

Status Report on the Bus Systems in the National Capital Region



Report of the Regional Bus Subcommittee to the Technical Committee
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
January 4, 2008

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Report Outline

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- Summary

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The Regional Bus Subcommittee

- Formed by TPB Resolution R13-2007 on January 17, 2007
- Mission: To provide a permanent process for the coordination of bus planning throughout the Washington region, and for incorporating regional bus plans into the CLRP and TIP.
- Membership includes representatives from all transit bus transit operators in the region as well as the DOTs and other regional transportation agencies.

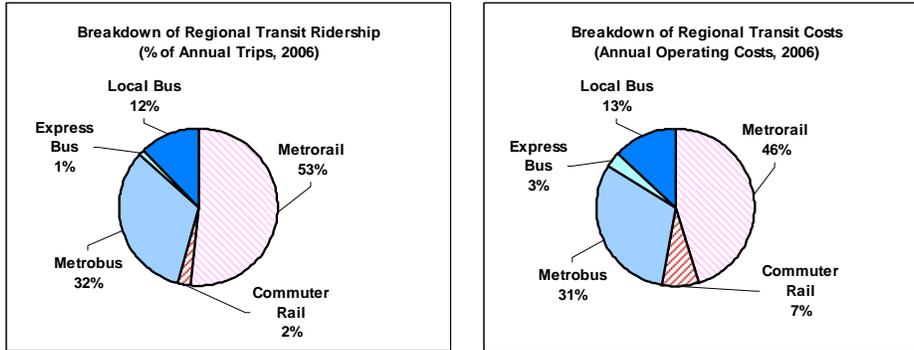
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The Bus Systems of the National Capital Region

- The Region has many different types of bus systems serving different needs:
 - Commuter/Express bus
 - Local bus
 - Feeder/Circulator bus
- 13 bus transit operators in the region
- Bus transit is a large part of the regional transit system:
 - 45% of transit trips, 45% of transit operating costs.

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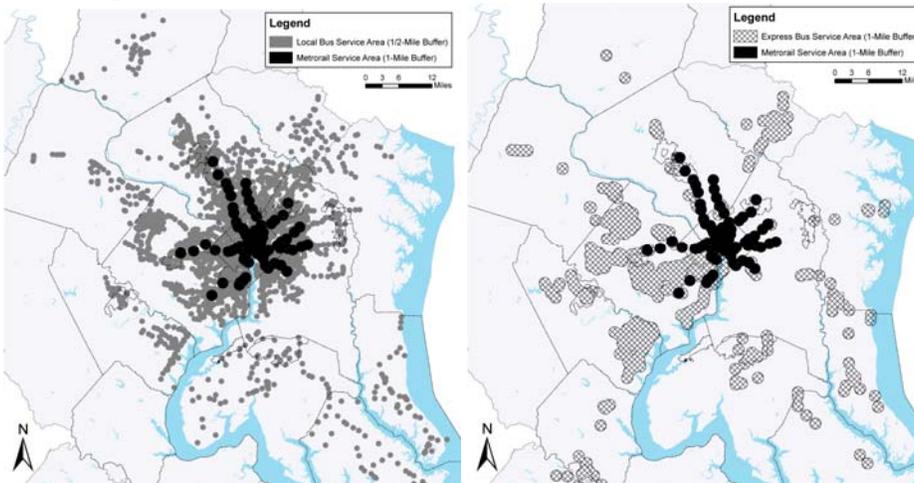
Bus Services Are Important to the Region



Bus systems in the region account for 45% of transit trips and 45% of transit operating costs.

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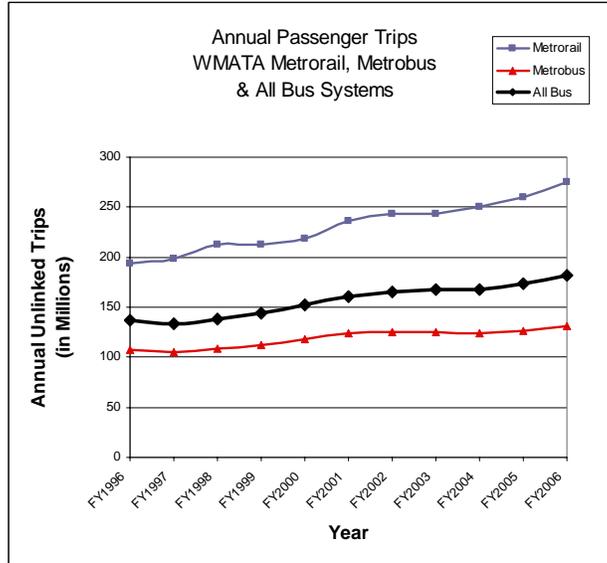
Bus Services Are Important to the Region



Bus systems have greater reach than Metrorail.

