Micro Mobility Hub Pilot

Testing practical urban infrastructure for app-based delivery riders in Cape Town

Final Report, 30 April 2026

local south

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Centre for Transport Studies

LANGA BICYCLE HUB

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Acknowledgements

This project was conducted by Local South in partnership with the University of Cape Town's Centre for Transport Studies and the Langa Bicycle Hub in South Africa.

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UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
FCDO leads the United Kingdom's international development and diplomatic engagements, supporting global efforts to reduce poverty, strengthen institutions, and build climate resilience. FCDO provided the grant funding for this project.

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1. Executive Summary

Cape Town, like many cities around the world, is experiencing rapid growth in app-based delivery by two- and three-wheeled vehicles. This form of micro-mobility delivery has become part of everyday urban life, providing convenience for customers, new markets for businesses and income opportunities for riders. At the same time, it has created new pressures on streets, sidewalks, parking bays and shopfronts.

The Micro-Mobility Hub Pilot was developed as a practical response to this emerging challenge. The pilot tested whether simple, well-managed spaces could improve working conditions for delivery riders while also supporting better use and management of public space.

The pilot was led by Local South in partnership with the University of Cape Town's Centre for Transport Studies and the Langa Bicycle Hub, with financial and strategic support from the FCDO. It tested three dedicated spaces for delivery riders in Cape Town, providing basic amenities including seating, shade, water, Wi-Fi, phone charging, toilet access where possible, demarcated parking and on-site support.

Photo by Ashraf Hendricks

The pilot was designed as a learning-by-doing process. Because micro-mobility delivery is still an emerging urban issue, research is limited and policy responses are still developing. The purpose of the pilot was therefore not to deliver a final solution, but to test a practical intervention, generate new knowledge, and create a stronger basis for future planning, regulation and partnerships.

The preliminary findings confirm the scale and complexity of the issue. Survey data from 241 riders shows a young, predominantly male and largely migrant workforce. Riders reported long and demanding working patterns, averaging 13 hours per day and six days per week. Most riders rely on rental motorcycles, which leads to very small earnings after paying for rental fees.

The pilot also showed that location is decisive. Where hubs were placed close to areas where riders were already gathering, use was strong. The City Centre hub recorded the highest growth and rider volumes, reaching peaks of around 40 riders per hour in the later weeks of the pilot. Rondebosch showed steady use. Observatory, where the hub was located slightly away from established waiting areas, saw limited uptake. This confirmed that even small distances matter when deciding where to place this type of infrastructure.

Trust also emerged as a critical factor. Some riders immediately understood and used the hubs, while others were unsure of the purpose of the intervention or suspicious of free services. Building trust required time, clear communication, repeated engagement and a visible operational presence on site. The role of the Langa Bicycle Hub was crucial in this respect, not only in managing the hubs, but in helping riders understand and feel comfortable using them.

The pilot demonstrated that micro-mobility delivery is a multi-sectoral issue. This creates a governance challenge, because no single actor currently has full responsibility for the problem or the mandate to address it alone. Platforms, retailers, property owners, residents, improvement districts, civic organisations and the City are all affected, but responses remain fragmented. The pilot helped move the issue from general concern to practical problem-solving and local government agreed to extend the permit for the CBD by two additional months to continue gathering intelligence as winter sets in.

Lessons have highlighted the potential for a future phase that tests a small network of core hubs and satellite points across Cape Town. They could complement the type of hub tested during this pilot, offering lighter-touch infrastructure such as demarcated parking, shade, seating or charging. Over time, these spaces could also support electric vehicle charging, maintenance, rider support and small enterprise opportunities. The pilot was small, but it confirmed that micro-mobility delivery is now part of Cape Town's urban system, and a coordinated response is paramount.

Photo by Chris Kets

2. Background and Rationale

The growth of micro mobility deliveries in Cape Town is visible on the streets and other public spaces. They form part of a new, decentralised system of urban freight movement that relies on thousands of individual riders moving between restaurants, shops, customers and waiting points throughout the day.

This has created new pressures on sidewalks, parking bays, shopfronts, and other informal waiting areas. Riders often have no access to basic facilities while working. Many are unable to use the toilets or seating areas of the businesses they serve. Some wait for long hours in exposed conditions, without shelter, water, charging facilities or a safe place to rest.

This creates a difficult situation for everyone involved. Riders work in poor conditions. Businesses and restaurants experience congestion outside their premises. Residents and pedestrians complain about blocked sidewalks, noise, and disorder. City officials are placed under pressure to respond, often through enforcement.

The Micro-Mobility Hub Pilot emerged from the recognition that Cape Town needed a practical way to understand and respond to this issue. The aim was not to design a perfect long-term solution from the outset. Rather, the pilot was intended as a "living lab" to test ideas, generate evidence, reveal operational challenges, and show public and private sector stakeholders what a more coordinated response might look like.

In 2025, Local South partnered with UCT's Centre for Transport Studies to develop the concept. The idea was to create dedicated spaces for delivery riders in locations where they were already gathering. These spaces would provide basic amenities, support more organised waiting and parking, and generate first-hand data. FCDO recognised the potential of the pilot to generate new intelligence and to galvanise interest from both the public and private sectors. Through UCT, grant funding was approved, enabling the pilot to begin development in October 2025.

Photo by Ashraf Hendricks

3. Project Partners and Roles

Local South

A Cape Town based social enterprise, Local South led the development and implementation of the pilot. Its role included conceptualising the hub model, identifying and engaging stakeholders, supporting site selection, coordinating permits and approvals, sourcing and designing infrastructure, managing implementation, and facilitating broader conversations with public and private sector actors. Local South also played a central role in adapting the pilot as new challenges emerged. This included responding to site constraints, engaging businesses and residents, coordinating with the operational team, and identifying lessons for future phases.

University of Cape Town

The University of Cape Town provided the research partnership for the pilot. UCT supported the development of the project concept and helped frame the pilot as a learning opportunity. Its role included contributing to research design, exploring opportunities for student research, advising on data collection and ethics processes, and analysing data. The research component was intended to complement the operational pilot by generating evidence on rider needs, site performance, behaviour change, and the broader implications of delivery activity in Cape Town.

Langa Bicycle Hub

The Langa Bicycle Hub was brought on as the on-the-ground operational partner. Its team supported the daily functioning of the hubs, including opening and closing the spaces, engaging riders, managing basic operations, recording usage, and capturing observations from daily interactions. This role proved essential. The pilot showed that the success of a hub depends not only on the physical infrastructure provided, but on the relationships, trust and day-to-day management that make riders feel comfortable using the space.

4. Project Objectives

The pilot aimed to understand and test the role of micro-mobility hubs in improving urban logistics, rider wellbeing and public space management.

The core objectives were to:

- Test a sustainable delivery model: Assess whether micro-delivery hubs can improve the environmental, spatial and social impacts of last-mile delivery, while offering a replicable model for Global South cities.
- Improve rider conditions: Provide basic amenities (seating, shade, water, Wi-Fi, charging and toilets where possible) to support riders during the working day.
- Reduce pressure on public space: Test whether dedicated waiting and parking areas can ease congestion, reduce conflict and improve the efficiency of urban logistics.
- Generate evidence and build partnerships: Gather practical insights on rider behaviour, site dynamics and hub use, while building the partnerships needed for a, long-term response.

Photo by Chris Kets

5. Pilot design and methodology

Site identification & stakeholder engagement

Local South began by mapping locations where delivery riders were already gathering, with an initial focus on the Cape Town CBD. When no feasible site could be secured there, the scoping exercise expanded to other parts of the city, including the broader City Bowl, the northern suburbs and as far afield as Somerset West. Interest was eventually confirmed in Rondebosch and Observatory in the southern suburbs.

Stakeholder engagement included local government; Woolworths; improvement districts; property owners; residents; delivery riders; platform representatives and other private sector actors. These engagements confirmed that the issue was widely recognised. Businesses, residents, improvement districts and public officials were aware of the growing presence of delivery riders and the pressures created by informal waiting and parking. However, the process also revealed significant reluctance to host or support physical infrastructure.

By December 2025, despite broad acknowledgement of the problem, no site had been confirmed. Stakeholders raised a range of concerns. Some argued that delivery riders were not their responsibility. Others feared that a hub would attract more riders and make the situation worse.

Some were worried about residents' responses. Others raised concerns that the infrastructure might be occupied by people other than delivery riders, including homeless people.

Hub model

The hub model was intentionally simple and practical. It was designed to provide riders with a dignified place to wait between orders while also helping to organise the surrounding public space. Depending on site conditions, the hubs included seating, shade or shelter, water, Wi-Fi, charging points, toilet access, demarcated parking bays, and a team on-site. The hubs were managed by the Langa Bicycle Hub. Their role included maintaining the space, supporting riders, recording usage, engaging nearby stakeholders, and capturing informal learning.

