FREE FARE UTA

We would like to see legislative appropriators eliminate all fares on all Utah Transit Authority transit modes. This would be smart and timely policy. Why?

Utah can afford it! With a robust budget, plus new federal funds already received and more to come, now is the time to invest in public transit – and greater upward mobility and economic opportunities!

UTA could offer Free Fares for only about $60 million a year.

2020 Revenues from passenger fares: $55,182,000 (est.) 16% of total revenues ($491,850,000 est.) 2021 Revenues from passenger fares: $58,813,000 (est.)

<https://www.rideuta.com/-/media/Files/About-UTA/Reports/2020/Final_Approved_Budget_2020.ashx?la=en>

FREE FARE UTA will help clear our air by getting more cars off the road, improving health and quality of life and reducing traffic and accidents, saving lives and road repair costs. This could be the biggest air quality initiative yet by the Legislature, and could provide the quickest results in reducing air pollution.

Transportation is the second highest household expense, after housing. Making transit free and easy will greatly improve “location affordability” by reducing transportation costs, potentially eliminating the need for two or even one car, and offsetting the increasingly unaffordable housing prices along the Wasatch Front.

Other transit systems have successfully eliminated fares - in 100 cities worldwide - and numerous U.S. communities have ended public transit fares, including Kansas City, Missoula, Olympia, and Corvallis. More are studying the option. In some cities, going fare-less increased ridership by 20% or more.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/02/free-public-transportation-is-a-reality-in-100-citiesheres-why.html>

<https://freepublictransport.info/city/>

UTA ridership declined by 2.4 million from 2015 to 2018 (the last year figures are available). Eliminating fares would boost ridership significantly – and send a big “Welcome Back!” to passengers who stopped riding due to the pandemic.

We encourage legislators to give serious consideration to this proposition.

*Prepared by Crossroads Urban Center 11/2021*