



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Robert Spillar, P.E., Director, Austin Transportation Department
CC: Robert Goode, P.E., Assistant City Manager
W. Gordon Derr, P.E., Assistant Director, Austin Transportation
DATE: January 28, 2016
SUBJECT: Smart Trips Austin Program

James J. Dale
For Robert Spillar

As part of the Traffic Congestion Action Plan (Traffic CAP), the Austin Transportation Department (ATD) is partnering with Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Cap Metro) to implement a Smart Trips travel demand management program aimed at reducing congestion by shifting drive alone trips to carpooling, transit, walking and bicycling. A grant funded pilot program of 5,000 households is currently underway in the North Austin area as shown in attached *Smart Trips Austin Program Description* (Attachment 1). A future Spring/Summer 2016 effort is being planned for 10,000 households located between IH-35 to the east, MoPac to the west, Koenig to the north and 38th street to the south, covering City Council Districts 4, 7, 9 and 10, as shown on the attached map (Attachment 2). This area was prioritized based on its excellent transit access, bicycle connectivity, shared mobility services and desirable walking destinations.

About Smart Trips:

Smart Trips is a best-practice travel demand management (TDM) strategy proven to shift drive-alone vehicle trips to transit, walking, bicycling and carpooling. The community is expected to benefit in terms of congestion management, mobility cost savings and improved public health. Households in the priority community will be invited to order an individualized set of mobility resources such as maps, bus passes, safety lights, pedometers and other materials that will be delivered to their doorstep. Households may also sign up for a number of free, community-based classes and programs such as transit adventures, walking programs and bicycle safety education designed to teach and encourage people to try new ways of getting around. The primary goal of the Smart Trips Austin program is to reduce single occupant vehicle trips by at least 5% and increase transit ridership, bicycling, walking and carpooling by at least 5% among households in the priority community. For a complete description of the program, please refer to the attached *Smart Trips Austin Program Description*.

Next Steps:

ATD staff is available to brief you and your staff on this project. Please contact Laura Dierenfield at 512-974-7189 to schedule a briefing. ATD staff will begin notifying area residents, Neighborhood Associations, and other interested stakeholders and hosting an open house in the area in the coming weeks to gather additional community input.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Smart Trips Austin Program Description

Attachment 2: Map of Smart Trips Austin 2.0 Priority Community

*Delivering a safe, reliable, and sustainable transportation system
that enhances the environment and economic strength of the region.*

Attachment 1:



Smart Trips Austin Program Description

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Smart Trips is a best-practice travel demand management (TDM) strategy proven to shift as much as 3-18% of single occupant vehicle trips to transit, walking, bicycling and carpooling thus deriving significant benefit to communities in the form of congestion management, mobility cost savings, improved public health and livability.¹ Figure 1 describes the type and reach of similar programs around the country.

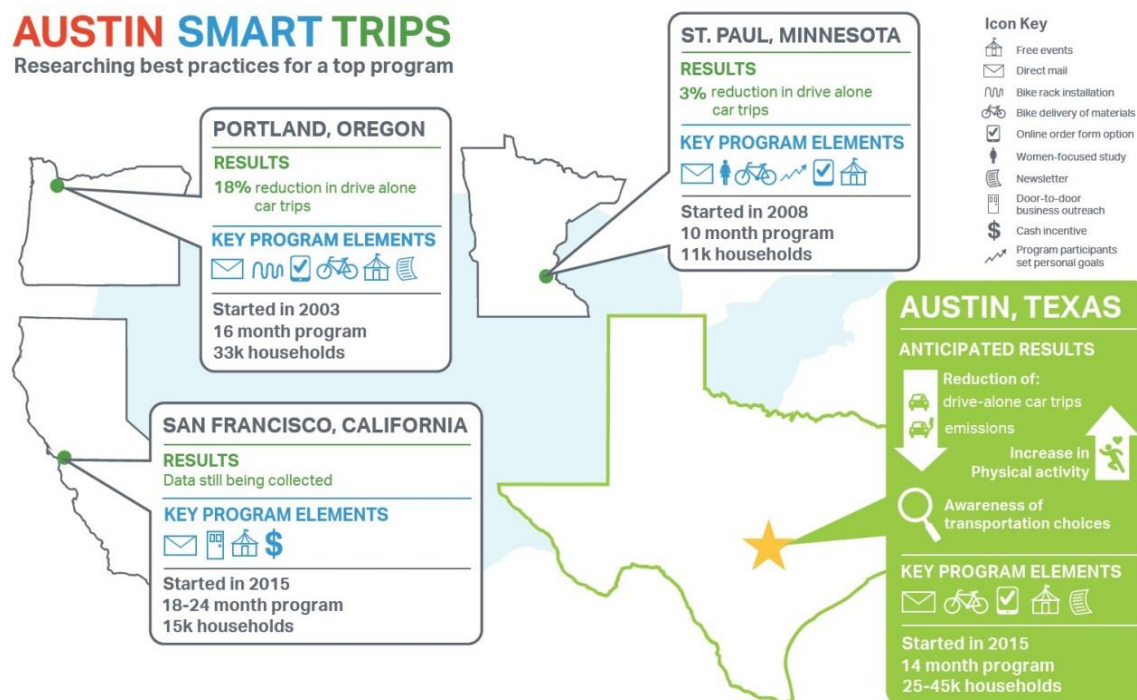


Figure 1: Examples of Smart Trips Programs in the U.S.