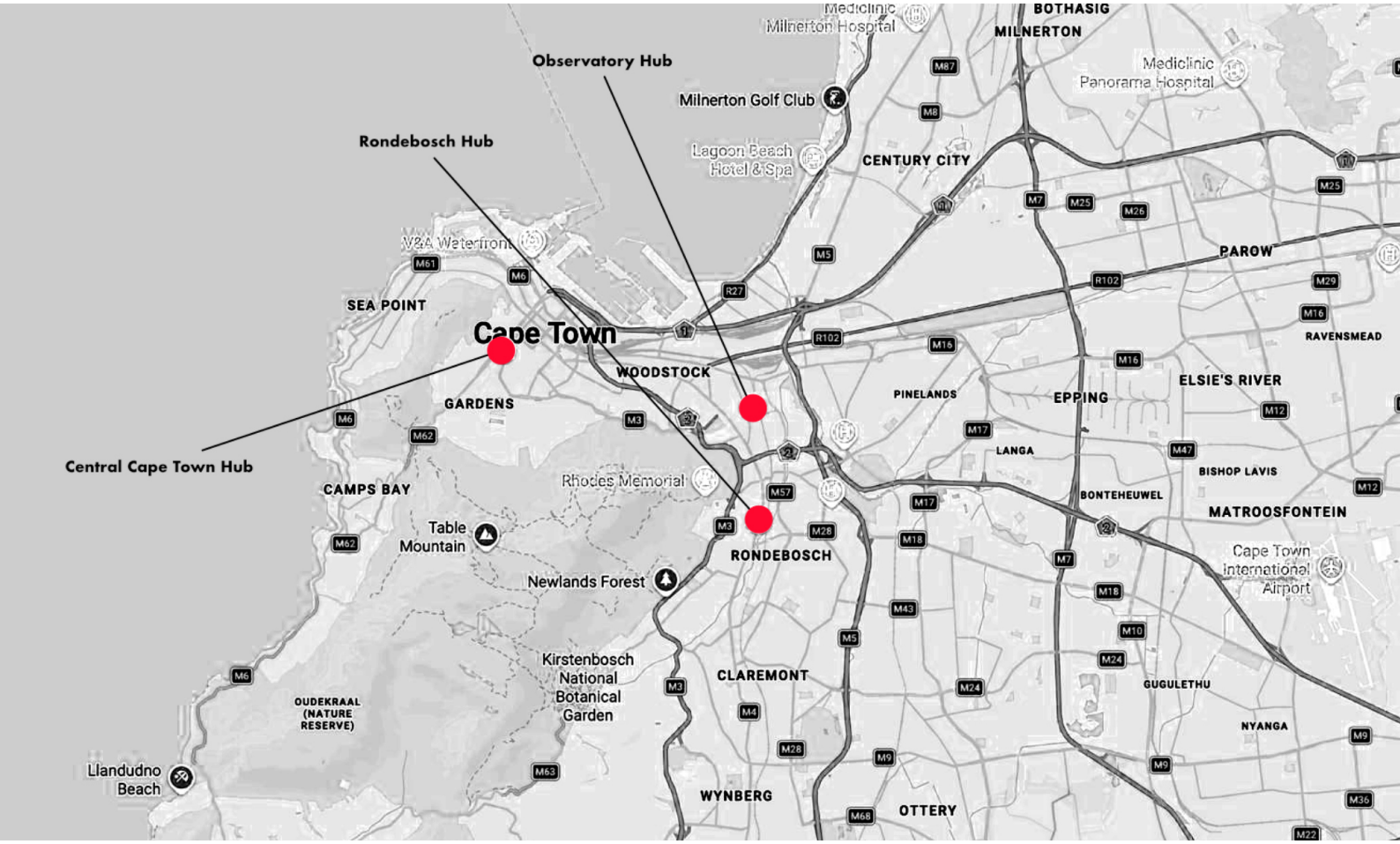
Rather than relying on enforcement or formal rules alone, the pilot depended on trust, repeated contact and practical support. This was important because many riders were initially uncertain about the purpose of the hubs, why the services were free, and whether using the space might affect their work.

Monitoring and learning approach

The monitoring approach combined rider surveys (see Annex 4), structured observation and qualitative learning. The operational team recorded daily information, including the number of riders using the hub, riders waiting outside the hub, motorcycles and bicycles present, phone charging use, non-rider users, comments or concerns raised by riders, and site-specific issues and observations. The observation template is included in Annex 5.

Some of the most useful insights emerged informally through conversations, repeated interactions and observation of daily routines. These qualitative insights became a central part of the learning generated by the pilot, helping the team understand not only whether the hubs were being used, but why they were or were not working in particular locations.

Following the successful rollout of the rider surveys, the UCT team developed an additional form to capture more detailed information on rider expenses and the underlying financial model of delivery work. This included costs such as vehicle rental, fuel, maintenance and other work-related expenses. The form was used during the final two weeks of the pilot, and the information is currently being consolidated for further analysis. The tool is included in Annex 6.



6. Implementation

Concept development and site identification (October – December 2025)

The pilot formally began in October 2025, following the signing of the contract with FCDO. Local South then developed the basic hub model, mapped potential sites, and engaged public and private stakeholders. This phase showed how difficult it would be to turn broad support into concrete site commitments. While many stakeholders recognised the problem, there was reluctance to host a solution, particularly near residential areas, retail entrances or contested public spaces.

Setup and early testing (January – February 2026)

A meeting at UCT on 22 January helped confirm the implementation approach. On 10 February, the first hubs were set up in Rondebosch and Observatory, using a trailer in Rondebosch and a container in Observatory. The early weeks tested rider uptake, the usefulness of the facilities, and how each hub functioned in relation to nearby businesses and public space. Site context proved critical. Where riders were already gathering (Rondebosch), uptake was stronger. Where the hub required riders to shift away from established waiting points (Observatory), uptake was more difficult.

Adaptation and learning (March – April 2026)

As the pilot progressed, the team used regular check-ins, site observations and stakeholder engagement to adapt the approach. A Walk & Talk was held in Rondebosch on 4 March, and the container which was not being fully utilised was moved to create a new hub in the CBD on 10 March, allowing the model to be tested in a denser and more complex public environment.

The sites produced different lessons. In Rondebosch, the hub worked largely as anticipated because it aligned with existing rider behaviour. In Observatory, uptake was lower despite good infrastructure, suggesting that mistrust, location and concerns about order allocation were significant barriers. The CBD hub, by contrast, was heavily used and at times oversubscribed, reinforcing the importance of placing hubs where demand is already concentrated.

On 1 April, the City of Cape Town undertook a site visit, helping to ground discussions in the practical realities of implementation. On 17 April, a focus group was held at UCT to reflect on emerging findings and deepen the research process.

The final roundtable on 23 April brought together public sector representatives, delivery platforms, researchers, civic partners and other stakeholders to discuss lessons learned from the three-month pilot and what should happen next. The discussion confirmed broad support for the value of dedicated spaces for delivery riders, while also highlighting the complexity of scaling the model.

The roundtable reinforced the urgency of avoiding an abrupt end to the pilot. Without a transition plan, there is a risk of losing the practical benefits already achieved, the trust built with riders, and the momentum created among stakeholders. The final weeks were therefore used not only to close out the pilot, but to identify pathways for continuation, including further engagement with Uber, exploration of satellite hubs, clarification of City permitting requirements, and the potential to convene a multi-stakeholder forum.

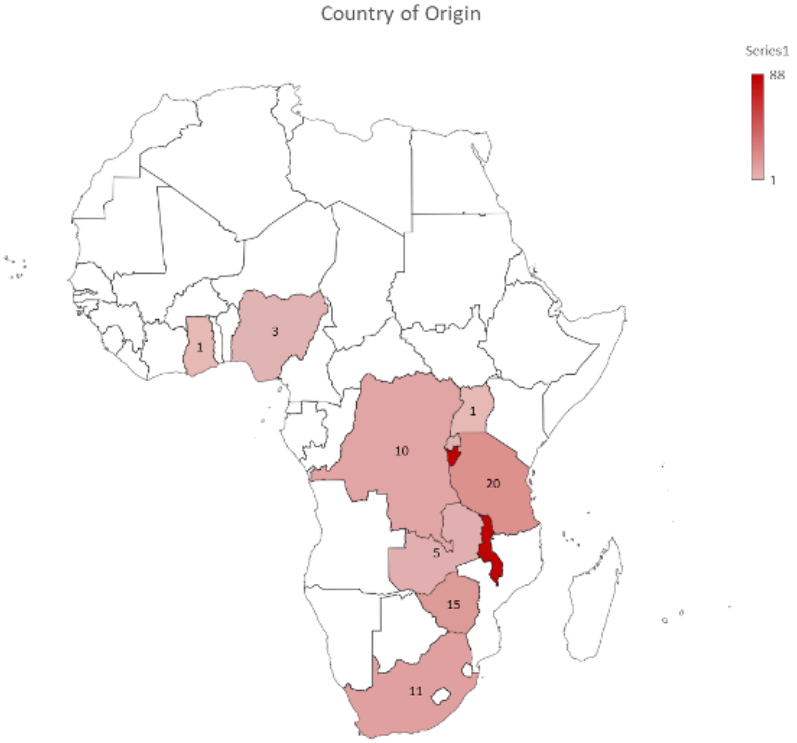
Photo by Chris Kets

7. Preliminary data findings

Rider demographics and socioeconomic profile

Survey data was collected from 241 delivery riders across four study areas in Cape Town, namely the City Centre, Observatory, Rondebosch, and Woodstock. The sample is almost entirely male (99%), with a mean age of 28 years, reflecting a young, predominantly male workforce typical of platform delivery economies in the Global South.

