



Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority



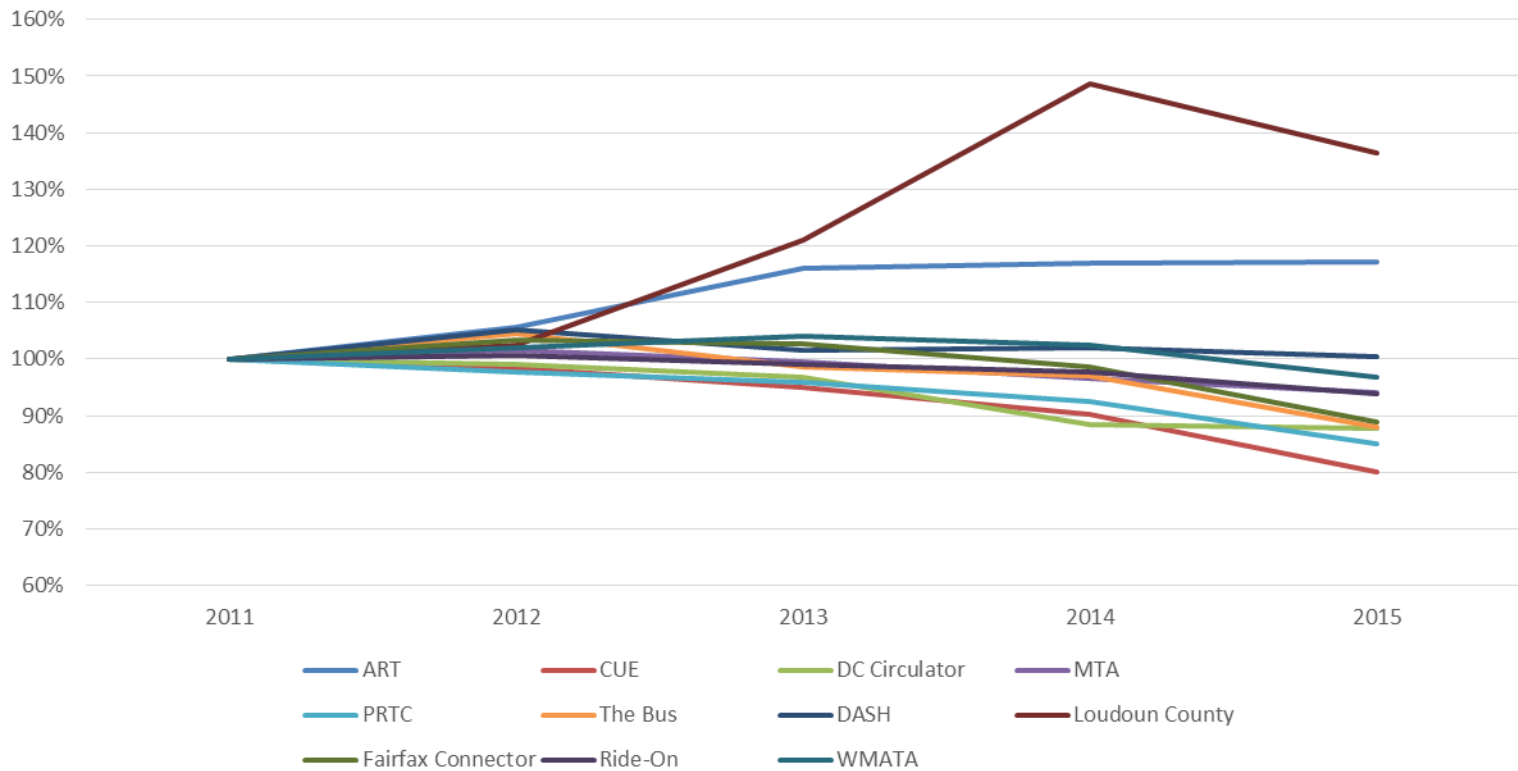
Regional Ridership Discussion

October 25, 2016



Bus Ridership Trends

Annual Ridership as a % of 2011 Ridership
NTD-Reported Unlinked Passenger Trips





Bus Ridership Trends

- Ridership is down across jurisdictions, time periods and days of the week
- Express and commuter routes are doing better than average
- Bus-to-rail transfers are falling faster than ridership overall, sometimes dramatically
 - Customer research shows rail reliability is a major influence in the decision to switch away from transit
- Ridership loss isn't predicted by current models, since it's occurring despite population and economic growth

Potential Contributing Factors

- National bus ridership trending down
- Alternative modes (Uber, Capital Bikeshare, etc.)
- Fares and transit benefits
- Rail reliability
- Gas prices
- Bus service levels and quality
- Safety and security
- Parking cost and availability
- Traffic conditions



