



ViaAlgo Update: Increased routing flexibility for faster pick-ups and better efficiency

What's new

We're making a small but impactful change to the way ViaAlgo (Via's automatic scheduling engine) schedules and routes rides in on-demand services.

How ViaAlgo works today:

When a rider (let's call him Sam) requests a ride for "Now", ViaAlgo assesses all vehicles and rides in the system and assigns him to an available seat, considering the best option for your overall service efficiency and the best pickup time for Sam. Let's say that the seat isn't available until 20 minutes from now. Sam receives an ETA of 20 minutes. On the backend, in the VOC, you see a 6-minute "window" surrounding this communicated pickup time - e.g., 9:00am-9:06am (reminder: riders never see this window).

Today, ViaAlgo is not "allowed" to re-assign Sam's ride if that assignment would be outside of that "window", *even if* that reassignment would result in an earlier pickup. This limits flexibility and opportunities for you to deliver speedier pick-ups for your riders.

What will change:

When riders request a ride for "Now" - they want to get picked up ASAP. This algorithm update makes that happen whenever possible. When this update happens, ViaAlgo will now be allowed to re-assign riders to an earlier pickup time, even if it means they get picked up outside of the "window" visible to you in the VOC.

What might this look like in real life? Let's return to Sam. If the rider in front of him cancels their trip, ViaAlgo will now be allowed to send the vehicle to pick Sam up ASAP, rather than waiting for his original "window". This means: a faster pickup for Sam, less waiting around for drivers, and allows each vehicle to serve more riders per hour (read: better efficiency).

As always, Sam will receive real-time ETAs right in the app.

What you will see:

You may see more rides might be marked as "early" in the VOC, now that we are allowing the algorithm to send vehicles earlier than the "commitment window".

**What you (and your riders) will experience:**

In the dozens of Via-powered services where we've piloted this change, we've seen positive rider feedback and improved metrics (like higher utilization).

Please note:

1. These changes only apply to rides being requested for as soon as possible. Pre-scheduled rides are not affected.
2. Riders and Drivers do not see a difference in booking a ride or how pickup times are communicated in the App. Riders might notice a difference for, for instance, being picked up earlier than initially communicated. But this will be communicated to them in the app.
3. You will still see a 6 minute window in the VOC for these rides, for now. A future update will remove this window to reduce any confusion.
4. As your Via service is still a shared service, ViaAlgo may also add additional pickups before picking up the initial rider, but will only do this if this adds no more than a slight delay to the estimated pickup time, and the additional rider is on a similar route.