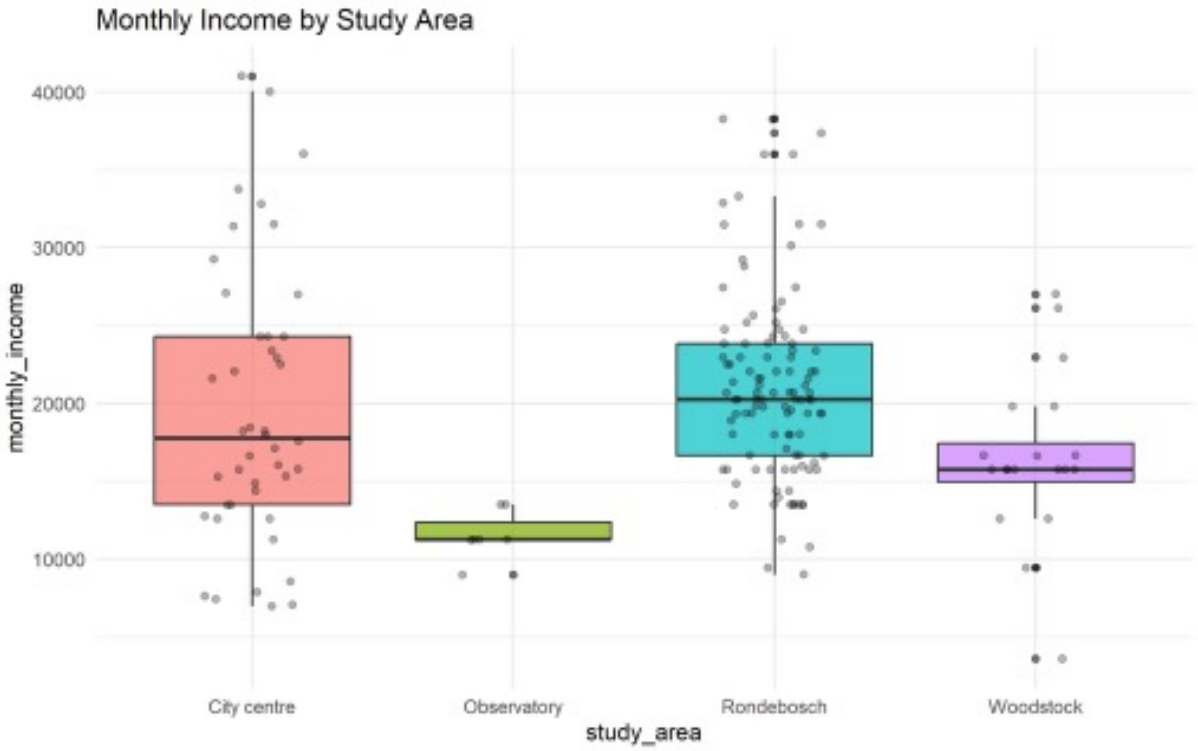
The country of origin map reveals an overwhelming majority of riders are migrants from elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, with Burundian nationals forming the single largest group at 37% of the sample, followed closely by Malawians at 35%. Tanzanian riders account for 8%, Zimbabweans for 6%, and South Africans for just 5%. Smaller contingents originate from the DRC, Zambia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Ghana, and Uganda. This finding positions Cape Town's gig delivery sector as substantially sustained by migrant labour from the Great Lakes region and southern Africa more broadly.



Income distribution

The monthly income boxplot shows considerable self-reported variation both within and across study areas. Rondebosch riders report the highest median gross monthly income at approximately R20,000, with a wide interquartile range extending toward R24,000 and numerous outliers approaching R38,000. City Centre riders show a lower median of around R17,000 but with greater overall spread and outliers reaching above R40,000. Woodstock riders cluster tightly around R15,000 with relatively little variation, while Observatory riders report the lowest and most compressed income distribution, centred near R12,000. These differences align with the hub utilisation data reported earlier, where City Centre and Rondebosch recorded substantially higher rider volumes and activity levels than Observatory.

On a per trip basis, riders earn a mean of R40, translating to roughly 23 deliveries per day and approximately 138 deliveries per week. Riders work an average of 6 days per week and 13 hours per day, indicating an intensive and demanding work schedule.



Vehicle ownership and operating costs

Most riders operate rental motorcycles (71%), with only 24% owning their own vehicle. This is significant because maintenance costs fall on the owner in 71% of cases, and on the rider personally in a further 22% of cases where damage is involved. Fuel costs are borne almost entirely by riders themselves (91%). With petrol being the dominant fuel type (94%), these recurring operating costs represent a substantial deduction from gross earnings, meaning net take-home income is likely considerably lower than the gross figures suggest.

Vehicle ownership		%
Rental	171	71
Self-owned	58	24
Company-owned	6	2
no information	6	2
	241	100

Platform dependency

Uber Eats dominates platform affiliation at 47 of riders, followed by Mr D at 14. All other platforms, including Takealot, Pick n Pay asap!, Picup, and Cowa-Bunga, account for very small shares. This concentration of riders on two major platforms points to significant dependency and limited bargaining power within the gig economy structure. It's important to note that a large share where other with was related to cellphone and app, which could have been other delivery services.

Platforms	Count
Picup	2
Cowa-Bunga	2
Debonairs	1
Mr D	14
Pick n Pay (asap!)	2
Takealot	2
Uber Connect	1
Uber Eats	47
Other (Cellphone/App)	119

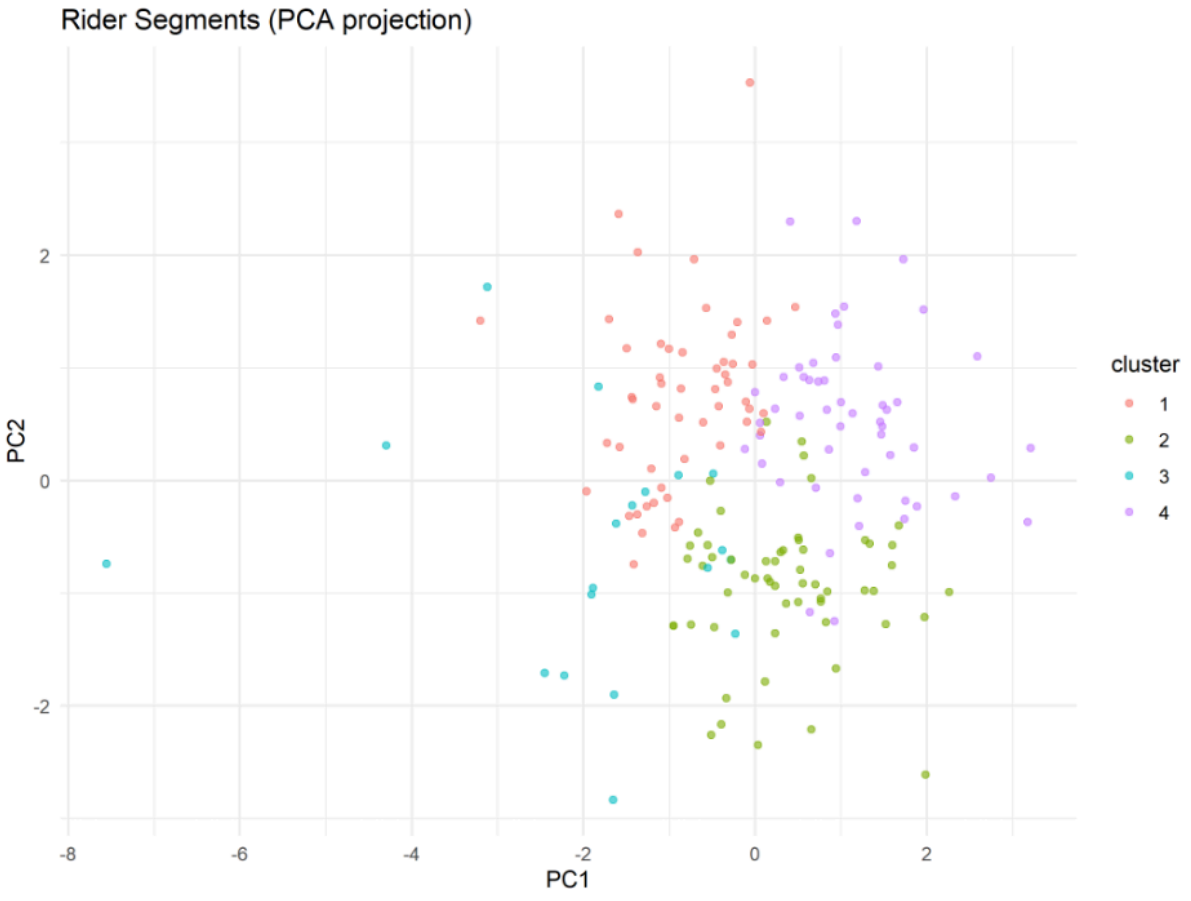
Rider Segmentation

Cluster 1 comprises 52 relatively young riders (mean age 27) who complete the highest number of deliveries per week (172) at moderate working hours (96 hours per month), and earn the highest mean monthly income at R26,963, though this productivity comes at a cost, as this group also records the highest rates of crash involvement (57%) and theft (64%).

Cluster 2 is the largest group at 58 riders, sharing a similar age profile but completing fewer deliveries (126 per week) at comparable hours (93 per month), resulting in a substantially lower mean monthly income of R16,801 and moderate risk exposure.

