The Jule's Journey to Reliable, Data-Driven Transit

ABOUT THE AGENCY

The Jule, Dubuque, Iowa's public transit system, serves over ~100,200 metro-area residents, including K–12 students, college students, seniors, and riders with accessibility needs. Managing such a diverse ridership requires strategic planning and strong data insights. The agency adopted a data-driven approach to improve service reliability and efficiency, guided by the belief that transit is about "giving people the gift of more time," which starts with designing smarter, more responsive routes. By implementing Streets ITS fixed-route software, the Jule transitioned from manual processes to a CAD/AVL system that enabled real-time vehicle tracking, automated dispatching, and digital data collection. This shift delivered immediate time savings, improved route planning, and a more dependable transit experience for the community.

Highlight 1

"We only needed a month's worth of data to begin restructuring our routes and optimizing schedules."

Highlight 2

"Reporting is amazing versus your [TripSpark's] closest competitor. With theirs, you can't tweak or drilldown to the data you need. Streets reporting is uncomplicated."

THE CHALLENGE

- **Disconnected Routes:** Buses often failed to reach key transfer stations, making connections unreliable and inefficient.
- **Underutilized Resources:** Some buses ran nearly empty while others were overcrowded, leading to poor resource allocation.
- **Extended Travel Times:** Trips that should have taken 30 minutes were stretching to 90, frustrating riders and reducing service appeal.
- **Heavy Reliance on Paratransit**: Limited fixed-route coverage increased dependence on costlier paratransit services in underserved areas.
- **Manual Operations Burden:** Paper-based scheduling and dispatching consumed valuable staff time, diverting attention from rider support and service improvements.

THE SOLUTION

- **Robust Reporting Capabilities:** TripSpark's fixed-route software enabled The Jule to generate custom ridership and fare reports, offering deep visibility into passenger behaviour.
- **Data-Driven Scheduling:** With access to detailed stop-level data, The Jule could identify low-traffic zones and reduce unnecessary mileage, improving route efficiency.
- **Passenger Insights:** The system allowed analysis of rider types, students, faculty, staff, and citizens, helping tailor services to meet specific community needs.
- **Precision Planning:** Drill-down reporting supported informed decisions that minimized service disruptions for riders who rely on transit the most.
- **Collaborative Partnership:** TripSpark worked closely with The Jule to ensure the software was effectively applied, delivering operational improvements within budget.

> *"What we can get from Streets ITS is pretty robust for our needs."*
> *– Director of Transit Operations*

THE RESULTS

- **Operational Efficiency:** Transition to a hub-and-spoke system and optimized bus usage led to a $100,000 budget reduction while maintaining or improving service quality.
- **Improved Rider Experience:** Enhanced stop locations and reduced trip times encouraged more elderly and able riders to use fixed-route services over paratransit.
- **Data-Driven Safety Enhancements:** Analysis identified high-risk stop locations (e.g., a problematic parking lot), enabling safer placements and reduced operating expenses.
- **Credibility with City Council:** Demonstrated success and savings through data-supported scheduling decisions strengthened trust and support from the city council.