

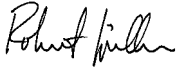


AUSTIN TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Mayor and Council Members

CC: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Jim Smith, Interim Assistant City Manager
Elaine Hart, Deputy City Manager
James Scarboro, Purchasing Officer

FROM: Robert Spillar, P.E., Director, 
Austin Transportation Department

DATE: January 31, 2019

SUBJECT: **MMAC: Smart Trips Austin Program Contract Continuation**
(Council Item 23, February 7, 2019 Agenda)

During the 2/7/19 Council Meeting, Council will consider continuation of a contract for the Smart Trips Program, managed by the Austin Transportation Department (ATD). The original contract was approved in 2017 for a two-year period with an option to extend for an additional 3 years with Council authorization (Agenda Item No. 18 on May 4, 2017 City Council Meeting). Prior to the 2017 contract approval by Council, ATD operated the Smart Trips Program using an American Planning Association (APA) Grant. The purpose of this memo is to provide an update regarding the success of the program deployment in its first four years of operation (2015 to 2018), and to provide the outcomes achieved from the 2016 contract approved by Council.

Program Background

Smart Trips is a neighborhood-based Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program that deploys national best practices to improve mobility for the neighborhoods involved in the program. Cities across the United States have successfully reduced single-occupant vehicle travel by between 3 and 18 percent where the program has been deployed.

Smart Trips Austin has three program goals:

- (1) manage congestion by encouraging residents to explore the city in new ways,
- (2) reduce single-occupant vehicle trips by five percent, and
- (3) increase active transportation trips by five percent.

The program is jointly funded by the City of Austin and Capital Metro through a financial and planning partnership. Additionally, the City was awarded \$216,000 by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) to expand Smart Trips Austin.

Smart Trips Austin focuses on personal interactions to educate individuals on their transportation options and to overcome barriers to multi-modal travel. Multi-modal transportation incentive toolkits are hand-delivered to households. Educational information and incentives are further supplemented through community-based events such as group bike rides, transit adventures, and

group walking activities. Mode share, mode shift, and mode frequency are all measured before and after implementation to evaluate program effectiveness. In addition to reported changes in transportation behavior, changes in confidence and awareness are also collected.

Results from the Smart Trips Program in Austin

Smart Trips Austin has demonstrated a successful decrease in drive alone car use over its four years in operation. The Austin program has consistently averaged a 3%+ reduction in drive alone trips since its inception. We believe that these reductions are sustainable and conservatively estimate that the program is reducing approximately 41,000 vehicle trips per year¹. Assuming sustained behavior change, the program spends \$1.50 per vehicle trip taken off the road over a five year period. At a one-time cost of approximately \$22 per target area household, the Smart Trips program provides both long-term community building and long-term travel behavior changes.

Key statistics from each year of programming are displayed in the table below and in the attached 2017 infographic.

Smart Trips Austin Program Results

	2015 Smart Trips: North Austin	2016 Smart Trips: Central Austin	2017 Smart Trips: Central South Austin	2018 Smart Trips Central Eastside (preliminary)
Location	North Austin within the borders of: US 183, Braker , Metric and Cameron/Dessau	South Austin within the borders of: IH- 35, MoPac, Koenig and 38th St.	Central South Austin: Zilker, Bouldin and Travis Heights neighborhoods	Central East Austin within the borders of: I-35, 7 th St, Webberville Rd, Airport Blvd, Wilshire
Participation	6.3%	4.2%	8.1%	7.9%
Behavioral Change Results	2.2 percent decrease in car mode share 11 percent increase in active mode trips.	3.3 percent decrease in drive-alone mode share 7.5 percent increase in active mode trips.	3.7 percent decrease in drive-alone mode share. 1.3 percent increase in transit.	1 percent decrease in drive-alone mode share. 6 percent increase in transit, 7 percent increase in walking.
Additional Results	75% of survey respondents reported that the program increased their knowledge of transportation options.	1 in 3 survey respondents reported that they use transportation options more often because of the program.	81% of survey participants found the toolkits helpful.	23% of respondents tried dockless mobility options, 15% tried transit, & 10% tried bicycling for the first time because of the program.

¹ Because each program year has a different household size, the 41,000 vehicle trip reduction is from a program outreaching 8,000 households at a 7.9% participation rate. A single Smart Trips program of 12,349 households with an 8.1% participant rate could see a reduction of approximately 73,000 vehicle trips a year. These estimates are derived from participants reporting they made 1.4 fewer drive-alone trips because of the 2017 Smart Trips Austin program.

