

**NOTICE AND AGENDA**  
**CITY OF UNION CITY**  
**SPECIAL MEETING AND WORK SESSION**  
**Tuesday, August 1, 2006, 7:00 P.M.**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
**34009 ALVARADO NILES ROAD**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

- I.a Pledge of Allegiance
- I.b Roll Call

**II. PROCLAMATION**

- 2.a A proclamation in recognition of a visit of the HangZhou Youth & Children's Activity Center Delegation to the City of Union City, July 17 – August 2, 2006

**III. WORK SESSION**

- 3.a Transit Alternatives Study

*A complete agenda packet is available for review at City Hall or our website [www.ci.union-city.ca.us](http://www.ci.union-city.ca.us)*

*Assistance will be provided to those requiring accommodations for disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Interested person must request the accommodation at least two working days in advance of the meeting by contacting the City Clerk at (510) 675-5348.*

**In Recognition Of The Hangzhou Youth & Children’s Activity Center Delegation  
JULY 27 – AUGUST 2, 2006**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Union City is proud to feature one of the most diverse populations in the Bay Area, including a significant Chinese-American population, and recognizes the many positive contributions made by Chinese-Americans to Union City; and

**WHEREAS**, in May 2006 the City of Union City Leisure Services Department sent a delegation to Hangzhou, China to execute a bilateral agreement for cultural exchanges between the Hangzhou Youth & Children’s Activity Center (HYCAC) and Union City Leisure Services (UCLS); and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Union City is pleased to be visited by a delegation of nineteen (19) children and teachers from the English Language Department of the HYCAC, who will be staying in Union City for approximately six days from July 27 through August 2, 2006, departing for the East Coast and then visiting Southern California; and

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of the HYCAC visit is to experience life in the United States and foster understanding and friendship between our two great nations; and

**WHEREAS**, said official Hangzhou Youth & Children’s Activity Center delegation includes the following members:

- |                   |                        |                         |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Guo JieYing       | Lai FanDi              | Wang BinYue             |
| Wang ZhenHao      | Wu YingXue             | Xu LiLi                 |
| Lin Xue           | Mao JiaLi              | Tang WeiXia             |
| Li Liangzi        | Zhang Ting             | Zhan ShiJue             |
| Shen YuTing       | Wang JiaRui            | Sun Lie                 |
| Xu Hong (Teacher) | Feng MeiJuan (Teacher) | Wang Yan (Teacher); and |

**WHEREAS**, the City of Union City is very appreciative of the volunteer host families in Union City who will provide lodgings and meals to the HYCAC delegation during their stay here in Union City, and to HYCAC Director Jianming Huang for his gracious hospitality in hosting the Union City delegation in May 2006 and his tireless efforts to support this important cultural exchange: and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Union City recognizes Meiling Zhou, Principal of Union City’s United Youth Enrichment School for her dedication and effort as the key liaison to both Centers and who was so instrumental in making this exchange program a success; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Union City looks forward to many more years of cooperation, cultural and economic exchanges with the People’s Republic of China that will strengthen the already strong ties between our two great nations.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City Council of the City of Union City, hereby expresses its sincere honor in receiving the official delegation of the Hangzhou Youth & Children’s Activity Center, and thanks the delegation for its contributions to the cultural enrichment of the City of Union City.

**Dated** this 1<sup>st</sup> day of August 2006



## Agenda Item

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DATE: AUGUST 1, 2006  
TO: CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: MINTZE CHENG, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR  
SUBJECT: CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION ON THE TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES STUDY

### **BACKGROUND**

On May 9, 2006, City Council authorized staff to enter into an agreement with Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates to prepare the Transit Alternatives Study. The Study is to look at different strategies that may increase transit ridership and the visibility of Union City Transit services.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Study is being conducted in two phases. Phase 1 included the following major tasks:

- Review of Existing Services
- Interview Stakeholders and City Council
- Review of Peer Transit Systems
- Provide Service Improvement Suggestions and Alternatives

Phase 1 defines the existing services and is presented in the attached "Briefing Book." After Council input, we can begin to look closely at what role(s) Union City Transit should play within the family of transportation services offered in the area and then the type of service(s) we should provide.

After Council discussion, Nelson\Nygaard will conduct Phase 2 of the Study. This includes an analysis of preferred alternative(s), an implementation plan, and a final report to Council. The final report is expected to be ready for Council review and approval in October.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

As part of the recommended implementation plan, a fiscal impact analysis will be presented to City Council at that time.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that City Council provide direction to Consultant and Staff on strategies for further analysis.

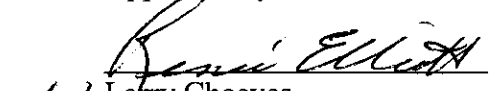
Submitted by:

Mintze Cheng  
Public Works Director

Prepared by:

Wilson Lee  
Transit Manager

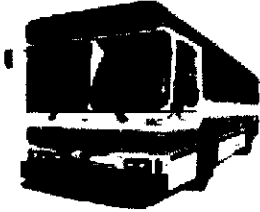
Approved by:

  
for Larry Cheeves  
City Manager

Attachment



**UNION CITY**  
 **TRANSIT**



# **Union City Transit Alternatives Study**

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# Introduction

This briefing book has been assembled to provide the necessary background information and performance data to make well informed decisions about Union City Transit (UCT) and more generally, transportation issues in Union City.

Fixed route ridership on UCT has declined steadily from its peak period in FY2000-01. The primary focus of this study is to examine the travel patterns, transit needs, community input and changing demographics to identify ways of improving ridership in Union City. This briefing book will lay the groundwork for the rest of the study and it is designed to provide the existing conditions of UCT in order to better understand the system.

Once we have defined the existing services, we can begin looking closely at what role UCT should play within the family of regional services provided by AC Transit and BART.

This report contains the following sections:

- Chapter 2 – Transportation and Demographics of Union City
- Chapter 3 – Stakeholder Interviews
- Chapter 4 – Performance Review
- Chapter 5 – Peer Review
- Chapter 6 – Preliminary Observations and Conclusions



# Transportation and Demographics in Union City

This chapter provides a community profile of Union City. This includes origin destination data and demographics from the 2000 Census. Although the census is now almost six years old, it still provides a basic snapshot of the travel patterns and population distribution for the area. In addition, this chapter highlights the results from a recent telephone survey of Union City residents completed in March 2005 for Union City Transit's Short Range Transit Plan.

This information provides necessary context for understanding the community and its transportation needs.

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF UNION CITY POPULATION

This section summarizes demographic data taken from the 2000 Census and from the phone survey.

### Total Population and Ethnic Background

The total population for Union City is 66,861 as of the 2000 Census.

The City is a "majority minority" with 43% of residents reported as Asian (43%), followed by Caucasian (30%). Of the remaining residents, 12% describe themselves as an 'other' race, African American and Hispanic non-white.

### Income

A vast majority of Union City households have a median income above \$50,000. Only one census block within the city had a median household income below \$50,000. The wealthiest part of the city is in the far southwest corner of the

city along Union City Blvd, which has a median household income above \$100,000. See Figure 2-6.

### **Population Density**

Most people in Union City live in the western part of the city. The highest population densities are located between Mission Boulevard and Alvarado Niles Road west of Decoto Road and the area around Alvarado and Union City Boulevards on the west side of I-880. See Figure 2-7.

### **Seniors**

The largest senior population in Union City is located south of Alvarado Niles Road to the east of I-880. Lower concentrations are located north of Lowry Road and directly west of I-880. See Figure 2-8.

### **Youth**

The Union City youth population is most heavily concentrated in the southwest part of the city west of Union City Boulevard and north of Lowry Boulevard. Higher concentrations are also located west of I-880 and east of Alvarado Boulevard, as well as the neighborhood between of Alvarado Niles Road and Whipple Road. See Figure 2-9.

### **Household Languages**

One of the most interesting demographic indicators for Union City is the household language data. This data shows that a majority of the west side block groups are made up of households where an Asian language is the predominant household language. In addition, the area west of Decoto and south of Mission and the area west of Union City Blvd near Homer are made up of primarily Spanish speakers. The data shows that a large portion of the population considers a language other than English as their primary language. See Figure 2-10.

### **Transit-dependence**

Union City residents are transit-independent, with 85% having a vehicle available to them, and another 5% sharing a vehicle.

Four percent report having a disability which would make using transit difficult (same as in 2003).

## **WHERE ARE UNION CITY RESIDENTS COMMUTING TO?**

According to the 2000 Census Journey to Work data, almost half of Union City residents commute to one of the following cities: Fremont (16%), within Union City (14%), and to Hayward (11%). Fremont and Hayward are both located along the I-880 corridor in close proximity to Union City. Other popular commute destinations are Oakland and San Jose (7% each) and San Francisco (6%).

Of those commuting into Union City for work, 24% are from Union City, 16% are from Hayward, and 12% are from Fremont. Oakland (8%) and San Leandro (4%) rounded out the top five locations where commuters to Union City live. All of the top 5 cities are located in Alameda County.

In general, a majority of commuters from Union City and those who work in Union City travel to and from areas located relatively near their homes. Short commutes between suburbs, which are increasingly the norm, are the most difficult to attract to transit because destinations are diffused, parking tends to be available and free, and trips are relatively short.

**Figure 2-1 Top 20 Journey to Work – Union City Residents Commuting to:**

City	County	Workers	Percentage
Fremont	Alameda	4,945	16%
Union City	Alameda	4,170	14%
Hayward	Alameda	3,255	11%
Oakland	Alameda	1,985	7%
San Jose	Santa Clara	1,985	7%
San Francisco	San Francisco	1,845	6%
Newark	Alameda	1,360	4%
Palo Alto	Santa Clara	875	3%
Santa Clara	Santa Clara	825	3%
San Leandro	Alameda	790	3%
Milpitas	Santa Clara	735	2%
Redwood City	San Mateo	580	2%
Pleasanton	Alameda	560	2%
Mountain View	Santa Clara	550	2%
Sunnyvale	Santa Clara	550	2%
Menlo Park	San Mateo	520	2%
Berkeley	Alameda	385	1%
San Mateo	San Mateo	370	1%
Remainder of County	San Mateo	350	1%
Remainder of County	Alameda	290	1%
		30,383	

Source: 2000 Census Journey to Work

**Figure 2-2 Top 20 Journey to Work – People Working in Union City:**

City	County	Workers	Percentage
Union City	Alameda	4,170	24%
Hayward	Alameda	2,720	16%
Fremont	Alameda	2,080	12%
Oakland	Alameda	1,325	8%
San Leandro	Alameda	630	4%
Newark	Alameda	510	3%
San Jose	Santa Clara	500	3%
Castro Valley	Alameda	460	3%
San Lorenzo	Alameda	330	2%
Pleasanton	Alameda	285	2%
San Francisco	San Francisco	275	2%
Livermore	Alameda	255	1%
Alameda	Alameda	245	1%
Cherryland	Alameda	215	1%
Ashland	Alameda	205	1%
Tracy	San Joaquin	190	1%
Remainder of County	Alameda	165	1%
Richmond	Contra Costa	135	1%
Dublin	Alameda	120	1%
San Ramon	Contra Costa	120	1%
		17,539	

Source: 2000 Census Journey to Work

### VARIATIONS BY CITY “QUADRANT”

A telephone survey was given to a random group of Union City households in 2003 and again in 2005. The survey results from 2005 support the census data with similar results related to journey to work. Most residents (84%) responding to the survey commute out of Union City to work and school. The top three destinations besides Union City were Hayward (18%), Fremont (13%) and San Francisco (10%).

For the purposes of establishing a general origin, respondents were identified as living in one of four quadrants created by the intersection of Alvarado-Niles Road and the Nimitz Freeway.

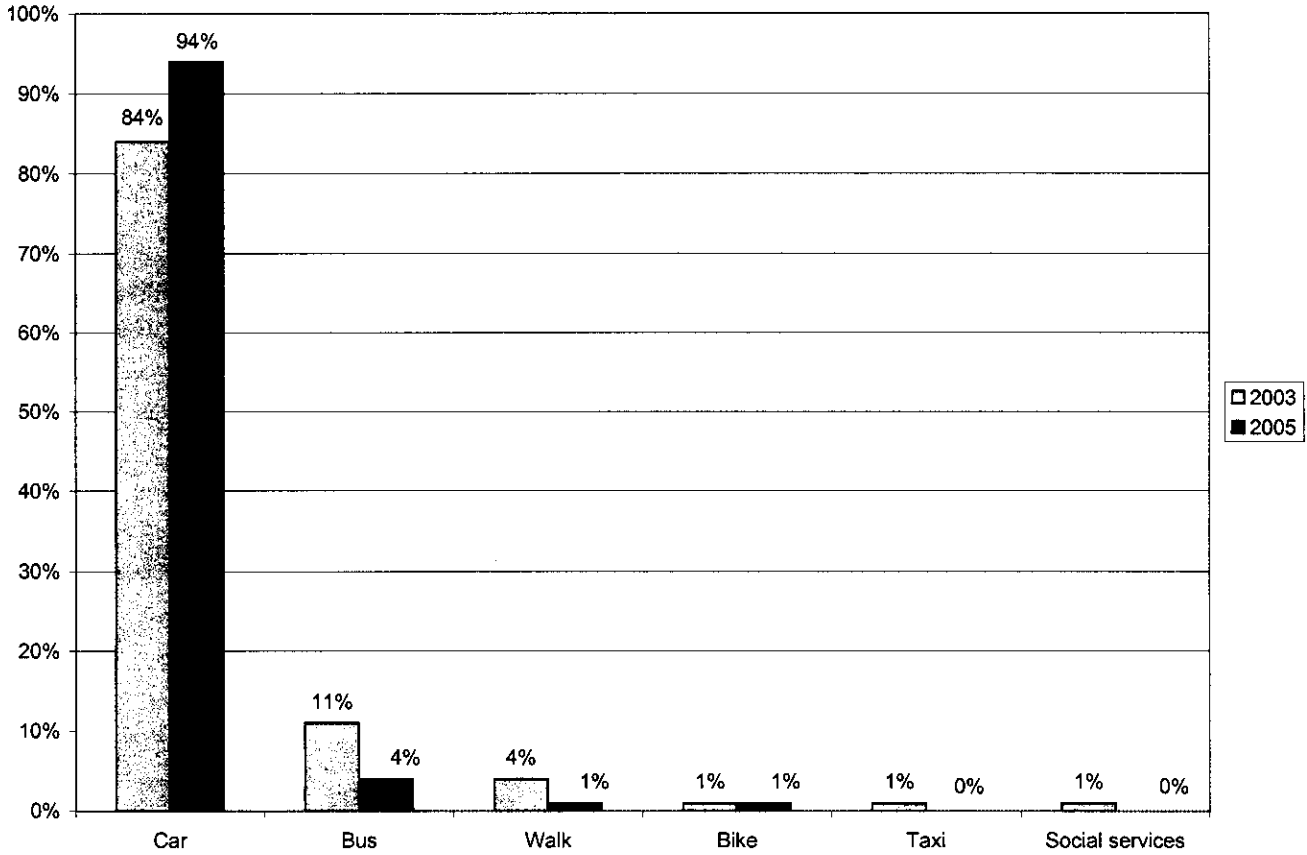
**Figure 2-3 Where Union City Workers and Students Live and Work**

Work/School Destination	Union City Residents				ALL students and residents employed outside the home
	NW	NE	SW	SE	
Hayward	29%	15%	4%	30%	18%
Union City	21%	10%	21%	12%	16%
Fremont	14%	5%	11%	18%	13%
San Francisco	7%	10%	11%	6%	10%
Oakland	0%	15%	7%	3%	7%
Palo Alto	7%	5%	14%	3%	6%
Pleasanton	14%	0%	4%	6%	5%
San Jose	0%	0%	0%	9%	5%
Menlo Park	0%	15%	0%	0%	3%
Redwood	0%	5%	7%	0%	3%
Sunnyvale	7%	0%	4%	0%	3%
Newark	0%	5%	0%	6%	3%
San Leandro	0%	5%	4%	0%	2%
San Miguel	0%	5%	0%	0%	1%
Walnut Creek	0%	5%	0%	0%	1%
Cupertino	0%	0%	4%	0%	1%
Foster City	0%	0%	4%	0%	1%
Livermore	0%	0%	4%	0%	1%
Mountain View	0%	0%	4%	0%	1%
Milpitas	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%
Portola Valley	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%

**Mode Share**

Respondents reported that they use their cars to commute to work more often now than they did in 2003. This is consistent with the decline in ridership experienced by UCT. The self-reported mode share shows a 10% rise in car usage, and a 6% drop in bus usage, since 2003.

