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# UTA reports 23% increase in ridership on Free Fare Friday

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SALT LAKE CITY — The Utah Transit Authority reports its Free Fare Friday promotion on Dec. 22 resulted in a 23 percent overall increase in system usage, with a combined total of approximately 31,732 additional boardings, the equivalent of an estimated 22,829 more passengers.

To calculate individual riders, UTA used the total number of boardings and assumed that each rider transferred 1.39 times, a figure calculated using findings from its 2015 rider survey.

FrontRunner experienced the largest increase with an additional 11,982 boardings, the agency said. Taking into account an average of 18,034 riders during each of the previous five weekdays, FrontRunner accommodated a total of 30,016 passengers on Free Fare Friday, a 66 percent increase.

TRAX, which averaged 60,363 boardings during the previous five weekdays, saw an additional 19,462 riders that day for a total of 79,825 passengers, a 32 percent increase, UTA said.

The agency said UTA buses saw a only modest bump in ridership with several hundred more bus riders using the system on Dec. 22 compared to the average of the five previous weekdays, with 61,735 boardings reported on fixed route buses.

UTA said the increase in ridership equated to removing 17,560 vehicles from Utah roads. An additional 3 tons of pollutants and 200 tons of greenhouse gases were prevented from entering the atmosphere, it said.

“Free Fare Friday was designed to encourage people to try public transit — and it worked,” Jerry Benson, UTA president and CEO, said in a statement. “Thousands of riders boarded our buses and trains, and we were able to save several tons of pollution from entering our atmosphere during a critical time of year for air quality. We hope this translates to more Wasatch Front residents who are willing to leave their cars at home and ride UTA again, especially during inversion season.”

Air Quality Strategy List

Strategy	Description	Budget	\$/Lifetime Ton Reduced	Total Lifetime Tons Reduced	Proposed sponsor
State Vehicle Replacement (Pre-2007)	Replace pre-2007 State Fleet-owned lightweight and heavy-duty vehicles and UDOT snowplows. Provide funding for building retrofits to accommodate communication requirements, building repurposing of space, common video conferencing equipment, etc., to allow for accountable telework options for State employees.	\$26,500,000	\$6,366	3,166	Rep. Steve Handy
Accountable Telework	Upgrade four Tier 2 backup diesel generators to Tier 4 standards.	\$6,050,000	\$6,900	877	Rep. Patrice Arent
Generators (Tier 2 - Tier 4 at prison)	Provide funding for EV charging stations at State facilities for the benefit of State Fleet, State employees, and the public.	\$1,620,000	\$10,075	161	Sen. Gregg Buxton
State EV Chargers	Establish revolving loan funding for building energy efficiency improvements and associated NOX reductions at schools throughout the State.	\$5,830,000	\$14,314	407	Rep. Val Potter
Increase U-Save revolving fund	Provide a 50% match for private sector and non-State public sector heavy-duty vehicle replacements.	\$10,000,000	TBD	TBD	Rep. Eric Hutchings
On-road heavy-duty replacement	Provide a 50% match for the installed cost of Level 2 EV chargers at workplaces and businesses.	\$15,000,000	\$7,515	1,986	Sen. Karen Mayne
EV Chargers (private)	Provide a 70% match for the cost of replacing wood stoves and fireplaces with natural gas appliances.	\$4,990,000	\$7,157	697	Rep. Lowry Snow
Wood Stove Conversion	Provide a 50% match to federally-funded income-based incentives to assist those with Tier 0 and Tier 1 vehicles that fail emissions tests purchase a newer, cleaner vehicle.	\$14,000,000	\$14,000	1,000	Rep. Timothy Hawkes
Vehicle Replacement Assistance	Provide an 80% match for replacing gasoline-powered yard equipment with comparable electric models.	\$6,500,000	\$9,997	520	Rep. Jeffrey Stenquist
Yard Equipment Exchange	Provide a 35% state match for the total cost of switch locomotive repowers. Envisions a 40% federal and 25% private cost-share.	\$3,710,000	\$28,041	132	Rep. Suzanne Harrison
Freight Switcher Locomotive Repower	Provide funding for weatherization assistance to reduce energy bills and NOX emissions.	\$2,100,000	\$9,451	222	Rep. Steve Handy
Weatherization	Provide funding for air quality innovation incentives.	\$1,500,000	TBD	TBD	Rep. Steve Handy
Air Quality Solution Innovation	Provide funding for 17 days of free transit ridership on mandatory action days.	\$1,500,000	TBD	TBD	Sen. Lincoln Filmore
Free Transit on Mandatory Action Days	Provide additional funding for air quality messaging campaigns.	\$1,200,000	\$41,210	29	Rep. Joel Briscoe
Air Quality Messaging Campaigns		\$1,000,000	TBD	TBD	Rep. Arent
Total		\$101,500,000		9,209	