Beyond managing congestion, the Smart Trips Austin program can be used as a tool to increase health outcomes, build community, and tackle the affordability issues in Austin by increasing physical activity, building local capacity among residents and organizations, and promoting transportation modes that have a lower personal cost on households.

Feedback from participating communities in Austin has been consistently positive:

- “Smart Trips was the motivation for me to cycle more and also learn more about bus routes”
- “I really wanted to learn to ride the bus but felt intimidated...a Smart Trips group bus outing to the Central Library was just what I needed... since then I have ridden the bus every time I’ve gone to the Central Library”

These testimonials articulate the reality that infrastructure improvements, like dedicated bicycle lanes or new bus lines, need to be coupled with programming to see a change in transportation behavior (i.e., to encourage and support the use of new infrastructure).

As an additional measure of the success of the program, our partners have committed to formal agreements and awarded the City additional funding for continued deployment. For example:

- Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority has entered into a 5 year inter-local agreement, formalizing a joint funding mechanism and program plan.
- The Capital Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) has recently awarded \$216,000 from 2019-2022 CAMPO Call for Projects Grant Program to expand Smart Trips Austin.
- The Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP) recognizes the Smart Trips Austin program as a key TDM strategy to reduce traffic congestion and increase sustainable mode share.

A map of the neighborhoods where ATD and Capital Metro have deployed the Smart Trips Program is attached.

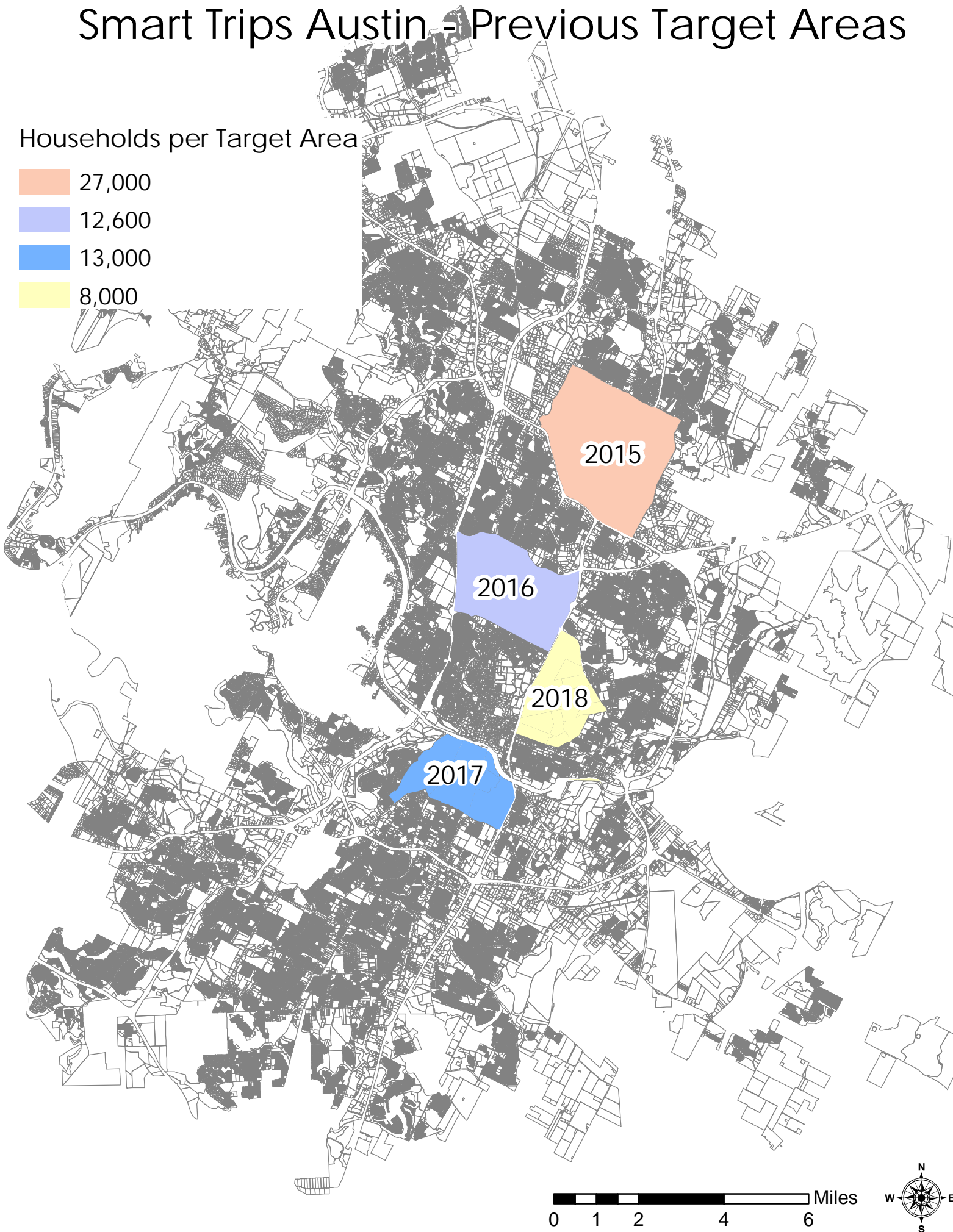
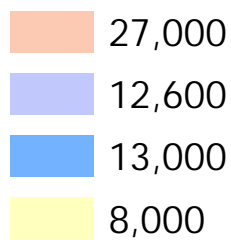
Next Steps