Cluster 3 is the smallest segment, consisting of 19 older and more experienced riders (mean age 36, mean tenure 4.8 years) who match Cluster 1 in delivery volume (173 per week) but earn a mid-range income of R19,480 and face only moderate risk levels, suggesting that experience may offer some protective benefit.

Cluster 4, also comprising 52 riders, records the lowest delivery volumes (123 per week) and the fewest working hours (86 per month), earning the lowest mean income of R16,210, yet paradoxically suffers the highest crash rate of all four groups at 65%, pointing to a concerning disconnect between workload and road safety outcomes that may reflect route characteristics, vehicle condition, or other structural vulnerabilities.



Fuel expense

		%
Rider	220	91
Company	9	4
Owner	6	2
no information	6	2
	241	100

Maintenance expense

		%
Owner	170	71
Rider (depends on damage)	53	22
Company	12	5
no information	6	2

The graphs present observational data collected across three delivery rider hubs in Cape Town, namely the City Centre (CBD), Rondebosch, and Observatory, spanning approximately nine weeks from February to April 2026. The data captures hourly counts of delivery riders waiting at these hubs, broken down by location, time of day, day of week, and week of study.

Work patterns, costs, and earnings

Riders in the sample are relatively young and moderately experienced, with a mean age of 28 years (ranging from 20 to 52) and an average of just over two years and four months working as delivery riders, though some individuals have been in the sector for as long as twelve years. Petrol motorcycles are the dominant vehicle type, used by 94% of riders, with electric motorcycles, electric bicycles, and diesel vehicles each accounting for only a marginal share of the fleet.

The working patterns recorded are demanding by any measure. Riders work a mean of 13 hours per weekday, across an average of six days per week, completing roughly 23 deliveries per day and 138 per week. The upper extremes are particularly striking, with some riders reporting up to 18 working hours in a single day, seven days per week, and as many as 400 deliveries in a single week, pointing to a subset of riders operating under exceptionally intensive conditions.

Operating costs fall overwhelmingly on riders themselves. Fuel is self-funded in 91% of cases, and maintenance liabilities rest with the vehicle owner in 71% of cases and with the rider personally in a further 22% where damage is involved. Against this backdrop, gross earnings average R40 per trip. The self-reported monthly range spans from R3,600 to R27,000, underscoring the considerable income volatility inherent in platform-based gig work. Once fuel and maintenance costs are accounted for, net earnings for many riders are likely to fall well below these gross figures, reinforcing the picture of financial precarity that runs through the broader findings of this study.

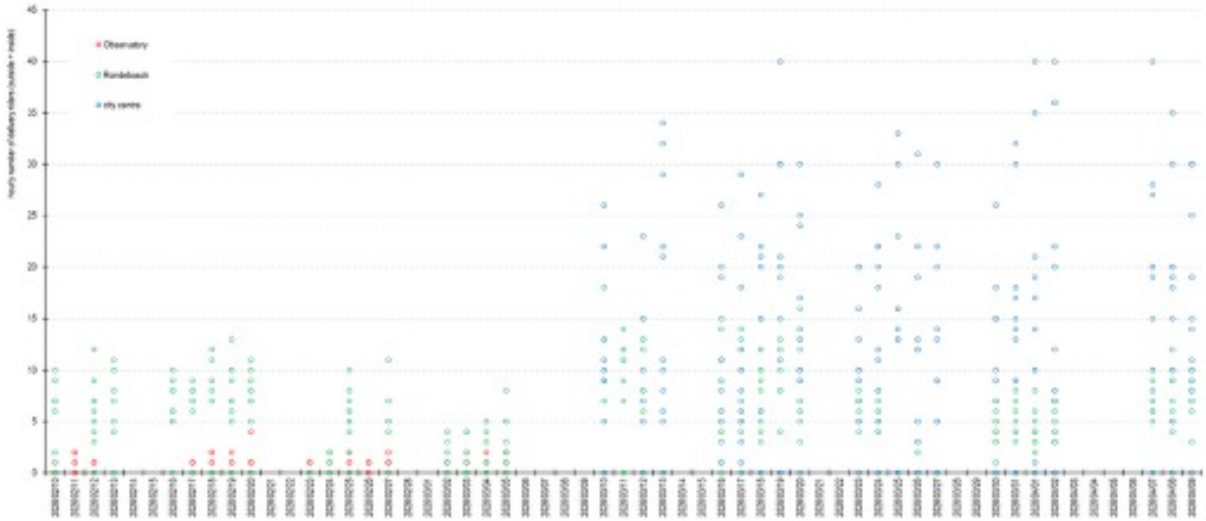
Experience	mean	min	max
age	28	20	52
years worked as a delivery rider	2 yr, 4 mon	2 mon	12 yr

Fuel type		%
Petrol	226	94
Electric (motorcycle)	4	2
Electric (bicycle)	3	1
Diesel	2	1
no information	6	2
	241	100

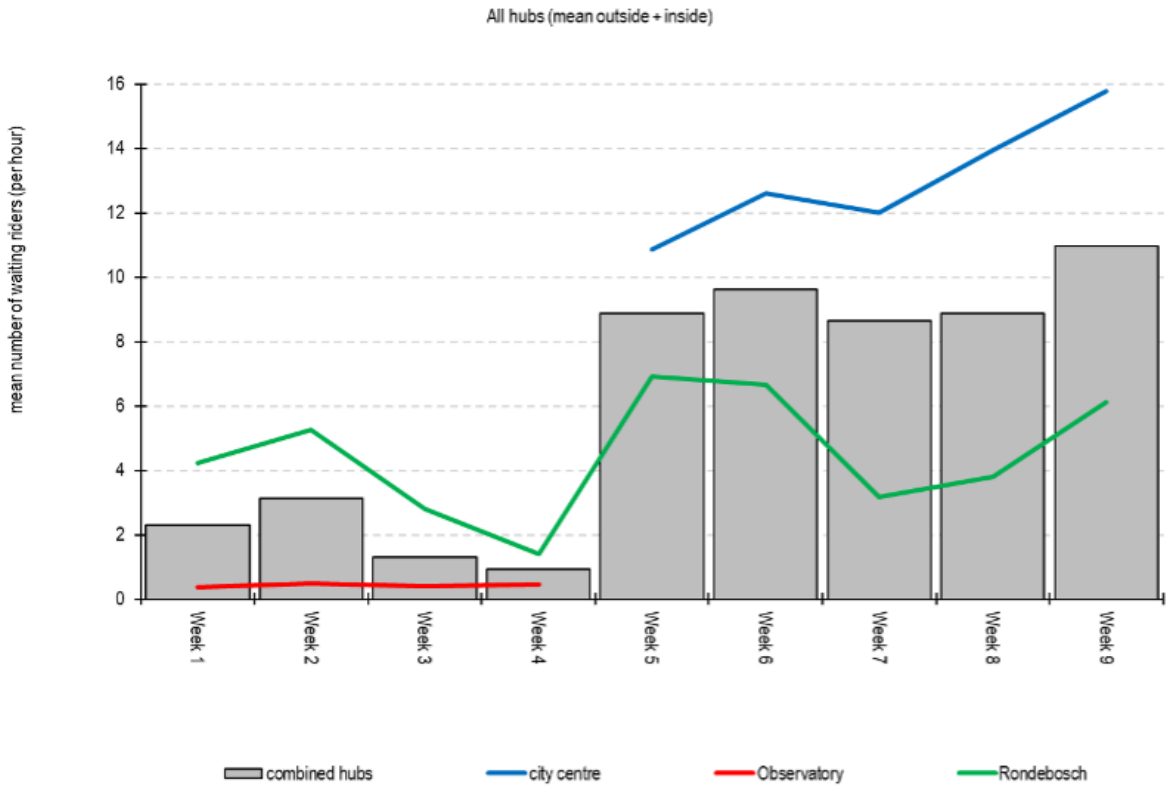
Working hours and deliveries	mean	min	max
weekday working hours	13	4	18
days worked / week	6	4	7
deliveries / day	23	6	57
deliveries / week	138	23	400

