



Interurban Transit Partnership

300 Ellsworth Avenue SW Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4005 616.456.7514

Date: March 5, 2020

Re: Final Assessment:
Michigan Mobility Challenge – The Rapid On-Demand

The Rapid, in partnership with VIA and Disability Advocates of Kent County, began what was to be an eight month pilot project on July 26, 2019. This project was funded by the Michigan Mobility Challenge grant. This program focused on creating a better transportation experience while creatively finding new funding opportunities and increasing efficiency – both time and cost. Seniors, persons with disabilities and eligible veterans currently have several options in the greater Grand Rapids area for transportation, but there are limitations and issues in the service such as long wait times and no same day service. This project hoped to address these concerns.

Using the VIA app, we proved that same day scheduling can be effective and a benefit to our clients. Use of the VIA app provided shorter on-time windows, more linear trips with shorter times onboard and the ability to add same day service all while making the routes more efficient. However, this pilot did prove to have some challenges.

Challenges:

- Disconnect between the elderly and visually impaired and the technology
- Limited geographic area
- Customer support limitations
- Limited use of buses

Initially, our elderly clients were intimidated by the technology. Long hours were spent introducing and reintroducing the app to bring the service to a level of comfortability. The technology was available only to those who had a smart phone or other related device. The app was also not initially user friendly for our visually impaired clients. Updates and upgrades needed to be added to the app to make this technology more suitable for those with visual limitations.

There were also limitations to the geography. Our clients were accustomed to the Go!Bus area mirroring our fixed route service. The geographic area serviced by Rapid On-Demand was approximately half of that which is serviced by the paratransit Go!Bus system. This limited the use of many of our existing clients. While we were able to accommodate some requests that went outside of the pilot service area, there wasn't sufficient demand to warrant expanding the service area during the pilot period.

The project was mostly facilitated by a project coordinator. This created for gaps in response and customer support as the Special Services Mobility Assistants were not involved with the scheduling and support. This caused for some lapse in service and slower response times. A call-in feature would greatly enhance the On-Demand platform.

Initially, the project called for use of five paratransit vehicles per day. However, due to the demand for paratransit service and because that is service is scheduled 24 hours in advance, five vehicles were not always available for the Rapid On-Demand service and same-day requests. The pilot average two buses per day.

Benefits & Positive Customer Feedback:

Despite its challenges, Overall clients felt the pilot was a success. Clients have provided feedback that serve as testimonials to this success.

"Go!Bus on demand has been life changing for our family. We often times forget to book the regular Go!Bus or have last minute changes that cannot be made when using the regular Go!Bus. Having the ability to be more flexible is great. In fact, we have had to use Uber until the new in demand feature was launched. Please keep the service! We need it. Having an adult child with special needs who is very active in the community can be stressful when planning transpiration. Go!Bus on demand has lightened our load."

"Demand more freedom by riding the RAPID ON DEMAND. Offering options about where/ when you go. It makes riders feel more like normal people with having the capability, the luxury, the freedom to go places without planning in advance. The RAPID ON DEMAND generates flexibility with plans created as things come up. Riders are not locked down to a pre-determined schedule. They are able to be active as things come up without having the restrictions. Not having to being stuck with plans created in advance."

"The Go Bus has been an absolute blessing for me! It has helped me be a productive and successful man in ministry. As a Minister and as motivational speaker, the service helps me work and keep a job and be successful in it. The on demand services has done even more by allowing me to be more flexible and getting places faster and without having to get there super early. Plus the option of paying with your debit card is nice. So in my opinion if it at all possible keep it around or make it an option for those who been riding with go bus for a long time like myself."

"Rapid On-Demand has been such a great resource for me. I have primarily used this service to get to and from work on the days when an early morning, or late evening Go!Bus ride would add more stress to my chronic pain and fatigue. Rapid On-Demand combines the safety and security of door-to-door pick up on the Go!Bus, with the instant independence afforded through similar ride-share services. Not only that, but it's incredibly affordable. I love that when I use Rapid On-Demand, I am able to be as independent as other people who can just get in their cars and drive to their destinations, yet I'm paying similar to what a person might pay for a gallon of gas".