**Figure 2-4 Mode Share**



Source: 2003/2005 Telephone Surveys.

### **Awareness and Use of Transit**

Phone respondents were well aware of UCT. Fifty-six percent identified UCT when to name local transit systems. Interest in using a “convenient local bus service” dropped from 55% in 2003 to only 39% in 2005. Of those who were interested, 79% said they were aware of UCT. 43% of respondents said they had used UCT at least once; 36% had used it at least once in the past month. In comparison, 92% have used BART.

Union City respondents said when traveling to BART, they drove alone (57%) or got a ride (14%). 9% of respondents say they take UCT to BART. The remainder take AC Transit (4%) or get there by some other means such as walking or biking.

In questions exploring perceptions of transit commute times, non-transit users’ estimates of both how long it took to drive and how long transit would take went up, however, the rise for drive time was larger than that for transit. This may indicate an awareness of congestion and a slightly improved impression of transit-based commuting.

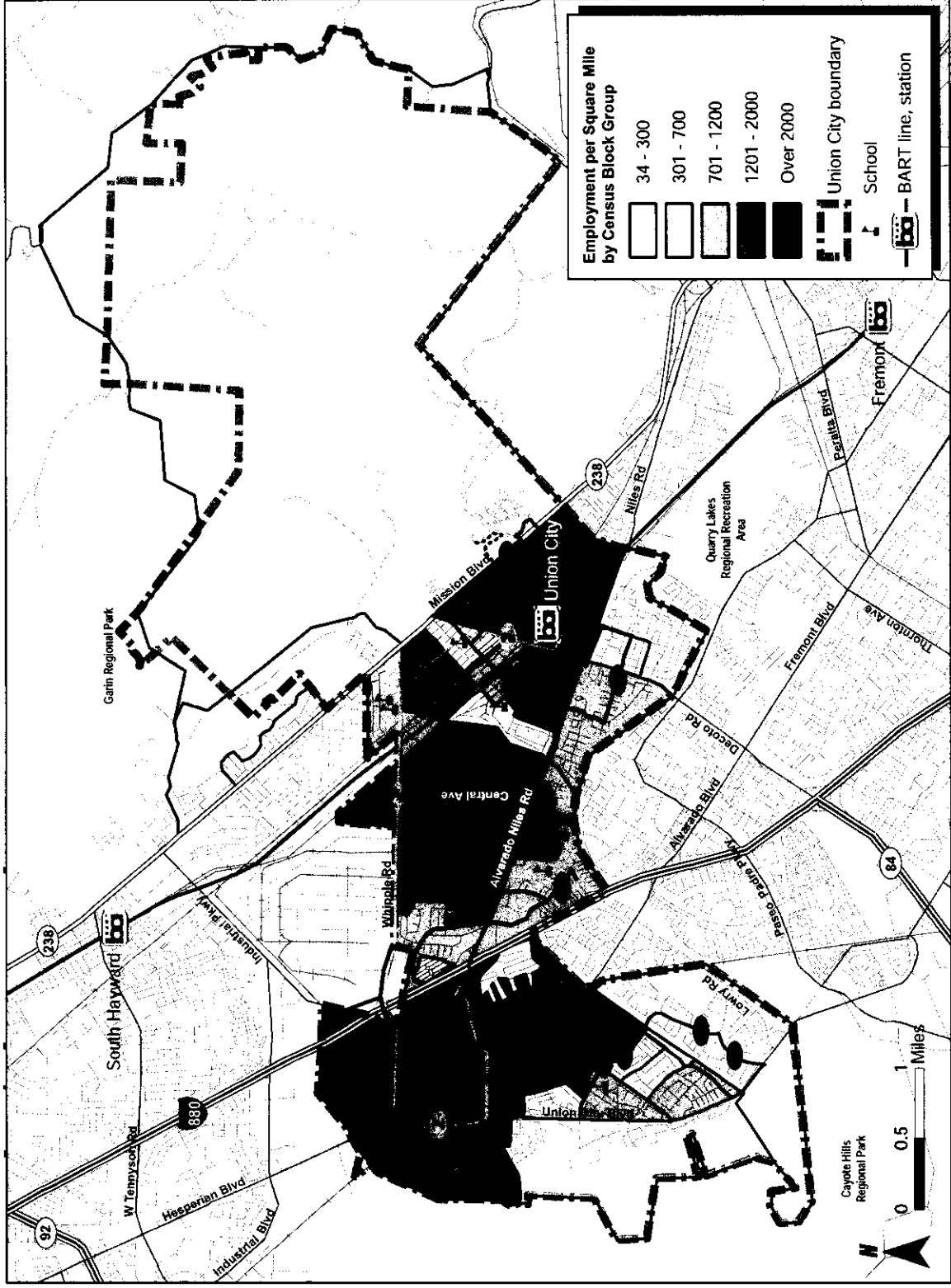
When asked about service improvements and amenities would inspire them to use transit “much more often”, the answers were very close to the 2003 results. The top services were directness, guaranteed ride home, reasonable fares, and improved amenities. All these answers were the same as in 2003 with the exceptions of “Direct bus service” (up 5%), “Improved connections with AC Transit” (up 6%), and “Earlier morning Service” (up 5%).

### **CONCLUSION**

Union City’s population is concentrated mostly in the western part of the city, with high concentrations north of the BART station and south of Alvarado Boulevard. Residents are also concentrated less densely south of Alvarado Niles Road. The areas with the increased population densities are also the areas where seniors and low income residents are more likely to be living. While the denser areas are home to more seniors and low income residents, the less dense areas are where the highest concentrations of the youth population are located.

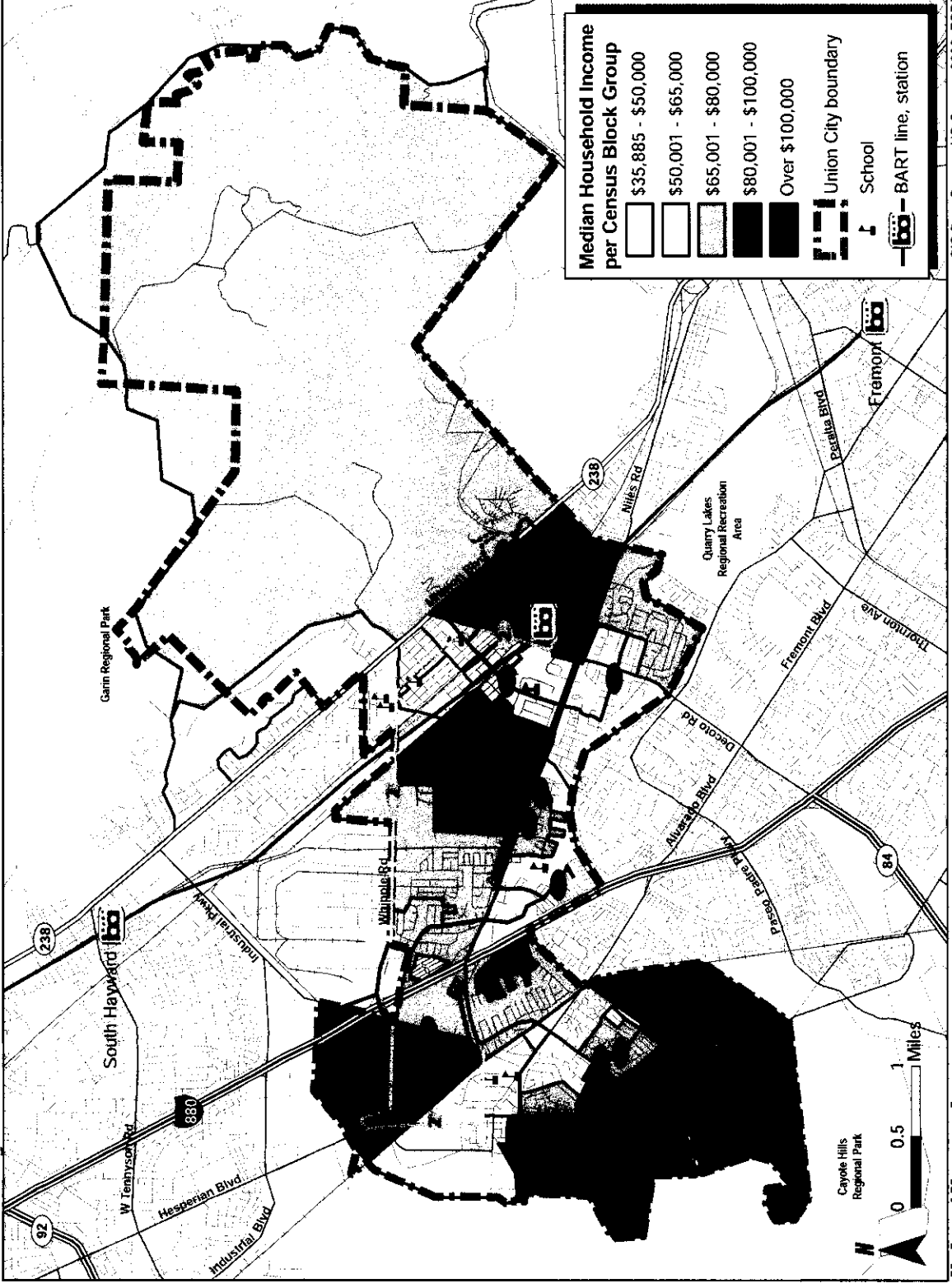
While employment densities are approximately evenly distributed throughout the city, three areas stood out showing high densities. The area around the Union City BART Station, the area around Central Avenue between Alvarado Niles Road and Whipple Road, and in the northwest of the city between Union City Boulevard and Dyer Street all have over 2,000 jobs per census block group. Lastly, the Census data shows that Union City is very diverse and that a large portion of the population does not consider English their primary language.

Figure 2-5 Employment Density



**Nelson\Nygaard**  
consulting associates

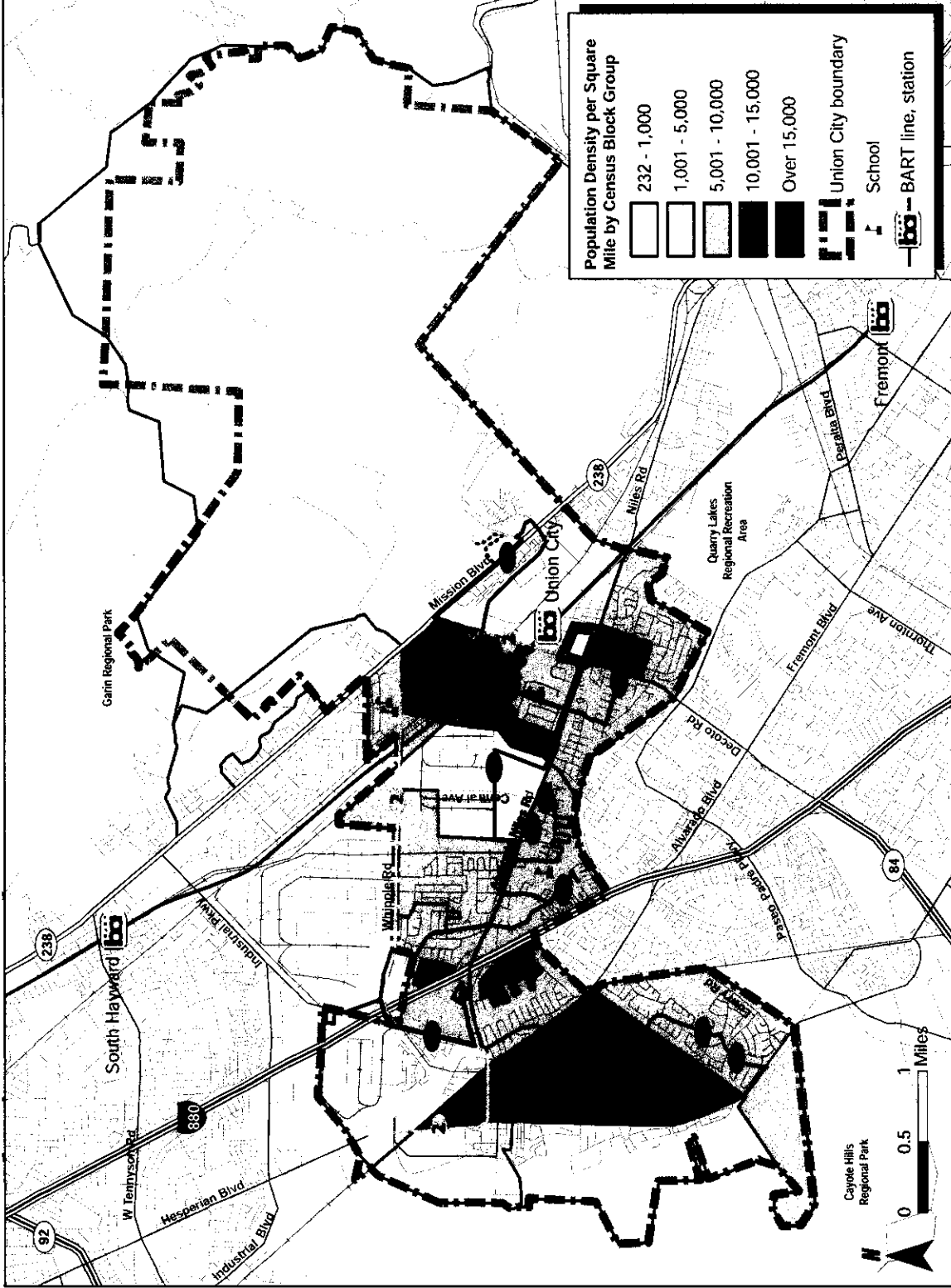
Figure 2-6 Income



GIS Data Source: US Census 2000, ESRI  
 Location: Union City, Alameda County, CA

