ride, they can call or text the driver/call center to let them know that they have a disability as a means of giving drivers a heads up. Additionally, while, generally speaking, riders will need to use the "mobility assistance" feature to request curb to curb service, they don't need to do so after 10pm or before 6am, during which time all rides are provided as curb to curb.

- In terms of establishing a formal pickup/dropoff location, that is certainly something we can move forward on, however it's not feasible to have two designated locations within the same area (i.e. there isn't a way for riders to select from multiple designated stops). I believe you had previously mentioned the front door as well as the employee entrance as two desired pickup/dropoff locations. Of those two, which would you prefer to have as the designated stop for Lighthouse for the Blind?

Also, I appreciate that the wait times for WAV trips and non-WAV trips are not equal, however, on average, we are seeing WAV trips have a wait time of 13 minutes and non-WAV trips see a wait time of 8 minutes. There isn't a definition for what equivalent level of service is, but we're continuing to monitor this discrepancy.

Lastly, as a pilot project, we are capturing your feedback and are planning to conduct a focus group with people with disabilities to ensure that as we evaluate the pilot and determine next steps, we know how the service is and is not working for different populations and where there are opportunities for improvements in the future.

Thanks,

Casey

Appendix D: Operator Feedback

Comment tags:

- App
- Avis
- Communication
- Compensation
- Contractor fees
- Customer benefit
- Customer experience
- Driver experience
- Employee status
- Fare payment
- Fleet size
- Pick up/drop off
- Professional development
- Resources
- Safety
- Schedule
- Service improvement
- Technology
- Training

Comments were labeled with up to three tags.

Via to Transit driver feedback, Nov. 2019

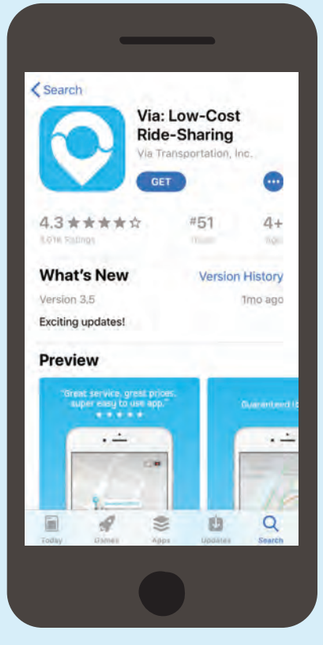
Comment	Tag 1	Tag 2	Tag 3
GPS is OK but sometimes there are mistakes esp. during construction	App	Technology	
App delays can affect when I clock in.	App	Compensation	Technology
Sometimes it doesn't clock in for 30 min	App	Compensation	Technology
Optimize van pick ups - currently get assigned pick ups in Tukwila if I'm in Mt. Baker, so the customer has to wait a long time. They should assign closer vans.	App	Customer experience	
Customers canceling and rescheduling	App		
The app is slow and uses a lot of power	App	Technology	
Avis - how they clean the cars	Avis	Driver experience	
Avis - the gas charge	Avis	Contractor fees	
Avis should treat us like customers if we are renting the vans.	Avis	Driver experience	
Car maintenance affects when I can clock in even though I show up on time	Avis	Schedule	
There needs to be better communication [with applicants] after people apply to drive	Communication	Driver experience	
At the end of the day, I would like to know what my take home pay is after the rental and gas etc.	Compensation		
Income verification - it says my income is greater than it actually is because I have to spend money to rent the van and pay for gas and other business expenses and fees	Compensation	Contractor fees	
We should be paid during trainings	Compensation	Driver training	
Takes too long to get to terminal from Avis, start getting paid 30+ min after paying for rental car.	Contractor fees	Schedule	
There's no health coverage.	Contractor fees	Employee status	
We need built in time (at least 15 min) to get back to the terminal because we have to use our own insurance to get back	Contractor fees	Schedule	
We need a separate phone or interface for the app so we don't use our own phone data	Contractor fees	Technology	App
Good for elderly and young students	Customer benefit		
It's faster and flexible	Customer benefit		
They expect door-to-door service	Customer expectations	Communication	

Customers don't have to walk or take the bus anymore [to get to LInk]	Customer experience		
Waiting period can be too long	Customer experience	App	
Flexible schedule, short hours	Driver experience		
Via as a company is good at handling problems like shifts, customers, etc.	Driver experience		
Where can we use the bathroom? Can we have access to bus driver comfort stations?	Driver experience	Employee status	
We need breaks for bathroom breaks	Driver experience		
Community building with other drivers	Driver experience		
How to work with customers who are blind or have other disabilities	Driver training	Customer experience	
Customer service classes and trainings	Driver training		
Deescalation trainings - people experiencing homelessness, mental illness. We have safety concerns.	Driver training	Safety	
Evaluate what we already know, and what trainings we have had. So you know what our skills are	Driver training		
We sign up as independent contractors, but we are not really independent.	Employee status		
We should be Metro employees	Employee status		
We don't get the same benefits as an employee, but we are still representing Metro and providing customer service	Employee status		
Confusion with fare payment - the receipt they get is confusing	Fare payment	Communication	Customer experience
If they pay for multiple people on the link, how do you pay for multiple people (kids or other fare types) on Via?	Fare payment	Communication	Customer experience
We have to pick up the rider regardless of whether they have fare/ORCA	Fare payment		
We need more drivers and more vans	Fleet size		
More vans to meet demand	Fleet size	Service improvement	
More vans to decrease wait time	Fleet size	Customer experience	
There are a total of 18 vans but 3-4 could be under repair at a time	Fleet size	Avis	
More backup vans and drivers in case vans need repair	Fleet size	Avis	

What professional development do we need to be eligible to be a Metro operator?	Professional development	Employee status	
I want this conversation to continue [regarding PD for drivers]	Professional development		
Tax classes	Resources		
Income verification help	Resources		
How to apply for low income housing	Resources		
Pick up spots and drop off spots can be unsafe	Safety	Customer experience	Driver experience
More service hours in Tukwila - there are apartments being built, so there will be more customers	Service improvement		
RFTP not working 90% of the time	Technology	Fare payment	
Tap machine near the car door, so they tap it as they enter	Technology	Fare payment	Service improvement
"I hope this continues!"			
Metro should provide the cars			

Appendix E: App Instructions in Amharic

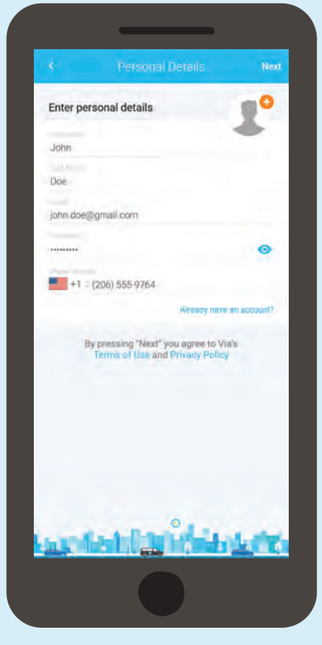
ጸረጃ 1 • STEP 1



በApp Store ወይም በ Google Play ውስጥ የሚገኛውን Via app **ይጫኑ።።**

Install the free Via app in the Apple App Store or in Google Play

ጸረጃ 2 • STEP 2



መለያዎን ለመፍጠር **ይመዝገቡ።።** መለያዎን ከፈጠሩ በኋላ በመለያዎ ውስጥ ማንኛውንም የተሽከርካሪ ማቅረቢያ ፍላጎቶች መጨመር ይችላሉ።።

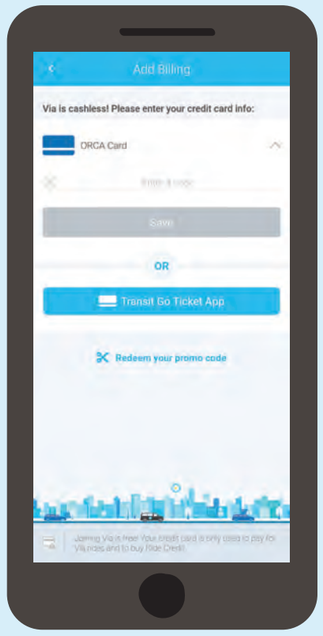
Sign up to create an account. After you create an account you can add any wheelchair accessibility needs in your Account settings.

ጸረጃ 3 • STEP 3

የመለያዎን ማረጋገጫ መለያ ለማግኘት **የቴክስት መልእክቶቻን** ይዩ እና አፑ ዉስጥ ያስገቡ።።

Check your text messages for the account verification code and enter it in the app.

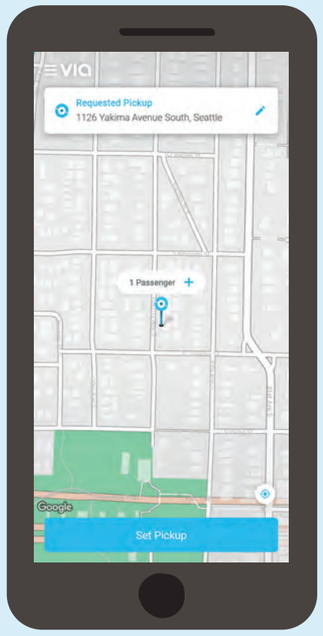
ጸረጃ 4 • STEP 4



የክፍያዎን ዘዴ ይምረጡ እና የተጠየቀውን መረጃ ያስገቡ።።

Select your payment method and enter requested information.

ጸረጃ 5 • STEP 5



ካአገልግሎት አካባቢ Link Light Rail ጣቢያ መነሻዎን ወይም መጽረሻዎን ይምረጡ።።

የመነሻ አድራሻዎን ለማረም የእርሳስ ምልክት ጫን ያድርጉ።።

ከርስዎ ጋር ሌላ ተጓዥ ሰው ለመጨመር ከ'Passenger' ምልክት ቀጥሎ ያለውን የመደመር ⊕ ምልክት ይጫኑ።።

የመነሻ አድራሻዎን ለማረጋገጥ 'Set Pick Up' ን ይጫኑ።።

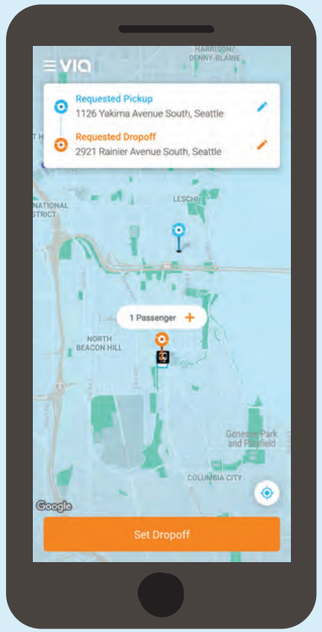
Select a ride to or from your service area's Link Light Rail station.

Tap the pencil icon to edit your pick up address.

Tap the plus sign ⊕ next to Passenger to add another person along with you.

Tap to confirm your pick up location.

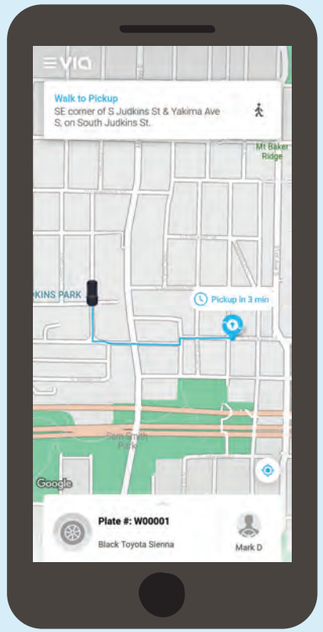
ጸረጃ 6 • STEP 6



አቦክዎን ጉዞዎን ያረጋግጡ።
የሚወርዱበትን ቦታ ለማረጋገጥ
ን ጫን ያድርጉ። ከዚያም
የተሰጣውን ጉዞ ለመቀበል 'Book this ride' ጫን ያድርጉ።

Confirm your ride. Tap to confirm your drop off location. Then tap "Book this ride" to accept the proposed ride.

ጸረጃ 7 • STEP 7



መውሰጃ ይሬመዱ፣ ከአምስት ደቂቃ በማይርቅ መንገድ፣ **Via to Transit** መኪናዎ 'ETA' ስር ባለዉ ሰዓት እንድወስድዎ ተዘጋጁ።

Walk to your assigned nearby pick-up location, no more than 5 minutes away, Be ready for your **Via to Transit** vehicle to pick you up by the time it says under 'ETA.'

ማሉታወኛ • NOTE

በሚከተሉት ሁኔታዎቅ የስህተት መልእክት ሊያገኙ ይቅላሉ፤

- ከስራ ሰኣት ውጭ መሳፈሪያው ሲጠየቅ
- የተወሰነ ጣቢያ የአገልግሎት አካባቢ በሌለበት አንድ ቦታ መጠየቅ፣
- ከጣቢያዎቹ በአንድ አረተኛ ማይል ርቀት ውስጥ መስፈሪያ መጠየቅ።

You may receive an error message if you:

- Request a ride outside of the hours of operation,
- Select a destination not within the specific station's service area, or
- Request a ride within a quarter mile of the stations.

Via to Transit የአንድ አመት የመከራ ፕሮጀክት ነው ።።

Via to Transit is a one year pilot project

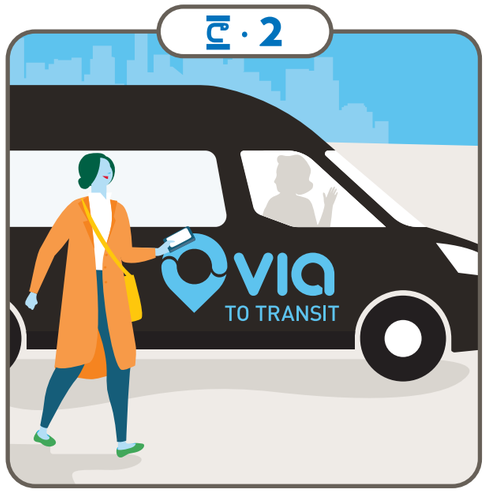
VIA TO TRANSIT

Get the app, book a ride

አፑን ያግኙ፣ ለመሳፈር በቅጽማያ ቦታ ይያዙ

በሚከተለው በተጨማሪ ይወቁ
kingcounty.gov/metro/via-to-transit
ወይም **206-258-7739** ይደውሉ 'Amharic' በሉ።።

Learn more at
kingcounty.gov/metro/via-to-transit
or call **206-258-7739**



In partnership with
ካ
City of Seattle
ጋር

Interpreter - 206-258-7739
Intérpretes Turjubaan Переводчик
Перекладач 통역사 የቃል አስተርጓሚ
翻譯員 Thông Dịch Viên ઇંટરપરેટર

Appendix F: East African Community Services MOU

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES

King County METRO

Memorandum of Understanding

between

East African Community Services

and

King County Metro Transit

I. Background

This Memorandum of Understanding is a voluntary agreement between community partner organization East African Community Services (EACS) and the agency partner King County Metro Transit as a part of their involvement in *Via to Transit* community engagement. The purpose of this research partnership is to market the Via to Transit mobility service to historically un(der)served King County residents, specifically those served by EACS. The purpose of this partnership is also to gather community feedback about the use of *Via to Transit* as well as market the program and provide education related to the use of ORCA cards for fare payment.

II. Purpose

King County Metro Transit wishes to enhance its understanding of barriers East African residents of King County face related to their use of Metro Transit services in order to improve public transportation options in the region through this partnership with East African Community Services.

East African Community services wishes to convene listening sessions and Via-Transit training (as community members 'drop-in') in order to achieve community awareness of this new transportation option available through this partnership.

The outcome of the research will be to evaluate the accessibility and legibility of Metro Transit's new innovative mobility service *Via to Transit* for immigrants and refugees, people with limited English proficiency, youth, and other populations EACS serves.

The project should not interfere with EACS's ability to carry out its day-to-day work.

III. Funding & Deliverables

King County Metro Transit will compensate East African Community Services in installments of $3,000, not to exceed a total of $9,000. Installments will be provided after work is completed and based on invoiced costs and staff time. EACS will conduct engagement/education/marketing activities, document qualitative and quantitative data, and develop a report of their findings.

East African Community Services will develop outreach and engagement activities to accomplish the above goals, and King County Metro Transit will provide necessary support of this work.

An example of an engagement activity EACS will develop and facilitate in order to achieve this partnership's goals is holding listening sessions with community members.

An example of a *Via to Transit* marketing activity might be including plugs to the service in newsletters and/or EACS-hosted community events.

The findings report will include the summaries and notes from each engagement/education/marketing activity, a summary of data collected (both qualitative and quantitative), and a recommendation to King County Metro Transit for how to continue to operate Via to Transit with regards to serving historically un(der)served populations in south King County. As an appendix to the report will be the invoices for associated costs including but not limited to staff hours and rate, listening session venue rental, participant incentives, printing costs, etc.

IV. Duration

July – January 2019: EACS designs and conducts Via to Transit engagement, education, and marketing activities

January 2019: EACS creates a report of activities, findings, and recommendation based on those findings.

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized leaders from King County Metro Transit and East African Community Services. This MOU shall become effective upon signature of authorized leaders from King County Metro Transit and East African Community Services, and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent. This MOU shall end on January 31, 2020.

V. Contact Information

King County Metro Transit
Casey Gifford, Innovative Mobility Project Manager
cgifford@kingcounty.gov, 206-263-0118
Shelby Cramer, Community Relations Planner
scramer@kingcounty.gov, 206-263-1109

East African Community Services
Munira Mohammed, Executive Director
munira@eastafricancs.org, 206-721-1119
Amir Soulkin, Communications and Development Manager
noir@eastafricancs.org, 206-721-1119

_____ Date: 12/17/19
Daniel Rowe, Research & Innovation Supervisor
King County Metro Transit

_____ Date: 1/29/2020
East African Community Services

Appendix G: East African Community Services report

EAST AFRICAN
COMMUNITY SERVICES
7050 32nd Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118-3598

February 4, 2020

TO: King County Metro

RE: Final Report Via to Transit Partnership with East African Community Services

East African Community Services is happy to report our findings from the Via Transit partnership with King County Metro. This report is comprised of four sections: Marketing, Planning and Design; Exposure Campaign; Community Experience and Feedback; and EACS Post-Project Recommendations.