"Rapid On-Demand is a service that will only increase the capabilities, independence, and overall well-being for people with disabilities, and I hope that there will be the opportunity to expand hours, and areas of operation, so that more people can enjoy these benefits throughout the day and into the evening for various social activities. I've always believed that access to transportation is one of the biggest catalysts for giving people the opportunity to thrive in their communities, and I am thankful that Rapid On-Demand is helping to meet this need for Grand Rapids."

Budget & Cost Analysis:

For this project, The Rapid was awarded a total of \$373,781.80. The breakdown of this budget is represented below:

The Rapid Budget

Vehicle operation cost					
Number of vehicles	Hours per day/vehicle	Vehicle hours/day	Vehicle cost/hour	Number of days	Total Cost
5	9.5	47.5	\$49.56	120	\$282,492.00
Staff Coordinator					
Hours per week	Number of weeks	Hourly rate	Fringe Costs	Total hourly cost	Total Cost
20	26	\$17.41	\$8.7050	\$26.12	\$13,579.80
The Rapid Total					\$296,071.80

Disability Advocates Budget

Project Coordinator					
Hours per week	Number of weeks	Hourly salary	Hourly overhead	Total hourly rate	Total Cost
20	26	\$16.50	\$21.96	\$38.46	\$20,000.00
Tester Stipend					\$5,000.00
Disability Advocates Total					\$25,000.00

Via Budget

Installation Fee					\$30,000.00
Vehicle Fee					
Number of vehicles	Fee / vehicle / month	Number of months			Total Cost
5	\$700.00	6			\$21,000.00
Per Trip Fee					
Fee per trip	Trips/hour	Trips/day	Number of days	Estimated Trips	Total Cost
\$0.15	2	95	120	11,400	\$1,710.00
Via Total					\$52,710.00
Project Total					\$373,781.80

Actual Expenditures & Fund Distribution:

The Rapid Budget

Vehicle operation cost	
MV Billing	Total Cost \$190,411.74
Staff Coordinator	
John Spears/Office Supplies/Banking	Total Cost \$28,878.68
The Rapid Total	\$219,290.42