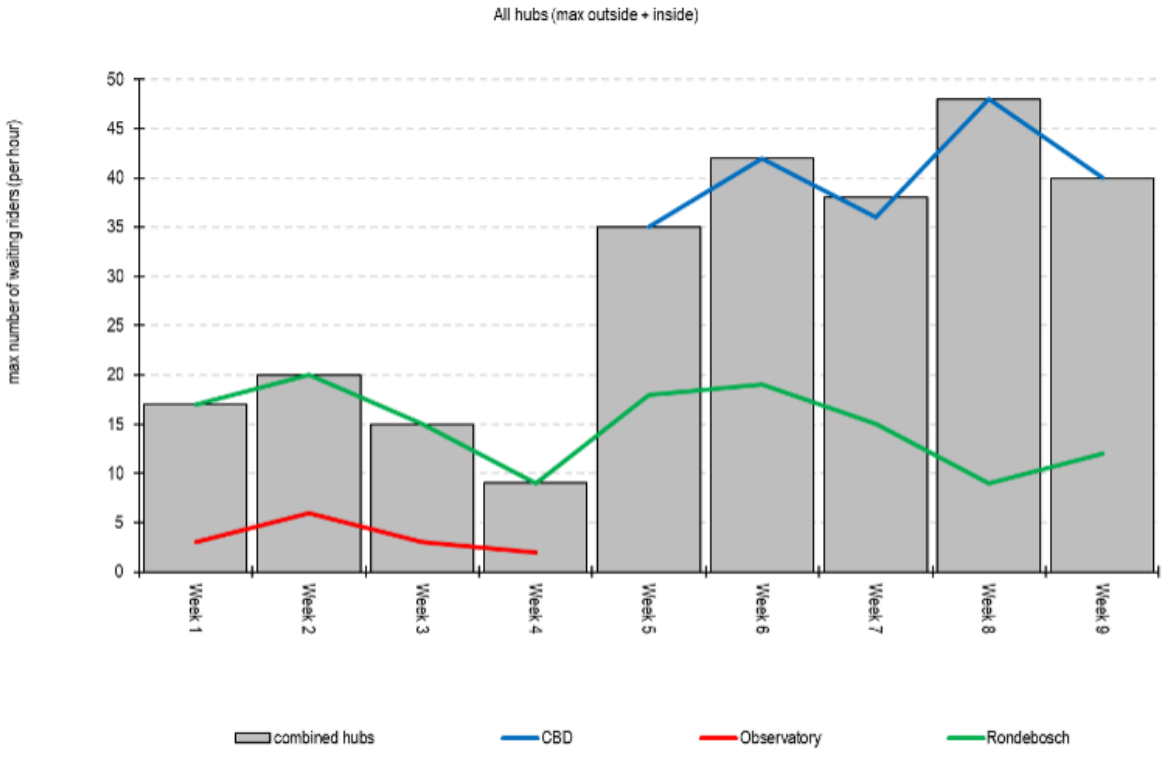
Hub activity and growth over time

The scatter plot below reveals that the City Centre hub consistently recorded the highest number of waiting riders throughout the observation period. Activity at all hubs was relatively low in the first four weeks of the study, with rider counts rarely exceeding ten per hour. From approximately week five onward, City Centre numbers climbed sharply, reaching peaks of 40 riders per hour by the final weeks. Rondebosch showed moderate and fairly steady activity throughout, while Observatory fell out of the measurement data after 4 weeks.



The weekly mean and maximum charts below confirm this pattern. Mean rider counts at the City Centre hub rose from roughly 3 per hour in week two to approximately 15 per hour by week nine. Maximum hourly counts at the City Centre reached close to 47 riders in week eight. The Observatory hub remained negligible across all weeks by both measures.

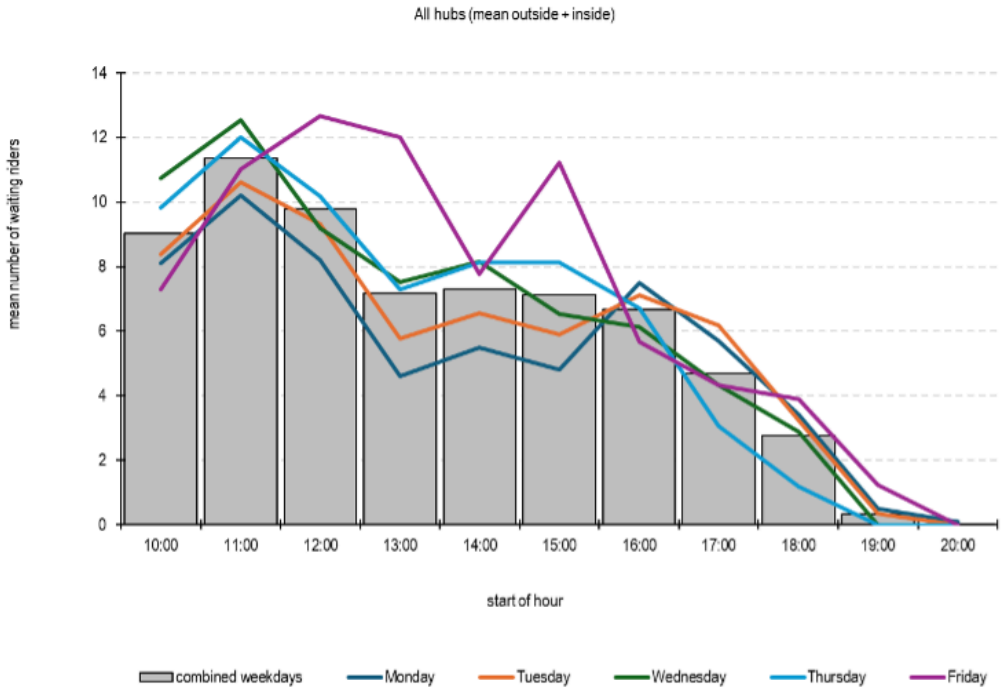


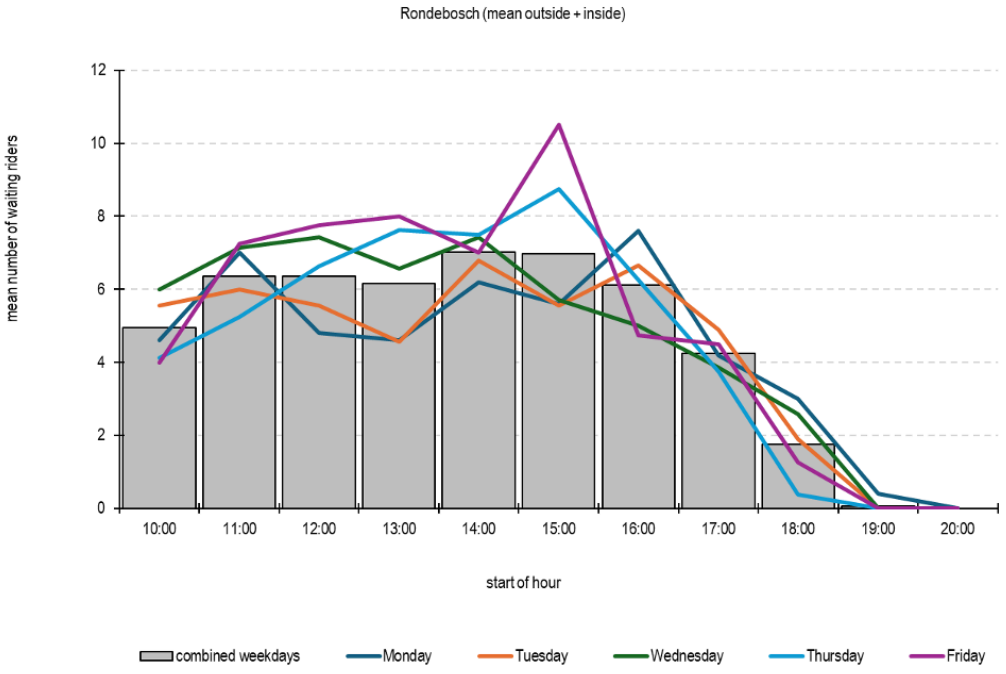


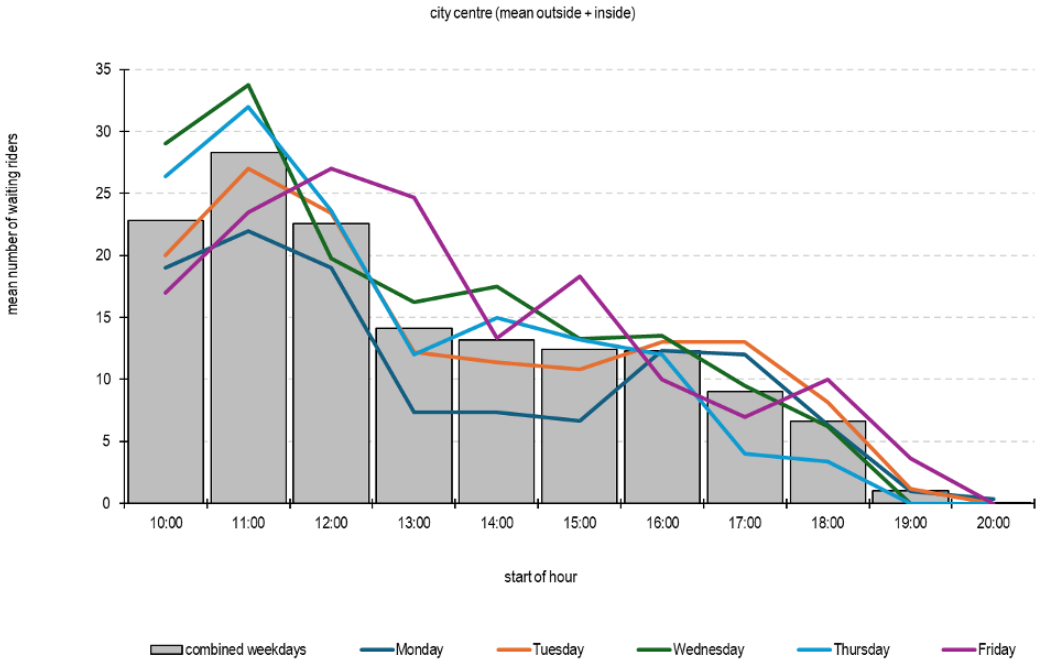
Time of day patterns

The intraday charts below consistently show that hub activity peaks in the late morning, between 10:00 and 12:00, and declines steadily through the afternoon, dropping to near zero by 19:00 or 20:00. This pattern holds across all hubs and all weekdays.