Marketing, Planning and Design

Between July and August 2020, EACS' core staff and university volunteers met with a few community Elders from our Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), Wadajir Parent Support Group and Citizenship Classes ("The Core") to discuss the Via Transit project, to understand issues that may block the success of the initiative and its overall value for lower income, East African immigrant and refugee families. Almost immediately, we were grateful that the project materials where translated into languages our people speak. EACS successfully convened 5, 1-hour listening sessions, with well over 120 New Holly and Rainier Valley residents in attendance. The sessions covered three important topics:

1. What is the Via Transit on-demand service and why is it important?
2. Using the Via Transit Mobile App
3. Safety and Security using Via Transit

The Core then worked to identify six advantages that we could use to market Via to Transit to our people. They are as follows:

1. Via to Transit is affordable (less than the cost of Uber/Lyft – and even cheaper for youth and seniors)
2. Via to Transit is On-Demand
3. Via Transit is Culturally Competent (multilanguage serving customer service!)
4. Via to Transit transports our community to stations in South Seattle and Tukwila
5. Via to Transit makes getting to family members in South Seattle easier with less walking to distant light rail stations.
6. Via to Transit is SAFE

We worked together to strategize 5 community listening sessions to engage East Africans with the Via Transit transportation option; working to help our community to see the extraordinary value (and convenience) of this innovative new service. As is customary in our community, we structured the Via to Transit listening sessions to coincide with our Parent Leadership Training Institute and Wadajir Parent Support Group meetings and our Family Night events. Our nearly two decade history lets us know that creating an informal, fun and community-oriented space, where our families feel comfortable speaking in their native tongues with other East Africans, creates the ground conditions from which they are more receptive to critical information disseminated for the betterment and improvement of our community.

Exposure Campaign

EACS has considerable expertise in Social Media, Web and Email Marketing. We heavily utilized the power of our website, Facebook and Instagram pages, and targeted email marketing (to over 4,000 subscribers), highlighting the "6 Advantages" of the Via to Transit Program.

Community Experience and Feedback

As is customary for EACS, we conducted a pre-project survey for all Via to Transit listening session participants. The pre-surveys the following questions:

1. What do you know of Via to Transit?
2. How far do you have to walk to your nearest light rail station?
3. Do you feel safe walking to your light rail station?
4. How comfortable are you using mobile phones and mobile apps?
5. How reliable and convenient is transportation from South Seattle to Tukwila, Washington?
6. What is your opinion of Ride Hail services like Lyft/Uber? Are they affordable?
7. If a transportation service would pick you up from home and transport you to the nearest light rail, would you use it?

The feedback was incredibly honest. Most participants had never heard of Via to Transit. Additionally, nearly all the participants where lower income refugee and immigrants with limited to average English skills. Many participants live in distances enough from the light rail that walking (especially for the Elders) was difficult.

Having grown up with technology, our youth are extremely comfortable with mobile technologies. EACS has worked hard to make sure our Elders understands how to use (and has become more comfortable with) technology. Nearly all our women participants expressed reluctance to travel as the sun begins to set. Many of our elders use Lyft/Uber regularly, though the costs are very high (for their limited incomes). The idea of a transportation that picks community members up near home, for the same price as the light rail was a very exciting idea for nearly every participant.

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES

7050 32nd Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118-3598

In January 2020, EACS engaged 20 participants who self-identified as regular users of the Via to Transit services. A summary of their feedback is listed below.

- 20 of 20 like the transfer to Metro feature.
- 17 of 20 participants were surprised that King County Metro created a program that seemed to design to help refugee and immigrant people of color.
- 10 of 20 participants said that calling the Via to Transit service (for non-English speakers or users with very little grasp of American English) was too long; wait times seemed to vary greatly. This was not desirable.
- 9 of 20 participants said the drivers could be a little more friendly.
- 20 of 20 participants indicated that they appreciated the significantly less cost of Via to Transit than Lyft/Uber.
- 20 of 20 participants wanted the service to be completely free.
- 4 of 20 participants had difficulty with the Mobile App

Overall, our community assessment of Via to Transit is positive. One significant take-away from our hands-on post-project surveys (of 20 participants) is that all 20 of them articulated a shock that King County Metro would engage minorities. Whether this is true or not is not relevant. However, it might suggest a perception that King County Metro doesn't often engage minority communities.

EACS Post-Project Recommendations

1. **Increase customer service training** for Via to Transit drivers, prioritizing kindness and customer engagement (knowing when and when not to engage in "small talk").
2. **Modern, Technology-enabled Brazen Marketing throughout Seattle and South King County and Greater Visibility:** If the County intends to make Via to Transit more permanent, EACS recommends interactive, 0multi-language kiosks at the light rail stations and other high-traffic areas throughout the service map. These computerized maps could have diverse (and multi-lingual) Via to Transit riders talking about the merits of the program, in their native tongues.

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Appendix H: Customer comments

Via C3 Comments

Between 04/16/2019 – 02/19/2020

Service Requests / Complaints Summary

There is a general appreciation of the existence of service and the value it provides in connecting people to transit, and respondents would like it to expand to more areas. However, there is improvement needed in communication and logistics around payment process. Additionally, low reliability of bookings and long wait-times indicate a need to address technology flaws as well as demand outpacing supply. There are also concerns about ensuring safe driving practices, including ensuring both basic safety training for drivers as well as pushing for best practices for where to pick-up riders and where to park when waiting for rides.

Expansion

- Requests to expand existing service area zones, especially in Tukwila
- Requests to add new service areas in other parts of the County

Complaints

- Concerns about overcharging and confusion over payment process
    - Disconnect between drivers, riders, and Via/Metro messaging and technology about transfers and paying discounted fares
        - References to receipts showing overpayment
        - Confusion over card reader not working, and over messages from drivers about not needing to tap but not wanting to get double charged for transfer
- Booking unreliability
    - Dissatisfaction with long wait times, reassignment or cancellation of ride, and insufficient vehicles to meet demand
    - Inconsistency in ability to book ride because of perceived changes—or rigidity-- in zone boundaries
        - Potential geofencing glitches that don't allow pick-ups that were previously allowed
- Dissatisfaction with pick-up locations—too far
- Unsafe Via driving practices
    - Generally aggressive or unsafe driving, idling and blocking road during pick-ups
    - Parking in business parking areas

Extend Via Pilot Comments Summary

Benefits

- The major benefits of Via are:
    - Lower commute times, convenience of the service, less reliance on personal vehicles and the stress of parking
    - Increase in access to all the areas that light rail serves, especially given limited transit and other services in S Seattle
- Specific benefits of Via to certain populations are:
    - Improved safety for women and kids/students (especially during the evening), more convenient connections for older adults and people with mobility impairments or disabilities
- Via provides a vital connection to light rail that addresses:
    - Poor local transit service (especially during off-peak hours), inclement weather, an infeasible walking distance, unsafe transit or walking conditions (especially at night)

Service Requests / Complaints Comments Tracking

Service Request

- Information and Marketing
    - More clarity on compatibility of different ORCA passes with Via (5)
    - More marketing to communities within zones
    - More information on usage of call center (3)
    - More information on open positions with Via (3)
- Miscellaneous
    - Wants to know where pick-up will be before hailing ride
    - Wants to know about capacity to transport bulky items/luggage
    - Wants to know how Via drivers are screened and what qualifications they must have (2)
- Expansion Requests
    - Expand to additional parts of:
        - Seatac, Tukwila (8), Mt Baker (3), Columbia City, Rainier Beach (3)
    - Add service areas in North Seattle, Beacon Hill, UW Station (3), Renton, Capitol Hill Link Station, Central District
- Routes and Schedules
    - Allow for travel overlap between zones
    - Allow for rides closer to stations for mobility impaired people to take short trips

Complaints

- Fares
    - Concerns about overcharging, poor integration between card reader and Via app booking
        - Confusion or errors related to transfer fares and tapping (18), card reader not working (7)
        - Errors related to specific types of fares:
            - Reduced fare cards (4), senior cards (4), child fare (2), paying for multiple pax (2)
- Via Application
    - App functioning issues
        - Unable to successfully book (5)
        - Can't change address once booked (2)
        - Zone appears incorrect / out of zone alerts (5)
    - Reliability of booking
        - Poor reliability of ride pickup / cancelations (9) (esp. as usage has increased)
        - Reassignment of ride (7)
        - Dissatisfied with wait-time (9)
        - Not enough vans (9)
    - Dissatisfied with pickup location (3)
        - Given steepness (2)
        - Pick up location very far (2)
    - Via customer service challenges (4), better coordination needed between Via and Metro
- Driver
    - Unsafe driving practices
        - Generally aggressive or unsafe driving (10)
        - Driver speeding (4)

        - Idling and blocking areas (5)
        - Parking in business parking areas (4)
        - Not using headlights (2)
    - Music too loud
    - Not familiar with area, gets lost (2)
    - Perceived slow response time to ride request (2)

Commendation

- Appreciates existence of service (7)
    - Extend pilot (4)
- Wants drivers to be paid more

Please Keep Via Comment Tracking

Expansion

- Wants Via to expand (5) generally, plus specifically:
    - To increase safety of traveling at night
    - To other stations with infrequent bus service (2), with poor sidewalks

Do not renew

- Recommend partnering with Uber/Lyft instead to lower cost to taxpayers, use more fuel efficient vehicles, subsidize Uber/Lyft rides
- Drivers do unsafe driving practices
- Funnel transportation funds to more pressing projects (2)

Improve

- Tech issues with app and booking
- Training
    - Cultural and communication training for drivers to communicate with people with disabilities
- Driver pay
    - Provide benefits
- Willing to pay more to keep it (2)

Commend

- Friendly and professional drivers (6)
- Provides job opportunities for drivers (2)

Benefit

- Personal
    - Increased efficiency / lower commute times (26)
    - Convenience /reliability of service (21)
- Cheaper cost
    - Than other ride share service (9)
    - Than driving (5), than buying a car
- Increased access
    - Increased access to community assets (17)
    - Increase viability of public transit usage – access to Link (15)
- Alternative to walking

    - Best option to avoid cold / inclement weather (11)
    - Poor sidewalks (2) or safety features/street lights,
    - Walking distance infeasible (21), incline (2), easier when carrying things (3)
    - Safer than walking or riding bus (17), particularly safety at night (14)
- Alternative to poor local transit service
    - Unreliable and infrequent (20), poor transit coverage (8), overcrowded buses
    - Poor service during off peak hours (8)
    - S Seattle benefit: Underserved by local transit and other services (7)
- Environmental / behavior change
    - Helps people with no car (3)
    - Less reliance on personal vehicle (12), creates less traffic (4)
    - Lower environmental impact (3),
    - Limited parking around station (9)

Population-Specific Benefits

- Easier for older folks to get to light rail and around the city (6)
- Safer for women (7) and kids/students (11)
- Helps people with disabilities have a cheaper and better alternative to uber or other options (2)
    - Helps people with mobility challenges (5)

Appendix I: Alta Listening Session Report

Listening Sessions

Two listening sessions were conducted at the Rainier Vista Boys & Girls Club to gather qualitative data on the participant's awareness of and experience with Via to Transit and preferences for other modes of transportation. The first listening session was for youth (ages 13-18) and the second was for adults. Table 3 summarizes the logistics of the listening sessions and Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6 summarize the qualitative feedback that was gathered from each session. A photograph of participants and the interactive displays used can be seen in Figure 6.

Table 3. Listening Session Logistics

Metric	Engagement Session	
	Listening Session #1	**Listening Session #2**
Date	November 19, 2019	December 10, 2019
Time	3:30 – 5 pm	6:30 – 8 pm
Audience	Youth ages 13 - 18	Adults
Attendees (#)	15	15
Provisions	Food from Wing Stop for each participant $25 Safeway gift certificates to each youth participant	Food from Wing Stop for each participant + child of participants; $25 Safeway gift certificates to each adult participant and the two childcare providers

Figure 6. Youth Session participants write what they like and dislike about each mode

Qualitative Feedback

The tables, charts, and narratives below present compiled feedback from the conversations and activities with the listening session participants. Many of the youth who participated lived in South Seattle, whereas many of the adults came from jurisdictions further south such as Burien, SeaTac, and Puyallup. The team did not collect data on where participants lived, but learned only through conversations.

Mode Use

Favorite Modes

Listening session participants shared their favorite way to get around their neighborhoods and wrote out one or two words to describe why it was their favorite mode. Some individuals, especially in the adult group, selected multiple favorite options. In both the youth and adult sessions, using a personal vehicle was the favorite due to the ease and speed with which they could get to where they needed to go; however, carpooling in a personal vehicle was preferred over driving alone for many adult participants to save on gas money, get places quicker, and enjoy each other's company. Several adults worked at the Boys & Girls Club and carpooled together to work. The two individuals, one youth and one adult, noted that biking was their favorite mode because they didn't have to sit in traffic or were able to navigate around traffic while riding a bike. One youth noted the bus was their favorite because it was "interesting," noting that watching other people on the bus and being with others on the bus made for an entertaining experience.

Table 4. What is your favorite way to get around your neighborhood or the city and why?

Session	Walk	Bike	Skateboard	Bus	Link	Personal Car	Carpool*	Uber/Lyft
Youth		No traffic		Interesting	Fast (3)	Easy (4) Safe Dependable Convenient Better Fast (3)		Constant service Music Easy Fast
Adult	Close (3) Easy Free	Traffic-free		Near house	No parking fees (2) Use Link to go to events	Quick (5) Peace & quiet (2) Being alone	HOV (7) Quick (2) Company (3)	
Total # Participants	**5**	**2**	**0**	**2**	**6**	**19**	**12**	**4**

* Carpooling = sharing a ride with more than one person of driving age in car.

Self-Reported Mode Share

Listening session participants shared how they typically get around and where they go in the morning, afternoon, and evenings on weekdays and weekends. Table 5 reflects weekday modes and destinations, while Table 6 provides the weekend modes and destinations. "Other" in the table references that an individual marked the mode, but did not provide a destination. A discussion of the results follows.

Weekday Trips

Youth participants were asked to think about how they got around the day prior to the listening session, a Tuesday, a regular school day and where they went using each mode. Similarly, adults were asked to think about how they get around on a typical weekday and where they go.

Table 5. Weekday Mode Share and Destinations

School or Work Day		Walk	Bike	Skateboard	Bus	Link	Personal Car	Carpool*	Via to Transit	Uber/Lyft
Morning	**Youth**	Friend's house *Other*			School (5) Starbucks B&G Club	Friend's house	School (7) Store (2)			Home
	Adults	Store Bus Light rail Work			Light rail Work (2) B&G Club	Work (2)	Work (8) Kid's school (7)	Work (2)		
Afternoon	**Youth**	Store			Transit Center Restaurant Home *Other*		Work Program School Home			School
	Adults					B&G Club	School (2) Store Bank	Work (2)		
Evening	**Youth**	Friend's house Home			Home (2) *Other*	B&G Club	Home (4) Restaurant			Restaurant
	Adults						Home (5) Store School/Childcare (5)	Home (6)		

* Carpooling = sharing a ride with more than one person of driving age in car. Count as "driving alone" if driving with kids only. This option was available for the adult session only.

Weekend Trips

To understand how individuals get around on days they are not going to school or working, participants responded to the question, "Think about this past weekend, either Saturday or Sunday, but try to think about what you did on just one of those days. How did you get around and where did you go?"

Table 6. Weekend Mode Share and Destinations

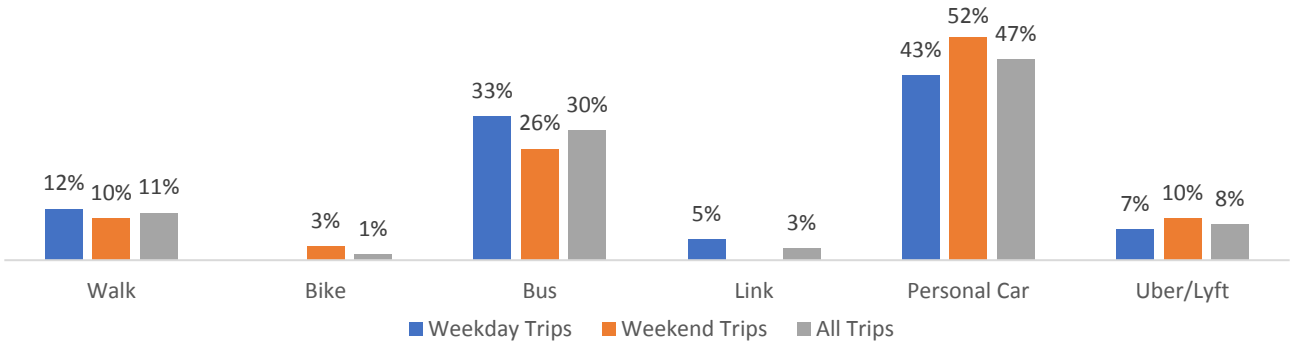
Weekend		Walk	Bike	Skateboard	Bus	Link	Personal Car	Carpool*	Via to Transit	Uber/Lyft
Morning	**Youth**	*Other*			Store Home Friend's House China town		Store (2) Friend's house School			Home
	Adults						Mt. Rainier HS Errands Relative's house (2) Gave relative a ride	Store Work Home (2)		Work
Afternoon	**Youth**	Friend's house	Store		Party Downtown *Other*		Friend's house Work Do stuff Home Store Pick people up			Restaurant
	Adults						Errands (3) Home (2)	Relative's house Home Store (2)		
Evening	**Youth**	Home			*Other*		Do stuff Party Home (3) Soccer practice			Friend's house
	Adults							Store (2) Home (4)		Home

* Carpooling = sharing a ride with more than one person of driving age in car. Count as "driving alone" if driving with kids only. This option was available for the adult session only.

