



Legislation Text

File #: 22-522, **Version:** 1

“Zero Fare for Better Air” Program Report

Presenter:

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Summary:

Mountain Metropolitan Transit (MMT) participated in the State of Colorado’s Ozone Season Transit Grant Program, otherwise known as the “Zero Fare for Better Air” initiative during August 2022. The program was designed to reduce ground level ozone, increase ridership, and reduce vehicle miles traveled in the state by increasing the use of public transit. Both fixed-route and ADA complementary paratransit services were fare free during the month.

Ridership in August 2022 increased by 39% over July 2022 on the fixed-route service and 35% on Metro Mobility, its ADA complementary paratransit service. However, ridership decreased 30% on the fixed-route service and 6% on Metro Mobility from August to September.

Background:

The State of Colorado’s “Zero Fare for Better Air” initiative was made possible through funding provided by Colorado Senate Bill 22-180. The bill created the Ozone Season Transit Grant Program, administered by the Colorado Energy Office. The program provides grants for free transit services during the peak ozone season, defined in the bill as the period between June 1 and August 31 of each year.

By participating, MMT aimed to thank its existing riders with a month of free transit, to welcome back customers who may have scaled back their transit usage over the past few years, and to attract first-time transit users.

Previous Council Action:

N/A

Financial Implications:

MMT will be reimbursed for both the farebox revenue lost and the operating expenses during the month of August. Together, that totals \$534,674. The net effect to the MMT budget is zero.

City Council Appointed Board/Commission/Committee Recommendation:

The Citizens Transportation Advisory Board (CTAB) was informed of MMT’s participation in the program on August 2, 2022.

Stakeholder Process:

Regular purchasers of bulk ticket orders were made aware of the fare-free initiative during the last two weeks of July via email or telephone. Information was uploaded to the City's website and social media announcements were made on July 19, 2022. That same day, a banner was placed on MMT's JustRide mobile ticketing application and the City Marketplace, the City's online ticket ordering site, was updated to include information regarding free fare during August 2022. Additionally, Rider Alerts were placed on buses and at the Downtown Terminal on July 20, 2022, and flyers were delivered to El Paso County and MMT's Senior Ambassadors on July 27, 2022. Multiple news stories were aired or printed between the 19th and 28th of July on six different media outlets.

MMT staff informed various Boards and Committees of its participation in the "Zero Fare for Better Air" initiative, including the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) Air Quality Technical Committee on July 27, 2022, the Citizens Transportation Advisory Board (CTAB) on August 2, 2022, the Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA) Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) on August 3, 2022, the PPRTA Board on August 10, 2022, and the PPACG Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on August 18, 2022.

Alternatives:

N/A

Proposed Motion:

N/A

N/A