At the City Centre, mean outside counts between 10:00 and 11:00 exceeded 20 riders per hour on several days, with Wednesday and Thursday frequently showing the highest morning peaks. Rondebosch displayed a flatter and more sustained midday profile, with activity remaining relatively consistent from 10:00 through to approximately 16:00 before declining. The non rider counts across all hubs remained very low throughout the day, suggesting that almost all individuals present at the hubs were active delivery riders.

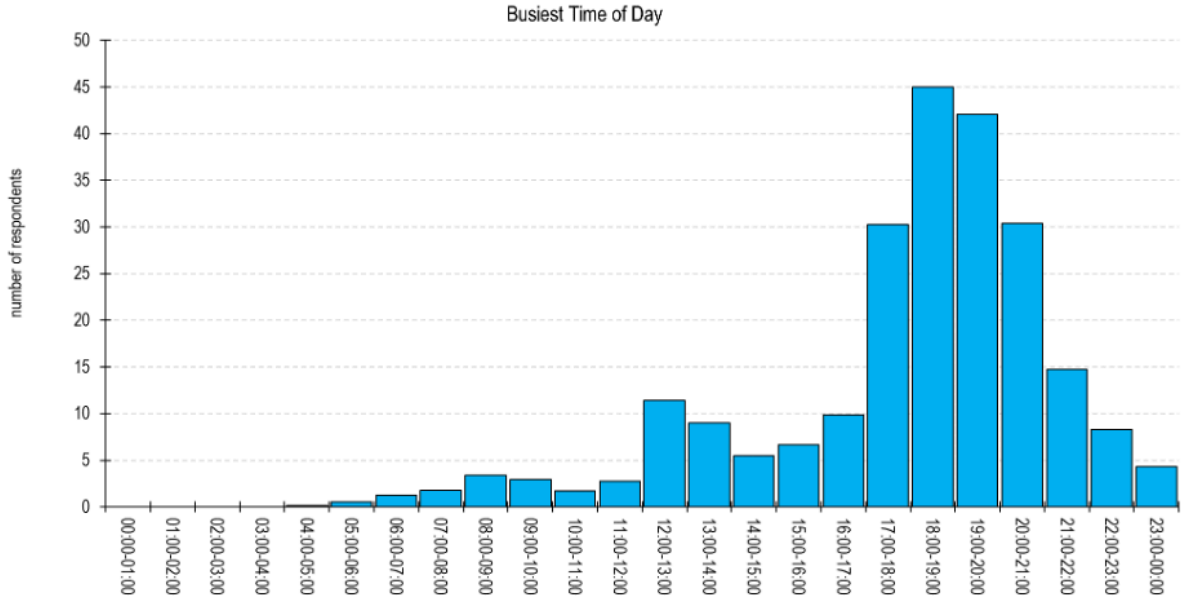


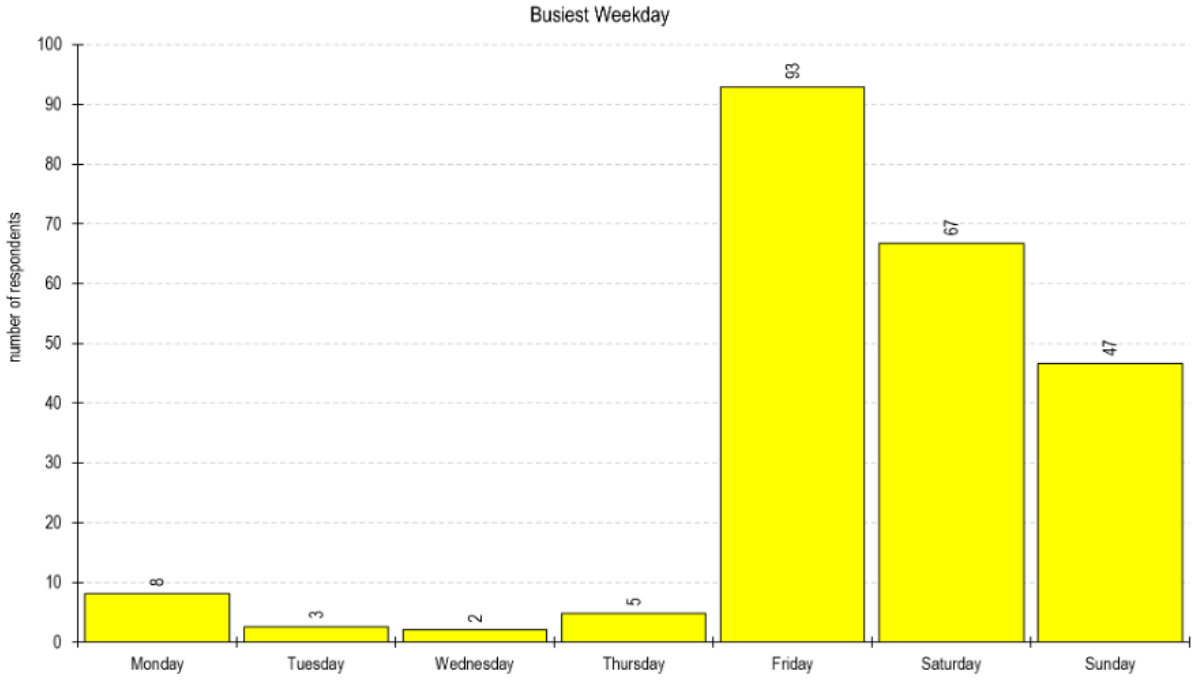


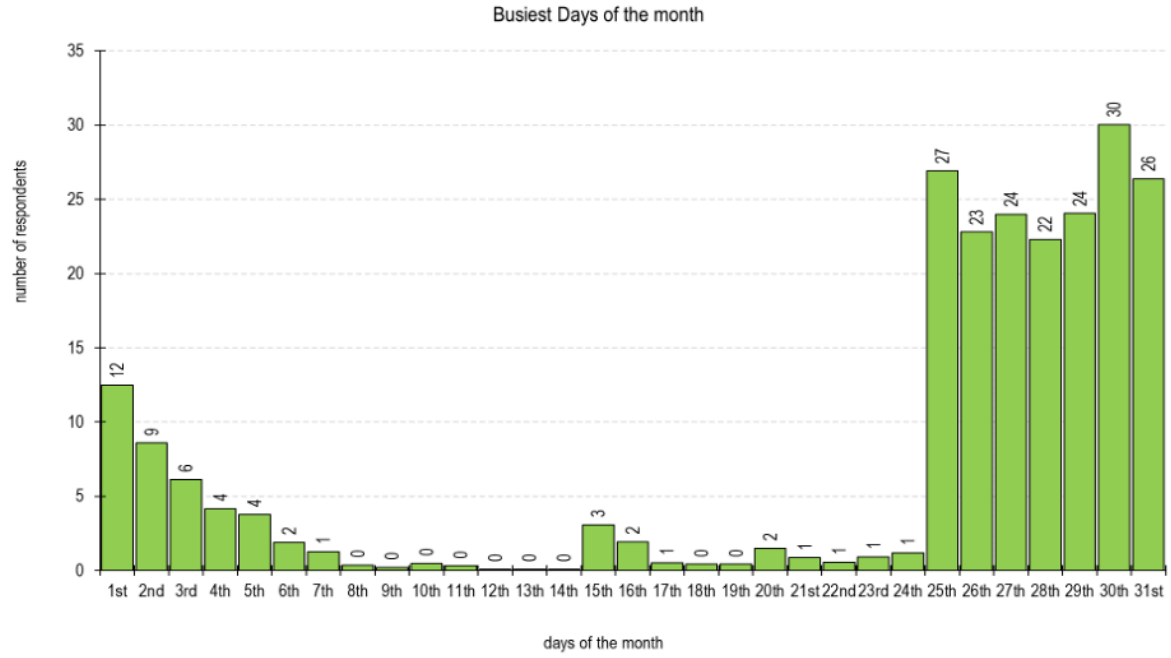


Busiest time of day and weekday

The bar charts in Image below indicate that survey respondents were most active between 17:00 and 21:00, with a peak around the 19:00 to 20:00 window. Responses were heavily concentrated on Fridays (93 respondents) and Saturdays (67 respondents), with very few responses recorded on weekdays earlier in the week.