Discussion

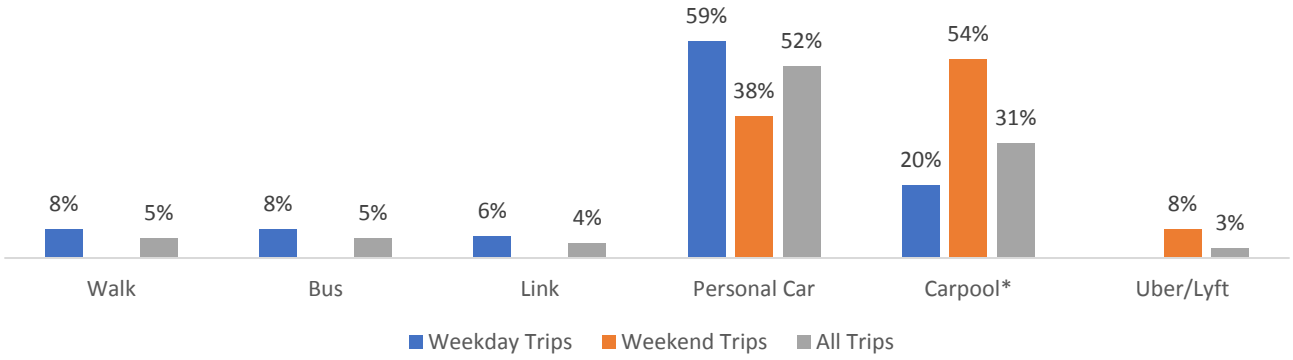
Overall, driving in a personal vehicle made up 53% of all weekday trips and 46% of all weekend trips for youth and adult modes combined (N = 90 and 56 trips, respectively). The second most used mode depended on the time of week. For weekdays, using the bus accounted for 20% of all trips, compared to 14% of weekend trips between youth and adult trips combined. For weekends, the second most used mode was carpooling, accounting for 25% of reported trips, compared to 11% on the weekdays. Neither adults nor youth reported using skateboards or Via to Transit for any trips. While only adults did not use bikes, the youth did not report any carpool trips.

Figure 7. Youth Mode Share by Weekday, Weekend, and All Trips



Specific to youth, the most common ways that the youth reported getting around was by personal car (riding with their guardians if not yet driving, 47%) and bus (30% of all youth trips), followed by walking (11%) as seen in Figure 7. They reported often travelling between home, school, friend's houses, and the Boys & Girls Club. The adult group was similar in that many reported getting around by personal vehicle (52% of all adult trips), but this was followed by carpooling (31%), rather than the bus (5%) and Link (4%) as seen in Figure 8. Some adults also reported walking (5% of all trips). Adults are often travelling between work and home, but many have additional trips to drop off or pick up kids and run errands.

Figure 8. Adult Mode Share by Weekend, Weekday, and All Trips



No participants reported using Via to Transit when thinking about and reporting on their modes. However, a handful of individuals reported using ride-hailing services, such as Lyft and Uber, to get to and from school or work or social gatherings. Of the eight-total ride-hailing trips reported, 6 were from youth and 2 from adults, and 5 of the 8 were associated with weekend trips. One adult reported taking the bus to connect to the Link light rail and one youth noted using a bus to connect to their transit center. More information about perceptions of ride-hailing services is provided in "First Last Mile Services."

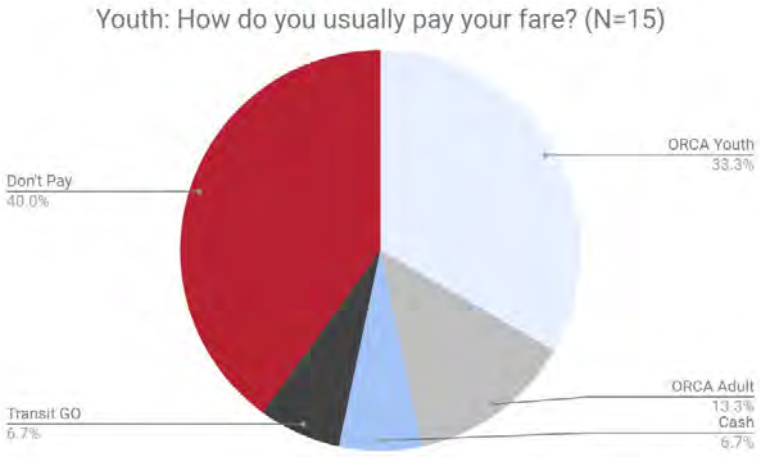
Getting to Transit

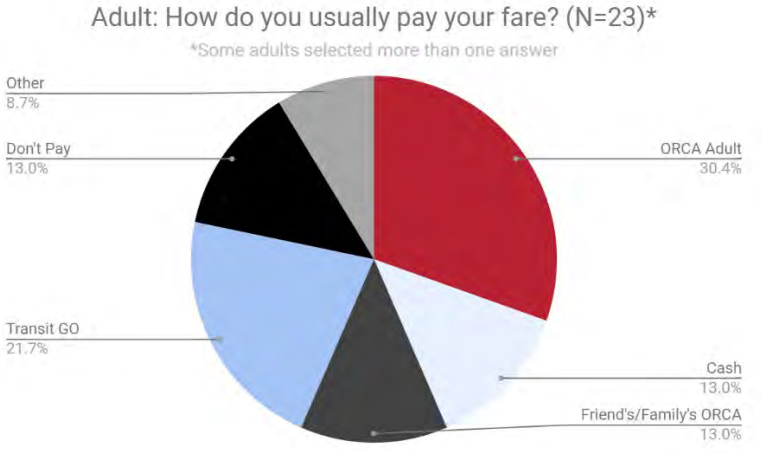
In the adult listening session, five participants who noted using transit (bus or Link light rail) responded to a follow-up questions about how do they usually get to transit. To get to the bus, all five mentioned walking, whereas to get to the Link light rail, 4 walk and 1 connects using a bus on weekdays, but on weekends, one noted parking at the Boys & Girls club to access the Link. Many participants who use the bus and/or Link noted they don't walk more than a block or two, that a bus stop is just across the street or down their street.

One participant works at an elementary school in SE Seattle and noted that they use the bus from a bus stop across from the school to take their students on field trips. Another individual who recently switched from driving to Kaiser on Capitol Hill to taking the Link light rail enthusiastically stated that she and her son now walk about 10 - 15 minutes to the Light rail station. It takes her approximately the same time or less (45 minutes) to walk to the Link light rail, take the Link downtown, and transfer, taking a bus up to the hospital as it did to drive, but now she saves money on parking and gas. She thought she received a Via to Transit brochure from a human resources or commute options staff at her organization upon orienting to the new position.

Fare Payment

To better understand barriers and access to fare systems, in general and related to Via to Transit, we asked participants how they pay, or do not pay, for their fare and what would make getting an ORCA card easier for them. For both groups, approximately 43% of participants use some form of ORCA card to pay, as seen in Figure 9 and Figure 10. Many more youth (40%) than adults (13%) do not pay fare at all, primarily because it was too expensive. One youth said they didn't pay because it was difficult to keep track of their ORCA card. See the charts below for details on fare payment behavior for both groups.





Getting an ORCA card

The majority of adult and youth participants that reported using ORCA cards get them from work or school. The adults offered a wider variety of ways in which they get their ORCA cards including at the store, at a transit station, and online.

Reloading an ORCA card

Youth with ORCA cards reload/fill their card by getting it renewed through their school or workplace. Two adults reported that their workplace provides a card. The majority (4) of adults reported that they reload their card at Columbia City station. Other responses included online, at the store, and using their phone.

ORCA card Barriers & Improvements

Participants were asked what could make it easier to get an ORCA card and/or reload an ORCA card. Youth participants discussed barriers and improvements that could be made to make this process easier. The main barriers to using and reloading their ORCA cards included the financial burden of paying for a card and loading fare, not knowing the right place to get a card, and losing the card. To make paying one's transit fare more accessible, and increase the use of ORCA cards, youth participants suggested a number of ideas, including that all schools give ORCA cards, it be made part of their ID card, it be available as an app, and/or to let youth ride for free. Adult participants stated that getting an ORCA card would be easier if they could get cards at Link light rail and other key transit stations, through their social service providers, at banks, gas stations, libraries/community centers, more grocery stores, or if they had more information about where to get cards. They also emphasized getting their children youth ORCA cards would help with transportation needs to and from summer jobs, extracurriculars, and freedom overall, especially on the weekends. Adults who care for or work with children suggested that schools provide youth ORCA cards to their students.

First Last Mile Services

Familiarity with Via to Transit

Before being recruited for the listening sessions, 12 youth (80%) and 11 adult (73%) participants had heard of Via to Transit. While no adults had used Via to Transit prior to the listening session, 4 youth (27%) had tried the service. Adults had learned about Via to Transit from seeing the vans driving around, through work, and word of mouth, such as family and others.

<u>Via to Transit Group</u>

Participants were split up based on if they had used Via to Transit or had not used Via to Transit and asked a variety of questions. Four youth reported having use the service. Participants were asked what their experience was like throughout the process of using Via to Transit from booking their ride to getting dropped off.

Of the 4 youth who had used Via to Transit, all stated that they normally use Apple Maps when they go outside of their neighborhood and have to figure out how to get back. Every participant who has used Via to Transit learned about it through friends. They decided to take it for a variety of reasons including that the bus was taking too long, they could use their ORCA card, it was the only option, and it was a better option than driving. They used it to get to school, a friend's house, soccer practice, and home. Participants like that it's reliable, fast, easy, and accepts ORCA. One participant stated that they disliked that the app didn't show the train to another destination. Several youth mentioned wanting to use the service as a broader ride-hailing service, compared to a first-last mile solution. For example, youth shared wanting to use Via to Transit to (1) go anywhere within the service area without one end of their trip being a Link light rail station, and (2) travel between the station-designated service areas. Table 7 summarizes their responses.

Table 7. Via to Transit Customer Experiences

Booking	Pick up	Riding in the van	Drop off
App	Similar to Uber/Lyft (quicker)	Awkward	No problems
Not expected	Booked	Fine	
Not like Uber	Didn't expect meeting	Weird conversation	
Confusing (only closest station)	Driver not in right place (2)		
Easy	Call to find driver		

Non-Via to Transit Group

Of the participants who had not yet used Via to Transit, 8 youth and 11 adults had heard about the service. The non-Via to Transit group (youth and adults) reported seeking help from family, Google Maps, King County Metro Trip Planner, One Bus Away, the bus driver, friends, Waze, and approachable looking people when travelling outside of their neighborhood to figure out how to get to their destinations and back.

To gain a better understanding of why participants choose the modes they do, they were asked "What do you like about what you take and why? What do you dislike?" Table 8 summarizes the participants' feedback on each mode. While participants noted the bus as an entertaining and social way to get around, commonly noted dislikes about taking transit included perceived smells and unsanitary conditions on buses and the Link.

Participants were asked a follow-up question about what would make the bus more comfortable. Responses included more comfortable seats, increased cleanliness, more security, friendlier drivers, lower fares, access to WIFI, and for drivers to be more courteous to the elderly.

Table 8. Non-Via to Transit Customers Likes & Dislikes of Various Modes

		Walk	Bike	Skateboard	Bus	Link	Personal Car	Carpool	Uber/Lyft/Car Rentals
Like	Youth	Fresh air Exercise Can see the world	Fun No traffic Exercise Cooling	Fun Recreation not transportation	Entertaining/Funny Society/community Fun experience Social Cheap Easy	Fast Free	Easy access Fast Safe Perfect	Fun Safe Interesting Easy	Constant service Music Easy Fast Can race
	Adult	Exercise (3)	Exercise (2)		No parking (2)	Fast (3) No parking	Alone time (4) Comfort Independence	HOV (4) Company (2) Passenger	When I am out of town (2) Safe driving (drinking)
Dislike	Youth	Unsafe Tiring Unaware of surroundings	Unsafe Falling Not lots of room to ride Too much stuff to carry	Unsafe Falling	Slow (2) Smell/unsanitary Weird Run into opposition/enemies	Unsafe Smell Weird	Pay for gas Traffic Insurance/License	Awkward No room	Racism from drivers Costly Safety concerns
	Adult	Bad knees Long distances (2)		Can't ride Falling	Smell Crazy/weird/rude people	Crowded (2) Delays	Traffic (6) Bad drivers (2)	HOV lane can be slow too	Sketchy drivers Dirty cars

APPENDIX

D

Marketing Report

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Via to Transit SE Seattle/TIBS First-Last Mile Program: Marketing Approach Summary – Phase 1

The following marketing and communication summary is unique to the Via to Transit first-last mile SE Seattle/TIBS pilot, with Via service and using the Via app or call center. Marketing and communication in this context includes all information about the service intended for audiences both internal within Metro and external to customers.

Program Approach

Project Goals

- Improve regional mobility by increasing ridership for King County Metro and Sound Transit.
- Provide a reliable, high quality customer experience.
- Ensure access for diverse populations, including those with limited English proficiency, the disadvantaged and underserved populations.
- Ensure comparable level of service for customers requiring an ADA-compliant Accessible Vehicle.

Target Audiences

1. Existing transit customers who:
    - are already using the transit hub, but are frustrated with existing access options
    - want to travel at a different time than they do currently, but parking availability, local fixed route schedules, or other barriers prohibit them
    - have a disability and use paratransit for feeder service to reach fixed-route transportation
2. New transit customers who:
    - had challenges accessing transit prior to the service, including because they have a disability, walking or biking is unsafe or uncomfortable, or local transit doesn't serve their needs
    - are currently driving their own car for an entire trip, but the services make taking transit more viable
    - want to try something new/are new to the area

Key messaging

- Your on-demand connection to Link light rail and nearby Metro buses.
- Quickly get to your bus or Link light rail, with pick-ups/drop offs in your neighborhood.
- Conveniently request trips when you need them using the Via app or by calling 206-258-7739.
- An easy way for you to try transit. No parking stress or car required.

Program Schedule

- April 16, 2019 – Program launch
- April – May 21, 2019 – Launch marketing efforts, Phase 1

King County METRO

Moving forward together

Digital Engagement

Facebook Advertising

Marketing Metrics

- **Facebook Ad engagement:** # individuals in geotargeted area reached/language

Facebook Ad budget and projected reach

Table 1: Facebook Ad Projected Reach

Language	English	Spanish	Vietnamese	Chinese	Filipino (Tagalog)
Budget	$1,000	$500	$500	$500	$500
Estimated maximum reach	99,000	6,800	4,900	1,400	2,000

Marketing Approach

- **Geotargeted Facebook ads**, running for 5 weeks in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Filipino (see Appendix A for details).

Performance Results

The performance metrics for the facebook Ad are summarized in Table 2. Key findings include:

- The ads performed above the industry standard unique click through rate of 1%.
- Across all five ads, the English ad had the greatest reach and lowest cost per click, followed by the Spanish ad and Vietnamese ad.

Table 2: Facebook Ad Metrics

Ad language	Schedule	Actual Budget	Unique Click Through Rate[1]	Clicks	Cost per Click	Reach	Impressions
Via to Transit Launch Ad							
English	April 16, 2019 through May 21, 2019	$1,050	2.26%	1,060	$0.99	41,774	188,525
Spanish		$550	2.43%	374	$1.47	13,319	80,062
Vietnamese		$550	5.44%	399	$1.38	6,144	75,972
Chinese		$550	6.14%	193	$2.85	2,523	35,961
Tagalog (Filipino)		$550	5.88%	252	$2.18	3,604	56,546
Average		**--**	**4.43%**	**456**	**$1.77**	**13,473**	**87,413**
Total – All Languages		**$3,250**	**--**	**2,278**	**--**	**67,364**	**437,066**

[1] ***Unique Click Through Rate:** the number of people who clicked anywhere in your ad, divided by the number of people you reached. Ex: if you received 10 unique clicks and your ad was shown to 1,000 unique people, your **unique click-through rate** would be 1%.*

King County METRO

Moving forward together

Digital Communications

Marketing Approach

- **Organic social media posts**, posted to English and Spanish County pages (see Appendix D for images)
- **Ethnic Media Ads** (digital, with some running print ads)
    - **Spanish:** El Noroeste de la Raza, El Siete Dias, El Mundo
    - **Asian (Chinese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese):** International Examiner, Seattle Chinese Times, NW Asian Weekly, Vietnamese Today Weekly News
    - **African American (Amharic and Somali):** Seattle Medium, Ethio Youth Media, Salaxley TV, Runta
- **Informational Metro webpages** available in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Tagalog
- **Targeted Emails** to CBO and Employer partners

Performance Results

The informational Metro webpages served as in-language landing pages for the ethnic media ads, facebook ads, and organic social media posts, providing a seamless experience for customers in a variety of languages.

In-Person Engagement

Print Materials

Marketing Approach

- **Brochures**: promotional and informational piece distributed across the service areas, available in Spanish, Vietnamese, Amharic, Chinese, Tagalog, and Somali
- **Publicity materials**: launch poster marketing and service information pieces to promote the program, steps, and service areas
- **Community posters**: provided in English with Spanish and Vietnamese key messaging, distributed among community hubs, CBOs, and employers within the service area and across the region
- **Infographic Flyer**: an infographic piece for individuals with Limited English Proficiency showing the series of images to convey the idea of the service and providing step-by-step instructions of how to use the app, provided in Spanish, Vietnamese, Amharic, Chinese, and Somali, with dual-English text
- **Station advertising**:
    - Via pick up and drop off station wayfinding signage to help customers identify where to find their Via van
    - Mount Baker full station advertising buy out providing promotional and user messaging in English and Spanish (See Appendix C for images)
- **Billboard**: mounted billboard along a heavily SOV traveled highway in Tukwila promoting the service
- **Promotional Flyer**: print piece promoting the first ride free for individuals wanting to pay for Via to Transit with a credit card or debit card

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In-Person Materials Distribution

Marketing Metrics

- **Brochure Distribution:** goal of 4,800 (32 sessions-morning, mid-morning, afternoon, goal of approx. 150 brochures handed out per session)

Marketing Approach

- **Station engagement**
  - Launch street teaming (See Appendix B for details)
- **Community based organizations engagement**: Engaging with 19 CBOs and service agencies in SE Seattle, and 18 in Tukwila

Performance Results

Metrics associated with station engagement and CBO engagement are provided in table 3 and 4, respectively. Key findings include:

- The quantity of brochures distributed exceeded the goal established at the start of the project.
- Individuals engaged provided extremely positive feedback on the concept of Via, especially when learning one can use their ORCA card and can transfer seamlessly between Via, Link light rail, and buses.
- Appendix B includes additional quantitative details related to station engagement. Qualitative feedback and observations are available in the final Via Street Teaming Outreach Summary provided by Alta.

