

Rideshare in Chicago During COVID-19

Nathalie P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Improvement at UIC

October 05, 2021

Executive Summary

Rideshare trips decreased by 62 million (55%) in 2020 compared to 2019. From late March 2020 onwards, only 27 million rideshare trips were taken in Chicago, about 60 million fewer trips compared to the same period in 2019.

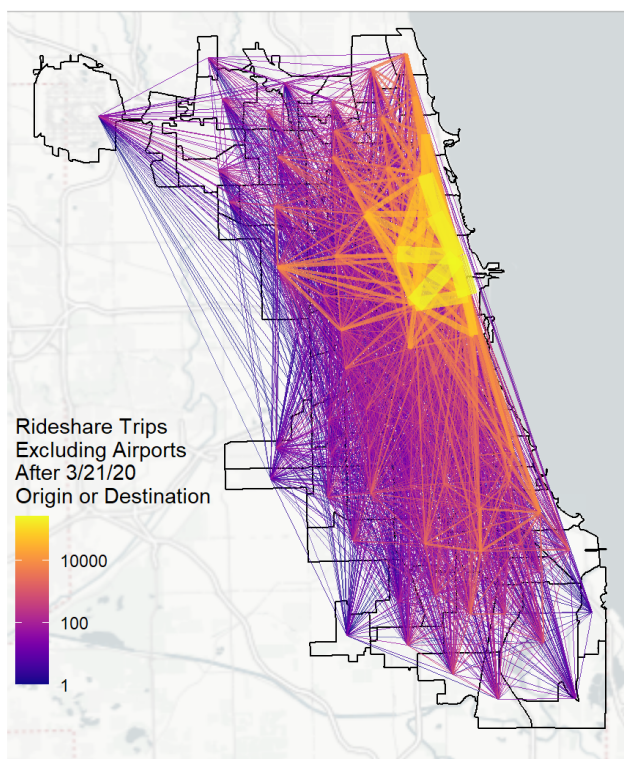
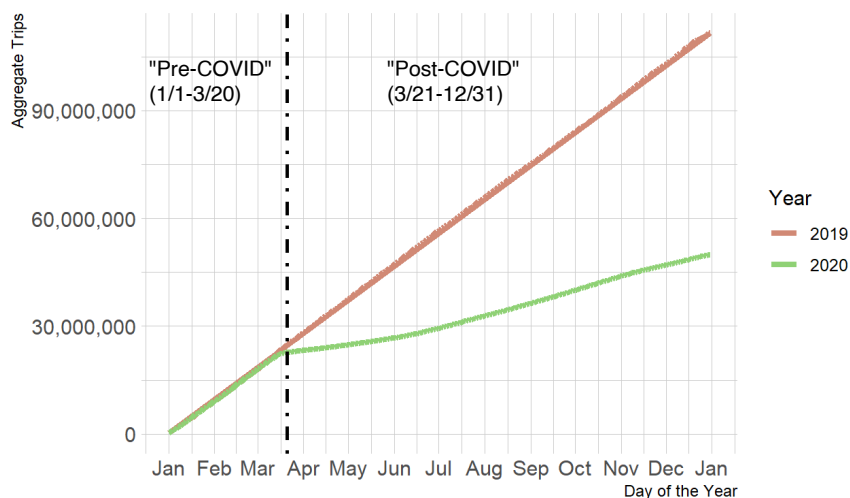
Weekday trips shifted to the afternoon, and average trip duration fell by 3 minutes (-15%), but average trip distance and fare remained unchanged.

Trip origins and destinations were mostly unchanged. Excluding airport trips (6%-9% of all trips), the most common rides were short trips to and from the Loop and nearby areas. In both 2019 and 2020, the top 3 Community Areas (The Loop, Near North Side, and Near West Side) accounted for over 40% of all rideshare trips within the city.

While few rideshare trips were made on the South and West Sides compared to other parts of the city, rideshare trip behavior was less affected during the pandemic. For example, one Census Tract in the West Side neighborhood of Austin was middle of the pack for trip pickups in 2019 (56th percentile). Pickups were almost cut in half in 2020, but the tract qualified as one of the more active pickup spots in the city (75th percentile).

The number of active drivers completing 1+ trip per month decreased by 45,000 (-64%) after the Stay-at-Home Order went into effect. This trend was also paired by a large increase in the number of inactive drivers, defined as those who completed zero trips despite being eligible to drive in Chicago that month. During this period, a higher percentage of drivers were inactive (64%) compared to 2019 (34%). A higher percentage of trips (+7%) were made by drivers with over a year's experience, both before and after the Stay-at-Home Order went into effect.

Compared to 2019, rideshare trips fell by 61,606,932 (-55%) in 2020



Active drivers per month declined starting in March 2020, bottoming out at 17,000 in April. The number of active drivers remained below 50% of 2019 levels.