Disability Advocates Budget

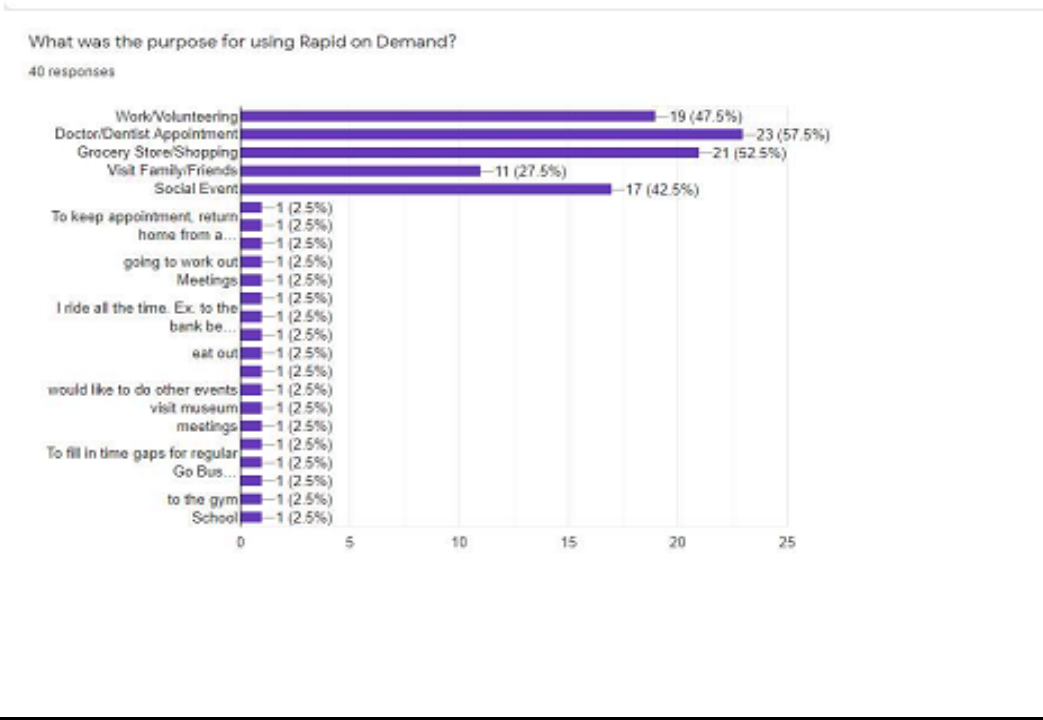
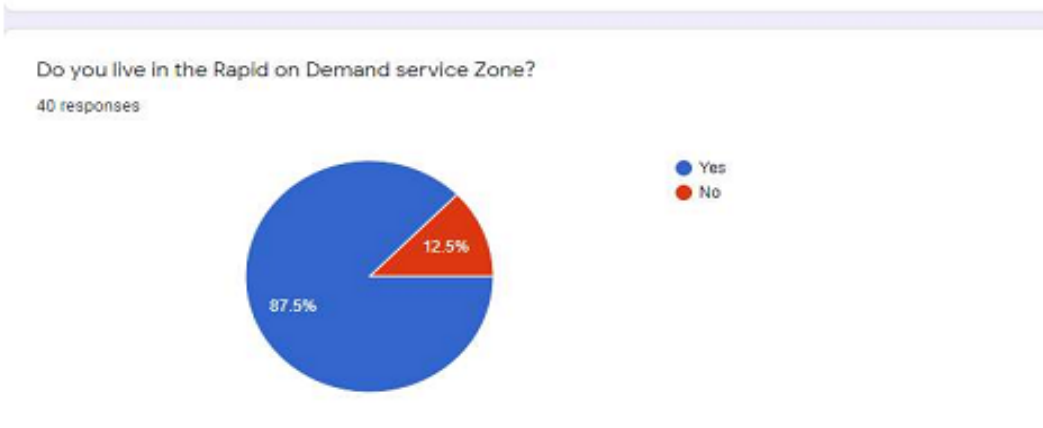
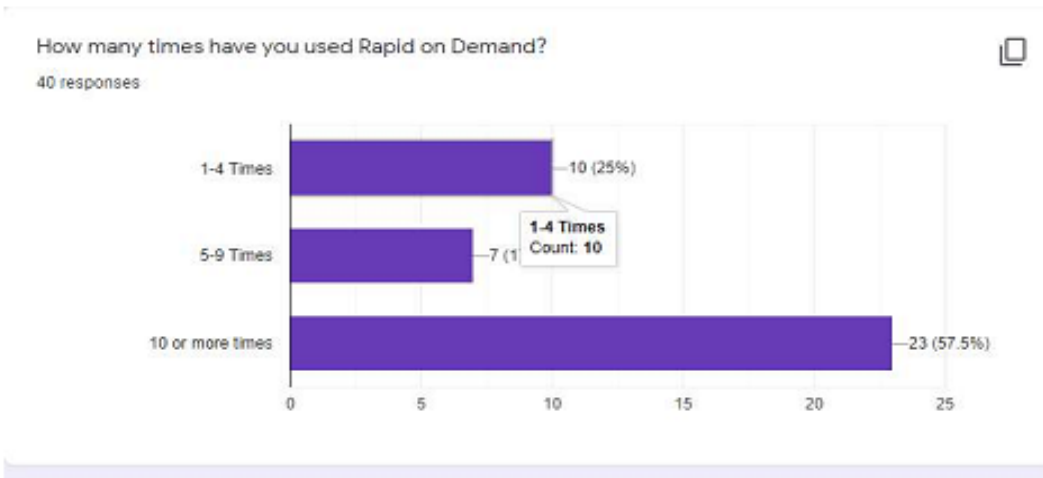
Project Coordinator	
Disability Advocates	Total Cost \$11,307.27
Disability Advocates Total	\$11,307.27

