



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration



Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox Demonstration: Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) First and Last Mile Solution *Evaluation Report*

Background

The Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) First and Last Mile Solution project is one of 11 Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox Demonstrations funded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). DART partnered with DoubleMap, Unwire, PayNearMe, MV Transit, and Uber.

DART, the regional public transportation agency serving the Dallas/Fort Worth area of Texas, provides multimodal transit options, including bus, light rail, commuter rail, streetcar, paratransit, and vanpool services. DART has expanded its transit services significantly to help accommodate the explosive growth in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, although increasing service frequency and ridership has been a challenge. The DART First and Last Mile Solution MOD Sandbox project was created to address these challenges by leveraging DART's GoPass app and implementing on-demand microtransit service, called GoLink, and TNC service, UberPool, to improve travel for passengers in the Plano area and to increase connectivity to the overall DART transit network.

Objectives

Through its MOD Sandbox project, DART sought to improve first- and last-mile (FMLM) connectivity to DART's transit network, increase satisfaction among DART customers, and enhance service for passengers with disabilities. The project had multiple objectives including 1) increasing transit use through FMLM improvements, 2) improving accessibility to DART transit among persons with disabilities, 3) improving multimodal travel, 4) decreasing wait and overall transit travel times through better FMLM connectivity, 5) expanding the geographic scope of locations reachable by DART transit services, 6) improving wait and overall travel times for passengers with disabilities, 7) increasing customer satisfaction, 8) enhancing the perception of the DART brand, and 9) producing lessons learned for future projects.

Findings and Conclusions

The evaluation revealed that the project had positive impacts on FMLM connectivity to DART transit, reduced travel times, improved services for passengers with disabilities, increased the geographic scope of DART transit, and increased satisfaction among DART transit users.

This report presents the results of an independent evaluation of the DART MOD Sandbox Demonstration, with lessons learned that potentially can help advance similar initiatives within other transit systems. The evaluation was guided by 12 hypotheses analyzed using survey data, agency data on vehicle activity, costs, and transit system coverage, and interviews with DART representatives. Key findings include the following:

- **Users reported greater FMLM connectivity with DART transit after using DART GoLink.** Survey results show that the majority of respondents indicated that their FMLM mobility to transit stations had improved as a result of GoLink.
- **Users reported experiencing lower travel times than they would have without the GoPass app.** Although average travel times fluctuated modestly during the study period, survey results suggest that users were satisfied with travel times for both GoLink shuttle and UberPool services.
- **Passengers with disabilities experienced improved access to transit and reduced travel times.** All survey respondents with disabilities considered their access to DART as average or above average, and the average in-vehicle travel time of all GoLink wheelchair-accessible vehicle (WAV) trips was consistently faster than the analogous fixed-route travel times during the evaluation period.
- **The geographic scope of locations reachable by DART transit services increased.** Before the DART GoLink program, 44% of Plano was considered accessible via DART transit. After implementation of GoLink and UberPool services, 82% of Plano was covered by DART transit services.
- **Users were generally satisfied with their DART transit experiences as a result of the project.** A majority of survey respondents rated their overall experiences and with specific aspects of GoLink and UberPool services as above average.

Benefits

The DART First and Last Mile Solution project was a learning experience for all stakeholders in the areas of project planning with committed partners, flexible contracting terms, metrics for adjusting service coverage, vehicle right-sizing, and understanding customer needs. Stakeholder and project partner interviewees reported that they were generally satisfied with its outcome. Ultimately, the DART project expanded the geographic scope of DART services and improved accessibility for travelers with disabilities and demonstrated the ability of a public transit agency to provide greater connectivity, decrease overall travel times, and improve the traveler experience. Lessons learned from the pilot project should allow future projects to build on this experience and advance common objectives with similar initiatives within other transit systems.

Project Information

FTA Report No. 0195

This research project was conducted by Elliot Martin, Adam Stocker, Adam Cohen, and Susan Shaheen of UC Berkeley and Les Brown of ICF. For more information, contact FTA Project Manager Steven Mortensen at (202) 493-0459 or Steven.Mortensen@dot.gov. All research reports can be found at

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/research-innovation>.