Table 3: Station Engagement - Brochures Distributed by Language

Station	Language							
	All Stations				*TIBS only*	*SE Seattle only*		
	English	Spanish	Vietnamese	Amharic	Somali	Tagalog	Chinese	Total
Mount Baker	1,161	2	2	1	0	0	1	**1,167**
Columbia City	1,155	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1,156**
Othello	957	4	14	1	0	4	5	**985**
Rainier Beach	1,268	4	2	0	0	1	3	**1,278**
TIBS	1,770	17	5	0	3	0	0	**1,795**
Total	**6,311**	**28**	**23**	**2**	**3**	**5**	**9**	**6,381**

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Table 4: CBO Engagement - Materials Distributed by Language

CBO Materials Distribution through July 2019			
	SE Seattle	**TIBS**	**Totals**
Poster	26	65	91
Brochure - English	1,240	1,330	2,570
Brochure - Spanish	220	350	570
Brochure - Vietnamese	180	325	505
Brochure - Amharic	280	370	650
Brochure - Chinese	165	*n/a for launch*	165
Brochure - Somali	*n/a for launch*	385	385
Brochure - Tagalog	190	*n/a for launch*	190

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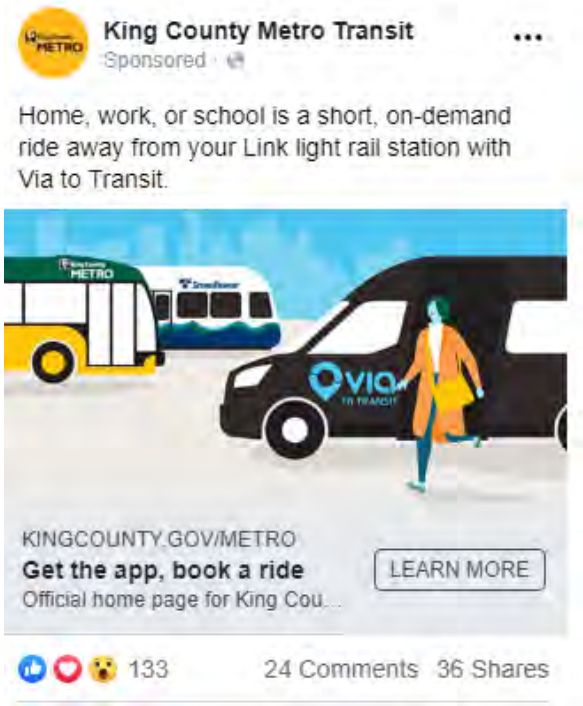
Appendix A: Facebook Ad Examples



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Appendix B: Via to Transit – Street Teaming Outreach Summary

Materials Distribution

Total Brochures* distributed per Station per Shift

		Week 1			Week 2			
Station	**Shift**	**16 Apr**	**17 Apr**	**18 Apr**	**23 Apr**	**24 Apr**	**25 Apr**	**Total / Shift**
Mount Baker	AM	262	275	--	--	178	--	**715**
	Mid-morning	149	--	--	--	162	--	**311**
	PM	--	--	141	--	--	--	**141**
Columbia City	AM	360	142	--	--	--	124	**626**
	Mid-morning	63		--	--	116	--	**179**
	PM	--	--	87	264	--	--	**351**
Othello	AM	279	118	--	--	128	--	**525**
	Mid-morning	178	--	--	--	100	--	**278**
	PM	--	--	182	--	--	--	**182**
Rainier Beach	AM	305	--	--	--	304	150	**759**
	Mid-morning	146	--	--	--	170	--	**316**
	PM	--	--	--	203	--	--	**203**
TIBS	AM	--	506	--	--	208	278	**992**
	Mid-morning	--	--	--	--	--	--	**0**
	PM	--	--	505	298	--	--	**803**
Total / Day		**1,742**	**1041**	**915**	**765**	**1,366**	**552**	**6,381**

**Total brochures include English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Amharic for all stations. Somali was available at Tukwila International Blvd Station (TIBS) and Tagalog and Chinese were available for SE Seattle stations.*

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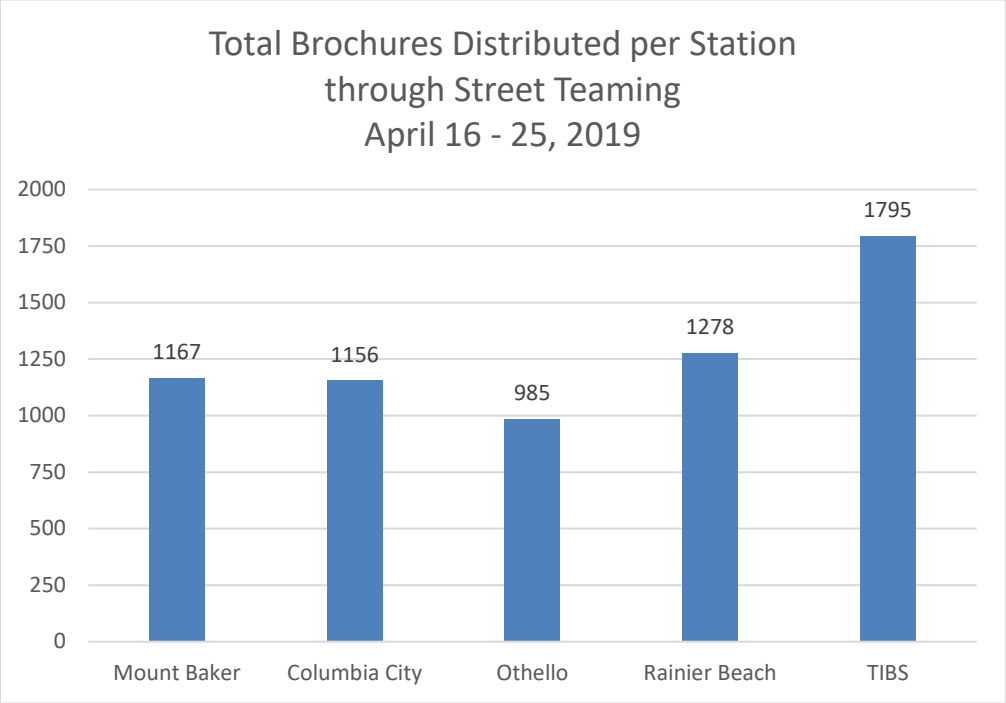

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Appendix C – Mount Baker Station Advertisements

Outdoor Ad Placement

Inside Ad Placement

ORCA Card Placement

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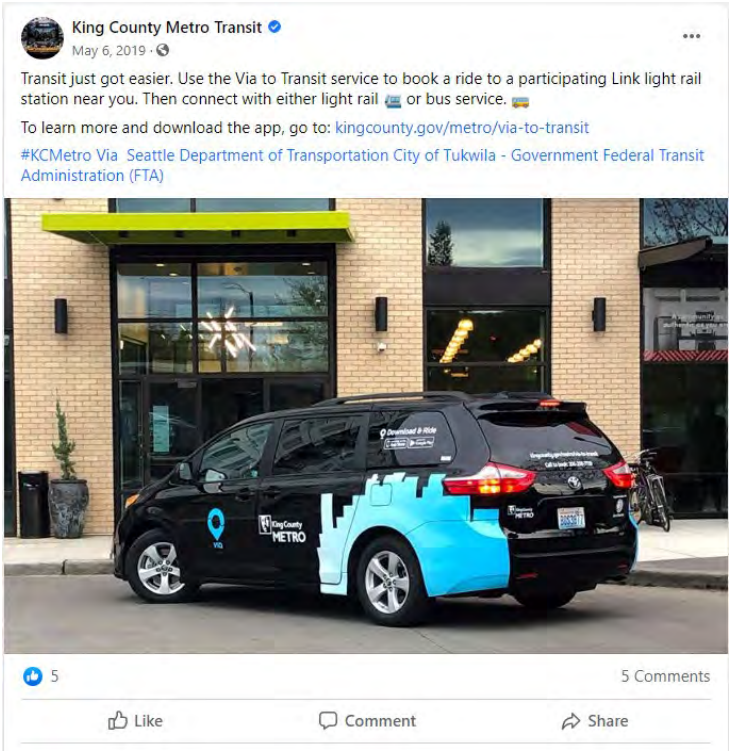
Appendix D – Organic Social Media



MEMORANDUM

The Joseph Vance Building
1402 Third Avenue, Suite 206
Seattle, WA 98101
(206) 735-7466

To: Ashley Wilson, King County Metro

From: Anna Gore & Cailin Henley, Alta Planning + Design

Date: January 27, 2020

Re: Via to Transit: Phase 2 Evaluation

Phase 2 Engagement & Marketing Efforts

This Memo provides a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Via to Transit's Phase 2 marketing, outreach, and engagement efforts in Fall of 2019. Phase 2 efforts focused on promoting the service primarily to potential off-peak customers and individuals with Limited English Proficiency through in-person community engagement. Additional efforts included refreshing digital materials and providing updated print brochures.

Contents

Phase 2 Highlights

- Facebook Ads were used to promote Via to Transit service during off-peak times within the Southeast Seattle and Tukwila service areas. The ads performed above the industry average click-through rate* and had a total reach† of over 26,000 across five languages.
- Nearly 2,500 print materials were distributed to 18 Community Based Organizations in the Via to Transit service area. Materials included Via to Transit brochures in seven languages, information about ORCA LIFT, and step-by-step flyers for audiences with limited English proficiency (LEP) or accessibility needs.
- Two listening sessions were held at the Rainier Vista Boys & Girls Club, with 15 youth and 15 adult participants, providing information about how they get around, what barriers they face for using transit, and what opportunities there are for improvement to transit and Via to Transit.
- Via to Transit was featured to Tukwila residents throughout the Tukwila In Motion program, including step-by-step orientations during events with Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA), the Somali Health Board, and Senior Housing Assistance Group (SHAG) Tukwila Village.

Audiences & Applicable Messages

The priority audiences for Phase 2 included:

- Non-peak users, ideally current non-transit users
    - Sub Audiences:
        - Afternoon and evening shift employees (UWMC, Kline Galland)
        - Conditionally eligible Access users
        - Seniors
        - Ball game and other regional event attendees
    - Messages:
        - **Promo:** Get your first ride free when you use the code KCMFREE if you want to pay for Via to Transit with a credit or debit card.
        - Get to your event easier and faster by using Via to Transit, connecting you on-demand to the bus and Link light rail at your local Link station.
            - Sub-message**:** ADA accessible vans are available.
            - Sub-message: Avoid the hassle and stress of parking at the event location.

- Community members with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
    - Messages:
        - **Promo:** Get your first ride free when you use the code KCMFREE if you want to pay for Via to Transit with a credit or debit card.
        - Via to Transit is a new service that can get you to and from your local Light rail station.

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* *Unique Click-through rate (CTR) is the ratio of unique users who click on a specific link to the number of total unique users who view the advertisement. Industry average Unique CTR is 1%*

† *Reach is the total number of people for who the advertisement is displayed*

- Sub-message: Use these LEP in-language flyers to learn how to book a ride and use the service, step-by-step.
- Sub-message: Find out more information online in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog.

Efforts

Phase 2 efforts included:

- Print materials
  - Updated brochures (all languages, both service areas)
  - New SE Seattle Somali brochure
  - New English-only, large print LEP Flyer (step-by-step) tailored for seniors and those with ADA accessible needs
- Digital Communications
  - Facebook advertising in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog during non-peak times employing an A/B test on two different ads (one featuring a person in a wheelchair and the other featuring a person walking)
- In-person engagement
  - Community hub materials drop offs
  - Boys & Girls Club listening sessions (youth and adult)
  - Coordinated Tukwila In Motion efforts: transportation workshops highlighting the In Motion program and step-by-step how to use Via to Transit
    - ReWA English Language Learner students
    - Somali Health Board quarterly meeting
    - SHAG Tukwila Village residents

Digital Communications

Facebook Advertising

The Facebook advertising effort prioritized reaching individuals during non-commute peak times and individuals who may have Limited English Proficiency. To do so, the ads ran in multiple languages during non-commute day-time hours on weekdays (10 am – 3 pm) and spanning the full weekend, from 9am – 9 pm to appeal to individuals who may use Via to Transit for getting to/from events. The ads were geotargeted to align as close as possible to the five Via to Transit service areas around each Link light rail station.

Two ads per language were run as an A/B Test from November 1 to November 27, 2019 to compare the performance metrics of two different images. One ad featured a male presenting figure in a wheelchair and the other featured the same figure walking towards the Via to Transit van. Both images also featured a female presenting figure with a head scarf stepping out of the van. Figure 4 includes an image of each ad in each language, as posted on Facebook. The two different ads reached different people without overlap, as standard in an A/B test.

Facebook Ad Metrics & Proofs

The performance metrics of all Facebook ads are summarized in Table 1. Key findings include:

- All ads performed above the industry standard unique click through rate of 1%.
- Across all five ads, the ad featuring the wheelchair had greater reach and impressions, as seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2. It also had a greater Unique Click Through Rate for the English, Spanish, and Chinese ads, but not the ads in Vietnamese or Tagalog, as seen in Figure 3.
- When assessing the cost per result (clicks), the A/B tests resulted in a winning image for the ads run in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Tagalog, but no winner for the English or Chinese ads. The wheelchair images for the Spanish and Tagalog ad won, whereas the walking image won among Vietnamese viewers. There was no A/B test winner for the English or Chinese ads given how similarly the ads performed.

Table 1. Phase 2 Via to Transit Facebook Ads

Ad	Schedule	A/B Test		Budget	Unique Click Through Rate[‡]	Clicks	Cost per Click	Reach	Impressions
English	November 1 – November 27, 2019	Wheelchair		$100	1.20%	78	$1.11	6,524	16,034
		Walking		$100	1.11%	70	$1.22	6,326	15,569
Spanish		Wheelchair[§]		$100	1.85%	77	$1.30	3,726	14,317
		Walking		$100	1.63%	65	$1.54	3,562	13,708
Vietnamese		Wheelchair		$100	2.22%	50	$1.69	2,257	13,677
		Walking[**]		$100	3.36%	73	$1.15	2,175	12,874
Chinese		Wheelchair		$100	4.25%	34	$2.63	800	6,312
		Walking		$100	3.78%	30	$3.13	793	6,071
Tagalog		Wheelchair[††]		$100	2.22%	37	$2.22	45	9,363
		Walking		$100	2.96%	31	$2.94	34	8,998
Average				--	2.46%	55	$1.89	2,624	11,692
Total – All Languages				$1,000	--	508	--	26,197	107,560

[‡] Industry standard is 1% Unique CTR

[§] Winning image from the A/B Test based on cost per result

[**] Winning image from the A/B Test based on cost per result

[††] Winning image from the A/B Test based on cost per result

Figure 2. Facebook Ad Impressions by Language

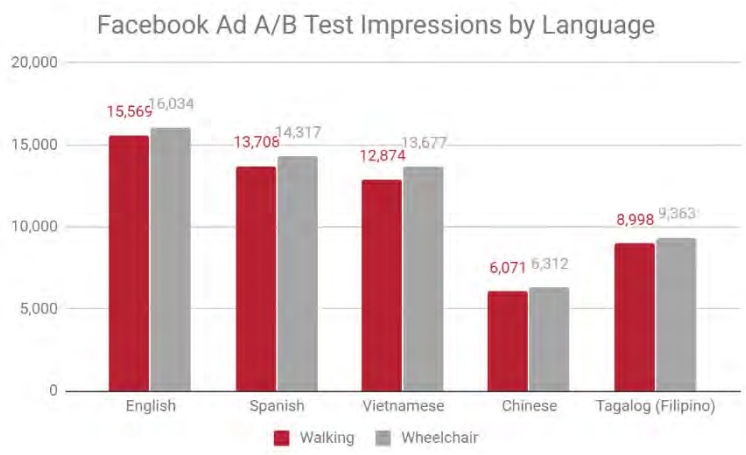


Figure 1. Facebook Ad Reach by Language

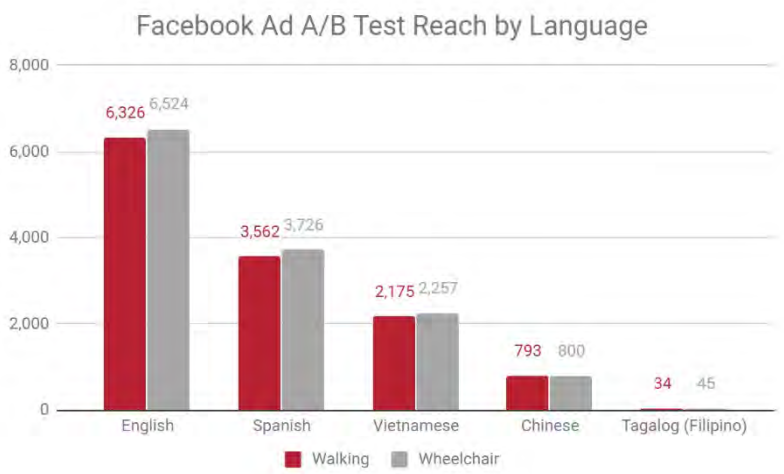


Figure 3. Facebook Ad Engagement (UCTR) by Language

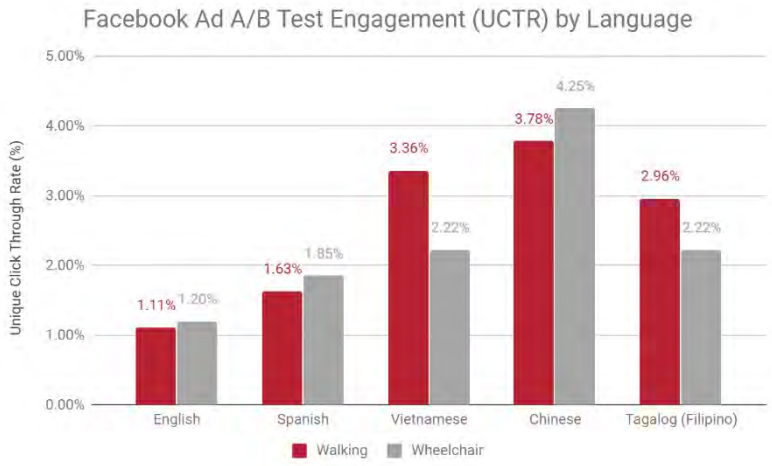


Figure 4. Phase 2 Via to Transit Ad Proofs - by Language and Graphic

English - Walking

English - Wheelchair

Spanish - Walking

Spanish - Wheelchair

Promo Code Usage

The Facebook Ad encouraged viewers to try out Via to Transit by offering a free ride, which viewers could access using the promo code (KCMFREE). The promo code was also promoted to participants of the listening sessions, through the recruitment fliers and during the session itself. Between the first day of the Facebook ads running (November 1, 2019) and January 21, 2020, Via reports 26 person trips have redeemed a free ride using the code. At the time of the listening sessions, none of the participants had used the code. Therefore, individuals who have tried out Via to Transit using the promo code have most likely learned about the opportunity through Facebook or through word of mouth, originating from seeing the Facebook ad. While it is unclear if Via's marketing team promoted the code through other channels, individuals may have learned through possible Via Marketing street teaming and app or online promotion.