¹ Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center Case Study of the Portland SmartTrips Program:
<http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/cms/downloads/ENC.PortlandSmartTrips.pdf>, accessed December 3, 2015.

PILOT PROGRAM

The City of Austin (COA) is currently piloting a Smart Trips program in North Austin with 5,000 households. The priority community is located in an area defined by US 183 to the south, Braker to the north, Metric to the west and Cameron/Dessau to the east. See the map (Figure 2) at right. The focus of the pilot program is to improve public health by increasing access to physical activity and healthy food. The pilot program is made possible by grant funding through the American Planning Association's Plan4Health initiative. A complimentary food planning effort is also underway, led by the Office of Sustainability.



With health as the primary driver, the goals of the pilot program are to:

- 1) Increase awareness of active transportation choices;
- 2) Increase physical activity; and
- 3) Increase in positive attitudes towards use of active transportation.

As part of this first-in-state pilot program, the Austin Transportation Department (ATD) has developed a portfolio of mobility resources including a Transportation Resource Guide, safety brochures, and community maps featuring transit, walking and bicycling routes that connect people to libraries, schools, parks, medical facilities and grocery stores. These resources are being distributed through three methods: (1) tabling at community events; (2) visits to HUD-qualified housing communities, and (3) direct mail. ATD has also engaged with community-based organizations to develop walking and bicycling programs in the community and Cap Metro has developed unique transit adventures offering instructional transit trips to special events.

2016 SMART TRIPS '2.0' PROGRAM

Starting in the spring/summer of 2016, the City of Austin (COA) and Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Cap Metro) will deliver the next Smart Trips Austin program, dubbed '2.0', to 10,000 households with a focus on reducing congestion by shifting trips to carpooling, walking, bicycling and transit. The primary goal of the Smart Trips Austin '2.0' program is to reduce single occupant vehicle trips by 5% among households in the priority community and increase transit ridership, bicycling, walking and carpooling by 5% among households in the priority community.



GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

In order to be successful in managing congestion, the priority community needs to have excellent transit access, bicycle connectivity, shared mobility services, desirable destinations that are accessible by foot. Several geographic focus areas were evaluated using this criteria and a four square mile area south of FM 2222, north of 38th Street, east of IH-35 and west of MoPac (Loop 1) was chosen as the priority community. This area encompasses the Rosedale-Northloop-Ridgetop-Ridgelea-Hyde Park neighborhoods, as well as parts of Allandale, Brentwood and Hancock. The area is well served by transit with two bus rapid transit lines as well as bicycle routes and many walkable destinations.

REACH

Reach is defined as the total number of households within the priority community that receive the initial newsletter in the mail. The estimated capture rate, based on similar programs in other cities, is between 5-10% of those households, or between 1,000 and 2,000 households who choose to participate in the program. COA will reach out to at least 10,000 households (representing approximately 20,000 adults).

HOW IT WORKS

Households will be mailed a newsletter introducing them to the program and alerting them that they will soon receive an order form in the mail with options for receiving active transportation resources including maps, safety tips and incentive prizes such as pedometers or bike lights. Households may also see an invitation on their social media feeds and be directed to an online form to request resources. An Options Team will travel by bike, bus or carpool to households with the requested information packaged in an Smart Trips Austin branded tote bag.



Figure 3: How the Smart Trips Austin Program Works, from the User's Perspective



The tote bag will include information about the dates, times and locations of several community-based bicycling, walking and transit programs. These programs will be scheduled to begin just as households are receiving their tote bags with the intent to capture interest in trying out a bicycle safety class, walking program or instructional transit trip. Follow up engagement through push notifications, text messages, email and phone calls will be done by Options Team members to make participants aware of these classes in an effort to sustain interest and involvement in the Smart Trips program. In addition, a website will be built and maintained with information about the program.

EVALUATION

A pre- and post-survey will be done to measure the change in travel modes in the priority community as compared to nearby households with similar transportation assets but who did not receive the Smart Trips information. A suite of other performance metrics will also be tracked such as bus boarding and alighting at stops in the priority community as well as overall satisfaction with the program as determined through participant surveys.

TIMELINE

Collateral development, community outreach and volunteer recruitment will begin in January and extend through March. An initial survey will be conducted in early March to assess baseline behaviors in the priority community and the nearby control community. Following mailing of information and return of order forms, the Options Team will begin visiting households in April through May. Community-based programs and mailed newsletters will start in April and extend through July. Data collection and analysis will take place in July and August followed by reporting in September.

ONGOING PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

The City of Austin (COA) and Cap Metro are committed to continuing this successful Smart Trips partnership as part of a robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategy for the Austin region. Resources permitting, COA and Cap Metro envision the Smart Trips Austin program expanding to include other areas of the City, developing customized programs for specialized audiences such as “new movers” or people who are moving to a new residence within Austin or relocating to the Austin region for the first time. COA and Cap Metro are also committed to leaving a legacy of support in the neighborhoods where the program was implemented the prior year to ensure that the transportation benefits are sustained over time.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Austin Transportation Department
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Phone: 512-974-7189



Attachment 2:

Smart Trips Austin 2.0 Priority Community Council Districts:

