



The City of Plymouth Train App

The Problem

- The City of Plymouth is completely bisected by railroad crossings
- Wait times of 20 minutes are not unusual
- First responders lose valuable time waiting for a train to clear
- Parents picking up children may be up to 20 minutes late
- The railroad is under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, leaving the city powerless to regulate train speed, length or time of crossing

The Idea

- What if we could devise a system that would provide notice when a crossing was blocked to increase the safety and convenience of our residents and visitors?
- What if we could partner with the private sector to tap into their resources for mutual benefit?

The Solution

- Partnering with a private innovation team, the City of Plymouth developed a phone app that gives real time information about blocked railroad crossings and when the crossings are clear
- The user can set times of the day and days of the week they would like to receive notices, however, users can check a crossing's status at any time
- Notices are automatically sent by the app – no user interaction is necessary
- A live video feed can provide additional information, such as if a train has stopped on the tracks
- An algorithm was used to predict the likelihood of encountering a train to help users avoid being in the area during particularly busy times

The Reaction

Social media comments within the first several hours of the app going live:

- “It’s like the universe heard me two weeks ago after I was held up for more than a half hour on Saturday trying to pick up my daughter from swim.”
- “This is life changing!”
- “Whoever came up with this idea deserves a medal.”
- “Literally the bane of my existence. Thank you!”
- “This is amazing!”
- “I got written up once for taking a two-hour lunch because I was stuck by the train.”

The Future

- The City of Plymouth and the private innovation team are working on the technology and infrastructure to expand the app to all crossings within our borders
- Other communities have already contacted us to learn how they can replicate our program