**Nelson Nygaard**  
 consulting associates

Figure 2-7 Population Density



**Nelson Nygaard**  
consulting associates

Figure 2-8 Seniors

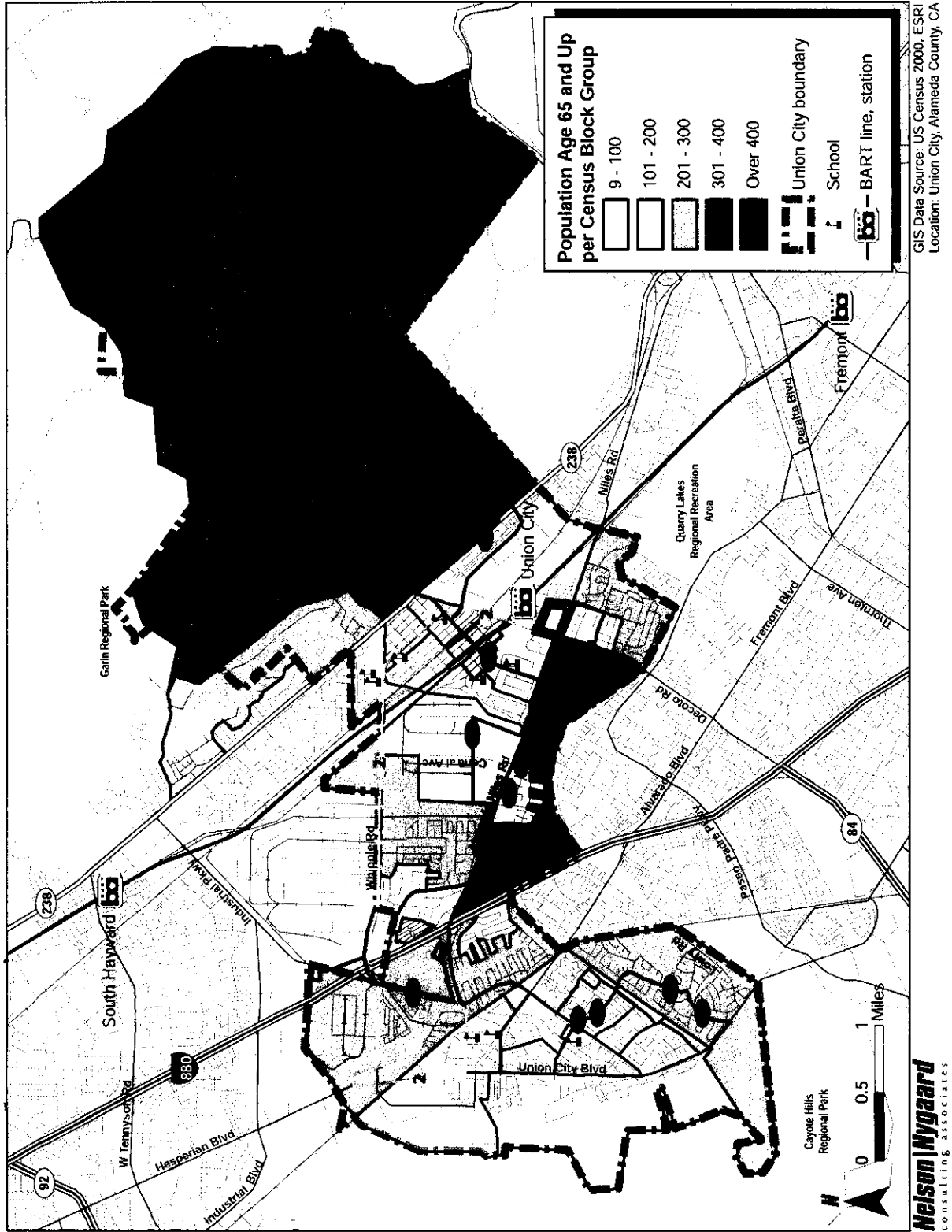
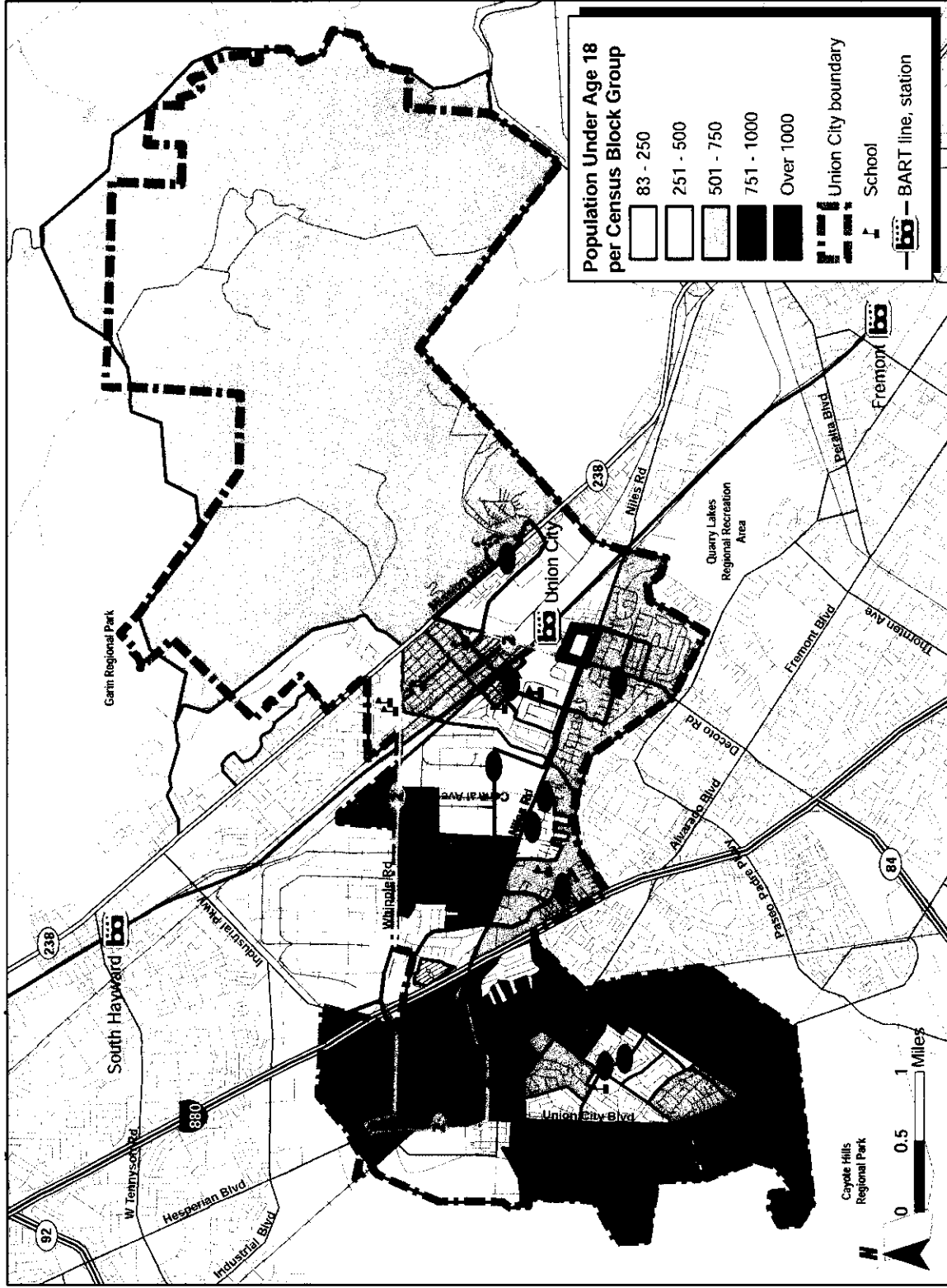


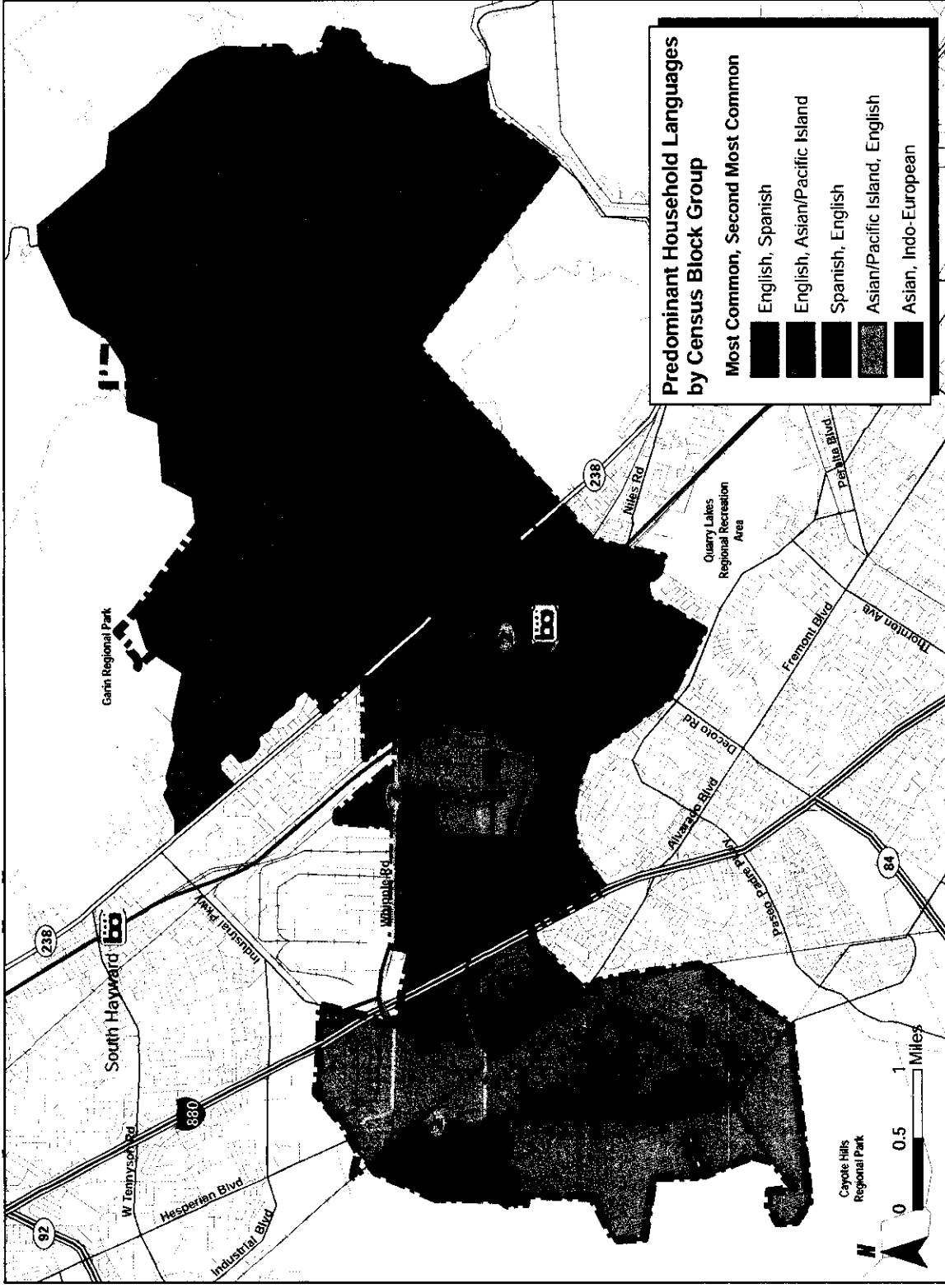
Figure 2-9 Youth



GIS Data Source: US Census 2000, ESRI  
 Location: Union City, Alameda County, CA

**Nelson Nygaard**  
 CONSULTING ASSOCIATES

Figure 2-10 Household Language





## Stakeholder Interviews

For this study, a number of local and regional stakeholders were interviewed. These stakeholders included members of the City of Union City staff and council, transportation representatives from New Haven Unified School District, drivers and staff from MV Transportation, representatives from other transit agencies, and concerned Union City citizens representing daily commuters and leisure riders of UC Transit.

This chapter anonymously summarizes the results of these interviews. The chapter is organized around a list of scripted questions asked of each stakeholder. Comments mentioned by more than one person are bolded and show the number of people who made similar comments in parentheses.

**Note: The content of this chapter has been taken directly from stakeholder interviews. The factual accuracy of this content has not been analyzed. These comments are not necessarily the opinion of anyone other than the stakeholder making the comment.**

### What role do you think UCT should play in Union City?

- **UCT needs to continue to provide coverage to the neighborhoods (8).** UCT should provide service to neighboring communities such as Fremont and Hayward (7).
- **The local bus system needs more frequent service on major corridors (5).** There needs to be two kinds of service – fast efficient and “straighter” routes for commuters, students and other choice riders who might take the bus for commute or occasional trips, plus local community circulators that can take people to local destinations in their

communities (2). Combining peak period commute routes that focus on BART, the future intermodal center, Logan High School, South Hayward BART and potentially the DB Caltrans lot in on Ardenwood and Decoto would provide fast convenient connections during peak hours. During the midday, the need is for more community shuttle service, focused on local destinations.

- **The local bus system should be more integrated into the workings of the City – schools, leisure services and events.** The local bus system should be in partnership with the schools so that either we're running a full school system or a full transit system – it is impossible to have both.
- **The local bus system is the connector between UC neighborhoods and the regional systems that run on the big arterials.**

**Who should Union City Transit serve? (rank the following)**

- **Commuters within UC**
- **Commuters going to BART**
- **Commuters going elsewhere**
- **Seniors**
- **Low Income**
- **Students/Youth**
- **Persons with disabilities**
- **UCT's highest priority is to serve the BART station (11).**
- **A high priority for UCT should be serving school kids/youth (5).**
- **Low income and seniors depend on UCT (5).** Seniors cannot walk far and need UCT to get them to medical facilities and grocery stores. Low income riders are the largest group currently on the bus. Increasing affluence in Union City may have contributed to losses in ridership. There are still a large number of people who need to get to service sector jobs and industrial jobs that depend on local transit service.
- **UCT needs to serve people going elsewhere – Fremont and South Hayward (5).** Union City Transit needs to serve different markets at different times (3) The current system is focused on youth and low income riders all day long. As the youth population decreases and as Union City becomes more affluent, ridership would naturally decrease unless

the system changes to look for new markets. The goal should be to operate community based shuttle routes during the midday, and fast commuter services for Logan and BART in the peaks. There should be a way to do both.

- **If it comes down to making a choice, UCT should support the needs of transit dependants first. (2)**

**How could transit service be changed to meet the needs of transit dependent population?**

- **More frequent service (6).** People have to wait an hour sometimes to get to the FoodMaxx on Route 3 or to get close to Walmart at Union Landing.
- **UCT should serve other nearby locations directly, such as Washington Hospital, St. Rose and Kaiser Hayward and the Hall of Justice complex in both Fremont and Hayward.** Service to Chabot and to Cal State would also be desirable. Shopping destinations include NewPark Mall and Southland. (5) There are no department stores in Union City and people still need to go out of town for basic needs.
- **UCT needs to provide all day service on the Union City Blvd corridor (4).** This is an important street in UC and there is only a peak period transbay bus serving it right now.
- **UCT needs to be in partnership with the school district to maximize both systems (3).** Need to work closely with the school district to understand what is "yellow bus" territory, and what UCT can do to fill the gaps.
- **More local services and community service might help reduce paratransit demands and be well suited to riders who can't walk to the bus stop or cross the main arterials (3).** During slow times it would be great to bring back the "flag stop" system where you could just wave at the bus to get it to stop for you. It might be possible to do some route deviation during off peak times to provide personalized service for people who can't walk to or cross the arterials.
- **Routes 3 and 4 need 30 minute frequencies (3).**
- **UCT needs better coordination with AC Transit (3).** Westside transit center needs to provide better transfer opportunities to AC Transit routes. The system should be set up within the framework of the regional transit systems.