In-Person Engagement

Community Hub Materials Distribution

The team prioritized distribution of Via to Transit materials in Phase 2 to reach new audiences and provide language-specific material to organizations that requested them. This included:

- Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and agencies that the team did not visit in Phase 1 efforts
- CBOs within the SE Seattle service area who requested brochures in Somali in Phase 1, yet did not received them as this material was unavailable in Phase 1
- Audiences associated with the Tukwila In Motion program (see "Coordinated Tukwila In Motion Efforts" for more detail).

A complete list of materials distributed is provided in Table 2, below, and Figure 5 illustrates how the materials were displayed within two community based organizations. A map of the Phase 2 priority locations for materials distribution is available in Appendix A. The collaborative full tracking spreadsheet from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 materials distribution efforts is available in Appendix B.

Table 2. Phase 2 Materials Distribution

Material	SE Seattle	TIBS	Totals by Material
Poster	18	1	19
Brochure - English	585	25	610
Brochure - Spanish	235	25	260
Brochure - Vietnamese	185	15	200
Brochure - Amharic	310	15	325
Brochure - Chinese	200	n/a	200
Brochure - Somali	435	25	460
Brochure – Tagalog	275	n/a	275
ORCA LIFT	24	n/a	24
LEP Flyers	22	35	57
Totals by Service Area	2,289	141*	

* The King County In Motion team distributed the following materials throughout the 12-week Tukwila In Motion program: 186 brochures were distributed in custom transportation packets, while dozens more brochures and step-by-step flyers were provided to attendees at events and during Door to Door outreach conversations. See Coordinated Tukwila In Motion Efforts for more detail.

Figure 5. ReWA and Tukwila Library displaying Via to Transit posters and brochures

Listening Sessions

Two listening sessions were conducted at the Rainier Vista Boys & Girls Club to gather qualitative data on the participant's awareness of and experience with Via to Transit and preferences for other modes of transportation. The first listening session was for youth (ages 13-18) and the second was for adults. Table 3 summarizes the logistics of the listening sessions and Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6 summarize the qualitative feedback that was gathered from each session. A photograph of participants and the interactive displays used can be seen in Figure 6.

Table 3. Listening Session Logistics

Metric	Engagement Session	
	Listening Session #1	**Listening Session #2**
Date	November 19, 2019	December 10, 2019
Time	3:30 – 5 pm	6:30 – 8 pm
Audience	Youth ages 13 - 18	Adults
Attendees (#)	15	15
Provisions	Food from Wing Stop for each participant $25 Safeway gift certificates to each youth participant	Food from Wing Stop for each participant + child of participants; $25 Safeway gift certificates to each adult participant and the two childcare providers

Figure 6. Youth Session participants write what they like and dislike about each mode

Qualitative Feedback

The tables, charts, and narratives below present compiled feedback from the conversations and activities with the listening session participants. Many of the youth who participated lived in South Seattle, whereas many of the adults came from jurisdictions further south such as Burien, SeaTac, and Puyallup. The team did not collect data on where participants lived, but learned only through conversations.

Mode Use

Favorite Modes

Listening session participants shared their favorite way to get around their neighborhoods and wrote out one or two words to describe why it was their favorite mode. Some individuals, especially in the adult group, selected multiple favorite options. In both the youth and adult sessions, using a personal vehicle was the favorite due to the ease and speed with which they could get to where they needed to go; however, carpooling in a personal vehicle was preferred over driving alone for many adult participants to save on gas money, get places quicker, and enjoy each other's company. Several adults worked at the Boys & Girls Club and carpooled together to work. The two individuals, one youth and one adult, noted that biking was their favorite mode because they didn't have to sit in traffic or were able to navigate around traffic while riding a bike. One youth noted the bus was their favorite because it was "interesting," noting that watching other people on the bus and being with others on the bus made for an entertaining experience.

Table 4. What is your favorite way to get around your neighborhood or the city and why?

Session	Walk	Bike	Skateboard	Bus	Link	Personal Car	Carpool*	Uber/Lyft
Youth		No traffic		Interesting	Fast (3)	Easy (4) Safe Dependable Convenient Better Fast (3)		Constant service Music Easy Fast
Adult	Close (3) Easy Free	Traffic-free		Near house	No parking fees (2) Use Link to go to events	Quick (5) Peace & quiet (2) Being alone	HOV (7) Quick (2) Company (3)	
Total # Participants	**5**	**2**	**0**	**2**	**6**	**19**	**12**	**4**

* Carpooling = sharing a ride with more than one person of driving age in car.

Self-Reported Mode Share

Listening session participants shared how they typically get around and where they go in the morning, afternoon, and evenings on weekdays and weekends. Table 5 reflects weekday modes and destinations, while Table 6 provides the weekend modes and destinations. "Other" in the table references that an individual marked the mode, but did not provide a destination. A discussion of the results follows.

Weekday Trips

Youth participants were asked to think about how they got around the day prior to the listening session, a Tuesday, a regular school day and where they went using each mode. Similarly, adults were asked to think about how they get around on a typical weekday and where they go.

Table 5. Weekday Mode Share and Destinations

School or Work Day		Walk	Bike	Skateboard	Bus	Link	Personal Car	Carpool*	Via to Transit	Uber/Lyft
Morning	**Youth**	Friend's house *Other*			School (5) Starbucks B&G Club	Friend's house	School (7) Store (2)			Home
	Adults	Store Bus Light rail Work			Light rail Work (2) B&G Club	Work (2)	Work (8) Kid's school (7)	Work (2)		
Afternoon	**Youth**	Store			Transit Center Restaurant Home *Other*		Work Program School Home			School
	Adults					B&G Club	School (2) Store Bank	Work (2)		
Evening	**Youth**	Friend's house Home			Home (2) *Other*	B&G Club	Home (4) Restaurant			Restaurant
	Adults						Home (5) Store School/Childcare (5)	Home (6)		

* Carpooling = sharing a ride with more than one person of driving age in car. Count as "driving alone" if driving with kids only. This option was available for the adult session only.

Weekend Trips

To understand how individuals get around on days they are not going to school or working, participants responded to the question, "Think about this past weekend, either Saturday or Sunday, but try to think about what you did on just one of those days. How did you get around and where did you go?"

Table 6. Weekend Mode Share and Destinations

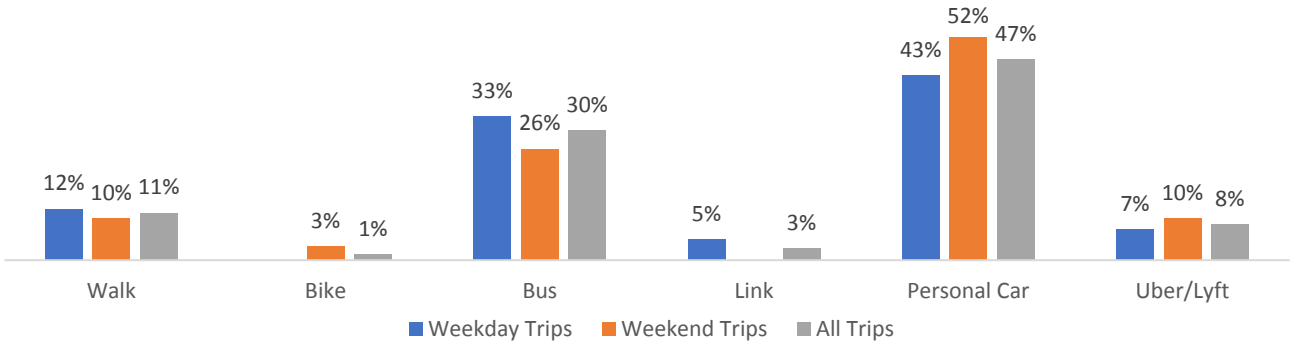
Weekend		Walk	Bike	Skateboard	Bus	Link	Personal Car	Carpool*	Via to Transit	Uber/Lyft
Morning	**Youth**	*Other*			Store Home Friend's House China town		Store (2) Friend's house School			Home
	Adults						Mt. Rainier HS Errands Relative's house (2) Gave relative a ride	Store Work Home (2)		Work
Afternoon	**Youth**	Friend's house	Store		Party Downtown *Other*		Friend's house Work Do stuff Home Store Pick people up			Restaurant
	Adults						Errands (3) Home (2)	Relative's house Home Store (2)		
Evening	**Youth**	Home			*Other*		Do stuff Party Home (3) Soccer practice			Friend's house
	Adults							Store (2) Home (4)		Home

* Carpooling = sharing a ride with more than one person of driving age in car. Count as "driving alone" if driving with kids only. This option was available for the adult session only.

Discussion

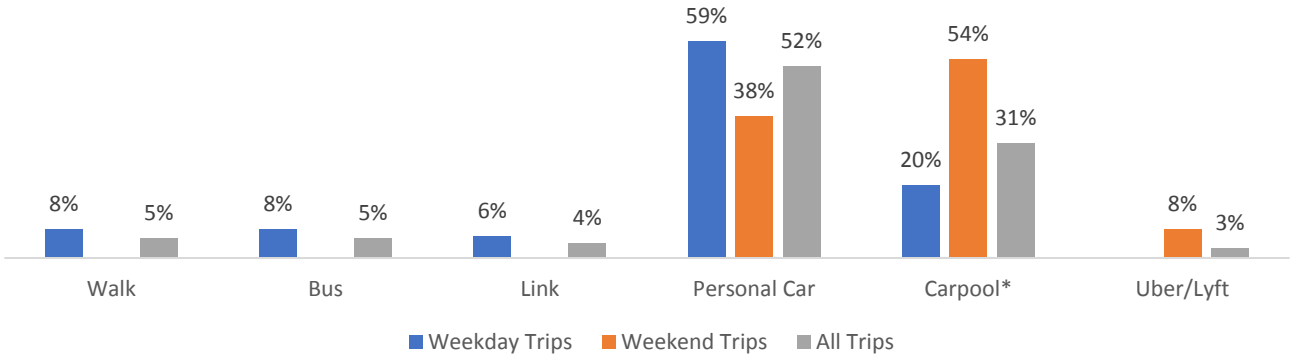
Overall, driving in a personal vehicle made up 53% of all weekday trips and 46% of all weekend trips for youth and adult modes combined (N = 90 and 56 trips, respectively). The second most used mode depended on the time of week. For weekdays, using the bus accounted for 20% of all trips, compared to 14% of weekend trips between youth and adult trips combined. For weekends, the second most used mode was carpooling, accounting for 25% of reported trips, compared to 11% on the weekdays. Neither adults nor youth reported using skateboards or Via to Transit for any trips. While only adults did not use bikes, the youth did not report any carpool trips.

Figure 7. Youth Mode Share by Weekday, Weekend, and All Trips



Specific to youth, the most common ways that the youth reported getting around was by personal car (riding with their guardians if not yet driving, 47%) and bus (30% of all youth trips), followed by walking (11%) as seen in Figure 7. They reported often travelling between home, school, friend's houses, and the Boys & Girls Club. The adult group was similar in that many reported getting around by personal vehicle (52% of all adult trips), but this was followed by carpooling (31%), rather than the bus (5%) and Link (4%) as seen in Figure 8. Some adults also reported walking (5% of all trips). Adults are often travelling between work and home, but many have additional trips to drop off or pick up kids and run errands.

Figure 8. Adult Mode Share by Weekend, Weekday, and All Trips



No participants reported using Via to Transit when thinking about and reporting on their modes. However, a handful of individuals reported using ride-hailing services, such as Lyft and Uber, to get to and from school or work or social gatherings. Of the eight-total ride-hailing trips reported, 6 were from youth and 2 from adults, and 5 of the 8 were associated with weekend trips. One adult reported taking the bus to connect to the Link light rail and one youth noted using a bus to connect to their transit center. More information about perceptions of ride-hailing services is provided in "First Last Mile Services."

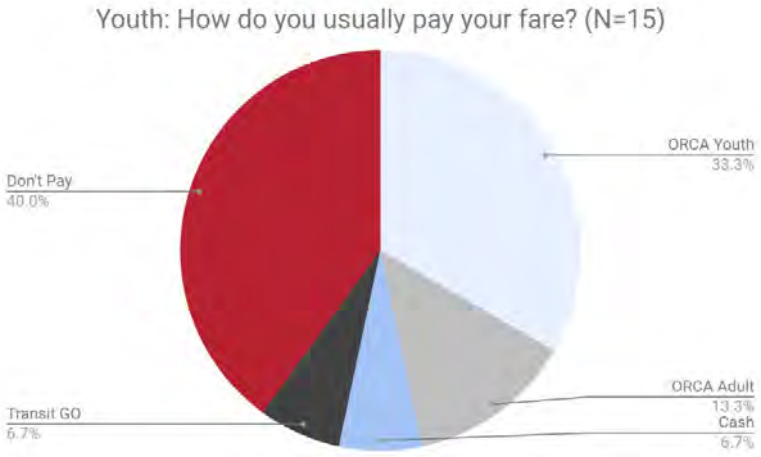
Getting to Transit

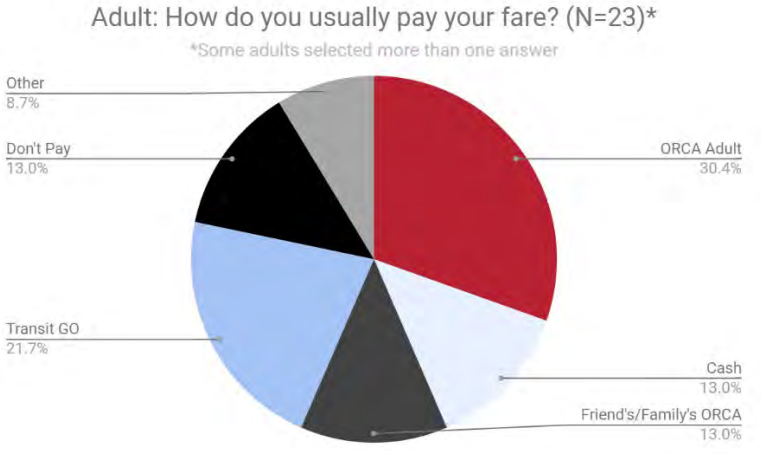
In the adult listening session, five participants who noted using transit (bus or Link light rail) responded to a follow-up questions about how do they usually get to transit. To get to the bus, all five mentioned walking, whereas to get to the Link light rail, 4 walk and 1 connects using a bus on weekdays, but on weekends, one noted parking at the Boys & Girls club to access the Link. Many participants who use the bus and/or Link noted they don't walk more than a block or two, that a bus stop is just across the street or down their street.

One participant works at an elementary school in SE Seattle and noted that they use the bus from a bus stop across from the school to take their students on field trips. Another individual who recently switched from driving to Kaiser on Capitol Hill to taking the Link light rail enthusiastically stated that she and her son now walk about 10 - 15 minutes to the Light rail station. It takes her approximately the same time or less (45 minutes) to walk to the Link light rail, take the Link downtown, and transfer, taking a bus up to the hospital as it did to drive, but now she saves money on parking and gas. She thought she received a Via to Transit brochure from a human resources or commute options staff at her organization upon orienting to the new position.

Fare Payment

To better understand barriers and access to fare systems, in general and related to Via to Transit, we asked participants how they pay, or do not pay, for their fare and what would make getting an ORCA card easier for them. For both groups, approximately 43% of participants use some form of ORCA card to pay, as seen in Figure 9 and Figure 10. Many more youth (40%) than adults (13%) do not pay fare at all, primarily because it was too expensive. One youth said they didn't pay because it was difficult to keep track of their ORCA card. See the charts below for details on fare payment behavior for both groups.





Getting an ORCA card

The majority of adult and youth participants that reported using ORCA cards get them from work or school. The adults offered a wider variety of ways in which they get their ORCA cards including at the store, at a transit station, and online.

Reloading an ORCA card

Youth with ORCA cards reload/fill their card by getting it renewed through their school or workplace. Two adults reported that their workplace provides a card. The majority (4) of adults reported that they reload their card at Columbia City station. Other responses included online, at the store, and using their phone.

ORCA card Barriers & Improvements

Participants were asked what could make it easier to get an ORCA card and/or reload an ORCA card. Youth participants discussed barriers and improvements that could be made to make this process easier. The main barriers to using and reloading their ORCA cards included the financial burden of paying for a card and loading fare, not knowing the right place to get a card, and losing the card. To make paying one's transit fare more accessible, and increase the use of ORCA cards, youth participants suggested a number of ideas, including that all schools give ORCA cards, it be made part of their ID card, it be available as an app, and/or to let youth ride for free. Adult participants stated that getting an ORCA card would be easier if they could get cards at Link light rail and other key transit stations, through their social service providers, at banks, gas stations, libraries/community centers, more grocery stores, or if they had more information about where to get cards. They also emphasized getting their children youth ORCA cards would help with transportation needs to and from summer jobs, extracurriculars, and freedom overall, especially on the weekends. Adults who care for or work with children suggested that schools provide youth ORCA cards to their students.

