

Reduction of Single Occupancy Vehicle Trips Pilot Program Appropriation

Rep. Joel Briscoe

Request amount: \$1.2 million

Purpose: To fund the creation of a 3-year pilot program to encourage individuals to use alternative means of transportation on days leading up to an inversion, including providing free fares on public transportation. The appropriation would fund 17 days of free transit and the associated administrative costs of managing the fund through the Division of Air Quality.

Why support this appropriation?

- With a growing population and booming economy, air quality will continue to be an issue unless there is a collective shift in how people move throughout the Wasatch Front.
- Behavior change is an important, yet challenging, component that complements other ongoing efforts to reduce emissions
- Two barriers to public transit use include cost and convenience
 - This pilot addresses the cost barrier and intends to encourage more people to try public transit who otherwise would not
- Public transportation can help reduce emissions and get cars off of the road
 - Only 1 in 4 people drive to a public transit access location
- In a one-day pilot in late 2017, FrontRunner ridership increased 66%, TRAX increased 32%, and buses increased 0.5%
- This 3-year pilot program will allow for a more realistic understanding of how free fares can get people out of their cars and incorporate public transportation into their routine, as well as provide an affordable way for people to take action as air quality is worsening due to an inversion leading to elevated pollution levels

Benefits of public transportation use:

- Emissions reduction is just one of the benefits!
- Fewer cars on the road means fewer potential road maintenance costs
- Increased and more efficient use of already-built infrastructure
- Less congestion

Analysis of Transit Ridership by Air Quality:

- All Electronic Fare Collection (Tap on/Tap off card) trips were analyzed for 2014-2016.
- Only February consistently had days ranging in air quality from green to red.
- The trip analysis showed that ridership dips slightly on yellow and orange air days, from green air quality levels, but increases on red air days.
- This behavioral change is observed in commute trips (6 – 9 AM and 3 – 6 PM) (Figure 1), non-commute trips, and total trips (Figure 2).
- This may be influenced by awareness (through media, campaigns, or otherwise) that a way to reduce emissions on red air days is to use transit instead of driving.

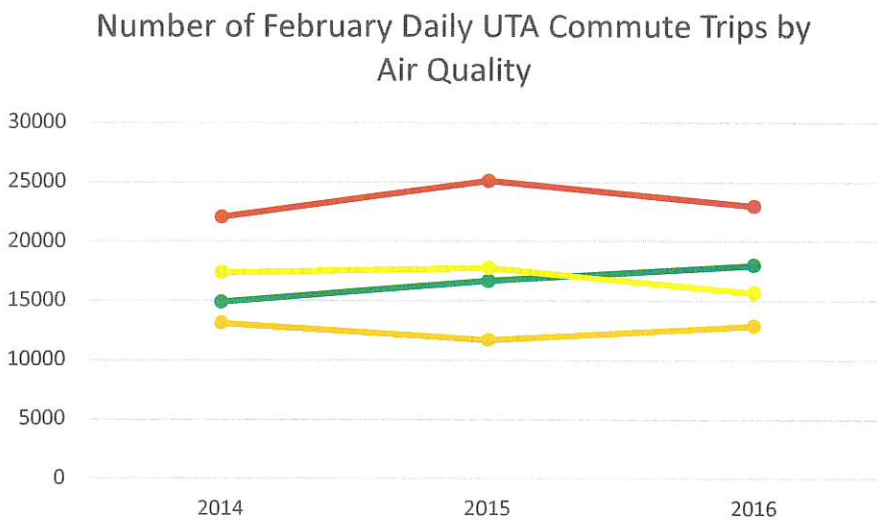


Figure 1 – Commute (6 – 9 AM and 3 – 6 PM) average daily trips during the month of February for the three largest UTA services by air quality.

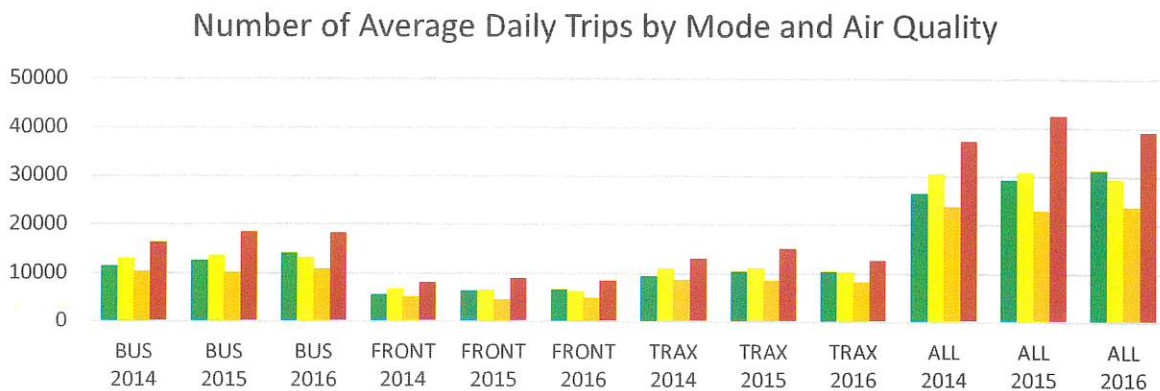


Figure 2 – Total (commute & non-commute) average daily trips during the month of February for the three largest UTA services by air quality.