- **Smaller friendlier buses that are easier to get on and off of quickly (3)**
- **Put back service taken away with the July service changes (2).**
- **Union City is majority Asian and there is very little outreach and coordination with the Asian community.** Material is not available in multiple languages and we don't use ethnic news outlets, etc.
- **There are important Asian oriented businesses at "four corners" on Alvarado and Dyer.** This should be an important node on a west side shuttle.
- **There is new low income housing at Mission near A Street that is not well served.**
- **There is no direct service to the Tiburcio Vasquez Clinic.**
- **Route 3 goes all over the place and doesn't serve anyone well.** The deviation to the Tropics trailer court takes people way out of direction and takes a lot of time for a small number of riders. It might be possible to use a signal like they do for Masonic Home to avoid the deviation. Route 3 tries to serve the Industrial Area which generates very few riders and probably never will. Staying on Alvarado Niles would make that route work better.
- **The new gym complex, retail center and housing on Union City Boulevard and Smith will be an important node, especially for youth riders.**
- **Midday needs are different from peak needs, which focus on the high school and BART.** During the midday, we may not need to connect east and west as much.
- **Route 4 has a "dead zone" on 7th Street which has development only on one side and sound walls on the other.** It's also "dead" on Perry, except for serving new senior housing. Are there ways to streamline and better serve some of the other dense areas in the Decoto District.

**How could UCT be changed to better meet the needs of commuters?**

- **More frequent service (8).** Overall travel time is critical to commuters, and people really value their wait time highly. Right now, if you can get a parking place at BART, it's free, and the car is the ultimate

convenience if you can afford one. To motivate people to take the bus it needs to be frequent, fast and inexpensive.

- **The bus needs better/more marketing and information at stops (6).** The printed schedules are only available at few places. They also need to carry AC Transit and BART schedules as well. UCT should work more closely with local businesses to promote the service and maybe partner with them on a BART shuttle. Real time information at stops would be a major improvement and would generate ridership.
- **Better passenger amenities (5).** UCT needs more shelters and benches to attract more riders. Cleaner and more comfortable waiting areas with no graffiti or trash. For commuters, having real time information in the stop, so commuters know when to expect the next bus would be very helpful.
- **UCT needs to serve Fremont and South Hayward (5).** UCT should go to these cities for shopping trips to the Fremont Hub, medical trips to Washington Hospital, work trips and to South Hayward BART for residents living in the Westside of Union City.
- **UCT needs better schedule adherence (5).** That is the biggest problem with the bus service, the bus is never at the stop when it supposed to be.
- **Straighter faster routes that don't go all over the place or necessarily stop at the transfer center at Union Landing when the stores aren't open.** Commuter service should emphasize speed and express services that don't really exist now. (4)
- **Direct service to Caltrans Park & Rides during commute (4).** UCT needs to serve the P&R near Smith and Union City Blvd for commuters to transfer to AC Transit's SB bus to San Francisco. Also service to the DB parking lot off of Ardenwood for westside riders connecting to the Dumbarton service. If there's no capacity on the DB service, UCT may need to go over the bridge as well.
- **West side service should orient towards South Hayward BART rather than Union City BART for peak service, which would also serve Hayward Kaiser and St. Rose. (2)**
- **Route 1 is very productive, but the Route 1A and 1B circulator pieces on the westside**

is confusing and may not be the best use of resources.

- **Need service on Union City Boulevard.** Much of the development in the last decade has been adjacent to Union City Boulevard, but there isn't any service there.

**Union City is served by AC Transit and BART, as well as UCT. Do you think that UCT has a role in serving destinations outside of the City limits?**

- **UCT needs to serve Fremont and South Hayward (9).** UCT should go to these cities for shopping trips to the Fremont Hub, Southland, NewPark Mall and medical trips to Washington Hospital, work trips and to South Hayward BART for residents living in the Westside of Union City. Other ideas include service to the Hall of Justice complexes in Hayward and Fremont during the peaks, and to community colleges.
- **West side commuters are oriented to South Hayward BART and we might look at going there and serving the hospital destinations near there. (3)** In Fremont, the destinations are too disbursed to serve adequately, so we should try to get people to regional connections there.
- **Union City doesn't have a department store and until it does people will need to shop out of town. We should go directly to a major shopping area. (3)**
- **Union City has more shopping resources now than it has in the past, and we should focus on getting Union City riders to Union City destinations and let AC and BART take people out of town.**

**What do you think is most important for UCT (trade offs)?**

- **Transit service that circulates through neighborhoods and makes many local stops (9)**
- **More productive routes that stay on arterials (8)**
- **Buses that can carry peak loads to schools and BART (8)**
- **More personalized routes that circulate in neighborhoods (7)**

- **Really, the answer to all of these is both (5) – during the peak, we need fast, express commute and school services in big buses.** During the midday, ridership drops off dramatically and we need small, flexible neighborhood circulators.
- **Transit travel times that are competitive with the auto (3)**
- **Smaller community circulator routes (1)**
- **The answers to all these questions depend on who you want to serve.** We should decide on who our market is first and then consider the trade-offs.

**Misc. Quotes about UCT:**

- **UCT needs to stop going into the transit center at Union Landing in both directions on the same route (6).** The perception is that we're running empty buses all day long. (3) We need to deal with that perception, even if it doesn't increase ridership. Part of this perception may be the equipment we're running. We need to understand the realities.
- **Bring back the old Route 5 with new routing – still need to serve S. Hayward BART and Lido Faire Shopping Center in Fremont (2).**
- **UCT needs transit signal priority to get through all the lights on Alvarado Niles and keep on schedule (2).**
- **UCT is almost two systems – a high capacity peak service that needs to get to BART and Logan quickly and a midday service that needs to cater to local circulation needs.**
- **We need automated passenger counters so we get better information about who is using different segments of routes.** Right now our routes are stretched very thin and are designed to cover a lot of territory, even if we don't know how many people are using them.
- **Find ways to eliminate the "dead zones" and use the service hours to provide more useful coverage.**



## Performance Review

This section summarizes the performance of Union City Transit's fixed-route and paratransit services, and looks at trends among measurable factors.

Data used in the following analysis was provided in the Union City Short Range Transit Plan update of January 2006. Those figures are based on Union City's submission to the Transportation Development Act of 2004. Costs for FY 2004-2005 are derived from estimates submitted in UCT's Transportation Development Act funding filing, prepared in April 2005.

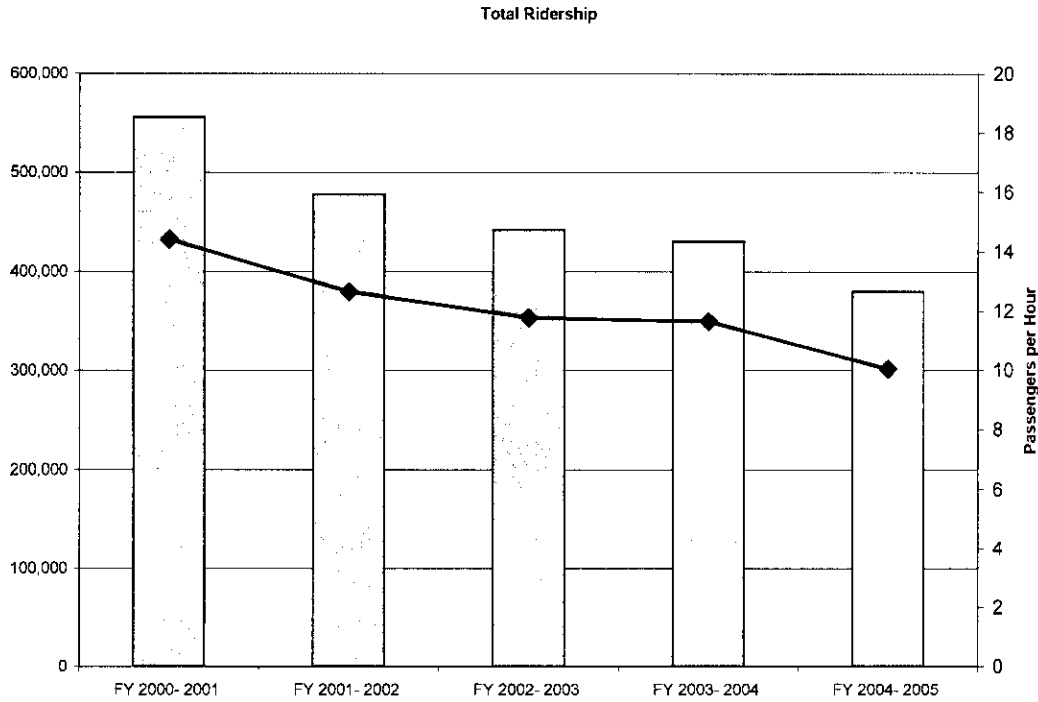
### UNION CITY FIXED-ROUTE TRANSIT

Union City Transit Service is made up of four routes. Routes 1 and 2, which focus service on the arterials of Alvarado-Niles and Whipple Rd. respectively, are designed to connect eastern and western parts of Union City, and are designed to carry large volumes of riders. These routes are very successful, combining to carry 80% of the system's riders.

Routes 3 and 4 are more community focused, providing neighborhood shuttles off the arterials. These routes are examples of more personalized "coverage-oriented" routes that are less productive by design.

Ridership for Union City's transit routes has been falling over the past five years, with a cumulative loss since 2001 of 32%. Ridership in the most recent fiscal year, which ended on June 30, 2006, is up by almost 5% over the previous year. Figure 4-1 summarizes ridership from FY 2001-FY 2005.

**Figure 4-1 Passengers – Total and Per Hour**



**Farebox Revenue and Costs**

Since 2000, the average fare collected for each passenger has increased 23%; but because there are fewer passengers, the actual farebox revenue collected has decreased by 6%, and the percentage of operating costs made up by farebox revenue has dropped 13%. In 2004 the farebox recovery ratio was 13.9%. Figure 4-2 summarizes operating costs and farebox revenue over the past five years.

**Service Hours and Miles**

UCT has offered virtually the same service over the last five years, with revenue hours reduced by only 2% over the five year period, and revenue miles increasing by 5%. However, operating costs have risen 8% over that same period, leading to negative performance indicators, such as a 3% higher cost per revenue mile, 10% higher cost per revenue hour, and 59% higher cost per passenger. This information is summarized in Figure 4-3.

See Figure 4-4 for a complete table of indicators.

Figure 4-2 Costs and Revenue

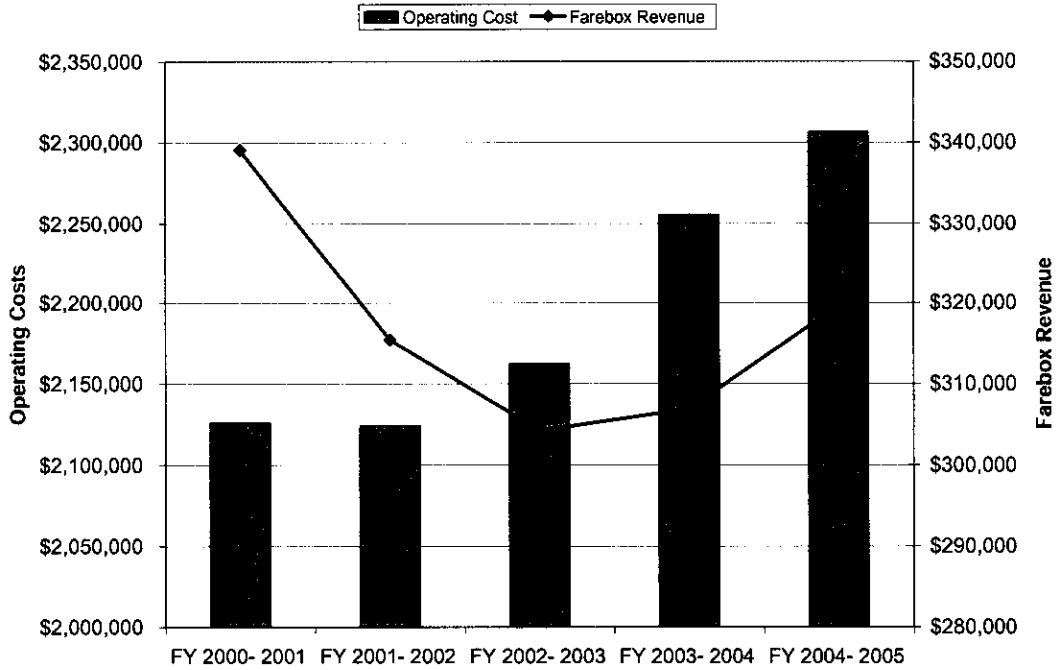


Figure 4-3 Costs per Mile and per Hour

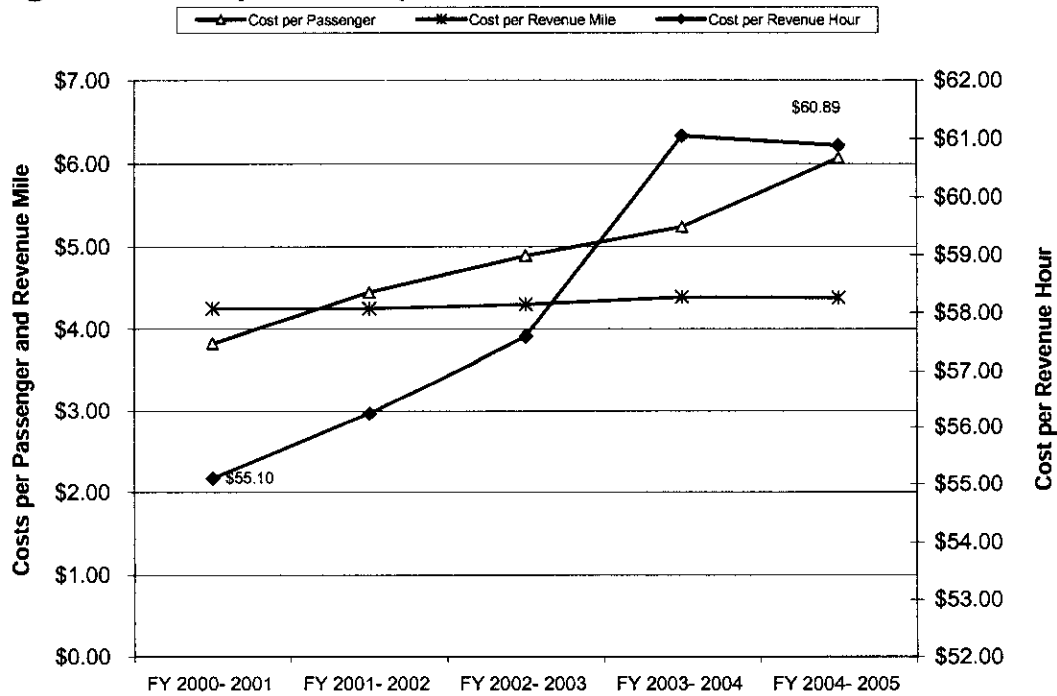


Figure 4-4 Fixed Route Performance, FY 2000-2001 – 2004-2005

Fixed Route Performance Measure	FY 2000 -2001	FY 2001-2002	FY 2002-2003	FY 2003-2004	FY 2004-2005	% Change 2002-03 to 2003-04	% Change 2003-04 to 2004-05	% Change 2000-01 to 2004-05
Total Passengers	555,443	477,672	442,274	430,520	380,117	-2.70%	-12%	-32%
Passengers per Hour	14.4	12.65	11.78	11.65	10.04	-1.10%	-14%	-30%
Passengers per Revenue Mile	1.11	0.95	0.88	0.84	0.72	-4.60%	-14%	-35%
Revenue Hours	38,581	37,769	37,540	36,943	37,877	-1.60%	3%	-2%
Revenue Miles	500,132	500,304	503,171	513,281	526,986	2.00%	3%	5%
Operating Cost	\$2,125,916	\$2,124,040	\$2,161,883	\$2,255,219	\$2,306,203	4.30%	2%	8%
Farebox Revenue	\$339,101	\$315,372	\$304,225	\$306,952	\$319,559	0.90%	4%	-6%
Cost per Passenger	\$3.83	\$4.45	\$4.89	\$5.24	\$6.07	7.20%	16%	59%
Cost per Revenue Hour	\$55.10	\$56.24	\$57.59	\$61.05	\$60.89	6.00%	-0.30%	10%
Cost per Revenue Mile	\$4.25	\$4.25	\$4.30	\$4.39	\$4.38	2.30%	0.00%	3%
Farebox Recovery Ratio	16.00%	14.80%	14.10%	13.60%	13.90%	-3.30%	2%	-13%
Average Fare/Passenger	\$0.61	\$0.66	\$0.69	\$0.71	\$0.84	2.51%	12.77%	23%

## WHO IS RIDING THE BUS?

### RESULTS FROM THE ON-BOARD PASSENGER SURVEY

This section summarizes surveys given to riders on the buses in March 2005, in preparation for the Short Range Transit Plan. All answers were tied to frequency of use, and clustered into three groups: those using the bus up to 3 days a week; those using the bus 4 or 5 days a week; and those using it 6 or 7 days a week. An overall rating for all users was also calculated.