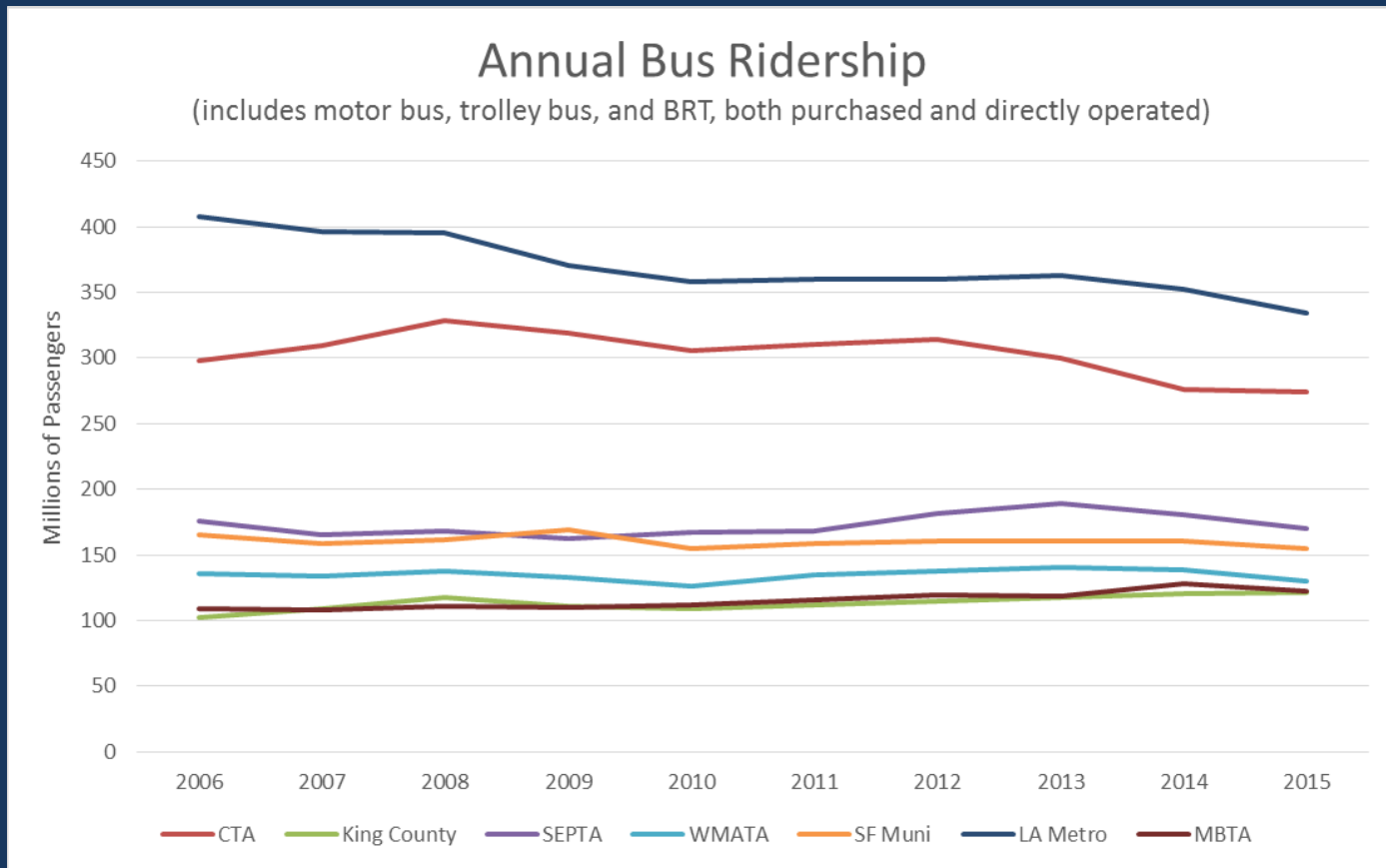
Potential Contributing Factors

- Regional VMT per capita has been flat or falling for several years
- Demographic changes: DC and Arlington becoming younger and whiter; suburbs the opposite.
- Shifts in regional economy (less federal spending, growth in the private sector)
- Are large employers moving away from transit?
- Telework and alternative work schedules





Peer Cities Comparison



Bus ridership is down at many peer agencies

Note: NY MTA bus ridership is declining, but is not pictured here.

Source: National Transit Database



Potential Next Steps

- WMATA bus passenger survey
- SmarTrip data mining
- Possible TPB study



WMATA Bus Passenger Survey

- Regional partner agencies will have the opportunity to “add on” to Metro’s effort
 - Ask limited additional questions or increase the sample size in an area of interest
 - Lower cost than running a separate survey
 - Potentially supported by COG technical assistance funds



SmarTrip Data Mining

- WMATA staff can analyze SmarTrip data to answer questions like:



- Are fewer people riding the same amount, or are the same people riding less?
 - Are more commuters traveling only 4 days per week?
 - Are passengers not transferring to rail doing something else instead?
- Staff capacity is very limited, so effort must be targeted



Possible TPB Study

- Gather and analyze existing data
- Dive deeper than agency staff have the resources to do
- Pooled funding from multiple stakeholders
- Need to identify specific goals and define scope
- RPTS would need to recommend study to TPB Technical Committee



Next Steps

- What questions need to be answered? What do transit agencies and DOTs need to know for
 - Budgeting
 - Planning (including data to plan for regional capital projects like the Purple Line)
 - Communicating with stakeholders
- What is the best avenue for exploring these questions?



Potential Questions

- What variables would need to be included in a model in order to correctly describe current trends?
- Is the current trend a temporary aberration or the new normal?
- What is the role of rail in bus ridership?
- How do employer choices/policies (telework, location) affect transit ridership?
- Is traffic actually getting worse? Where? What is the impact on bus service quality and ridership?