

# Case study: mobile ticketing

St. Catharines  
Transit Commission

# Background

The St. Catharines Transit Commission runs the local bus system serving the city of St. Catharines, Ontario, and the greater Niagara Region, with over 5 million riders annually. In 2014, St. Catharines Transit was the first North American agency to make Transit its official app for real-time passenger information and trip planning. Today, over 18,000 St. Catharines riders use the app every month, and over half of St. Catharines riders will open the app on an average weekday.

St. Catharines was interested in mobile ticketing as a way to make it easier for riders to purchase fares, but wanted to proceed carefully to make sure riders would embrace this new feature.



**Rather than asking our users to download a brand new app to buy tickets, we figured we could leverage Transit's existing popularity. We expected our riders would be thrilled to be able to purchase tickets with the app they were already using to get around St. Catharines.**

**Tim Luey**

Manager of Transportation,  
St. Catharines Transit Commission

# The challenge

Why was a new fare payment option important for St. Catharines Transit? Riders using exact change at onboard fareboxes faced an inconvenient payment process, and cash payment delayed trips by extending dwell times at busy stops.

Instead of investing millions into new fareboxes, or waiting for a more complex regional smart card system, St. Catharines saw a mobile ticketing pilot as a quick and low-risk approach to improve fare collection.

Photo: Wikimedia Commons



## Solution

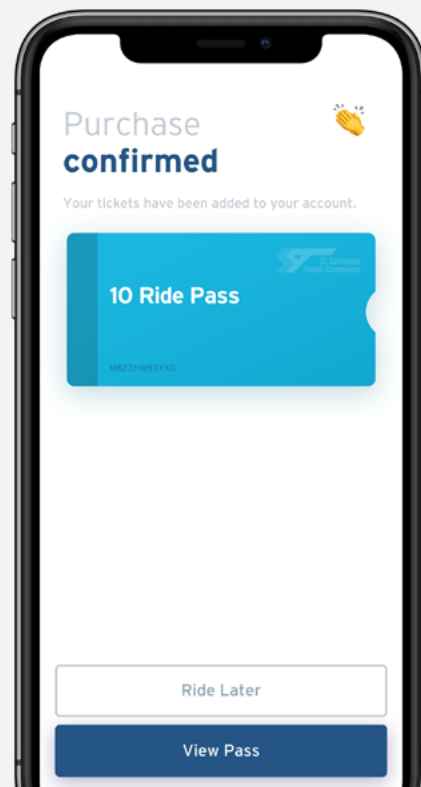
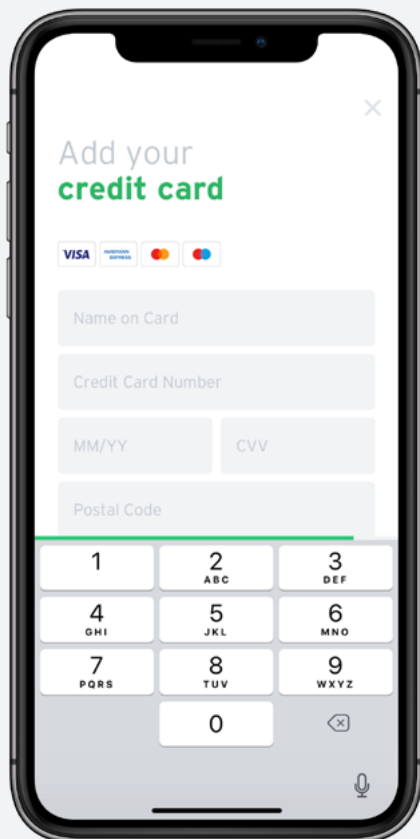
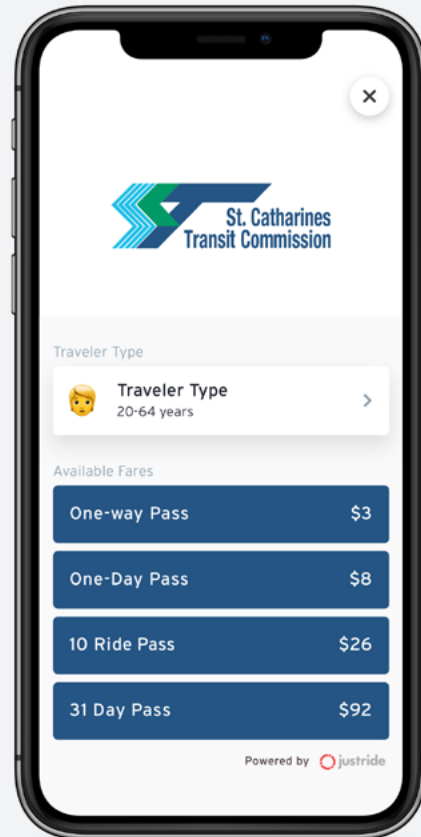
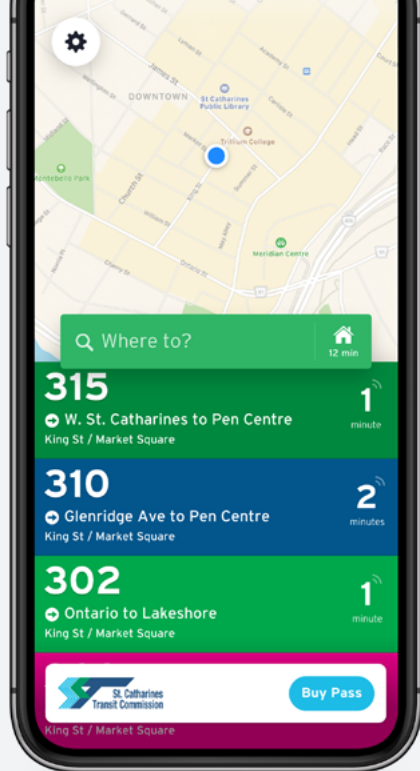
St. Catharines had two priorities for mobile payment: the agency wanted one integrated app where riders could both plan and pay for trips, and it wanted a quick and nimble pilot rather than an overly prescriptive procurement.