#### Ridership

Union City Transit (UCT) ridership tracked population trends closely through the 1990's, increasing as the population rose. As the population leveled off from 2000-2003, ridership declined to 1994 levels.

While ridership declined from 2003 to 2005, 46% of riders surveyed said they started using the bus during 2004 or 2005, indicating a high degree of turnover. New riders (0-3 years) were up by 4%, while long-term riders (3+ years) are down by 5%.

Seventy-three (73%) of 2005 riders either do not have a driver's license or do not have access to a vehicle. Those who ride the bus least often (up to 3 days a week) have more choice: 34% of these riders are licensed and either own or share a vehicle.

#### Travel Patterns

The majority of riders are traveling between home, work and school. Trips to and from work comprise 45% of trips, with school or college trips at 32%. Most riders use the system only for one type of trip; with 68% of riders using the bus only for home/work or home/school trips. Just over half of UCT riders (55%) use the bus for round trips; among those using the bus 7 days a week, this rises to 70%, reflecting their higher dependence. The high percentage of riders not making a round trip reflects students and BART commuters who are able to get a ride in one direction.

Most riders (53%) say they make two trips a day. The largest change in this factor since 2003 was for those using the bus 6 or 7 days a week. In 2003, 93% of this group made two or more trips per day; in 2005, this dropped to 85%. Overall, the average trips per user (1.9) has not changed since 2003.

The number of riders transferring during their trip dropped 5%, from 43% in 2003 to 38% in 2005. This may indicate that transferring riders have stopped taking the bus, or that the routes have changed to reduce the necessity to transfer.

While reducing transfers is generally considered a positive, it also contributes to declining ridership statistics since transit operators count every boarding as a riders, regardless of whether the passenger is "new" to the system or transferring from another line.

Ninety-two percent (92%) of UCT riders pay for their trip with cash or cash plus transfer, up significantly from 85% in 2003. The greatest changes were a drop of 4% in the use of BART Plus, and a rise of 6% in those paying a cash fare.

#### Rider Perceptions of Service

Riders rating their overall satisfaction as Excellent or Good have remained consistent over the past two surveys. A total of 89% rated the system either as excellent or good in 2005, although the percentage rating the system as "excellent" declined slightly compared with 2003 results. Security/safety and Cleanliness were both rated higher, with a 4% rise in those rating them Excellent or Good.

The service improvements rated most highly by riders were:

- More frequent service,
- More weekend service,
- Later evening service

Although on-time performance showed the greatest drop in satisfaction, improvement of on-time performance ranked fifth in importance to users (36%).

#### Hours & Locations

Many respondents indicated they would ride "a little more" or "much more" if hours were extended later in the evening. Most requests were for routes 1A and 1B to extend to 9pm, 10pm or 11pm. In the current schedule, the last weekday PM times are:

	1A	1B	2	3	4
Last bus departs from origination point	8:05	7:35	8:30	7:55	8:21
Last bus arrives at final destination	9:00	8:30	9:25	9:03	8:48

Only 11% of riders selected earlier start times as their favored improvement. Several respondents mentioned start times that are already accommodated on weekdays, leading to the assumption that they are talking about weekend service. Unfortunately this must be deduced, since the survey did not make that distinction.

### Demographics

#### Age, language, income, employment, working weekends

UCT riders are much younger on the whole than the general population, reflecting the high usage of high school and college students, who are either unlicensed or can't afford a car. The largest group of riders (32%) is from 25 to 44; the second largest group overall (26%) is people under 17. This same group comprises 30% of 5-day a week riders.

Proportionately, fewer seniors age 56-65 ride UCT (7%) than are in the general population (15%). For seniors 66 and older, the 2003 survey shows them to comprise 7% of both the general population and the bus-riding population; however, in the 2005 survey, they still comprise 7% of the bus patrons, but 15% of the general Union City population. This is due to the increase in senior housing in Union City. Many new residents in these housing areas either do not travel independently, or rely on transportation provided by their residential center.

Between 2003 and 2005, reported household income of UCT riders stayed the same or shifted slightly higher across all categories except \$50k-\$75k, which went down by 4%. The SRTP notes that 17% of riders indicate a household income of \$7500 or less, a figure that seems too low to be believable without special circumstances or misperceptions by the youngest group of riders.

Census data for 2005 income is not available; however, comparing the bus survey data with 2000 Census data for Union City income, there is an obvious inverse proportion between income level and bus ridership, equalizing at about \$40,000 annual household income.

Numbers on employment are virtually unchanged, with slightly more students (+2%) in 2005. The great majority, 80% of riders, are either employed outside the home or are students.

The need for Saturday transportation to work (29%) remained virtually the same as for 2003 (30%).

When analyzed by amount of weekend work, the service expansion most desired is more Sunday service, with 67% of those working Saturday and Sunday reporting they would use UCT "much more" with this added service.

### ROUTE PRODUCTIVITY

Ridership and productivity figures for each fixed-route operated by UCT are provided below. The data shows that Routes 1A, 1B, and 2 make up over 80% of existing ridership. Route 1B is the most productive route with 16.8 passengers per hour.

**Figure 4-5 Productivity by Route**

Route	Daily Boardings	% of System Boardings	Passengers per Hour
Route 1A	308	22.8%	14.0
Route 1B	387	28.7%	16.8
Route 2	393	29.1%	10.6
Route 3	131	9.7%	7.2
Route 4	131	9.7%	14.0
Total	1,350		12.5

### Weekday Ridership Details

#### Routes 1A and 1B

Route 1A and Route 1B operate every 30 minutes during the peaks and 60 minutes in the evening and midday. The routes are offset on Alvarado Niles to allow for more frequent service along the corridor. Each route operates in a reverse one way loop in the Alvarado District neighborhood allowing for bi-directional service throughout the day.

Boardings on Route 1A are steady throughout the day with a clear peak trip at 7:05AM. Ridership on Route 1B fluctuates with the greatest boarding totals during the AM peak and 2:50PM and 3:50PM trips. The principal boarding locations on both routes occurs at the two transit centers and along the Alvarado Niles and Dyer corridors.

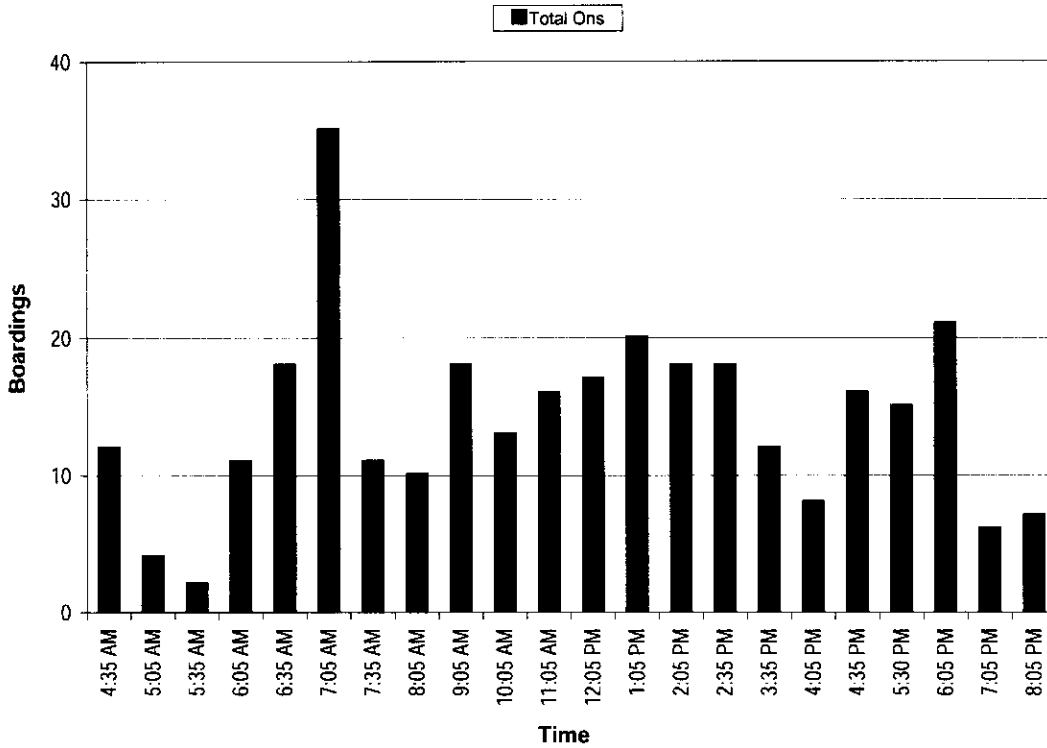
**Figure 4-6 Top Boarding Locations – Route 1A**

BART	66
Transit Center (outbound)	23
Dyer/Alvarado (Fremont Bank)	13
Transit Center (inbound)	13
Rose/Darlene	9

**Figure 4-9 Top Boarding Locations – Route 1B**

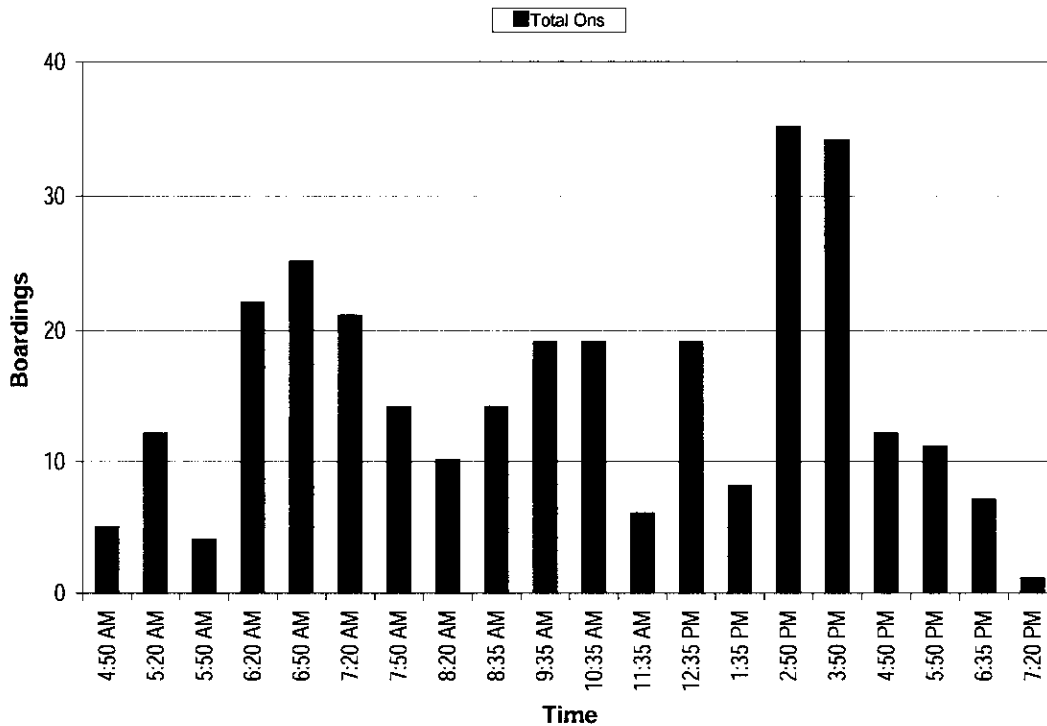
BART	94
Alvarado-Niles/H St.	44
Dyer/Alvarado (Fremont Bank)	27
Alvarado-Niles/Meyers	25
Transit Center (outbound)	22

**Figure 4-7 Route 1A Total Boardings by Trip - Weekday**



The data does not reflect every weekday trip.  
 Source: Union City Transit SRTP 2006-2015

**Figure 4-8 Route 1B Total Boardings by Trip - Weekday**



The data does not reflect every weekday trip.  
 Source: Union City Transit SRTP 2006-2015

**Route 2**

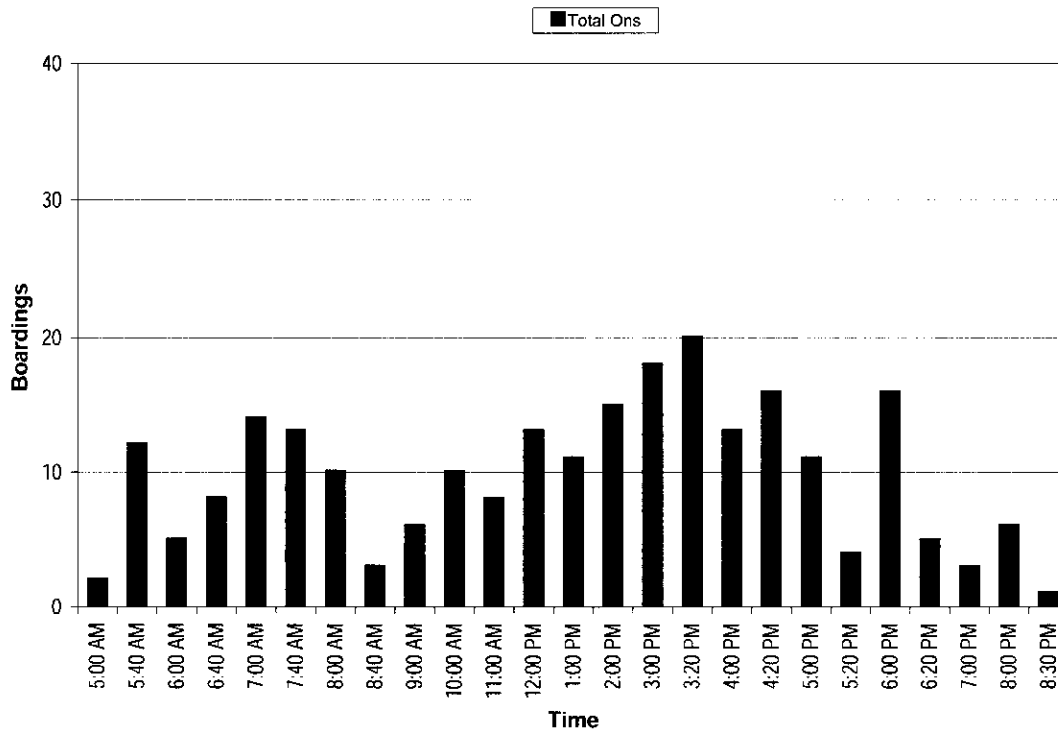
Route 2 connects Union City BART to the neighborhoods in the northwest part of the city and along the 6th Street and Whipple corridors. The route provides an important connection to the Kaiser medical facility on Union City Blvd. The route operates every 20 minutes during the peak and every 30 minutes during off-peak periods.

Ridership on Route 2 peaks in the afternoon from 2:00PM to 6:00PM with the most boardings occurring at the BART station (171) and at Whipple and Medallion (33).