Via Budget

Via Software/Support	Total Cost \$60,610.57
Via Total	\$60,610.57
Project Total	\$291,208.26

****This project in total was under budget by \$82,573.74. Transportation cost was under \$92,080.26. John Spears (Coordinator Budget) was over by \$11,107.20. Disability Advocates was under budget by \$8,692.73. VIA was over budget by \$7,900.57****

Survey Results:



Comparison of Data

The Rapid never had On-Demand services prior to this pilot. Below we attempted to capture some comparisons of data. For this table we selected 6 months prior to the pilot of standard paratransit services versus that of the first 6 months of the pilot with On-Demand Services. Data compared: No-shows, Cancellations, and Riders per hour.

Standard Paratransit Services:

2019	January Ridership: 26,882	February Ridership: 27,578	March Ridership: 31,554	April Ridership: 30,536	May Ridership: 30,596	June Ridership: 27,017
No-Shows	629	646	609	523	594	501
Cancellations	8,880	6,445	6,153	6,163	5,957	5,001
Total: No-Shows & Cancellations	9,509	7,091	6,762	6,686	6,551	5,502
% of No-Shows & Cancellations	35.3%	25.7%	21.4%	21.9%	21.4%	20.5%
Average Riders Per hour	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.9

On-Demand Services (VIA combines No-Shows and Cancellations):

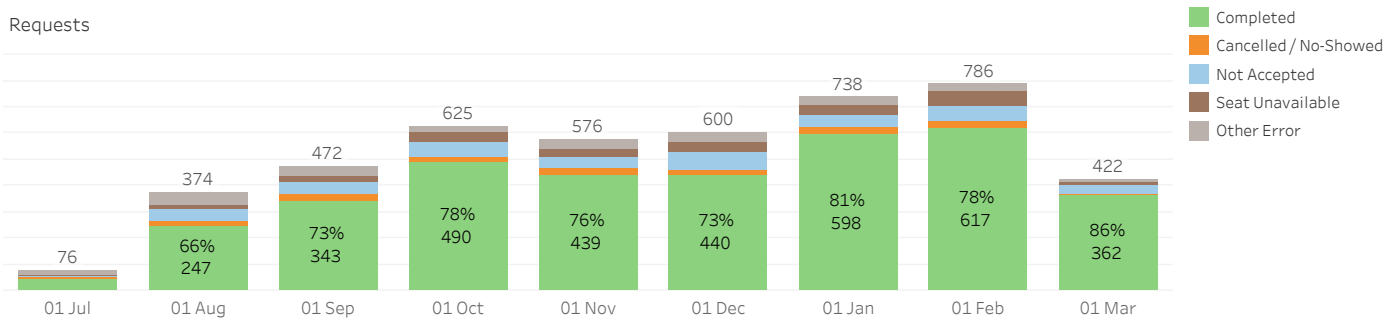
2019	July Ridership: 70	August Ridership: 247	September Ridership: 343	October Ridership: 490	November Ridership: 439	December Ridership: 440
No-Shows /Cancellations	3	18	28	20	28	19
% of No-Shows & Cancellations	4.28%	7.28%	8.16%	4.1%	6.37%	4.31%
Average Riders Per hour	.61	1.25	1.91	2.37	2.44	2.33

**Data shows that there is a significant improvement in ridership with a decrease in percentage of no-shows and cancellations utilizing the On-Demand Services. If ridership trends were to continue to rise for On-Demand services, there is a little doubt that No-Shows/Cancellations would maintain at a minimum. Clients are more likely to keep appointments that are made same day as opposed to weeks in advance.

