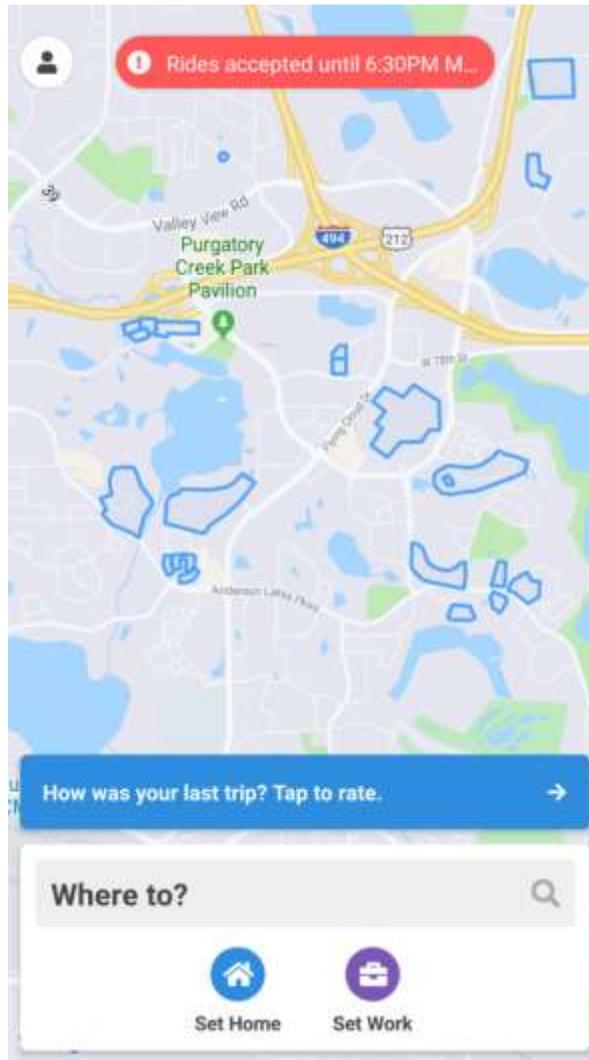




SouthWest Transit's Microtransit Service
MPTA 2021

SouthWest Transit (SWT) Overview

- ▶ Public transit provider for southwestern suburbs of Minneapolis - Eden Prairie, Chaska, Chanhassen, as well as Carver and Victoria (contracts).
- ▶ Governed by a commission consisting of six individuals appointed by the member cities and one rider representative.
- ▶ Suburban provider established by State Legislative action in 1983 due to the fact that the existing structure was not responsive or meeting the needs of the growing suburbs.
- ▶ SWT was formed in 1986.
- ▶ Pre-COVID: Operated over approximately 160 trips per day with 75 buses.
- ▶ Major routes bring commuters to Downtown Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota
- ▶ National leader in innovation, technology, and transit-oriented development.
- ▶ Provider of choice to many special events.
- ▶ Pre-COVID: Annually provided over 1.2 million rides.



WHAT IS SW PRIME?

- ▶ First of its kind shared ride microtransit service in Minnesota. Service began operating in 2015.
- ▶ The general public can request a ride on demand only within the SWT service area.
- ▶ Scheduling is allowed for out of service area trips to limited locations.
- ▶ Curb-to-curb service.
- ▶ Serves our entire service area plus select locations outside our service area.
- ▶ Scheduling software (Spare) used to book, batch, and route ride requests.
- ▶ Current Fares
 - ▶ General Public: \$4/ride
 - ▶ TAP/Senior Days: \$2/ride
 - ▶ Mall of America: \$6/ride
 - ▶ MSP Airport: \$8/ride
 - ▶ SW Prime MD: \$5/ride



SW PRIME FLEET



Prime Performance Pre-COVID

- ▶ Average Ride Time: 9.43 minutes
- ▶ Average Wait Time: 18.62 minutes
- ▶ Average Daily Riders: 378
- ▶ Average Trip Distance: 5 miles
- ▶ Passengers Per In-Service Hour: 2.29
- ▶ Peak Buses Used: 14
- ▶ Avg Subsidy Per Passenger: \$8.63
- ▶ Ride Booking Method
 - ▶ 65% Online
 - ▶ 35% Phone
- ▶ Customer Reviews: 4.8 out of 5
 - ▶ Ratings received immediately after completion of rides.



COVID-19 Impacts

- ▶ Immediate 75% drop in ridership.
 - ▶ Significant ridership loss of certain demographics - seniors and commuters.
- ▶ Software allowed us to immediately alter the service to allow for only one ride per vehicle.
- ▶ Reduced fares.
 - ▶ Essential workers - Free
 - ▶ Lowered standard fare to \$4/trip
 - ▶ Lowered Prime MD - \$5/trip
- ▶ Driver barriers installed on all vehicles.
- ▶ Passenger areas were sanitized after every trip and vehicles are sanitized after every run.
- ▶ SW Prime ridership had grown back faster than fixed route ridership.
 - ▶ Currently at 80% of pre-pandemic ridership.
- ▶ The pandemic required us to rethink the SW Prime service, which allowed for new services to immerge.

New Services

- ▶ Grocery Getter Service
 - ▶ \$2 rides to all grocery stores in the SW Prime service area.
 - ▶ 9am-12pm on weekdays - period of the day that had capacity on the system.
- ▶ Shakopee Service
 - ▶ \$4 rides to/from the majority of Shakopee including Mystic Lake, Valleyfair, and Canterbury Park.
 - ▶ Rides can be on-demand or scheduled (to promote batching).
 - ▶ Rides must originate or terminate in the SW Prime service area.
- ▶ 494 Service
 - ▶ Scheduled or on-demand service along the I-494 corridor between Eden Prairie and MSP Airport.
 - ▶ Rides must originate or terminate in the SW Prime service area.
 - ▶ Service includes Southdale Mall and Normandale Community College (\$4), Mall of America (\$6), and MSP Airport (\$8).
 - ▶ Airport rides can be scheduled 14 days in advance.
 - ▶ Park and Fly available at our Eden Prairie ramp (\$5/day).
- ▶ Free rides to COVID-19 vaccine sites.

Lessons Learned

- ▶ The Algorithm Is Important
 - ▶ Suburban vs. Urban
 - ▶ One size does not fit all
- ▶ Service Area - Don't Be Too Restrictive
- ▶ Operating On-Demand and Scheduled Rides Together Can Be Problematic
- ▶ Administration
 - ▶ Negative customer interactions has led to increased admin staff time
 - ▶ Less staff required compared to traditional Dial-a-Ride
 - ▶ Ensure proper fraud protections are in place
- ▶ Ridership Demographics Are Similar to Dial-a-Ride
- ▶ Don't let First Mile-Last Mile Be the Only Consideration
- ▶ No Standing Orders
- ▶ Microtransit Can Be the Public Transit Form of TNCs (Depending on service area characteristics)
 - ▶ Think Dial-a-Ride and Taxis
- ▶ Be Willing To Take Risks
 - ▶ Trial and error
 - ▶ Make changes on the fly



What's Next?

- Electric Vehicles (2022)
- Autonomous Demonstrations
- Suburb-to-Suburb Service
- Mobility as a Service (Microtransit/Fixed Route)