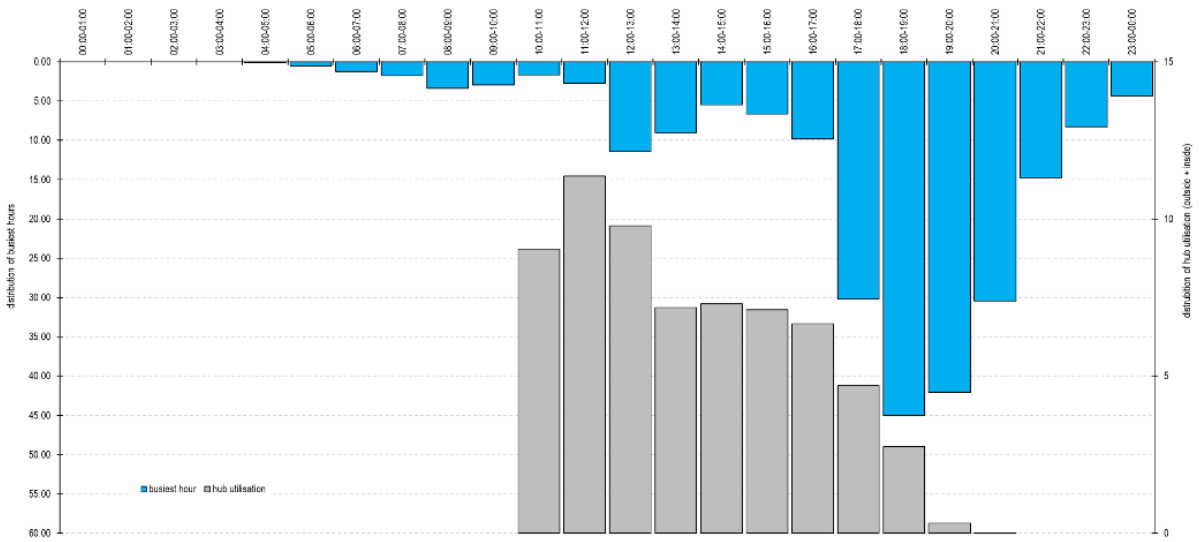



Busiest Weekday
number of respondents
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
8
3
2
5
93
67
47
Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday


Busiest Days of the month
number of respondents
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
12
9
6
4
4
2
1
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
3
2
1
0
0
2
1
1
1
1
27
23
24
22
24
30
26
1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th 13th 14th 15th 16th 17th 18th 19th 20th 21st 22nd 23rd 24th 25th 26th 27th 28th 29th 30th 31st
days of the month

Hub utilisation vs busiest hours

The graph below presents a dual axis chart comparing the distribution of busiest hours (blue bars, reading downward from zero) against hub utilisation measured in riders per hour (grey bars). Hub utilisation is concentrated firmly between 10:00 and 17:00, peaking around 11:00 to 12:00. The busiest hours as reported by riders span a wider window, from late morning through to late evening, with notable activity recorded between 18:00 and 23:00. This divergence suggests that while physical hub presence peaks at midday, riders consider their working day to extend well into the evening.



Summary of hub utilization data and survey

Across all metrics, the City Centre hub dominates in rider volume and shows the most pronounced growth over the study period. Activity follows a clear midday peak pattern on all weekdays, with mornings being the busiest period for physical hub presence. Rondebosch serves as a secondary hub with moderate but consistent usage, while Observatory plays a minimal role. The data points to strong demand concentration at the City Centre, particularly in the later weeks of the study, which may warrant consideration of expanded facilities or capacity management at that location.

8. Early signs of impact

While the full quantitative analysis will be completed in the course of the next few months, the pilot has already generated useful evidence of how the hubs contributed to the project's objectives.

Reducing pressure on public space
Where hubs were located close to existing rider waiting areas, they helped organise parking and waiting activity. In Rondebosch and the CBD, riders had a clearer place to gather, rest and charge phones, which helped reduce the sense of unmanaged activity around sidewalks and shopfronts. The high use of the CBD hub, at times exceeding capacity, confirmed the need for dedicated rider space in high-pressure delivery nodes.

Improving spatial and social outcomes
The hubs created a more structured and dignified environment for riders. Access to seating, shade, Wi-Fi, charging and toilets where available was positively received, and some riders asked whether the hubs could remain beyond the pilot. Small gestures, such as providing playing cards, helped break down barriers and build camaraderie. As trust grew, riders also began using the hubs more confidently, including asking to leave jackets and, at times, valuables there.

Environmental contribution
The pilot did not generate enough evidence to make strong claims about direct environmental impact. However, it showed how hubs could support broader climate and sustainability goals if scaled. With further refinement, hubs could improve delivery efficiency, incorporate new technologies, and support programmes that help riders transition to EVs and other lower-emission delivery options.

Testimonials

"I'm so happy for the project. Be blessed we were struggling enough in some conditions… everyone here is happy with the hub , we're all enjoying…You made our life easier"
- Eric, CBD hub, driver from Burundi

"This place is very important to the drivers. At first, the drivers didn't trust us when we offered our service for free But over time, they started to trust us because they saw the value They come here to charge their phones and save data since we have free WiFi. We've even noticed they wait for us to open so they can have breakfast we provide tables and chairs for them."
- Nande, Langa Bicycle Hub team

"I would really like the hub to stay. It shows that there are people who actually care about us. Since I started working as a delivery rider, no one has ever thought about providing something like this for us. Since the hub came, it has changed the way I work. It's made things more organised, and I've been able to improve how I manage my deliveries."
- Reuben, Rondebosch Hub, driver from Burundi

"They (drivers) don't have a place to park. That is why I have been both fascinated by and supportive of this pilot. What we are trying to do is help facilitate a shift from informal to formal — but formalising the informal is very difficult."
- Marc Truss,Oranje Kloof City Improvement District

9. Lessons learned

Location determines viability: A hub only works if it aligns with how delivery work actually happens. Riders need to stay close to restaurants, retail nodes and perceived order hotspots. Even small shifts away from demand can make a site unviable. Future hubs must therefore be planned around rider behaviour, platform dynamics and public space pressures, not available land alone.

The basics are non-negotiable: Seating, shade, water, Wi-Fi, charging and toilet access are not extras. They respond to practical needs created by long hours of waiting and phone-dependent work. Where riders used the hubs, these services helped create a more dignified and functional working environment.

Trust is part of the infrastructure: Physical infrastructure is not enough. Some riders were immediately receptive, while others were suspicious of free services or unclear about the project's purpose. Building trust takes time, clear communication and trusted people on the ground, especially in a sector shaped by precarious work, migrant status, xenophobia and limited trust in formal institutions. Trust was built gradually through consistent, informal engagement. The presence of the Langa Bicycle Hub team on a daily basis, the regular conversations, clear explanations of the purpose of the hubs and surveys, and visible delivery of promised services helped reduce suspicion over time. As riders saw that the hubs were genuinely free, useful and not linked to enforcement or hidden costs, more began to use the spaces and participate in the research.

Public space needs active management: A hub cannot simply be installed and left to function on its own. Staff are needed to manage the site, engage riders, respond to issues and maintain relationships with surrounding stakeholders. At the same time, they cannot be expected to act as law enforcement. Clear roles, operating rules and limits of responsibility are essential.

Not in My Backyard (NIMBY) dynamics must be anticipated: Many stakeholders recognised the problem, but were reluctant to host the solution. Concerns about attracting more riders, upsetting residents or increasing pressure on contested spaces are not unique to Cape Town. Future phases need to address these concerns early through strong engagement, clear benefits and shared responsibility.

Public-private collaboration is essential: No single actor can solve this alone. Platforms, retailers, property owners, improvement districts, civic organisations and the City all have a role to play. A sustainable model will require shared funding, practical permissions, clear operational responsibilities and a partnership structure that turns broad support into concrete commitments.

Pilots reveal what planning alone cannot: The pilot surfaced lessons that could only emerge through implementation: the importance of small location differences, the depth of rider mistrust, the intensity of managing public space, and the social ecosystem around delivery work. Its value was not only in testing a hub, but in generating the grounded intelligence needed to design a better next phase.

10. Conclusion

The Micro-Mobility Hub Pilot showed that the challenges created by micro-mobility deliveries are not simply behavioural problems to be enforced away. They are spatial, operational and governance challenges linked to a rapidly growing urban sector.

The pilot has also created a strong basis for further research and public discussion. Two academic papers will be developed from the findings and presented later in the year, while an op-ed piece is expected to be published the last weekend of April (following the submission of this report) to share early lessons with a wider audience.

Most importantly, the pilot showed that a long-term solution requires shared responsibility. The City has a role in permitting, public space management and coordination. Platforms have a role in funding, data sharing and rider communication. Retailers and property owners have a role in managing pickup environments. Civic organisations and local operators have a role in trust-building and day-to-day management.

By the end of the pilot, a permit extension had been secured, allowing operations to continue beyond the initial pilot period. This continuation will be supported by Local South and new partners interested in seeing the model continue until more sustainable funding is secured. This is an important outcome in itself, as it helps maintain the trust, operational learning and stakeholder momentum built during the pilot.

A possible next step will be to test a small network of core hubs and satellite points across the city. Core hubs could provide fuller amenities in major delivery nodes, while smaller satellite points could be placed closer to restaurant clusters and pickup hotspots, offering lighter-touch infrastructure such as organised parking, shade, seating or charging.

Photo by Chris Kets

Annex 1: Media coverage

Online articles

- D+C Development and Cooperation

How delivery services are reshaping cities, 20 Jan 2026
Opinion / thought leadership piece situating the pilot within wider urban delivery challenges and Global South relevance.

- World Economic Forum

How Cape Town is addressing the costs of on-demand delivery, 3 March 2026
Feature on the hidden urban and human costs of delivery, including micro-mobility hubs as a potential solution

- Southern Suburbs Tatler

How Rondebosch's micro-mobility hub is transforming delivery driver support, **6 March, 2026**
Local news coverage of the Rondebosch hub launch, including quotes from Local South, City of Cape Town and a delivery rider.

- Daily Maverick

Learning by doing: practical responses to micro-mobility in Cape Town, **3 May 2026**
Opinion piece by Local South reflection on lessons from the pilot and ideas to build on it.