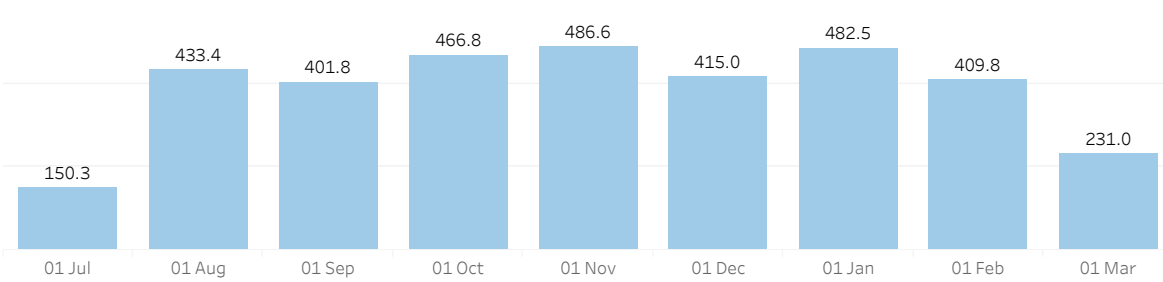
Based on the successes of the pilot program, The Rapid has begun the process of updating their antiquated scheduling software by executing a contract with a new company that not only increases paratransit efficiencies with advance software options, but has the capabilities of diversifying the services with On-Demand service.