**Figure 4-9 Top Boarding Locations – Route 2**

BART	171
Whipple/Medallion (inbound)	33
Whipple/A St (inbound)	21
6th/G St (inbound)	15
Transit Center	15

**Figure 4-10 Route 2 Total Boardings by Trip – Weekday**



The data does not reflect every weekday trip.  
 Source: Union City Transit SRTP 2006-2015

**Route 3**

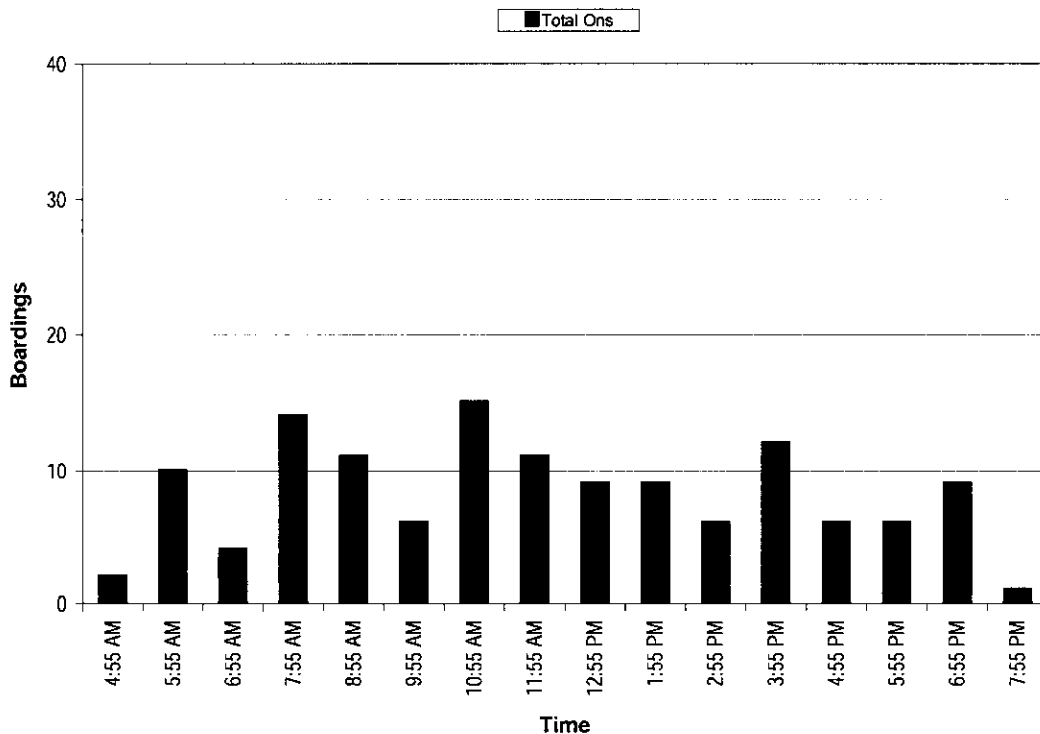
Route 3 connects the Union City BART station to portions of Dyer and Alamedan between Whipple and Alvarado Niles. In addition, the route provides service to the Tropics neighborhood and mobile home park and the Food Maxx/Home Depot Shopping Center on Industrial Parkway. The route operates every 60 minutes from 4:55AM to 7:55PM.

Ridership on Route 3 is fairly low throughout the day with peaks occurring at 7:55AM and 10:55AM. Boardings are dispersed along the route with the most boardings at BART (36) and the Tropics (8).

**Figure 4-11 Top Boarding Locations - Route 3**

BART	36
Almaden/Palm (Tropics)	8
Union Square/Alvarado-Niles	6
Alvarado-Niles/Decoto	6
Alvarado-Niles/H St	6
Industrial/Food 4 Less	6

**Figure 4-12 Route 3 Total Boardings by Trip - Weekday**



The data does not reflect every weekday trip.  
 Source: Union City Transit SRTP 2006-2015

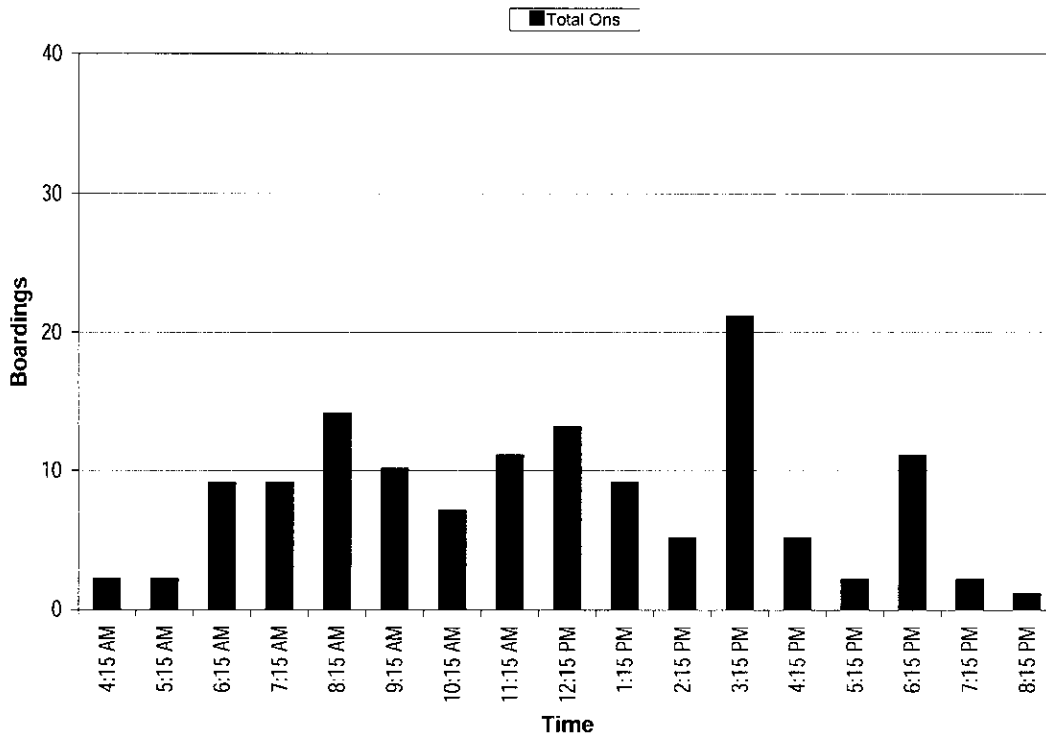
**Route 4**

Route 4 provides service from BART to the Decoto District on the east side of Union City. The route operates every 60 minutes throughout the day. Peak trips on the Route 4 occurred at 8:15AM and 3:15PM. Route 4 is the only UCT route that does not provide service to the Union Landing Transit Center.

**Figure 4-13 Top Boarding Locations – Route 4**

BART	34
Appian/Mission	22
Venito/Ladera	15
7th/ARC	8
7th/H St	8

**Figure 4-14 Route 4 Total Boardings by Trip – Weekday**



The data does not reflect every weekday trip.  
 Source: Union City Transit SRTP 2006-2015

### UNION CITY PARATRANSIT

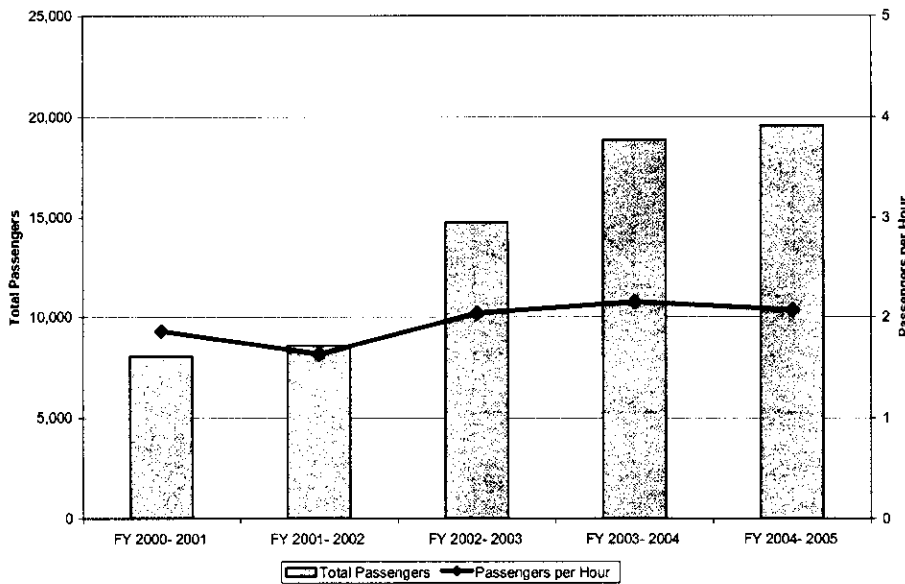
Union City's paratransit service has seen a significant growth in service over the last five years, with an overall increase in passengers of 143% since FY 00 - 01. Revenue hours have also increased significantly (114%), leading to more modest gains in passengers per revenue hour to 2.07 in 2004-05.

Costs per passenger have stayed virtually the same over the five years, dropping 5%. Costs per revenue hour have also stayed

almost flat, with a 5% gain. Costs per revenue mile, however, have climbed 61%, half of that in 2003-04.

Operating costs have increased 131% over the past 5 years, however, farebox revenue has also seen a healthy 145% increase over that same period.

**Figure 4-15 Total Paratransit Ridership**



**Figure 4-16 Paratransit Cost and Revenue**

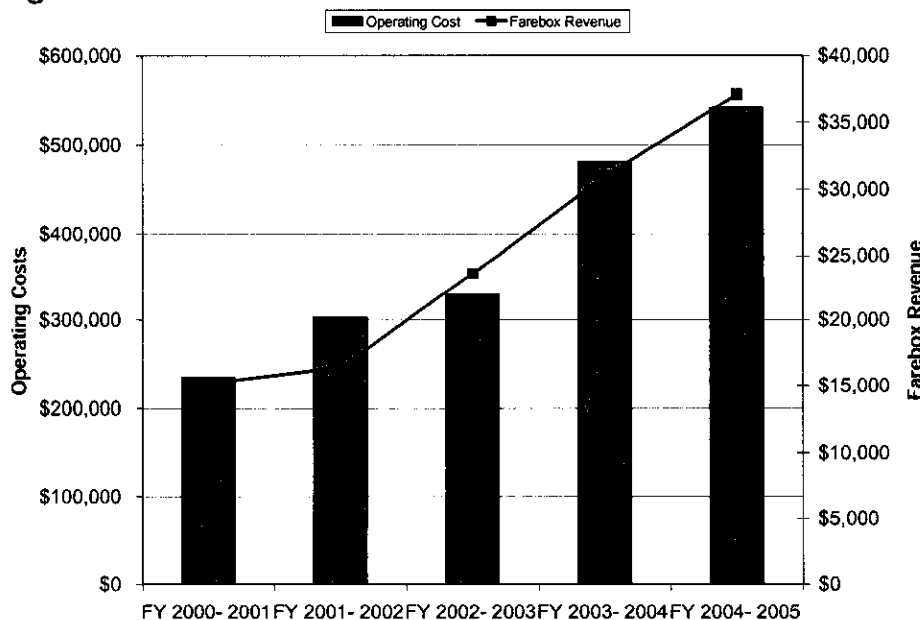


Figure 4-17 Paratransit Performance, FY 2000 – 2001 through 2004 – 2005

Paratransit Performance Measures	FY 2000-2001	FY 2001-2002	FY 2002-2003	FY 2003-2004	FY 2004-2005	% Change 2002-03 to 2003-04	% Change 2003-04 to 2004-05	% Change 2000-01 to 2004-05
Paratransit Passengers	8,045	8,563	14,764	18,845	19,563	27.60%	4%	143%
Passengers per Hour	1.86	1.63	2.04	2.15	2.07	5.10%	-4%	11%
Passengers per Revenue Mile	0.13	0.15	0.19	0.22	0.22	16.40%	0%	69%
Revenue Hours	4,318	5,255	7,235	8,785	9,465	21.40%	8%	119%
Revenue Miles	61,834	56,153	77,590	85,061	88,976	9.60%	5%	44%
Operating Cost	\$234,093	\$302,582	\$329,467	\$481,014	\$541,277	46.00%	13%	131%
Farebox Revenue	\$15,155	\$16,353	\$23,618	\$31,013	\$37,080	31.30%	20%	145%
Cost per Passenger	\$29.10	\$35.34	\$22.32	\$25.52	\$27.67	14.40%	8%	-5%
Cost per Revenue Hour	\$54.21	\$57.58	\$45.54	\$54.75	\$57.19	20.20%	4%	5%
Cost per Revenue Mile	\$3.79	\$5.39	\$4.25	\$5.65	\$6.08	33.20%	8%	61%
Farebox Ratio	6.50%	5.40%	7.20%	6.40%	6.90%	-10.10%	6%	6%
Passengers/Revenue Mile	\$0.13	\$0.15	\$0.19	\$0.22	\$0.22	16.43%	-1%	69%
Passengers/Revenue Hour	\$1.86	\$1.63	\$2.04	\$2.15	\$2.07	5.12%	-4%	11%
Average Fare/Passenger	\$1.88	\$1.91	\$1.60	\$1.65	\$1.90	2.87%	15%	1%

Source: Union City Transit Final Report Short Range Transit Plan Update 2006-2015



## Peer Review

A peer review was conducted to provide a context in which Union City can interpret its performance, strengths and weaknesses in relation to other transit agencies in the San Francisco Bay region.

Note: These comparisons are for illustrative purposes and no inferences should be made as to the quality of service that each individual transit operator provides. Each transit operator has its own unique operating environment.

### PEER SYSTEMS IN REVIEW

Six Bay Area transit systems were chosen for the review. While many of these agencies, including Union City, run on-demand as well as fixed-route transit services, only the fixed routes service data was included.

Transit systems in this peer review are:

- Benicia Transit
- East Contra Costa Transit Authority (Tri Delta Transit)
- Fairfield Suisun Transit
- Livemore-Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA)
- Santa Rosa City Bus
- Vallejo Transit

All data used in this review are from 2004/2005 fiscal year (from MTC records), except for Benicia Transit. Sources for Benicia data are 2003/2004 Operating Data, 2005/06 Projections, and 2004/2005 Budget figures.

See Appendix A for the detailed data used in this review.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVICE AREAS

Population and size of service area for the studied agencies help determine comparability of agencies, and combined, determine density.

At 18 square miles, and with a population of around 70,000, Union City is one of the smaller communities in the review; it is also more dense than half of the other areas.

Benicia, at 14 square miles, is most comparable in terms of size, but its population is 28,000 – 40% the size of Union City's population.

Higher density environments can lead to higher productivity for transit, because density is one factor that drives ridership. High density environments can also be attractive to pedestrians; since all transit trips begin and end as a pedestrian, this encourages transit use. However, dense environments can lead to congestion, which in turn can lead to slower travel times on transit, unless the transit is separated from other traffic.

Note: Peer populations represent the service area populations for each system, which may or may not be equal to the population of the major city served.

## RIDERSHIP

To compare ridership between properties of different sizes, ridership per capita is often used to standardize for the population being served. UCT carries about 5.4 passengers per capita, similar to local systems in Benicia and Fairfield/Suisun – but significantly lower than other peers. AC Transit also operates extensively in and around Union City, and may have a negative effect on UCT ridership.

## SERVICE HOURS

Union City's total number of annual service hours is commensurate with the small size of the area covered. However, in terms of service hours per capita, it runs a proportionately higher number of hours than its peers, placing it in the middle of the peer agencies.