First Last Mile Services

Familiarity with Via to Transit

Before being recruited for the listening sessions, 12 youth (80%) and 11 adult (73%) participants had heard of Via to Transit. While no adults had used Via to Transit prior to the listening session, 4 youth (27%) had tried the service. Adults had learned about Via to Transit from seeing the vans driving around, through work, and word of mouth, such as family and others.

<u>Via to Transit Group</u>

Participants were split up based on if they had used Via to Transit or had not used Via to Transit and asked a variety of questions. Four youth reported having use the service. Participants were asked what their experience was like throughout the process of using Via to Transit from booking their ride to getting dropped off.

Of the 4 youth who had used Via to Transit, all stated that they normally use Apple Maps when they go outside of their neighborhood and have to figure out how to get back. Every participant who has used Via to Transit learned about it through friends. They decided to take it for a variety of reasons including that the bus was taking too long, they could use their ORCA card, it was the only option, and it was a better option than driving. They used it to get to school, a friend's house, soccer practice, and home. Participants like that it's reliable, fast, easy, and accepts ORCA. One participant stated that they disliked that the app didn't show the train to another destination. Several youth mentioned wanting to use the service as a broader ride-hailing service, compared to a first-last mile solution. For example, youth shared wanting to use Via to Transit to (1) go anywhere within the service area without one end of their trip being a Link light rail station, and (2) travel between the station-designated service areas. Table 7 summarizes their responses.

Table 7. Via to Transit Customer Experiences

Booking	Pick up	Riding in the van	Drop off
App	Similar to Uber/Lyft (quicker)	Awkward	No problems
Not expected	Booked	Fine	
Not like Uber	Didn't expect meeting	Weird conversation	
Confusing (only closest station)	Driver not in right place (2)		
Easy	Call to find driver		

Non-Via to Transit Group

Of the participants who had not yet used Via to Transit, 8 youth and 11 adults had heard about the service. The non-Via to Transit group (youth and adults) reported seeking help from family, Google Maps, King County Metro Trip Planner, One Bus Away, the bus driver, friends, Waze, and approachable looking people when travelling outside of their neighborhood to figure out how to get to their destinations and back.

To gain a better understanding of why participants choose the modes they do, they were asked "What do you like about what you take and why? What do you dislike?" Table 8 summarizes the participants' feedback on each mode. While participants noted the bus as an entertaining and social way to get around, commonly noted dislikes about taking transit included perceived smells and unsanitary conditions on buses and the Link.

Participants were asked a follow-up question about what would make the bus more comfortable. Responses included more comfortable seats, increased cleanliness, more security, friendlier drivers, lower fares, access to WIFI, and for drivers to be more courteous to the elderly.

Table 8. Non-Via to Transit Customers Likes & Dislikes of Various Modes

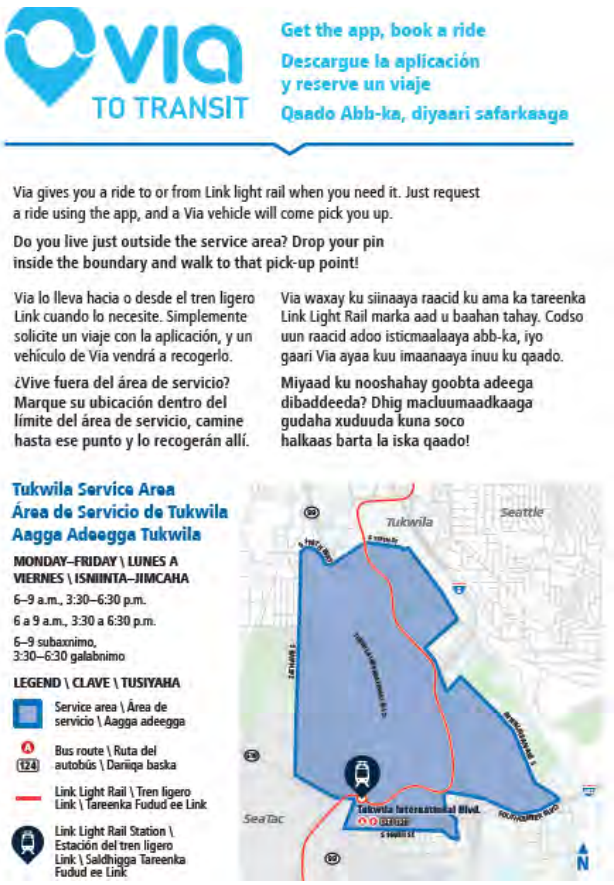
		Walk	Bike	Skateboard	Bus	Link	Personal Car	Carpool	Uber/Lyft/Car Rentals
Like	Youth	Fresh air Exercise Can see the world	Fun No traffic Exercise Cooling	Fun Recreation not transportation	Entertaining/Funny Society/community Fun experience Social Cheap Easy	Fast Free	Easy access Fast Safe Perfect	Fun Safe Interesting Easy	Constant service Music Easy Fast Can race
	Adult	Exercise (3)	Exercise (2)		No parking (2)	Fast (3) No parking	Alone time (4) Comfort Independence	HOV (4) Company (2) Passenger	When I am out of town (2) Safe driving (drinking)
Dislike	Youth	Unsafe Tiring Unaware of surroundings	Unsafe Falling Not lots of room to ride Too much stuff to carry	Unsafe Falling	Slow (2) Smell/unsanitary Weird Run into opposition/enemies	Unsafe Smell Weird	Pay for gas Traffic Insurance/License	Awkward No room	Racism from drivers Costly Safety concerns
	Adult	Bad knees Long distances (2)		Can't ride Falling	Smell Crazy/weird/rude people	Crowded (2) Delays	Traffic (6) Bad drivers (2)	HOV lane can be slow too	Sketchy drivers Dirty cars

Coordinated Tukwila In Motion Efforts

At a Glance

- **6,840 Households received a Tukwila In Motion Custom map** with Via to Transit inset providing information on the Tukwila service, geographic area and accessing the area if living nearby, and hours. This information was provided in English, Spanish, and Somali, as seen in Figure 11.
- **186 Tukwila In Motion participants requested Via to Transit materials in their custom transportation packets** (29.5% of program participants). Participants were provided materials in one of three languages: English, Spanish, and Somali. Tukwila Via to Transit brochures were provided in English to 180 participants. Three participants received materials in Spanish, and three participants received materials in Somali. The Spanish and Somali materials provided included an in-language brochure and an in-language step-by-step flyer.
- **3 Transportation Workshops** highlighted the service, presenting how the service and app works to 90 workshop attendees. Brochures and step-by-step flyers were distributed to attendees as desired.

Figure 11. Via to Transit inset on custom Tukwila In Motion map



Engagement Events

At the following Tukwila In Motion events, the Tukwila In Motion team promoted Via to Transit as a new service to engage individuals to try out taking transit and use their In Motion promotional ORCA Card.

The King County In Motion team distributed additional Via to Transit brochures and LEP step-by-step flyers throughout the 12-week Tukwila In Motion program: 186 brochures were distributed in custom transportation packets, while dozens more brochures and LEP flyers were provided to attendees at the following engagement opportunities:

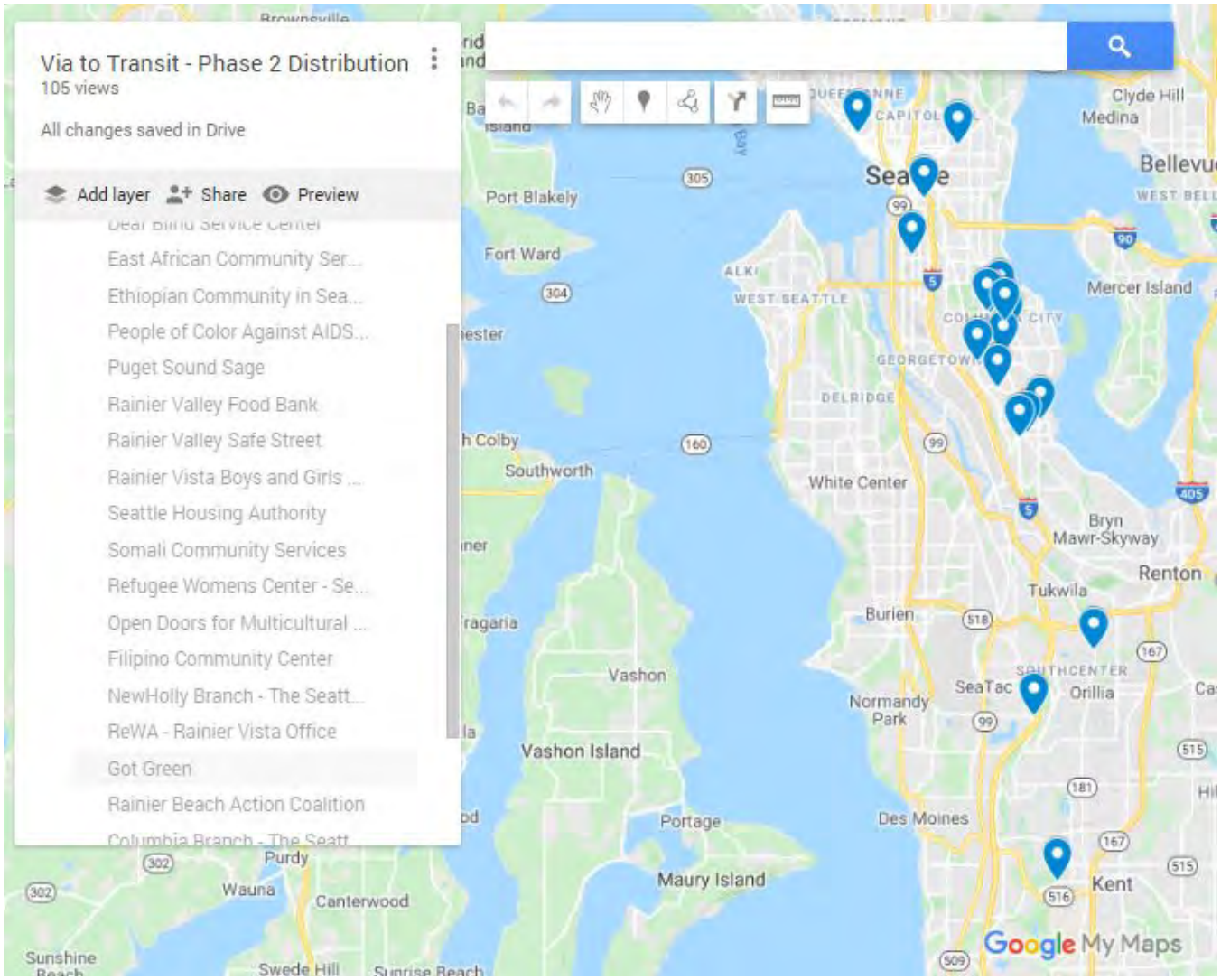
- **Transportation Workshops** with ReWA English Language Learner class (45 attendees), SHAG Tukwila Village (20 attendees, residents and employees), and Somali Health Board Quarterly Meeting (25 social and health care service providers). These workshops highlighted what Via to Transit is and walked through the steps of how to use the app, in addition to outlining how to sign up for Tukwila In Motion, what ORCA cards are available, and how to pay transit fares. Figure 12 and Figure 13 correspond to the ReWA and SHAG events, respectively.

- **Abu Bakr Islamic Center tabling** event where approximately 150 individuals stopped by the table to talk about transportation and/or sign up for Tukwila In Motion during and after Friday prayer and services.
- Two **Tukwila Library Transportation Drop-In events** where the team spoke with 38 individuals about the program and the Via to Transit service while tabling at the Tukwila Library with the City of Tukwila, ORCA to Go, and ORCA LIFT.
- **Door to Door outreach** engaged approximately 1,500 households in Tukwila. Via to Transit was an especially popular service to promote and discuss in the Allentown neighborhood. Outreach staff brought brochures with them to discuss with interested residents who expressed interest in taking transit, yet felt there were many barriers to getting to transit (distance, limited local service, and parking capacity at the Park & Rides).

Figure 12. ReWA Transportation Workshop

Figure 13. In Motion outreach staff presenting on Via to Transit at the SHAG Tukwila Village Transportation Workshop

Appendix A. Phase 2 Materials Distribution Map



Appendix B. Phase 1 and Phase 2 Materials Delivery

Organization – SE Seattle	Phase 1 Materials Delivered April/May 2019	Phase 2 Materials Delivered Oct/Nov 2019
A Beautiful Safe Place for Youth	*Organization incorporated into RBAC*	
Asian Counseling and Referral Service	SE Seattle: 2 posters, 50 English, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog	
Deaf Blind Service Center		25 English SE Seattle, 4 ORCA LIFT
East African Community Services	SE Seattle: 150 Amharic, 100 English brochures, 2 posters TIBS: 25 Somali, 25 Amharic, 2 posters,	1 poster 100 Somali 50 Vietnamese 50 English
Ethiopian Community in Seattle		1 poster 50 Amharic 25 English
Father and Songs Together	*No response*	*No response*
Filipino Community of Seattle		1 poster 100 Tagalog 50 English *would like a youth session*
Got Green		1 poster 10 English
Graham Hill Elementary	SE Seattle: 50 English, 50 Spanish, 10 Chinese, 10 Vietnamese, 10 Amharic, 10 Tagalog, 1 poster	
Harborview MC "Getting There" Tx Resource Center	SE Seattle: 50 English, 10 Spanish, 10 Chinese, 10 Vietnamese, 10 Tagalog, 10 Amharic TIBS: 10 of each Poster: 1 of each Ride2: 20 English (5-10 in other languages, if/when available)	
Hillman City Collaboratory	SE Seattle: 1 poster, 25 English	
Kline Galland	SE Seattle: 1 poster	
Lighthouse for the Blind	SE Seattle: 1 poster, 25 English	
Muslim Housing Services	SE Seattle: 150 English	
Neighborhood House - New Holly		10 English 10 Somali 10 Amharic

Northwest African American Museum	SE Seattle: 1 poster, 25 English	
Open Doors for Multicultural Families		
People of Color Against AIDS Network		1 poster 10 Somali, 10 Amharic 50 Spanish 50 English
Puget Sound Sage		4 Posters, 4 ORCA Lift, 50 of English, Tagalog, Somali, Amharic - SE Seattle
Rainier Beach Action Coalition	*Received materials from Metro*	100 of each language + 1 poster
Rainier Community Center	SE Seattle: 25 Spanish	
Rainier Valley Food Bank	SE Seattle: 2 posters, 100 English, 50 Spanish, 25 Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, Amharic	1 poster 90 Chinese 50 English 10 ORCA Lift *would like ORCA to GO to sign up RRFP*
Rainier Vista Boys and Girls Club	SE Seattle: 100 English, 25 Spanish, Vietnamese, and Amharic	SE Seattle: 4 posters, 50 English, 25 Tagalog, Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, Amharic (No Chinese)
Refugee Women's Alliance	SE Seattle: 2 posters, 30 English	
Seattle Housing Authority		5 Posters 50 English, Spanish, Somali, Amharic 5 ORCA Lift
Seattle Public Schools		
Somali Community Services		1 poster 50 Somali 25 English
Southeast Seattle Senior Center	SE Seattle: 2 posters	
SPL - Columbia City	SE Seattle: 1 poster, 50 English, 25 Spanish, Amharic, Vietnamese	1 poster 10 English 10 Spanish 10 Vietnamese 10 Somali 10 Amharic 10 Chinese
SPL - New Holly	SE Seattle: 25 English, Vietnamese, Tagalog	1 poster 5 Somali 5 Amharic 5 English
Treehouse	SE Seattle: 2 posters, 50 English	
VA Puget Sound Health Care	*Received materials from Metro*	

Washington Council of the Blind	*Received materials from Metro*	
YMCA Accelerator	SE Seattle: 3 posters, 100 English, 25 Spanish	

Organization - Tukwila	Phase 1 Materials Delivered April/May 2019	Phase 2 Materials Delivered Oct/Nov 2019
Bhutanese Nepali Christian Community Church/Foster Tukwila Presbyterian Church	TIBS 1 poster, 10 English	
Debre Amin Abune Teklehaimanot Orthodox Church		
Highline WIC office	TIBS 1 poster, 25 English	
Islamic Center of Tukwila	TIBS 1 poster, 50 English, 50 Somali	
King County Housing Authority	SE Seattle: 50 English, 1 poster (for Staff). TIBS: 3posters. 50 English, 25 each TIBS language	
Refugee Women's Center - SeaTac office	TIBS: 25 English, 25 Amharic, 25 Somali, 1 poster. SE Seattle: 25 English, 25 Amharic. 1 poster of each. Want driver information, Orca card info in languages (asked for materials also in Arabic and Swahili, French) Delivered 100 more English + 50 Amharic on 7/16 for Tukwila In Motion stakeholder interview	25 SE Seattle and TIBS - Somali 5 LEP Flyers - Somali (10), English (5)
Sarana International Buddhist Center	TIBS: 2 posters, 50 English, 25 Vietnamese (asked for Thai)	
St. Thomas Catholic Church	TIBS 25 English, 25 Spanish	
Somali Health Board	TIBS: 50 English, 50 Somali, 1 poster. SE Seattle: 50 English, 1 poster Delivered 50 more English TIBS, 50 SE Seattle on 7/15 for Tukwila In Motion Stakeholder interview	
Tukwila Community Center	TIBS: 3 posters, 25 English, Spanish, Vietnamese. (asked for Somali brochures) SE Seattle 1 poster, 25 English	10 English, Spanish, Somali
Tukwila Food Pantry	TIBS: 3 posters, 25 English, Vietnamese, Spanish (asked to coordinate an LEP learning session with ORCA lift)	
Tukwila King County Library	TIBS: 1 poster, 25 English, Vietnamese, Amharic, Spanish, Somali (Somali delivered on 5/19) (asked for orca lift)	15 English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Amharic 25 Somali
Tukwila Pool	TIBS 1 poster, 25 English, Spanish	

Tukwila School District	TIBS 23 posters, 200 English, 50 Vietnamese, Spanish, Somali, Amharic (asked for more posters) SE Seattle 10 English	
Riverton Park United Methodist Church	TIBS: 1 poster, 25 English, 5 Vietnamese, 5 Spanish	
SHAG Tukwila Village	TIBS: 1 poster, 25 English, 25 Amharic	
Kona Kai Café		2 posters
Friendz Cafe		1 poster, 10 English
RiverTerrace Housing (3 Tukwila properties)	TIBS: 3 posters, 25 for all languages,	
Tukwila City Hall - original materials	TIBS: 300 English, 50 Spanish, Vietnamese, Amharic, Somali; 15 posters	
Tukwila City Hall - additional materials	TIBS:150 English, 50 Spanish, Vietnamese, Amharic, Somali SE Seattle: 50 English	LEP flyers - 5 of each: English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali
Tukwila City Hall - additional materials	TIBS: 150 English, 25 Spanish, 25 Vietnamese, 25 Amharic. SE Seattle: 100 English, 25 Spanish, 25 Vietnamese, 25 Amharic, 8 posters Both: LEP flyers, 10 Spanish	

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(206) 735-7466

To: Ashley Wilson, King County Metro

From: Anna Gore & Cailin Henley, Alta Planning + Design

Date: January 30, 2020

Re: Via to Transit: Ongoing Recommendations

Marketing, Outreach, and Programmatic Recommendations

This memo provides marketing, outreach, and programmatic recommendations for King County Metro's Via to Transit service as the program continues through 2021. These recommendations aim to increase engagement and ridership during off-peak times (10 – 3 pm weekends, all times on weekends) and to people who may have Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Potential Via to Transit off-peak customers include people who work early or evening shifts, are students, retired or unemployed, attend weekend or late-night events, and/or have accessibility needs. The following recommendations are informed by interactions with the public during Phase 1 and Phase 2 outreach for Via to Transit and outreach during the Tukwila In Motion program.

