



dial-a-ride

Options



# How It Began

- **Idea:** Utilize Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) to supplement overburdened paratransit services with same day transportation options.
- **Goal:** Add transportation flexibility and improve customer satisfaction for paratransit clients.

**April 2022:** On-Demand Pilot Program approved by City of Tallahassee City Commission.

**July 2023:** Uber contract finalized, Innovative Services and Development Grant awarded for FY 2023–2024.

**Aug 2023:** Beta Testing started with select customers and Uber.

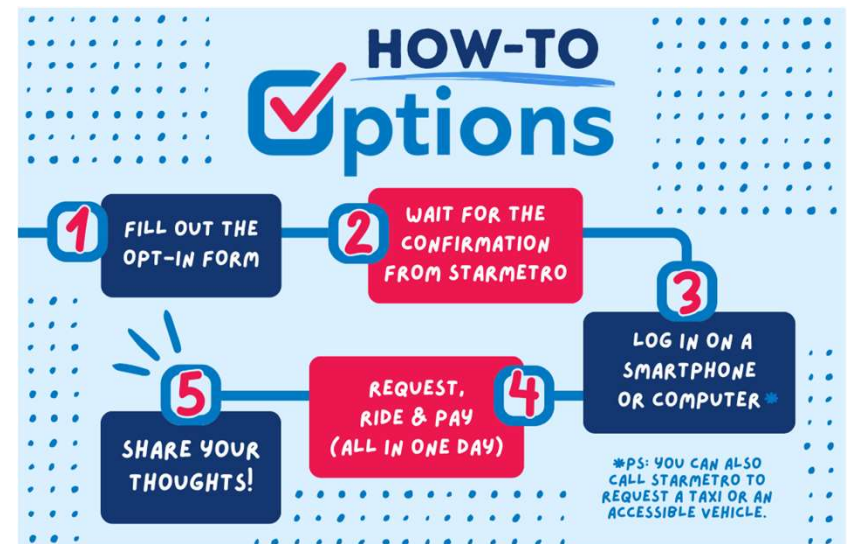
**April 2024:** Program is in **Soft Launch** and applying for a second year of funding.



# Program Basics

## Current Dial-A-Ride customers...

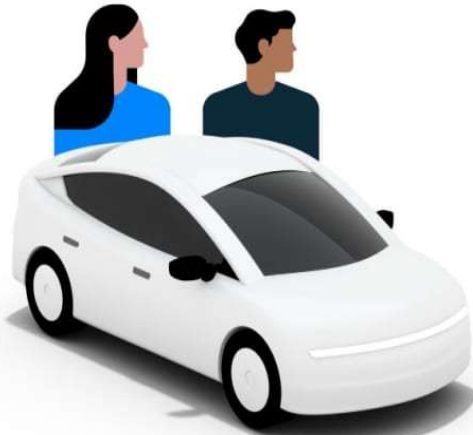
- Opt-in with approval from StarMetro
- Download ride hailing app from participating TNC
- Connect or create an account
- Request their own rides as-needed
- Pay the regular **\$2.50** + fares above approved subsidy
- Participants with wheelchairs or without smart phones call Customer Service