## COSTS AND REVENUE

Union City's costs per hour are the lowest of all agencies reviewed, at \$60.68.

Another financial measure is the percentage of costs which are recovered through rider fares. Union City's recovery ratio is the lowest of the group studied. This may be because UCT's fares are relatively low, but is more likely due to a combination of low ridership and discounts given to youth and BART transfer riders.

## EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS, AND PRODUCTIVITY

This section compares the combination of factors already looked at separately to find Union City's position in relation to the other agencies with regard to overall economy and effectiveness.

The cost to operate a bus is roughly the same regardless of the size of the vehicle, or whether a lot of people ride or only a few. Union City's "big" buses are very cost efficient, with the lowest cost per hour of its peers.

While its cost per hour is low, the cost per passenger trip on Union City Transit is higher than its peers, reflecting relatively low ridership for the amount of service provided. Union City Transit's costs equalled \$6.00 per passenger trip during FY 04/05 – higher than any other agency except Fairfield-Suisun.

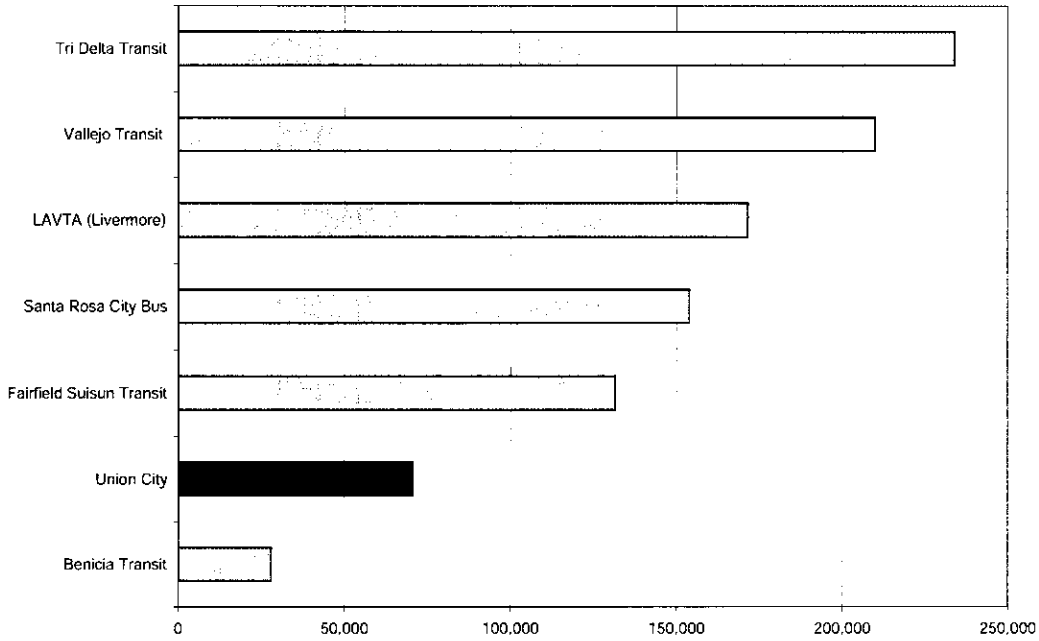
Relatively low ridership also affects productivity measured in passengers per hour. The most productive segments on the UCT system operate on the busiest corridors, especially Alvarado-Niles. UCT's productivity is low compared to its peers as more circuitous "coverage" routes carry relatively few riders per hour.

Figure 5-1 Peer Comparison Data

	Benicia Transit	Fairfield-Suisun Transit	LAVTA (Livermore)	Santa Rosa City Bus	Tri Delta Transit	Vallejo Transit	Union City
Service Area (square miles)	14	41	40	41	225	48	18
Population	28,000	131,661	171,652	154,000	233,900	210,000	70,685
Density (persons per square mile)	2000.0	3211.2	4291.3	3756.1	1039.6	4375.0	3926.9
Transit Density (vehicle revenue-hours per square mile)	785.7	1609.8	2850	1975.6	706.7	2625.0	2111.1
Usage (unlinked passenger trips per capita)	4.7	5.8	11.2	16.9	9.9	10.5	5.4
Speed (average mph)	21	15.4	14.9	12.5	14.2	19.2	13.9
Productivity (unlinked passenger trips per vehicle revenue hour)	12	11.6	17	32.2	14.6	17.6	10.0
Cost Efficiency (operating cost per vehicle revenue hour)	\$59.111	\$75.19	\$79.19	\$82.65	\$71.57	\$75.91	\$61.05
Cost Effectiveness (operating cost per passenger trip)	\$6.04	\$6.99	\$4.69	\$3.12	\$4.90	\$4.32	\$6.05
Annual Ridership (1000s)	132	763	1929	2606	2320	2214	381
Annual Revenue Vehicle Miles (1000s)	231	1014	1701	1013	2251	2420	527
Annual Revenue Vehicle Hours (1000s)	11	66	114	81	159	126	38
Annual Operating Costs (\$1000s)	\$797	\$5,330	\$10,235	\$7,229	\$11,379	\$9,575	\$2,306
Annual Operating Revenue (\$1000s)	\$672	\$5,607	\$10,253	\$8,401	\$13,116	\$14,077	\$2,810
Hours per Square Miles	785.7	1609.8	2850.0	1975.6	706.7	2625.0	2111.1
Hours per Capita	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.5
Boardings per Revenue Hour	12.0	11.6	16.9	32.2	14.6	17.6	10.0
Recovery Ratio		23.5%	17.5%	20.7%	16.1%	33.0%	13.9%

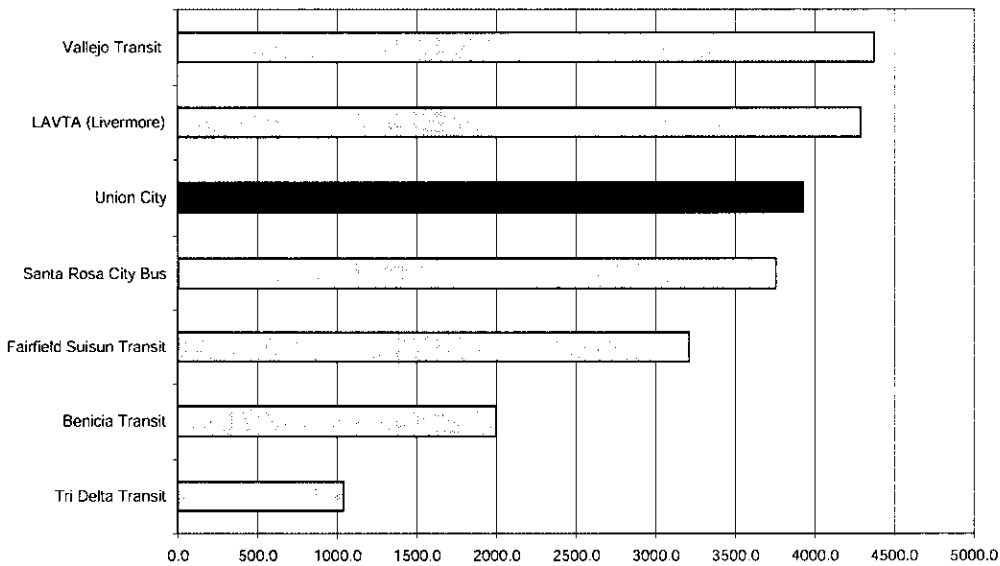
**Peer Comparison Data Tables**

**Figure 5-2 Population**



Note: Benicia data from FY 2005/06 Projections

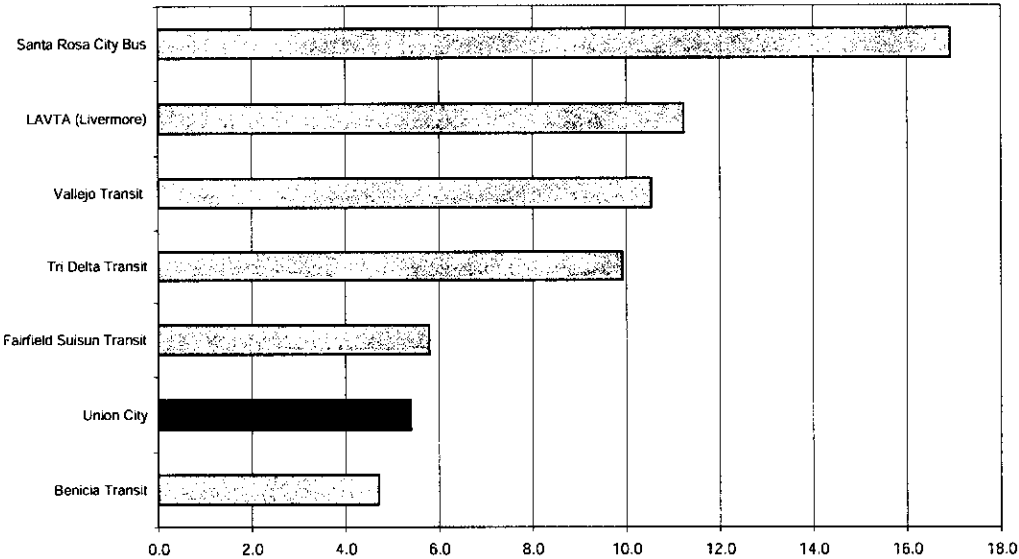
**Figure 5-3 Density**  
(Persons Per Square Mile)



Note: Benicia data from FY 2005/06 Projections

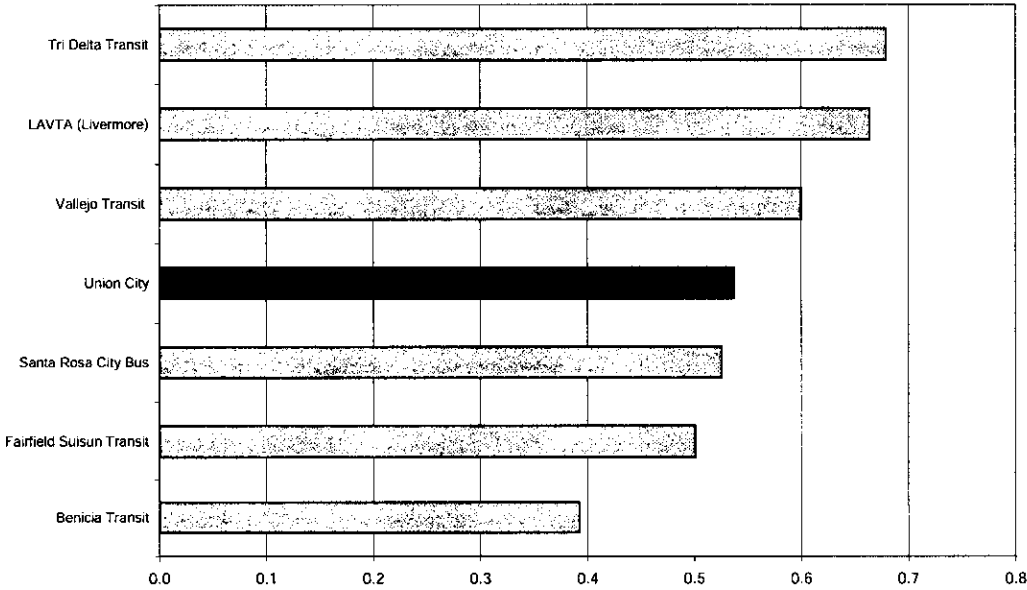
Peer Comparison Data Tables (continued)

**Figure 5-4 Usage**  
(Unlinked Passenger Trips Per Capita)



Note: Benicia data from FY 2005/06 Projections

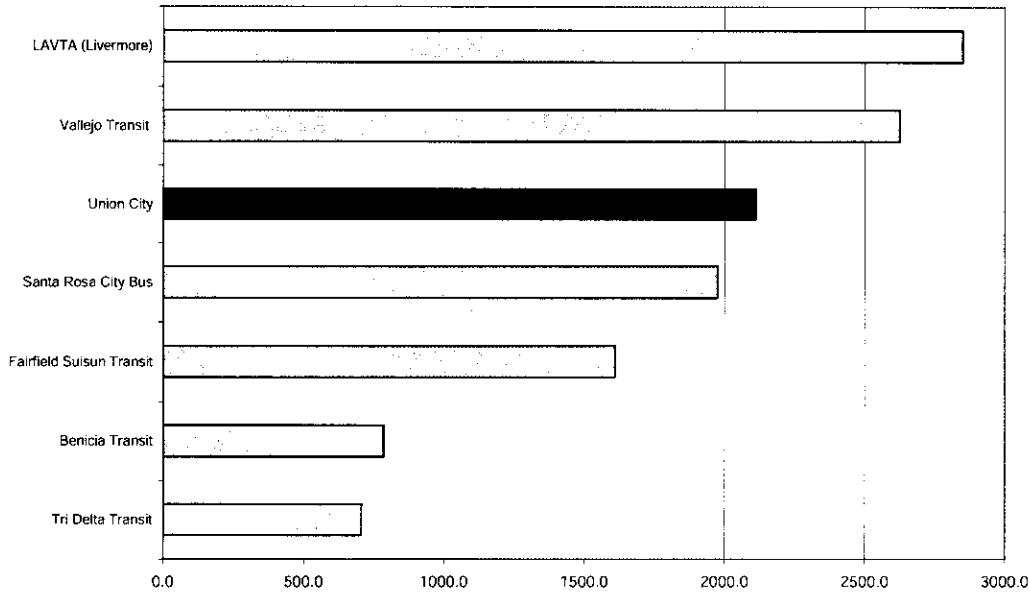
**Figure 5-5 Annual Hours Per Capita**



Note: Benicia data from FY 2005/06 Projections

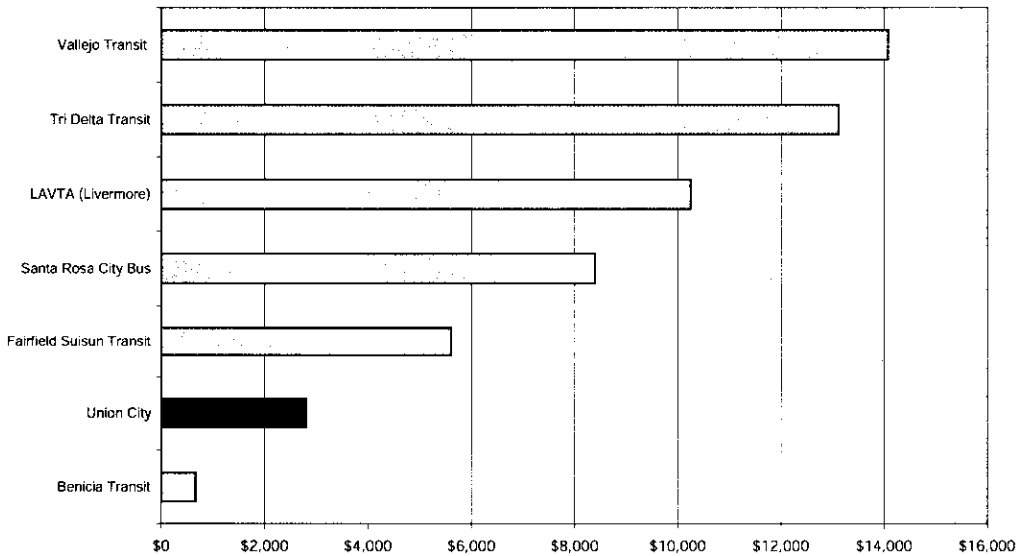
**Peer Comparison Data Tables** *(continued)*

**Figure 5-6 Annual Revenue Hours Per Square Mile**



Note: Benicia data from FY 2005/06 Projections

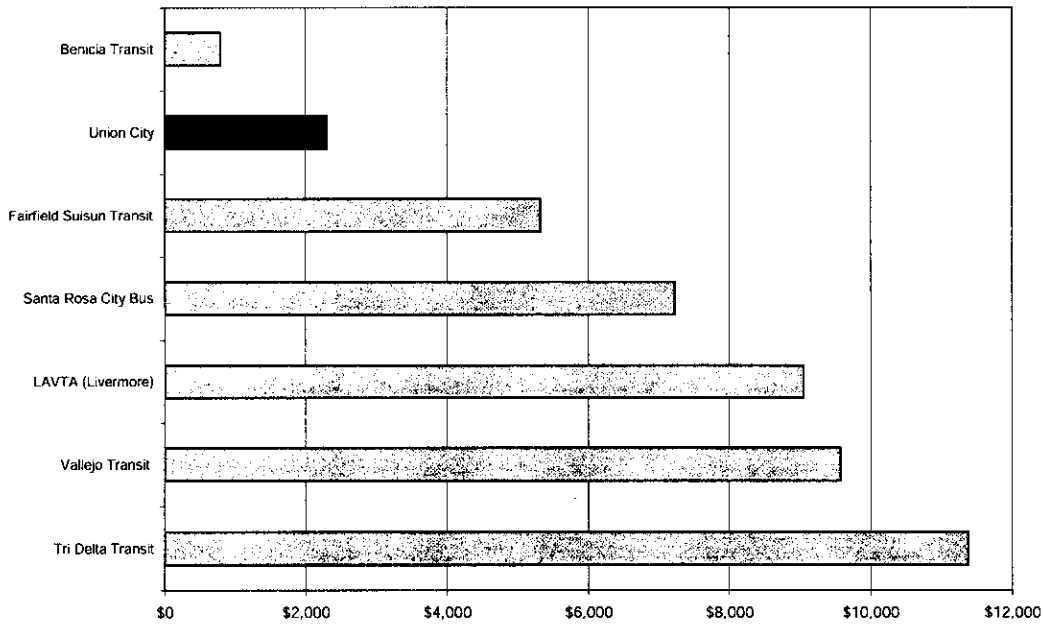
**Figure 5-7 Annual Operating Revenue**  
*(in \$1000's)*



Note: Benicia figures from 2004/05 adopted budget.