Implementation of future Smart Trips Austin programming is contingent on the continuation and amended budget of the Alta Planning contract agreement (Agenda Item No.23 on Feb 7 City Council Agenda). Beginning in 2019, the Smart Trips Austin program approach will be revised to serve more residents over a longer period of time. Given increased budget approval, the Smart Trips Austin program will be able to serve 250 percent more residents over an additional four months compared to previous programming.

If you have any questions about the Smart Trips program, please feel free to contact me or ATD Assistant Director Annick Beaudet at 512-974-7959.

Smart Trips Austin - Previous Target Areas

Households per Target Area



SMART TRIPS AUSTIN

About the program



The goal of the *Smart Trips Austin* program is to encourage Austin residents to walk, bike, ride transit, and share rides more often, rather than drive alone. Since 2015, Smart Trips Austin has reached over 60,000 households through four programs across north, central, south central, and east Austin. The program, a partnership between the **City of Austin** and **Capital Metro**, uses the following strategies to accomplish its goal:

Strategies



Lowens barriers to using transportation options by offering supportive bike rides, group walks, and transit adventures.



Raises awareness of transportation options by delivering customized resource toolkits to residents.



Provides personalized support and transportation information through e-newsletters and social media.



Builds the capacity of community partners to host transportation events and communicate with others about the benefits of transportation options.



SMART TRIPS: CENTRAL SOUTH AUSTIN, 2017

REACH, IMPACT, & STORIES

The 2017 *Smart Trips: Central South Austin* program served residents of the Travis Heights, Bouldin Creek, and Zilker neighborhoods. The reach, impact, and stories from this program are detailed below.

PROGRAM REACH



12,349

Households reached through direct mail



1,005

Toolkits ordered and delivered to residents.



36,000+

Social media impressions



47

Community events



1,230

Community members engaged at events

PROGRAM IMPACT



Pre- and post-program participant surveys revealed the following:

Drive-alone mode share decreased **3.7** PERCENTAGE POINTS

Respondents made an average of **1.4** fewer drive-alone trips per week after the program.

This could result in a reduction of approximately **73,000** vehicle trips per year.

Percentage of respondents using transit three days prior to survey increased **2** PERCENTAGE POINTS

3 IN 4 survey respondents feel more aware of Austin transportation options because of the program.

1 IN 3 survey respondents increased their use of transportation options because of the program.

84% of survey respondents found the Walk, Bike, & Ride Map useful and the toolkit helpful.

3 IN 4 survey respondents think there is value for Austin residents in continuing programs like Smart Trips Austin.



This calculation extrapolates the reported drive-alone trip reduction of 1.4 trips per week to a full year across all 1,000 participants.

PARTICIPANT STORIES

"I feel like I now have better resources to share with friends and family so we can use public transportation options together."

"I received help in mapping out a bike route from a Smart Trips advisor! She was so helpful and gave me detailed instructions on a route I could take that was safer than the way I had been going before. Thanks so much!"



"Smart Trips Austin was the motivation for me to cycle more and also learn more about bus routes. All of the team did a great job!"

"Just talking about using better options with another person helped me to commit to do so—at least 2 days/week."

For more about the 2017 program and our community partners who supported stakeholder outreach efforts and program events, visit

smartripsaustin.org/past-programs/finalreport2017