# Program Statistics

*6 months = 1,831 Uber rides*

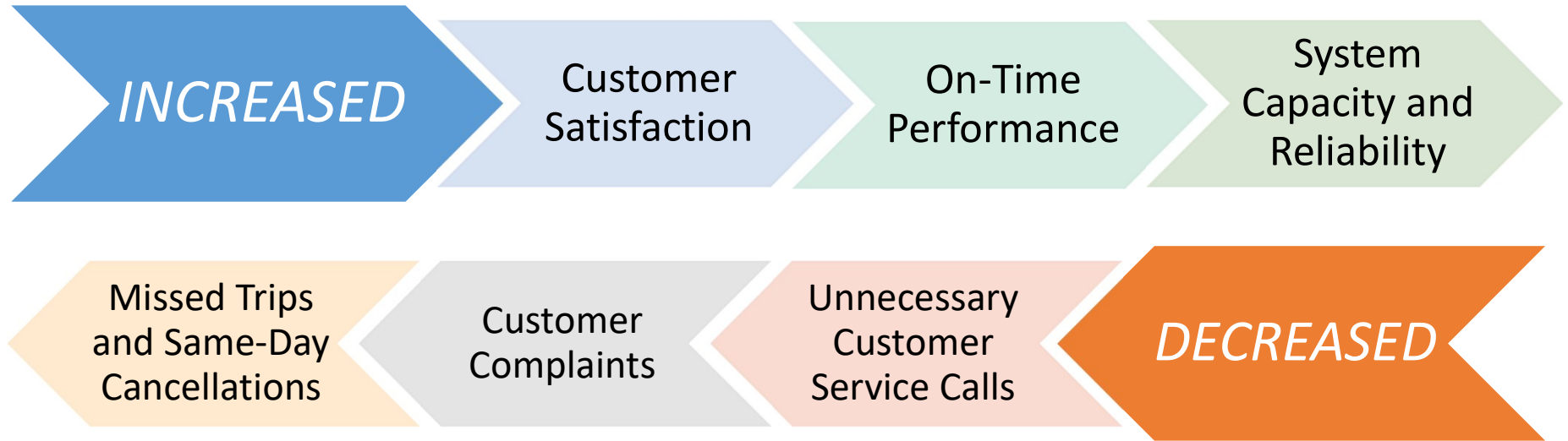
**46 current participants**



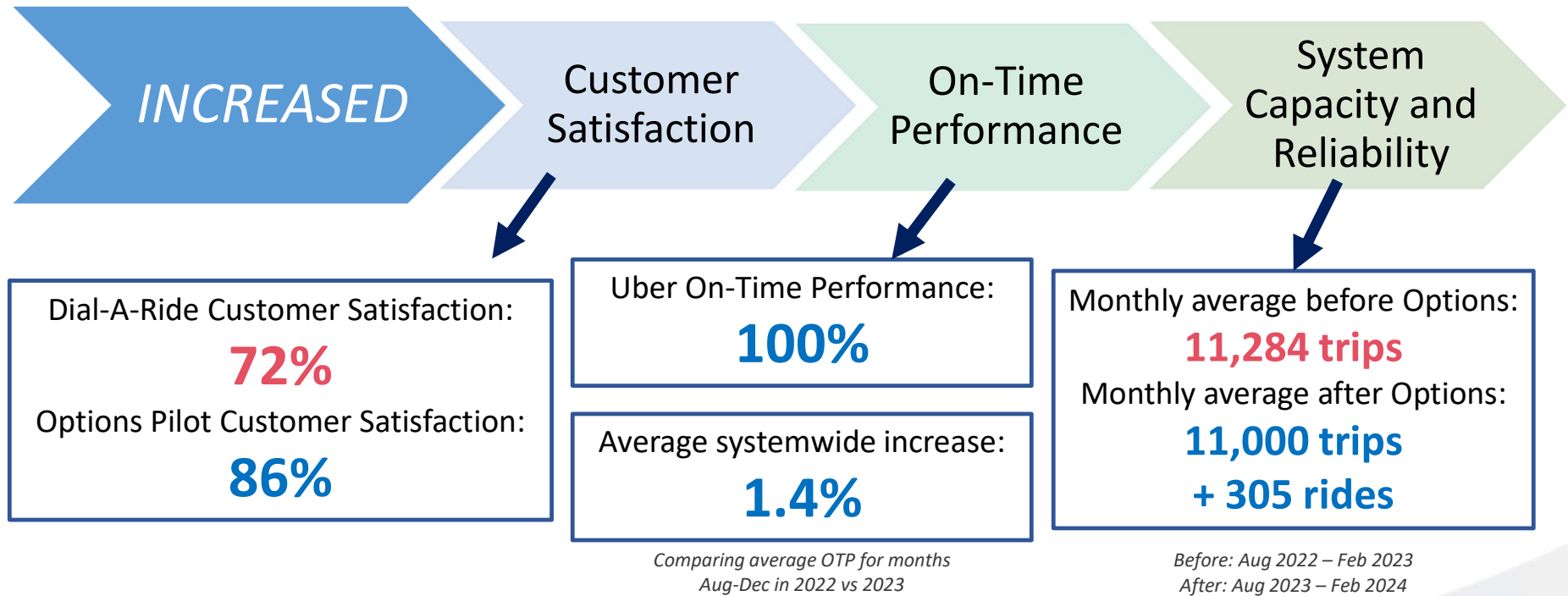
- Average cost to StarMetro per ride is **\$12**
- Customer pays base **\$2.50** fare for 80% of rides
- About 30 rides per month billed to ISD
- Remaining rides come out of general funds