Service Operations

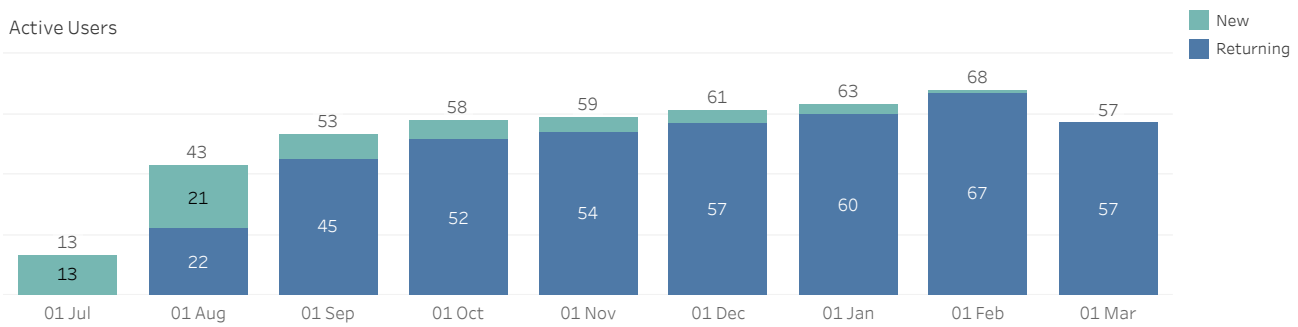
Requests



Driver Hours

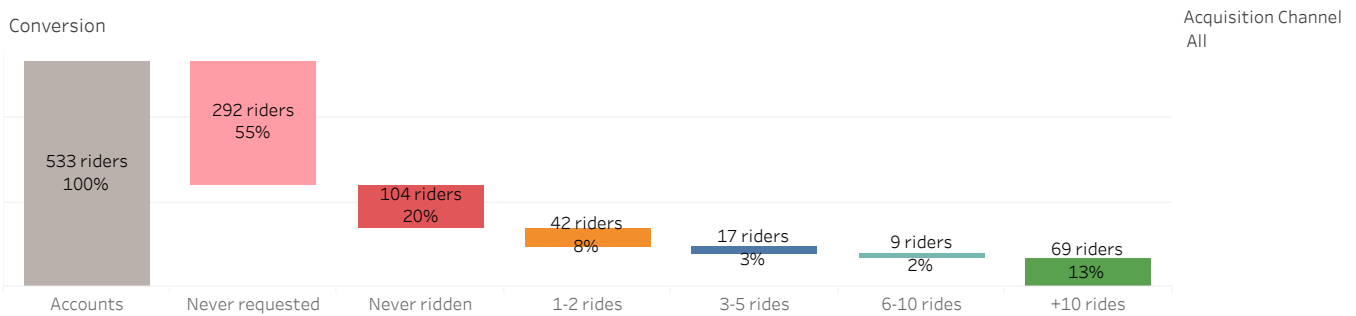


Active Users

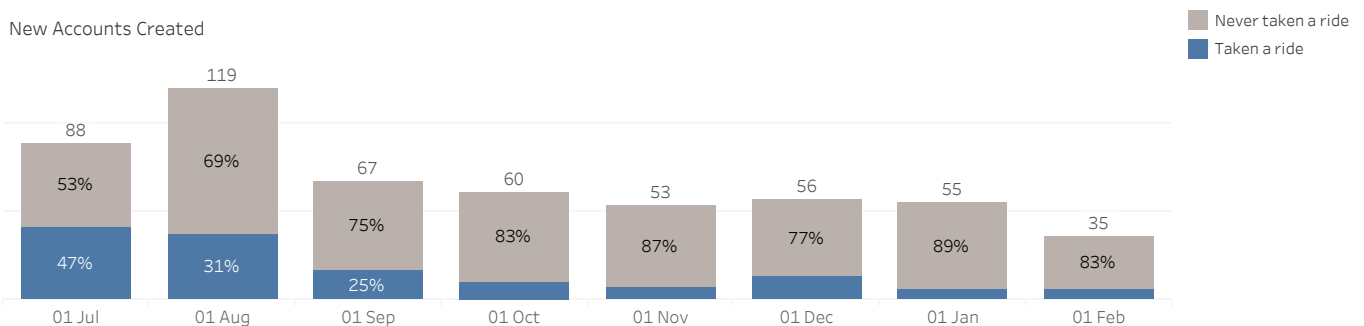


Rider Growth

Conversion



New Accounts Created

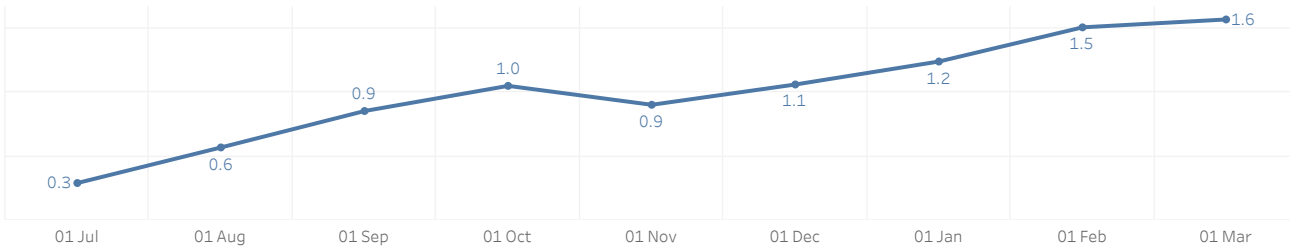


Date View
Month

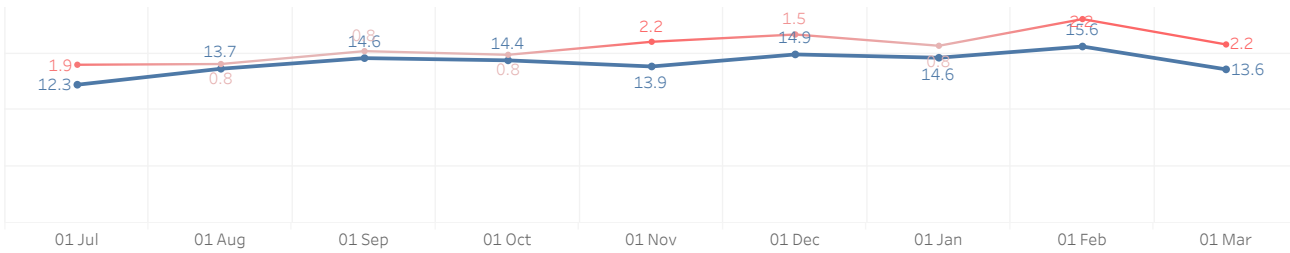
Days/Weeks/Months Back
8

Detailed Views
OFF

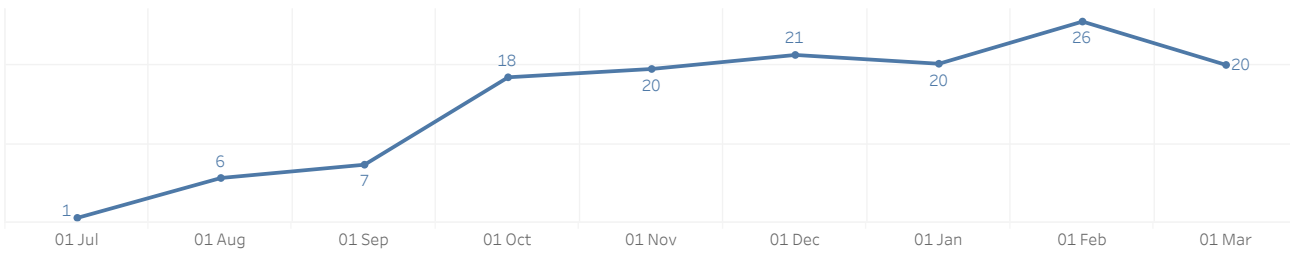
