

Data – Ridership and Costs

Jail Transportation Pilot Background

The Jail Transportation Pilot started because individuals were having a difficult time getting home after their release from the Dakota County Jail in Hastings. Transportation options in Hastings are limited, and individuals were oftentimes walking or hitchhiking along Highway 55, waiting for days in the lobby for rides or loitering in local businesses.

The initial Jail Transportation Pilot began in July 2018 using the Metropolitan Council's TransitLink service. Two one-way trips from Hastings to Eagan and West St. Paul were provided each weekday at 1pm and 4pm. In trying to meet the need for early morning and later afternoon releases, the Pilot was expanded in January 2019 with two additional one-way shuttles (6:30am and 6:30pm) using Hastings-based taxi service, SmartRide.

DakotaLink started in September 2019 for a six-month pilot. Dakota County contracted with Hastings Bus Company to provide this service. DakotaLink operated as a loop transportation service between Hastings, Cedar Grove Transit Station in Eagan and Signal Hills Shopping Center in West St. Paul. It was intended to not only provide a transportation option to help connect individuals being released from jail to public transportation but also help those who needed to get to and from Hastings for court, to visit loved ones in jail, meet with probation officers or to attend a public health clinic.

In February 2020, the DakotaLink pilot was extended and the service was opened for community members to also ride. The intention to open it up to community ridership was both to increase ridership and to provide a benefit to the community by offering a transportation option for those commuting to and from Hastings or just going to the cities.

DakotaLink was suspended in March 2020 due to COVID-19 and was restarted in late June 2020 with a new contract with Hastings Bus Company. DakotaLink ended on March 24, 2021 due to low ridership, due to COVID-19.

The current iteration of the Jail Transportation Pilot began on March 25, 2021 using Lyft Concierge. Individuals being released from jail can call a phone number upon their release using a phone in the jail release vestibule. The call center representatives book them a ride on Lyft. The starting location is the Dakota County Judicial Center and their final destination can be up to 24 miles away, which will get individuals to locations anywhere in Dakota County or to a transit hub in Dakota County where individuals can connect with Metro Transit or MVTA transit service.

Data from the current iteration of the Jail Transportation Pilot using Lyft Concierge from March 25, 2021-August 30, 2022 is below.

Jail Transportation Pilot Data –

Riders can use Lyft to travel up to 24 miles from the Judicial Center, which will take them anywhere in Dakota County or to a transportation hub in Dakota County where they can take a bus to get them to their final destination.

Monthly Ridership totals, average cost/ride and average miles traveled from the Dakota County Judicial Center:

Month	Total Number of Rides Provided	Average Cost of a Ride	Average Miles Traveled/Ride
March 2021 (partial month)	13	\$ 31.25	20.4
April 2021	58	\$ 28.13	19.8
May 2021	56	\$ 27.26	19.5
June 2021	75	\$ 39.70	19.3
July 2021	70	\$ 54.06	20.9
August 2021	79	\$ 55.19	19.7
September 2021	67	\$ 55.57	19.3
October 2021	71	\$ 51.76	20.6
November 2021	75	\$ 48.23	19.7
December 2021	55	\$ 96.41	20.3
January 2022	56	\$ 77.11	19.4
February 2022	79	\$ 81.20	19.5
March 2022	94	\$ 89.49	19.5
April 2022	57	\$ 80.36	20.0
May 2022	96	\$ 86.59	19.7
June 2022	87	\$ 90.17	19.6
July 2022	135	\$ 84.95	20.1
August 2022	123	\$ 91.50	20.7
Total	1346	\$69.72	19.9

Released individuals are relieved to have a transportation option available after their release. Quotes from riders include:

- I don't know what I would have done without this program.
- I'd be stuck here.
- I would have had to hitchhike.
- I wouldn't be getting home.

Overall data reported from individuals on how they would have gotten home if the pilot was not available is below:

Transportation Option	Percent of Riders who report they would have used this option without the pilot
Taxi/Uber/Lyft	3%
Bus	3%
Hitchhike	3%
Call Family/Friend	13%
Walk	21%
No other transportation/not sure	57%

The previous version of the Jail Transportation Pilot (DakotaLink) had a fixed monthly cost, which made the per trip cost high, especially during COVID when trips were less frequent. Since Lyft's costs are per actual trip taken, the cost/rider is lower. Average costs/Lyft ride have increased since December 2021 due to a driver shortage and increased demand for Lyft. It is unclear whether the costs of Lyft will come down again. Additionally, the jail population is increasing, which may mean additional trips

Costs/rider throughout Jail Transportation Pilot (including DakotaLink and Lyft Concierge):

Month/Year	Total Number of Riders	Average Cost/Rider	DakotaLink or Lyft Concierge
September 2019	32	\$ 317	DakotaLink
October 2019	91	\$ 111	DakotaLink
November 2019	115	\$ 88	DakotaLink
December 2019	71	\$ 142	DakotaLink
January 2020	65	\$ 156	DakotaLink
February 2020	57	\$ 177	DakotaLink
March 2020	30	\$ 338	DakotaLink
April 2020	0	0	N/A
May 2020	0	0	N/A
June 2020	0	0	N/A
July 2020	20	\$ 507	DakotaLink
August 2020	11	\$ 922	DakotaLink
September 2020	27	\$ 375	DakotaLink
October 2020	17	\$ 596	DakotaLink
November 2020	32	\$ 317	DakotaLink
December 2020	32	\$ 317	DakotaLink
January 2021	29	\$ 349	DakotaLink
February 2021	34	\$ 298	DakotaLink
March 2021 (partial month)	34	\$ 298	DakotaLink
March 2021 (partial month)	13	\$ 31.25	Lyft

April 2021	58	\$ 28.13	Lyft
May 2021	56	\$ 27.26	Lyft
June 2021	75	\$ 39.70	Lyft
July 2021	70	\$ 54.06	Lyft
August 2021	79	\$ 55.19	Lyft
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