Marketing

Create a short video featuring the steps of booking and using Via to Transit

During stakeholder interviews and transportation workshops for the Tukwila In Motion program, people commented on the need for a short video featuring the steps involved with using Via to Transit, especially for people with LEP and/or those with accessibility needs. The video could help to strengthen self-efficacy with messaging like "I was worried it would be complicated, but now that I know how to use it, it's easy!"

The content of the step-by-step flyer could serve as a starting place for the video. The video style could be animated or live action, depending on the goals, target audience, and budget available. If a live action or photo-based style is preferred, it could include influential local leaders using the service such as community members from Rooted in Rights, Manoro (Somali ADA advocate) or Mustafe Kaid (SomTV), and/or a person accessing local community services such as the Rainier Valley Food Bank. To appeal to people in multiple languages and with various access needs, the video could include both audio and closed captioning in various languages. In order to encourage use of the service within the Muslim community, featuring a Muslim woman could be especially beneficial. Tukwila In Motion stakeholders mentioned some Muslim women may not feel comfortable riding in a van with an unknown male, so featuring them could help to normalize the service as a reasonable option. Stakeholders also reported that some Muslim women report being verbally harassed on local bus routes. Although it is not possible to adequately address this issue in a short video intended to promote the service, this issue should be considered when developing and promoting the video.

To leverage this investment, clips from the video could be used in online advertising targeting specific off-peak times of the day on Facebook. The clip could also be used to advertise across various in-language or ethno-cultural platforms, such as:

- Pan-Asian Pacific American: International Examiner (online news)
- Spanish: La Raza del Noroeste (online news providing geotargeted digital ads)
- Vietnamese: Seattle Viet Times (Facebook) and/or Nguoi Viet Ngay Nay (online news)
- Somali: SomTV Seattle (Facebook and online news)

In addition to illustrating the step-by-step experience of different people using the service, the video could highlight both the phone and app-based booking capabilities. For phone-booking promotion, the video could provide direction of what to say to the call-center staff to improve the experience for a person who needs a translator.

Promote off-peak event-based advertising

Media Kit & Promotional Code

To encourage off-peak, event-related use of Via to Transit, consider creating a media kit for event organizers to use on their "getting there" webpages or emails. The kit could include one-sentence, two-sentence, and three-sentence options to include, along with the Via to Transit logo-lock-up. Event-specific kits could also include a custom promotional code offering a discount or free Via to Transit ride for first time users, which could be used to track the redemptions associated with these events. To promote transit and Via to Transit even greater, while reducing confusion that Via to Transit fares transfer when paid with ORCA, consider offering a free transit ride altogether. This could mean a free transfer if the trip starts on Via or an ORCA e-purse credit if it ends with Via for eligible riders.

During Phase 1 street teaming, many people who lived close to the Link right rail stations served by Via to Transit said that they wouldn't use the service. However, using Via to Transit to reach local community events or recreational opportunities, such as those at Seward Park, Stan Sayres Memorial Park, or Genesee Park and Playfield, provides an opportunity to boost ridership on the weekends and alleviate traffic and parking congestion at these venues. Use the suggested media kit when connecting with event organizers about including Via to Transit as a transportation option to their public events at/along Seward Park, Lake Washington Blvd, and Genesee Park.

Distribution Plan

Distribution of this media kit could occur by working directly with venue and event organizers. Distribution could be managed by King County Metro, the marketing consultant, and/or the Via vendor based on existing connections. The marketing consultant could develop and support executing a distribution plan, which would offer a framework to evaluate its success.

Large venues, such as T-Mobile Park (Ride Link light rail to T-Mobile Park), Century Link (Seahawks Transportation, Sounders FC Transportation, and WaMU theatre), and the Washington State Convention Center (Directions) platforms all have the opportunity to reduce congestion and improve traffic congestion around their venues through promoting Via to Transit. The distribution plan would incorporate the key relationships between agency staff and venue managers.

Designated Pick-Up/Drop-off Locations

Consider working with event organizers, stadiums, and Seattle Parks & Recreation department to identify and designate a pick-up/drop-off location for events. Pick-up/drop-off signage similar to that existing at the Link light rail stations could increase awareness and ridership of the service to/from these locations, while supporting event organizers' traffic circulation plans.

Outreach

Attend additional in-person events

Stakeholders expressed a number of barriers to using Via to Transit that may best be addressed during in-person outreach. Commonly mentioned barriers include not having a credit card for payment; access to the right ORCA card and associated reduced fare (youth, RRFP, LIFT); and/or an understanding of the fare transfer feature and how it works with the ORCA card.

In-person outreach efforts to promote the Via to Transit service could be coordinated with the ORCA to Go team pop-up events or other existing events. The outreach could aim to provide people with the right ORCA card and explain how the fare transfer works with Via to Transit. Outreach that provides easy access to the right ORCA card could not only encourage people to try out and use Via to Transit, it may increase transit use overall. The following is not an exhaustive list, but provides a few suggestions of locations and ORCA teams with whom to coordinate the outreach:

- Rainier Valley Food Bank – with existing ORCA LIFT pop-up; while food bank volunteers have been distributing Via to Transit brochures to clients, they have said that having someone to explain the Via to Transit service (perhaps using the in-language videos, if created) while connecting clients with an ORCA card could help clients get to/from the food bank.
- Columbia City Farmers Markets – with ORCA to Go and ORCA LIFT vendor
- Rapid Ride R Line community events – align with the Rapid Ride R Line team's outreach efforts at community events and meetings
- Muslim Housing Services – with ORCA to Go and ORCA LIFT vendors at community events or meetings
- Somali Health Fair – with ORCA LIFT vendor; this is an annual event held at NewHolly Neighborhood House hosted by the Somali Health Board
- Rainier Beach Action Coalition organized community meetings and/or Town Hall
- Tukwila Community Center – with ORCA to Go and ORCA LIFT vendors; the Recreational Superintendent relayed that the lack of a bus route near the Tukwila Community Center is a barrier to access and causes many people to drive or for students to walk the distance in sometimes unsafe conditions. With the Tukwila International Boulevard Station (TIBS) Via to Transit service area serving the community center, it could be a resource for select trips; however, note that the TIBS service only operates during peak hours.
- Tukwila Food Pantry - with ORCA LIFT vendor
- *Other local, cultural events that emerge*

Partner with community organizations to host more transportation workshops

To reach people who may feel dissuaded by a primarily app-based platform and/or may not know about Via to Transit's ADA accessibility provisions, Transportation Workshops could be hosted at various centers that draw seniors and people with accessibility needs. Potential locations include:

- Filipino Community Center of Seattle
- South Seattle Senior Center
- Bellwether Housing locations within the service areas (Juneau Townhomes, Kingway Apartments, Rose Street Apartments, the Genesee)
- Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
- Kline Galland Home – with ORCA to Go vendor at community event or meeting

These workshops could offer residents and clients of these venues an overview of Via to Transit and how to use the service, along with information on other local transportation options, and information on ORCA cards. Workshops could be as short as 15 minutes, if part of a standing meeting agenda, or a full 45 minutes or longer, depending on the audience, format, and level of detail desired. Including the ORCA to Go team and ORCA LIFT could be worthwhile if enough participants are anticipated. Lastly, the coordinating team would need to logistically and financially plan for translation and childcare as applicable.

Programmatic

The following programmatic recommendations stem largely from outreach in the Tukwila area, considering the teams' partner efforts through Tukwila In Motion.

Allow for cash payment

In Phase 1 and Phase 2 outreach, people noted that not having a cash option was a barrier to using Via to Transit because they don't have a credit or debit card. Allowing cash payments would reduce barriers to use the service, especially for people living on a low-income. However, increased investment in ORCA LIFT and ORCA to Go pop-ups to engage these people to sign up for the most appropriate ORCA Card could provide an alternative to a cash payment, if accepting cash is not an option.

Expand service hours for Tukwila to meet shift work needs

Many people in the Tukwila service area have said that they would like to use the service but cannot due to the limited service hours. Several of these people work at SeaTac Airport and noted (1) they commute very early or late in the evening and/or (2) often feel uncomfortable walking to/from the TIBS or waiting at their local bus stop connection in the dark especially along Tukwila International Blvd. If service is expanded to meet the needs of a specific employee population, targeted outreach should be done through employers in that industry segment to promote the service to people who will most benefit from it.

Expand the Tukwila TIBS service area

The Tukwila In Motion outreach team heard from people in Allentown who were elated to have the Via to Transit service option, with several people learning of the service through door-to-door outreach. However, people in Duwamish Hill and Foster Point stated to the city and Tukwila In Motion outreach staff that they lack

options to safely access transit. Common safety concerns included distance to access transit along routes lacking sidewalks and fear of crime. As previously conveyed from the Via to Transit Phase 1 outreach, street teaming staff heard a desire for this service to expand into Southcenter for the TIBS service area. Street teaming staff also heard a desire for additional service areas including Angle Lake, Des Moines, Burien, Normandy Park, and Renton-Fairwood, in order of frequency.

Provide a child car seat and booster seat in each Van

A handful of people noted the lack of provided car seats and the need to bring one's own as a barrier to them using Via to Transit to access transit as a family. The new Washington State Child Restraint Law that went into effect on January 1, 2020 states that:

- Children up to 2 years old must be in a rear-facing car seat
- Children ages 2 – 4 must ride in a car seat with a harness and can face either forward or to the rear
- Children 4 years and older must ride in a car or booster seat until they are 4'9" tall
- Children up to age 13 must ride in the back seat of a vehicle

To promote Via to Transit as an option to access transit for off-peak events and recreation on the weekends, consider providing car seat and/or booster seat options. While there would be a number of legal and logistical questions to address, supporting families in this way could help to make Via to Transit a viable option for some families.

Recommendations to implement may include:

- Providing one or two booster seats and one car seat per vehicle. Families may have different needs and requirements for the number and type of car seat required. Providing one standard car seat across all Via vehicles could set expectations about what is provided.
- Train drivers to properly install the car seat in a seat, and place it where it could remain without moving often, considering frequency of both side door use and rear-ramp wheelchair access.
- Provide booster seats that can be stored in the trunk and move freely around each vehicle.
- Update the app and telephone operator script to include a car seat and booster seat request when adding passengers and booking the ride.
- Provide proper car seat and booster seat training to all Via to Transit drivers, along with information on the state child restraint law and guidance of how to talk with parents and youth (especially those around 4'9" who may ride alone if 13 years or older) about the law, proper fit, and liability.

Offer bike racks on non-wheelchair accessible Via vans

Offer the option for Via to Transit customers to bring their bike on their trip by adding bike racks to the Via to Transit Vans not equipped with the rear wheelchair ramps. Adding the option to bring one's bike along could increase ridership to/from local events at Seward or Genesee parks, as well as along Lake Washington Blvd. This could help people access these safer, low stress places to walk and bike alone or with others. Similar to the car and booster seat option for implementation, add a bicycle feature to the ride request in the app and telephone operator script.

Via TO TRANSIT

Get the app, book a ride

Home, work, or school is just a short, on-demand ride away from your Link light rail station with **Via to Transit**

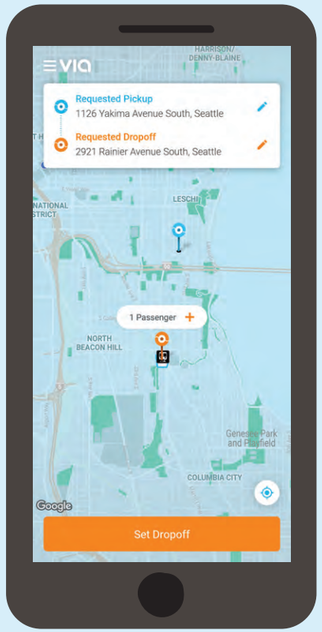
1. **Download** the Via app
2. **Book** an on-demand ride with the app or call 206-258-7739
   Standard Metro fares apply.
3. **Ride** and connect to buses and Link light rail at Mount Baker, Columbia City, Othello, Rainier Beach, and Tukwila International Blvd. stations

Learn more at
kingcounty.gov/metro/via-to-transit
or call 206-258-7739.

King County METRO | SoundTransit | Via | In partnership with City of Seattle | U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration | MOD Mobility on Demand

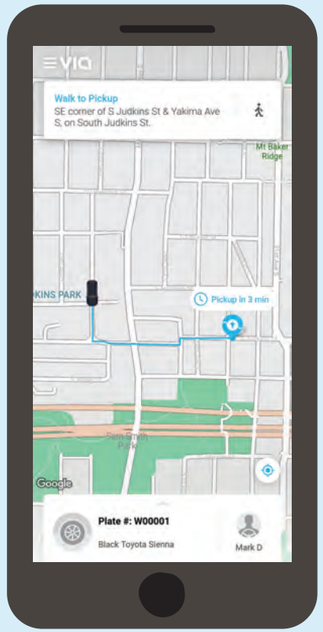
Interpreter - 206-258-7739
Intérpretes Turjubaan Переводчик
Перекладач 통역사 የቃል አስተርጓሚ
翻譯員 Thông Dịch Viên ਇੰਟਰਪਰੈਟਰ

STEP 7



Confirm your ride. Tap Set Dropoff to confirm your drop off location. Then tap “Book this ride” to accept the proposed ride. Your ORCA card will not be charged until you tap your card when Via to Transit picks you up.

STEP 8



Walk to your assigned nearby pick-up location, no more than 5 minutes away, Be ready for your **Via to Transit** vehicle to pick you up by the time it says under 'ETA.'

NOTE

Walking:

- If you require mobility assistance, you will not be asked to walk to a nearby location.
- You will not be asked to walk after 10 pm or before 6 am.

You may receive an error message if you:

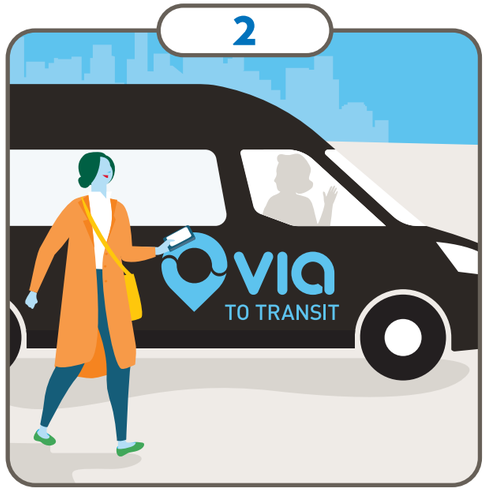
- Request a ride outside of the hours of operation,
- Select a destination not within the specific station’s service area, or
- Request a ride within a quarter mile of stations

Via to Transit is a one year pilot project that launched on April 16, 2019

VIA TO TRANSIT

Get the app, book a ride

Learn more at
kingcounty.gov/metro/via-to-transit
or call **206-258-7739**



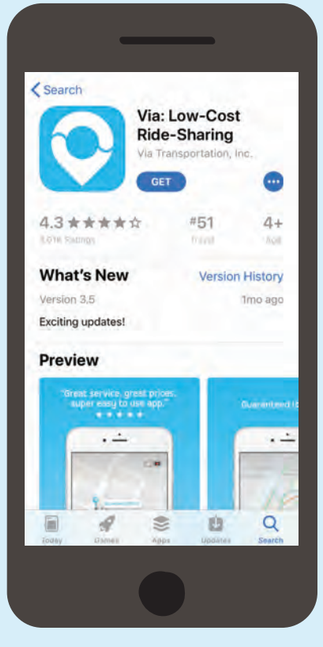
King County METRO

SOUNDTRANSIT

In partnership with City of Seattle

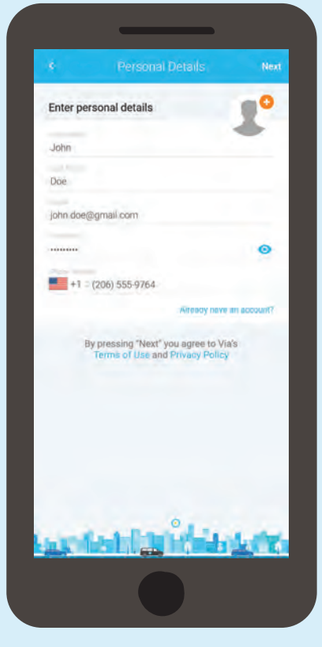
Interpreter - 206-258-7739
Intérpretes Turjubaan Переводчик
Перекладач 통역사 የቃል አስተርጓሚ
翻譯員 Thông Dịch Viên ਇੰਟਰਪਰੈਟਰ

STEP 1



Install the free Via app in the Apple App Store or in Google Play

STEP 2



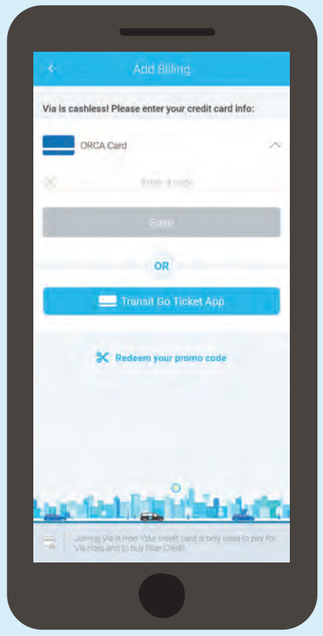
Sign up to create an account.

