



## Information Update – Mobility-on-Demand Pilot

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**To:** Chair and Board of Directors  
**Through:** President/CEO Inez P. Evans  
**From:** Senior Director of Strategic Planning Brooke Thomas  
**Date:** August 4, 2023

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### MOBILITY-ON-DEMAND, PROOF-OF-CONCEPT PILOT

#### BACKGROUND:

In March 2021, as part of IndyGo's most recent comprehensive operational analysis (COA) and review of the network redesign, a project team made up of IndyGo staff and consultants designed a proof-of-concept pilot to explore the possibility of restructuring or replacing low performing fixed-route bus service within a designated area.

After developing a transit propensity index and creating a composite density analysis to identify potential pilot areas, the COA project team chose the area southeast of Downtown Indianapolis as the pilot area, and defined the primary use cases as follows:

1. Getting people to and from higher-frequency bus routes, such as the Red Line or Route 8/future Blue Line.
2. Accommodating trips that IndyGo cannot physically reach with local bus service.
3. Accommodating trips that IndyGo doesn't currently serve very well either because the bus service doesn't operate frequently enough or because the bus service is non-existent at certain times of the day (e.g., mid-day).

Success was defined in several ways throughout the years' long process. Objectives included:

- Obtaining data and information to determine whether the type of mobility-on-demand service we were envisioning could be developed, and to see if it was possible to test the feasibility of replacing low performing fixed-route bus service.
- Answering the questions, "Will our customers use it? How will they use it? Who is using it?" And "Does all of this fit within our overall strategy to be able to right-size our services going forward?"
- Offering IndyGo's core riders another way to travel within the zone.

In December 2021, using unspent purchased transportation dollars, IndyGo competitively procured Via's turnkey, mobility-as-a-service suite of services to perform the pilot where Via provided the operators, vehicles, mobile-app, customer call center, business intelligence tool used for reporting, marketing and outreach support, and more. The service officially launched on May 11, 2022. Branded as *IndyGo Connect*, this service was designed to be available to anyone who wanted to travel within the zone, or to and from the zone. The only technology the customer was required to have was the ability to receive SMS text messages after calling in to book their ride over the phone; however, most customers used their smartphone to access the mobile application.

While much attention was paid by staff to design a service that would not compete with IndyGo's fixed-route bus service, preliminary analysis of the data shows that there were very few (~25) active riders who rode often (>5 times per week on average). Between May 2022 and May 2023, there were approximately 10,500 completed trips. Between 20-30% of these trips could have been made by single seat ride on a bus because both the origin and destination were

within ¼-mile of one of IndyGo's existing routes. The same data shows that between 40-50% of these trips could have been made with a two-seat ride (i.e., one bus transfer).

Final evaluation of the proof-of-concept can be summarized as follows:

**Goal 1: Attract New Riders to IndyGo**

Partially met goal with attractive customer performance metrics

**Goal 2: Maximize IndyGo's Fixed Route Service**

Failed to meet goal by competing with fixed-route bus service

**Goal 3: Identify Partnership Opportunities for Alternative Mobility**

Met goal by enhancing IndyGo's understanding of the partner landscape

**Goal 4: Improve the Customer Experience**

Partially met goal by providing riders a low cost, convenient travel option

**Goal 5: Enhance Central Indiana's Mobility on Demand Ecosystem**

Partially met goal by temporarily standing up a new service delivery model, and obtaining lessons learned for future iterations

**Goal 6: Provide a Cost-Effective Service Compared to Fixed Route**

Failed to meet goal because it did not effectively produce shared rides and could not be sustained over many years

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive the report.

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