**Participants take 25% less trips on traditional paratransit when Uber rides are available.**

# Pilot Expectations



# Actual Pilot Impact



# Customer Feedback

**"This program is a godsend.** It allows for the sudden life needs and wants that those who are able to provide their own transportation are able to enjoy and from which they benefit... I feel almost equal on the road to sighted peers."

**"I can't begin to thank you enough** for allowing me to be a part of the beta testing in the options program. Personally, I was able to make it to an unexpected medical appointment, accomplish some absolutely necessary time-sensitive banking, and even go to lunch with a friend."

**"Options is a miracle service** for which many of us have been dreaming about and it has finally arrived. It certainly prevents a great deal of stress. More independence!"



# Lessons Learned

## Start Early

Legal for both parties takes time.

## All Contracts are not Equal

There are benefits and pitfalls of leveraging existing contracts.

## Work Closely with Other City Departments

Determine budgeting requirements in advance.

## The Devil is in the Details

TNC's do not fall under federal or local authority and do not like to provide data, even when required by contract.

## Verify Funding Beforehand

For the above reason, not all grants and agencies are willing to fund TNC trips.

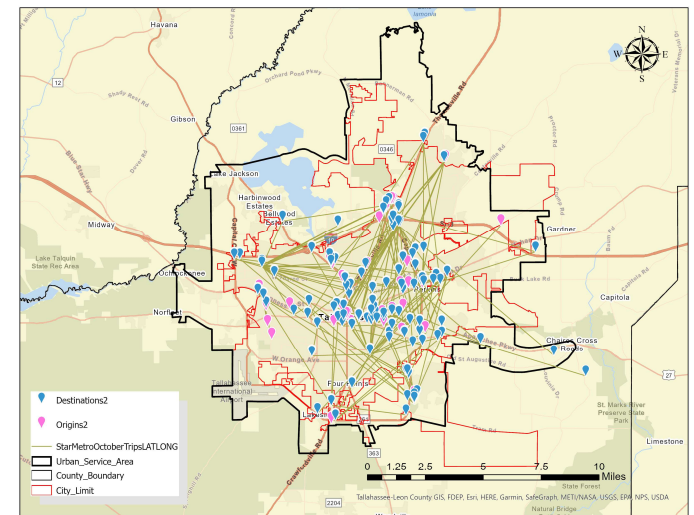




# Invoice Reconciliation

## TNCs & Data

- **Uber for Business** portal is easy to use and StarMetro can download ride data on demand.
- The **ISD grant** invoice accommodates Latitude and Longitude location data. There is a cost associated with converting addresses in bulk through ARCGIS.
- Will Latitude/Longitude location data continue to be acceptable outside of the ISD grant for a long-term program?



# Program Sustainability

- ❑ **Change program parameters and marketing** to control growth:
  - Six months of DAR eligibility
  - Monthly same day ride allowance
- ❑ **Streamline program management and policy enforcement:**
  - Standardize customer communications
  - Test new **Uber for Business** features
- ❑ **Plan for permanency:**
  - Issue **combined RFP** that integrates same day service into the standard transportation provider contract
  - Include same day paratransit in StarMetro's **long-term technology plan**





# Next Steps!

## Continued Soft Launch

- Collect participant feedback
- Fine-tune program parameters
- New participants by referral

## Full Program Launch

- Mass-mailed invite emails and letters
- Brochures
- Earned media
- Social media
- Word of Mouth