After you create an account, you can change your Account settings to indicate that you need mobility assistance.

STEP 3

Check your text messages for the account verification code and enter it in the app.

STEP 4

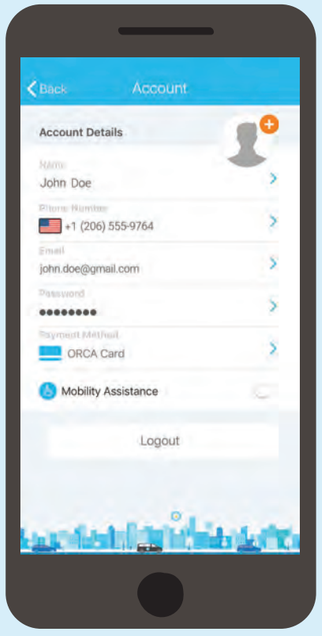


Select your payment method and enter requested information.

You can pay your fare using:

- ORCA card
- Credit/debit card
- Prepaid cards
- Transit Go mobile app

STEP 5



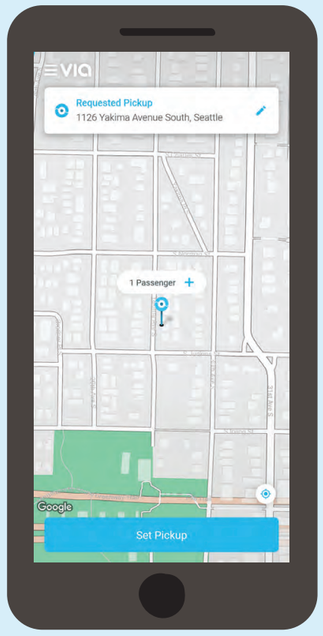
If you use a wheelchair or need other mobility assistance:

Tap the three bars next to VIA on the home screen.

Tap on your name and circle in the top left corner. John Doe

Tap on the white button → next to "Mobility Assistance."

STEP 6



Select a ride to or from your service area's Link Light Rail station.

Tap the pencil icon to edit your pick up address.

Tap the plus sign next to Passenger to add another person along with you.

Tap Set Pickup to confirm your pick up location.

APPENDIX

E

Subsidy Report

Mobility on Demand Sandbox Project
Puget Sound Subsidy Plan

Overview

In the Puget Sound, Sound Transit and King County Metro (Metro) are Key Implementing Partners as sub-recipients to LA Metro for a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox grant. To fund this project as committed in the grant, Sound Transit and King County Metro provided $100,000 each for the purpose of trip subsidies during pilot operations. The FTA provided $350,000 for FTA-approved expenses to be reimbursed from the FTA through LA Metro.

Through conversations with local agencies as part of project planning, the City of Seattle identified a shared project goal of providing increased first and last mile service to transit specifically in the Rainier Valley. Additional project sponsorship from the City will enable an expanded project scope, including an additional location (Othello Station), and expanded service. The City of Seattle contributed approximately $2,500,000 to this project.

King County Metro procured, negotiated and currently holds the contract with the service provider for this project, NoMad Transit LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Via Transportation Inc. (Via). Payment is issued by Metro to Via directly. Metro requested and received eligible reimbursable costs from the FTA through LA Metro. Sound Transit provided its $100,000 match for trip subsidies to King County Metro.

Project Description

Service was provided to and from five Link stations within two zones. The SE Seattle zone includes Mount Baker, Columbia City, Othello and Rainier Beach stations. Each station has its own service area within which customers may take a ride to/from the given station. The Tukwila International Boulevard Station (TIBS) zone includes TIBS. Service hours vary by zone. In the SE Seattle zone, service was provided 20 hours per day Monday through Saturday, mirroring Sound Transit Link operating hours of 5:00 AM – 1:00 AM, and was available 18 hours a day on Sundays, from 6:00 AM until 12:00 AM.

Service in the TIBS zone was focused on peak periods on weekdays only. Specific service hours in this zone was 6:00 AM – 9:00 AM, 3:30 PM – 6:30 PM. Table 1 provides a detailed project description for this pilot.

Table 1. Project Description

Project Description	Zones		
	SE Seattle	TIBS	Total
Number of Zones	1	1	2
Service Hours per Day	20 Hours: Monday – Saturday, 5:00 AM – 1:00 AM 18 Hours: Sunday, 6:00 AM – 12:00 AM	6 Hours: Monday - Friday, 6:00 AM – 9:00 AM, 3:30 PM – 6:30 PM	-
Vehicles per Zone	14	4	18
Zone Size (sq. mi.)	11.64	4.65	16.29
Days of Week	7	5	-
Total Operational Hours	6,762	1,470	8,232
Total Driver Hours	58,152	5,160	63,312
Average Driver Hours per Week	1,187	105	1,292
Pilot duration	49 weeks		-
Total Rides	259,030		

Costs of Service Operation

King County Metro paid Via a set of fixed costs as well as a variety of variable costs, which were billed on an as-used basis. The largest variable cost were driver hours, which were billed as a standard hourly driver rate, a peak hourly driver rate, or an Accessible Vehicle hourly rate. Customer demand was a primary determinant of how many driver hours Via would deploy, as it was the responsibility of Via to ensure that there were enough vehicles in operation to meet the minimum level of service.

Table 2 presents the costs of service operations.

Table 2. Costs of Service Operation

Description	Cost
Total Via Fixed Costs	$1,042,077
Total Via Variable Costs	$1,853,407
Marketing and Community Engagement	$137,415
Other (Evaluation, Knowledge Transfer, etc.)	$50,693
Total Project Cost	$3,083,592
Total Project Cost per Driver Hour	$48.70
Total Cost per Ride (Not Including Fare Recovery)	$11.90
Total Fares Recouped	$285,000

Fare Structure

Service was provided to customers at varying costs depending on how payment is made and depending on customer fare type. At project launch, there were two payment method options: customers could pay by tapping their ORCA card in-vehicle, or they could pay by purchasing a ticket using the pre-existing mobile ticketing app, Transit GO Ticket, and showing the Via driver their Transit GO Ticket on their mobile device upon boarding. Costs to customers paying with their ORCA card depend on the individual's ORCA pass type and associated reduced fare eligibility. Riders paying with their ORCA card

were eligible for fare transfers to other Puget Sound transit services that accept ORCA. Costs to customers paying with Transit GO Ticket mobile ticketing depend on the individual's associated reduced fare eligibility as available within the app. Riders paying with Transit GO Ticket were eligible for fare transfers between the Via service and King County Metro bus service. Approximately a month after launch, customers could also pay through the Via app or call center using a credit or debit card (including stored value cards). Through this option, customers paying with a debit or credit card paid $2.75 per one-way trip. This functionality required an exception to a King County Metro policy requiring the use of the County's existing payment processing vendor. Table 3 provides a detailed breakdown of fare payment media and customer fares.

Table 3. Fare Payment Media and Customer Fares

Fare Payment Media	Fare Class	Rate	Fare Payment Mechanism/Verification	Fare Transfer
ORCA	Adult	$2.75	Tap ORCA card on reader upon boarding	All Puget Sound public transit services that accept ORCA
	Youth	$1.50		
	RRFP	$1.00		
	Access	$1.75		
	LIFT	$1.50		
Transit GO Ticket (mobile ticketing)	Adult	$2.75	Mobile phone "flash pass" to driver upon boarding	Metro buses
	Youth	$1.50		
	RRFP (pending development)	$1.00		
	Access (pending development)	$1.75		
	Lift (pending development)	$1.50		
Credit/debit card in Via app/call center	Adult	$2.75	Drivers could see in their app whether a rider had paid	None
N/A	Children (5 and under)	Free	N/A	N/A

Because customers paying with their ORCA card may not pay for the service (if they have an employer-issued passport card), and will always be eligible for fare transfer to public transit, there is an inherent incentive for customers to use an ORCA card to pay for service provided through this pilot. Over 96% of rides paid with ORCA.

Fares paid using a debit or credit card were credited to Metro in invoices. Fares paid by customers who successfully tapped their ORCA card on a reader in the Via vehicle were recouped by King County Metro in the same way they would be typically when customers use their ORCA cards on Metro buses. Due to antiquated and unreliable ORCA card readers, however, many Via fares were not directly collected through the ORCA system, but instead were reconciled between Sound Transit and Metro using Via data and available ORCA data.

Fares recouped through this service was approximately $285,000. This figure represents approximately $1.23 recouped per fare transaction, yielding an approximate 10% farebox recovery.

For comparative purposes, Table 5 shows benchmarks for King County Metro service.

Table 5. King County Metro Service Benchmarks

Description	Benchmark
KCM Average Farebox Recovery on Bus (2016, KCM)	30.1%
KCM Average Cost per Boarding for Sections of Bus Routes within the Pilot Service Areas (weekday only, including capital and operational expenses, fall 2018)	$6.12
Paratransit Cost per Boarding (2016)	$55.75
KCM Average Taxi Scrip (2016)	$13.42
Cost per Boarding Community Access Transportation (2016)	$7.95

APPENDIX

F

Weekly Via to Transit Statistics

	15-Apr	22-Apr	29-Apr	6-May	13-May	20-May	27-May	3-Jun	10-Jun	17-Jun	24-Jun	1-Jul	8-Jul	15-Jul	22-Jul	29-Jul	5-Aug
Rides																	
Total	772	2,000	2,445	3,256	3,874	4,354	4,087	4,428	4,505	4,666	4,900	3,798	4,814	5,163	5,474	5,370	5,307
Mount Baker	104	235	261	320	394	389	364	340	401	423	509	376	435	474	544	453	441
Columbia City	268	619	544	782	859	932	893	1,018	911	957	970	702	865	997	934	969	960
Othello	139	339	511	705	853	1,041	1,069	1,026	1,121	1,142	1,086	847	1,088	1,221	1,355	1,304	1,328
Rainier Beach	208	689	988	1,268	1,564	1,748	1,569	1,827	1,829	1,899	2,131	1,718	2,216	2,242	2,371	2,424	2,367
Tukwila	53	118	141	181	204	244	192	217	243	245	204	155	210	229	270	220	211
Average Daily Ridership																	
Total	129	286	349	465	553	622	584	633	644	667	700	543	688	738	782	767	758
WAV																	
Total	0	3	3	0	2	9	13	21	27	22	22	10	5	23	18	5	19
Mount Baker	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	6	1	7	0	0	7	4	3	7
Columbia City	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Othello	0	1	1	0	1	7	9	10	16	15	15	4	2	8	10	2	3
Rainier Beach	0	2	2	0	1	0	1	6	4	3	0	6	3	7	2	0	1
Tukwila	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Average Trip Duration																	
Total	6.7	6.7	7	7	7.2	7.2	7.3	7.7	7.5	7.6	7.6	7.1	7.6	7.4	7.6	7.5	7.5
Rides/Vehicle/Hour																	
Total	1.4	2.6	3.1	3.3	3.8	3.9	3.6	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.2	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.9
Average Wait Time																	
Total	7.6	7	7.6	7.4	8	7.4	7.6	8.1	7.9	7.7	7.7	7.5	7.9	7.5	7.5	7.8	7.9
WAV	0	20.2	15.1	0	23	15.2	10.8	12.3	13.2	11.9	15.9	16.5	13.9	8.7	11.6	11.2	11.2

Call Center	All time
Total	1.8%
WAV	55.4%

Ride Rating	All time
Total	4.8
WAV	4.8

Please note that there may be slight variations in week to week data between different data sources, given minor discrepancies in the way the data is processed for the Via dashboard compared to Metro's raw data.

	12-Aug	19-Aug	26-Aug	2-Sep	9-Sep	16-Sep	23-Sep	30-Sep	7-Oct	14-Oct	21-Oct	28-Oct	4-Nov	11-Nov	18-Nov	25-Nov	2-Dec
Rides																	
Total	5,446	5,651	5,427	4,995	5,932	5,829	6,414	6,760	6,598	6,797	6,770	6,857	7,056	6,539	7,028	5,501	6,572
Mount Baker	429	474	473	412	442	441	489	477	460	578	518	475	503	512	539	441	464
Columbia City	991	1,046	896	851	1,029	988	1,048	1,100	1,035	1,069	1,017	1,059	1,018	956	1,031	831	933
Othello	1,356	1,394	1,376	1,333	1,570	1,505	1,751	1,738	1,788	1,822	1,848	1,846	2,076	1,840	2,068	1,686	1,914
Rainier Beach	2,484	2,496	2,466	2,231	2,650	2,665	2,887	3,175	3,026	3,059	3,060	3,197	3,206	2,999	3,154	2,395	3,084
Tukwila	186	241	216	168	241	230	239	270	289	269	327	280	253	232	236	148	177
Average Daily Ridership																	
Total	778	807	775	714	847	833	916	966	943	971	967	980	1008	934	1004	786	939
WAV																	
Total	43	28	13	6	13	13	21	22	35	13	6	11	11	14	20	11	7
Mount Baker	2	3	0	0	3	3	0	2	4	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	1
Columbia City	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Othello	26	19	9	5	8	6	14	19	24	10	2	9	11	13	10	6	5
Rainier Beach	13	5	0	1	2	4	5	1	7	1	4	1	0	1	8	5	1
Tukwila	1	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Average Trip Duration																	
Total	7.4	7.2	7.2	7.4	7.6	7.8	7.5	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.6	7.5	7.6	7.5	7.9	7.1	7.8
Rides/Vehicle/Hour																	
Total	3.8	3.9	3.6	3.5	4.1	3.9	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.9	4.6	4.9	5.1	4.8	5.1	4.1	5.1
Average Wait Time																	
Total	8.1	7.7	7.5	7.7	8.4	8.5	8.7	8.6	9.1	9.3	9	9.2	9.4	9.3	9.9	8.6	9.9
WAV	12.3	13.6	17	13.4	16	12	16.4	10.8	16.1	15.3	12.9	13.7	12.9	13.3	13.8	11.1	6.5
Call Center																	
Total																	
WAV																	
Ride Rating																	
Total																	
WAV																	

Please note that there may be slight variations in week to week data between different data sources, given minor discrepancies in the way the data is processed for the Via dashboard compared to Metro's raw data.

	9-Dec	16-Dec	23-Dec	30-Dec	6-Jan	13-Jan	20-Jan	27-Jan	3-Feb	10-Feb	17-Feb	24-Feb	2-Mar	9-Mar	16-Mar	Average	Total
Rides																	
Total	6,797	6,476	4,462	4,788	6,490	5,913	5,961	6,608	6,428	6,292	5,860	6,188	5,549	3,631	1,759	5,277	258,587
Mount Baker	497	446	351	389	472	436	496	464	434	473	375	369	385	257	115	419	20,549
Columbia City	1,039	1,077	648	751	980	896	820	911	928	898	810	851	771	433	148	878	43,039
Othello	1,948	1,858	1,400	1,351	1,795	1,608	1,680	1,863	1,837	1,690	1,741	1,840	1,647	1,070	555	1,408	68,969
Rainier Beach	3,126	2,865	1,964	2,190	3,022	2,806	2,817	3,200	3,052	3,007	2,781	2,927	2,595	1,757	905	2,374	116,306
Tukwila	187	230	99	107	221	167	148	170	177	224	153	201	151	114	36	198	9,724
Average Daily Ridership																	
Total	971	925	637	684	927	845	852	944	918	899	837	884	793	519	251	754	
WAV																	
Total	4	6	12	23	20	23	26	21	30	28	28	29	24	31	36	17	830
Mount Baker	0	0	2	0	0	1	4	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	76
Columbia City	0	1	0	1	0	2	4	3	5	1	0	1	0	0	3	1	33
Othello	3	3	9	14	17	9	9	9	19	14	16	14	12	12	18	10	478
Rainier Beach	1	2	1	7	3	10	9	9	4	12	11	13	12	18	15	5	224
Tukwila	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	19
Average Trip Duration																	
Total	7.7	8.0	6.8	7.0	8.8	7.3	7.4	7.6	7.6	8.1	7.4	7.9	8.0	7.1	5.8	7.4	
Rides/Vehicle/Hour																	
Total	4.9	4.7	3.4	3.5	4.5	4.4	4.2	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.2	4.3	3.9	2.5	1.2	3.9	
Average Wait Time																	
Total	9.5	10.0	7.4	7.7	9.4	9.6	9.9	9.7	10.2	9.7	10.0	10.6	9.4	7.8	6.4	8.5	
WAV	11.7	13.6	13.1	12.8	12.4	11.7	14.1	11.5	12.1	9.5	8.4	8.7	8.6	9.0	7.4	12.3	
Call Center																	
Total																	
WAV																	
Ride Rating																	
Total																	
WAV																	

Please note that there may be slight variations in week to week data between different data sources, given minor discrepancies in the way the data is processed for the Via dashboard compared to Metro's raw data.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CSN	Card serial number for ORCA card
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
KCM	King County Metro
LACMTA	LA Metro
ORCA	One Regional Card for All (Puget Sound transit fare payment card)
PFTP	Portable fare transaction processor (device to process ORCA transactions)
RRFP	Regional reduced fare permit (for seniors and persons with disabilities)
ST	Sound Transit
TRAC	Washington State Transportation Center
TNC	Transportation network company
WAV	Wheelchair accessible vehicle

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Federal Transit Administration
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