The agency deployed a solution powered by Masabi's Justride SDK, a software development kit that allows the industry-leading mobile ticketing provider to seamlessly integrate with Transit. To remain flexible and reduce upfront costs, St. Catharines launched with mobile tickets that require no on-board infrastructure. This allowed bus drivers to visually validate tickets at launch, with the option to add scanners at a later date.

Riders could now buy, store, and use tickets with the same app they already use to plan trips. Transit's existing popularity meant riders could quickly discover mobile ticketing, allowing St. Catharines to drive widespread adoption instead of waiting for riders to download a new app.

Transit's millions of users in the US and Canada, including existing users from the Greater Toronto Area, or tourists coming to the Niagara Region, could now easily buy St. Catharines tickets without downloading a new app. And Transit's existing payment integrations with bikesharing, ridehailing, and carsharing services in other cities meant that St. Catharines was well positioned to offer broader capabilities to its riders over time.





## Initial results

After a successful closed beta with a few dozen users, St. Catharines launched mobile ticketing to all customers in April 2019. Initial launch marketing was done solely from within the app: Transit sent push notifications about the ticketing launch to thousands of local users, and displayed a prominent banner on the app home screen.

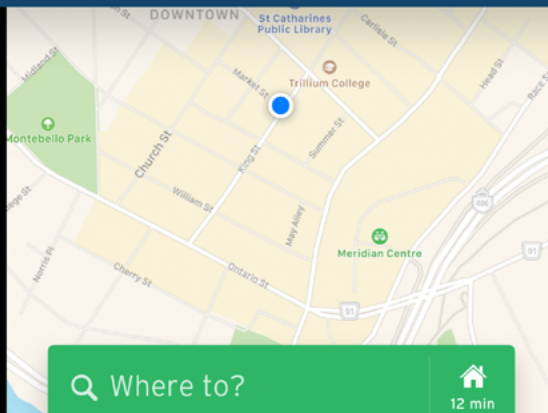
Transit's existing reach meant that potential users could quickly discover mobile ticketing. After three days, before any other marketing went live, about 2 percent of St. Catharines riders who did not already have a university-provided pass were purchasing tickets through Transit. **After little more than a month, that number reached approximately 7 percent.**

Among these early sales, 56 percent of transactions were for single-ride tickets, showing that in addition to supporting regular commuters, the integration makes it simple for occasional riders to access transit service. With a larger marketing push planned, St. Catharines is confident that mobile ticketing will become even more popular among its riders.

### MOBILE TICKETING ADOPTION



YES! Buy St. Catharines Transit bus tickets here  
Tap to learn how it works



Where to?

12 min

**315**

W. St. Catharines to Pen Centre  
King St / Market Square

1  
minute

**310**

Glenridge Ave to Pen Centre  
King St / Market Square

2  
minutes

**302**

Ontario to Lakeshore  
King St / Market Square

1  
minute



Buy ticket

King St / Market Square



Interested?

Email **partners@transit.app** to bring  
mobile ticketing to your city.