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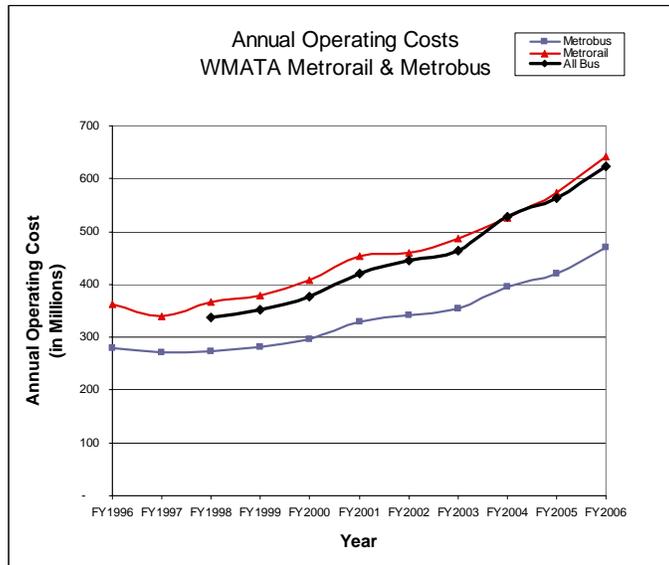
Trends in Regional Bus Ridership



Ridership on the regions bus systems is growing steadily, as is growth of Metrorail ridership.

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Trends in Regional Bus Costs



Operating costs are also growing for both bus and rail transit systems.

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Recent Bus Planning Efforts

- Regional Bus Study, 2003
 - Recommended service and capital improvements
 - Service improvements include improving existing routes, creating new routes, and establishing high-performance services
 - Capital improvements include fleet improvement, passenger amenities, running way treatments and ITS technology
- Regional Bus Summit, November 2006
 - Recommendations included creating a regional transit planning group

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Real Monetary and Infrastructure Needs

- The region's bus operators are experiencing real monetary and infrastructure needs
 - Need for upgrading bus fleet to larger, cleaner and more durable vehicles
 - Need to serve new bus lines and reduce congestion on existing routes
 - Need for new maintenance and storage facilities
 - Need for funding to cover operating costs
- Other concerns:
 - providing quality bus stops and transit transfer centers;
 - implementation of BRT technologies;
 - compliance with the ATA;
 - planning for the conversion of HOV lanes to HOT-lane facilities.

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Examples of Current Bus Systems' Current and Short-Term Needs

- New Buses:
 - CUE
 - TheBus
 - DASH
- Expansion/Development Plans:
 - ART
 - TransIT
 - TheBus
- New routes:
 - WMATA
 - Circulator
 - LC Transit
 - DASH
 - RideOn
- New Facilities: Seven new bus garages through the region between 2002 and 2012, capacity for 900 buses, per the Regional Bus Study

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Long-Range Planning Activities

- Activities of the Regional Bus Subcommittee
 - Mapping transit service and land use for 2030
 - Establishing regional bus transit LOS standards for planning
 - Facilitating electronic delivery of transit schedules between operators and TPB staff
 - New Greenhouse Emissions exercise, using transit to help reduce carbon footprint of the region
 - Coordinating with other TPB committees and activities, including AFA, MOITS task forces, Congestion Management, etc.
 - Regional Bus Survey, Spring 2008
- Other TPB Planning Activities Involving Bus Transit
 - The Scenario Study (RMAS)
 - Examined large increases in regional transit service
 - Regional Value Pricing Study
 - Examining enhanced bus service along a congestion-free network of variably priced lanes

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Summary

- Bus service is important to the region's transportation system
 - 20% of Metrorail riders reach system by bus
 - 45% of regional transit ridership is bus
 - Ridership and costs are increasing
- Challenges facing Metrorail are well-known. Bus systems are facing similar challenges which go relatively unrecognized
- Real monetary and infrastructure needs include:
 - Replacing aging buses to increase capacity, reliability and fuel efficiency, and to improve local air quality
 - Increasing fleet sizes to expand and maintain service levels
 - Citing and constructing new bus garages and maintenance facilities
 - Locating daytime parking facilities for commuter buses

The Regional Bus Subcommittee is pursuing long-range planning for the region's bus systems. However, long-range planning cannot be accomplished in earnest until the current operational challenges of the region's bus systems have been met.

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Recommendations from the Regional Bus Subcommittee to Raise the Profile of Bus Transit

- Present the report to the TPB
- Continue to ensure that bus transit needs be addressed
- Create a brochure to highlight the major points of this report
- Continue to promote a regional perspective to bus planning, and identify ways to improve fare and service coordination among the regional and local services.

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