TV & Radio

- eNCA, interview with Refiloe Mpakanyane, 2 May 2026 20h30
- CapeTalk, interview with John Maytham

Videos

Micro-mobility Hub by Local South
Delivery scooters clutter sidewalks from London to Cape Town. It's a problem that must be solved to bring order and safety to the pedestrian by Cllr Mikhail Manuel
Walk & Talk in Rondebosch, by UK in South Africa

Printed media

CAPE TOWN CARNIVAL JOIN US! SAT • 21 MARCH • 6PM GREEN POINT FANWALK Follow your heART

CLAREMONT | RONDEBOSCH NOVANEWS

People's Post

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

Motorcycle delivery riders use the mobile micro-mobility hub in Rondebosch, which provides seating, shade and electricity while they wait for orders.

DEDICATED REST SPACE FOR DELIVERY RIDERS

Micro-mobility hub test

On average ridwers work 13 hours a day, completing around 16 deliveries per shift

A pilot project in Rondebosch is testing whether a dedicated rest space for delivery riders can improve safety, working conditions and the management of public space in Cape Town.

The initiative centres on what organisers describe as the city's first mobile micro-mobility hub, offering motorcycle delivery riders access to seating, shade and electricity while waiting for orders.

The hub was launched by The Local South, an urban research and advisory organisation based between South Africa and Colombia, in partnership with the City of Cape Town's Urban Mobility Directorate, UCT Centre for Transport Studies, and Langa Bicycle Hub.

The project is funded by the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

The Local South works with partners across global South cities on urban challenges, including mobility, informality, public space management, food systems and the just transition.

The pilot comes as the rapid growth of app-based food delivery services has increased the presence of motorcycle riders around restaurants and shopping areas.

TO PAGE 4

FROM PAGE 1

CITY ACKNOWLEDGES POLICY GAP

Ward 59 councillor and urban mobility chair Mikhail Manuel said the City does not yet have a single coordinated approach to managing delivery riders in public spaces.

"There are at least three directorates that have a responsibility here," Manuel said. "But no one has one comprehensive solution that looks at the dignity of the drivers while also maintaining public space."

Manuel said the pilot provides an opportunity to test practical solutions while the City works on broader upgrades in the Rondebosch precinct. Until now, interventions have included converting vehicle parking bays into motorcycle bays and increasing impoundments of illegally parked motorcycles.

However, Manuel acknowledged that these measures have not resolved tensions around congestion, safety risks and informal gathering points.

"This pilot allows us to try something and learn from it," he said.

RIDERS FACE DIFFICULT CONDITIONS

Research conducted by students under the supervision of Prof Roger Behrens from the University of Cape Town's department of transport studies surveyed 60 delivery riders working in the area.

The findings highlight the challenging conditions many riders face. Eighty percent of respondents said they had been involved in a road collision.

On average, riders reported working 13 hours a day and completing around 16 deliveries daily.

"The average age of riders in our survey was 29, and almost all were foreign nationals," said Behrens. "Many are operating in vulnerable conditions with limited formal training and very little job security."

The research also found that 75% of riders rent their motorcycles and must pay daily rental and fuel costs.

Although gross monthly earnings average just under R15 000, more than half of riders who rent motorcycles said they are unable to save money. "For many, this is essentially a survival income," the professor said.

Project lead from The Local South Marcela Guerrerro said the location of such hubs is critical because delivery platforms rely on algorithm-driven systems to assign orders.

Samuel Kontawa, a delivery rider, plays cards while waiting for his next order at the mobile micro-mobility hub in Rondebosch. PHOTO: NAMHLA MONGALI

"Riders need to be right there," she said. "If they are perceived to be too far from demand areas, they risk missing out on jobs."

A similar hub tested in Observatory saw lower usage partly because it was located further from Lower Main Road, where many riders typically gather.

"We have learned that infrastructure must align with existing rider behaviour," she added. "You cannot simply place a facility anywhere and expect it to work."

While the food delivery sector has expanded rapidly, questions remain about who should pay for infrastructure supporting the workforce behind it.

Colin Leeman of the FCDO said the pilot forms part of broader efforts to explore practical urban mobility solutions.

"This is about testing ideas and gathering insights that can inform future policy," Leeman said.

However, delivery platforms and retailers have not yet committed financial support.

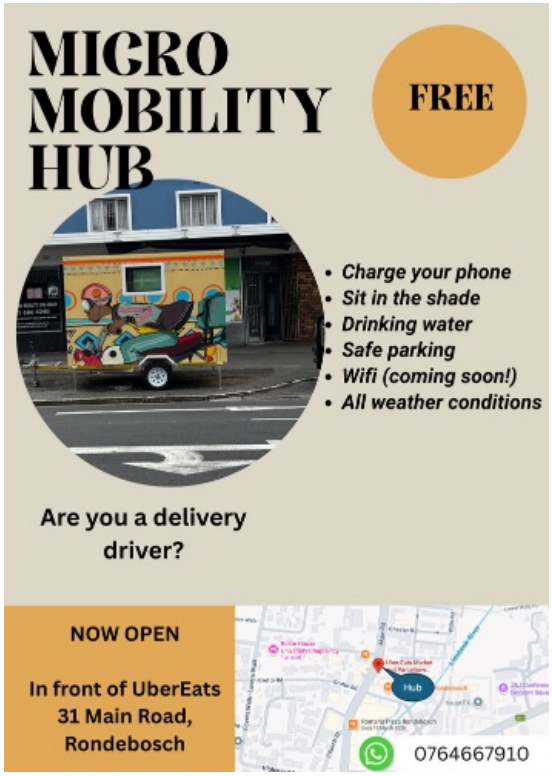
Manuel said that while the City can regulate aspects of public space, broader change will require cooperation from property owners, tenants and platform companies.

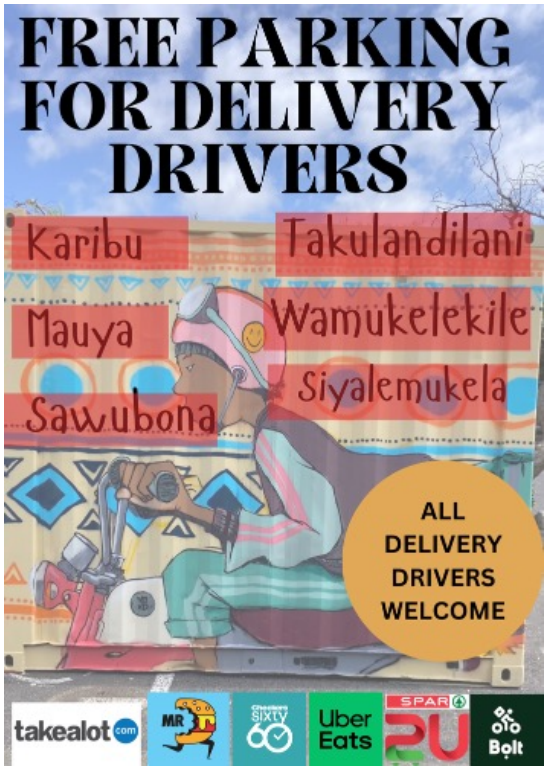
"The real levers sit with those stakeholders," he said.

The pilot will run until the end of April, after which stakeholders will review the findings to determine whether the model could be expanded.

"There is acceptance across stakeholders that there is a problem," Behrens said. "The question now is who takes ownership of it."

Annex 2: Rider information flyers





Annex 3: Event invitations

Annex 4: Structured survey extract

Micromobility Hub Pilot Project

MOTORCYCLE DELIVERY RIDER SURVEY

Hello, my name is **[XXX]**. I'm working with the Langa Bicycle Hub and Local South.

We are conducting a survey to understand what life is like for motorcycle delivery riders in Cape Town.

Here is what you need to know:

- Your participation is voluntary.
- Your answers will be anonymous.
- The interview will take about 10-15 minutes.
- You can stop me anytime.

Can I ask you some questions? (tick) Yes ☐ No ☐

Interviewer name

Study area? (tick)

Rondebosch ☐
Observatory ☐
City centre ☐

1. **In what year were you born?**

2. **In which country were you born?**

Annex 5: Observation template

Micro-mobility Hub

Inside: include drivers seating and standing

Outside: include seating and standing in area outlined in map

Bikes: Write number of bicycles separately

Notes: issues, observations, questions, etc

Non-riders: include all in area outlined in map

Date	
Hub	

Time	Inside	Outside	Bikes	Non-riders	Phones	Notes
10:00						
11:00						
12:00						
13:00						
14:00						
15:00						
16:00						
17:00						
18:00						

All observation data can be accessed here.

Annex 6: Expenditure addendum

EXPENDITURE ADDENDUM

Interviewer name

Study area? (tick)

Rondebosch	
City centre	

25. Who owns the motorcycle you ride? (tick)

Rental	
Self-owned	
Company-owned	

26. If the motorcycle is RENTED, how much money do you typically spend on the following items?

Rental payment to vehicle owner		per week / month / year
Fuel		per week / month / year
Oil		per week / month / year
Motorcycle maintenance		per week / month / year
Other (specify) _____		per week / month / year
Other (specify) _____		per week / month / year
Other (specify) _____		per week / month / year

Photo by Ashraf Hendricks

Photo by Chris Kets