Utilization [passengers / driver hour]



Avg. Proposed ETA and Lateness [minutes]

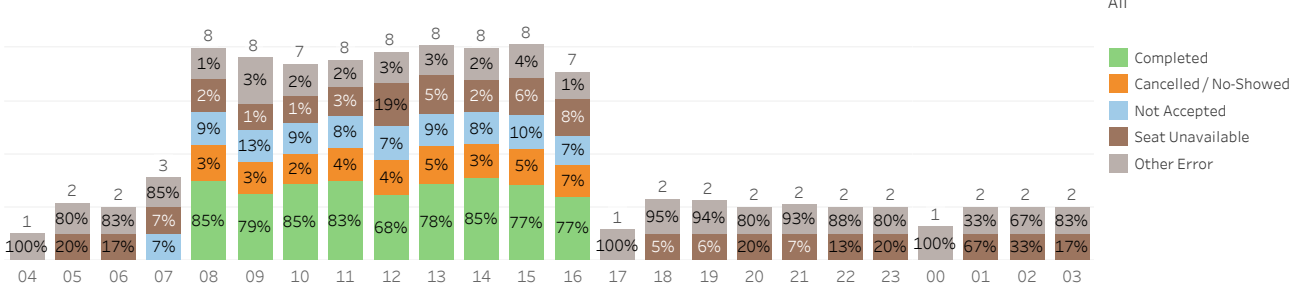


Avg. Walking Distance to Pickup [meters]



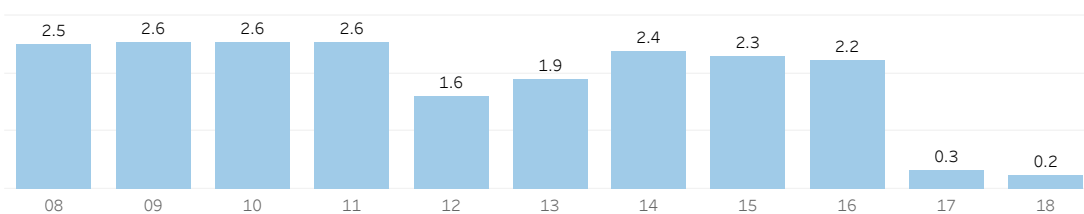
Hourly Averages

Avg. Requests per Hour



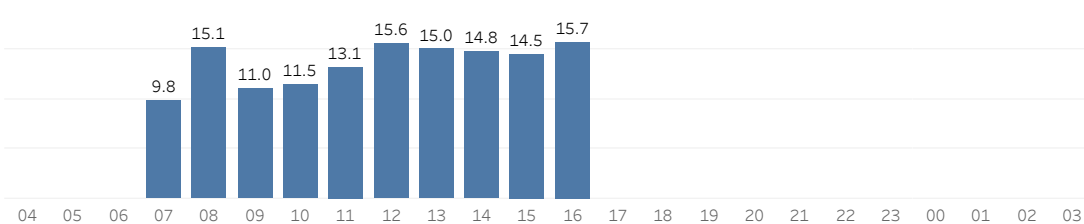
Weekday
All

Avg. Driver Hours per Hour



Weekday
All

Avg. Proposal ETA per Hour



Weekday
All