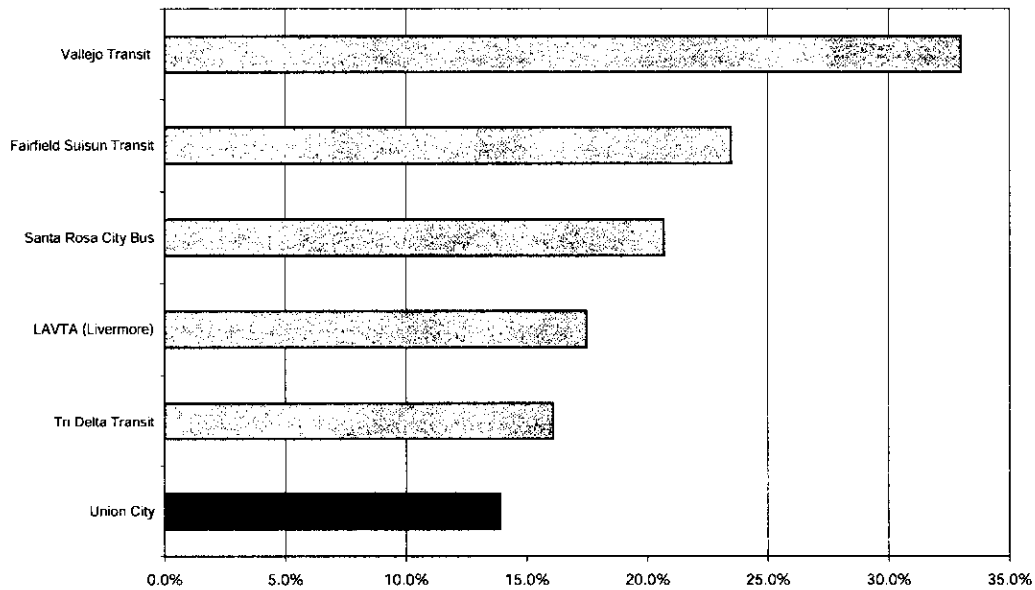
Peer Comparison Data Tables (continued)

**Figure 5-8 Annual Operating Costs**  
(in \$1000's)



Note: Benicia figures from 2004/05 adopted budget.

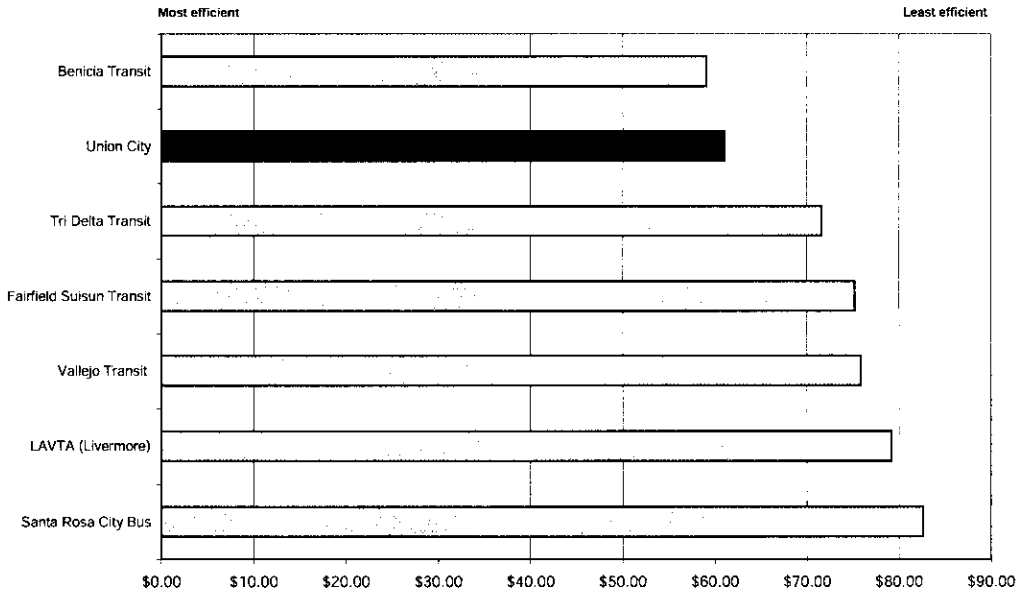
**Figure 5-9 Farebox Recovery Ratio**



Note: Benicia figures from 2004/05 adopted budget.

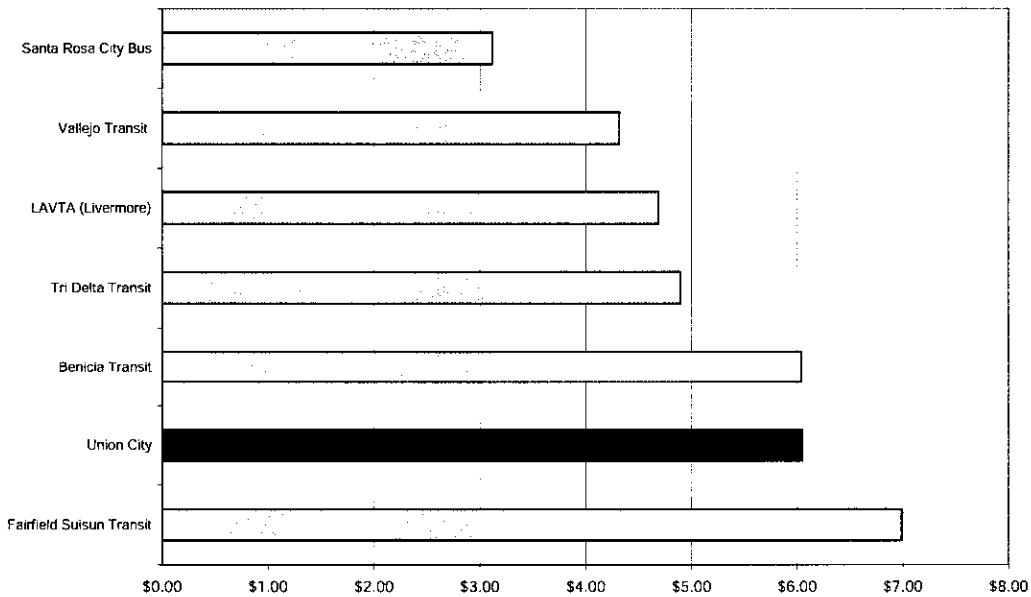
Peer Comparison Data Tables (continued)

**Figure 5-10 Cost Efficiency**  
(Operating Costs Per Vehicle Revenue Hour)



Note: Benicia data from FY 2003/04 data.

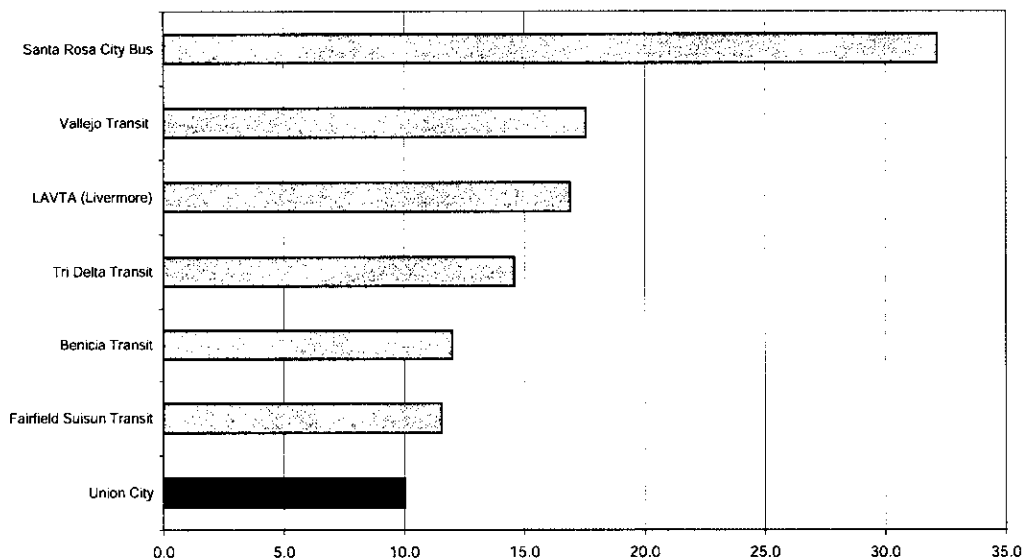
**Figure 5-11 Cost Effectiveness**



Note: Benicia figures from 2005/06 Projections.

Peer Comparison Data Tables (continued)

Figure 5-12 Productivity  
(Unlinked Passenger Trips Per Vehicle Revenue Hour)





## Preliminary Observations & Conclusions

Union City Transit's ridership decline is not unique. Nationally, transit systems experienced a downturn with the economic decline that was triggered by the "dot com" bust. This decline was felt more significantly in Union City and other areas that depend on Silicon Valley employment than in other parts of the Bay Area. Other transit systems have found that they have "bottomed" out and their ridership is now recovering along with the economy. Union City Transit is no exception, as 2005-06 ridership is expected to exceed 2004-05 by almost 5%.

Union City Transit has operated essentially the same system for more than a decade. The system has two types of routes – Routes 1 and 2 which are designed for productivity, taking residents from higher density residential to BART and Logan High School. These two routes travel the entire east-west width of the City and carry about 80% of total boardings.

The two other routes, Routes 3 and 4 serve primarily as neighborhood shuttle services. While both routes do serve the High School and BART, the two most popular stops in the network, they meander through neighborhoods, making frequent stops and traveling either in large loops or out of direction for many travelers. These routes are designed for coverage rather than productivity, ensuring that most Union City residents are within walking distance of a transit route.

The current service is most useful to youth and low income riders and others who do not have a car. With free parking at BART, the convenience of taking your own car to the station is difficult to compete with. However, with increasing gas prices, a new focus on sustainability and a reasonably competitive product,

Union City Transit has the opportunity to gain new riders while better serving current riders. A key to designing potential improvements is determining the optimal role for the transit system. This is discussed at the end of this section and will be the primary topic of discussion at the August 1 City Council Work Session.

## CURRENT SYSTEM OBSERVATIONS

- **The most productive route segments in Union City are those that are frequent, relatively fast and relatively straight.** This is especially true on Alvarado Niles, where the 1A and 1B offset to create a 15-minute headway.
- **Routes 3 and 4 are not time competitive with the auto, and run so infrequently that they can't be reasonably used by casual users.**
- **Only Routes 1 and 2 demand large transit buses based on loads.** Routes 3 and 4 could be run with smaller buses without overcrowding, even at peak. Even Routes 1 and 2 could be operated with smaller equipment during the midday and evening hours. However, smaller buses can be a problem because as ridership increases, the amount of service has to essentially double to meet increasing demand. Small buses cost only about 10-15% less per hour to operate than large buses, and the inefficiencies of operating multiple vehicle types would further complicate the system.
- **Several of Union City Transit's routes suffer from the lack of a complete network of arterial streets.** Route 1, the most heavily used route in the system, has to penetrate a neighborhood on residential streets to reduce walk distances to the bus. There are few reasonable ways to traverse that neighborhood without bringing big buses down residential streets.
- **Routes 2, 3 and 4 all have significant segments with very little ridership.** On Route 3, the industrial loop serves almost no riders. The deviation south off of Alvarado Niles to the Tropics also serves few riders. On Route 4, the 7th Street segment is lightly used, and the Perry Street segment is also very lightly used. Route 2 is lightly used on Whipple from Central to Amaral.
- **Coverage throughout Union City is generally good, however, there is no Union City Transit Service the length of Union City Boulevard.** A route that had been tried several years ago failed to

attract ridership; however there has been an increase in development in that area which may justify another look. Another area with limited transit access is Mission Boulevard north of Decoto, including the new moderate income housing that has recently been developed there.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Based simply on the analysis of existing data and conversations with stakeholders, the following opportunities for improvement are recommended for further study:

1. **Don't "throw out the baby with the bath water."** All transit systems have room for improvement, and Union City Transit is no exception. However, given the limited funding available to the system, it is important that the system not jeopardize current riders in the quest for new ones. Major restructuring and major changes on any transit system tend to temporarily depress ridership. Union City Transit should make major changes only if financially sustainable, and only if it will not disenfranchise large numbers of current riders.
2. **Improve marketing and public information.** This would include implementing Next Bus technology in key stops, and making transit information available on the web and in other formats. Passengers would be given up to the minute information on their estimated wait time. This change alone is likely to have a positive impact on ridership. In addition, Union City Transit's signage is getting "tired" in some locations and could be refreshed.  
  
Improved marketing includes reaching out to the ethnic communities and other potential rider groups in Union City. In Fremont, for example, AC Transit has increased ridership by serving community centers and places of worship that had not previously been accessible. In Union City, the retail area around Four Corners is particularly popular with some members of the Asian community, but there is little advertisement or coordination with that community to let people know that service is available.
3. **Consider a Union City Boulevard - South Hayward Route.** Union City Boulevard is the only major arterial in the City without service. Riders in the far western part of the city tend to think of South Hayward BART as "their" station, and may appreciate service there. A route could be designed

to link the Caltrans Park and Ride lot in Newark up Union City Boulevard, past Kaiser in Union City and past many of the medical destinations in Hayward to the South Hayward BART station.

4. **Consider a combination of “big bus” and “small bus” service.** Routes 1 and 2 do a good job of connecting the major “nodes” in Union City, while Routes 3 and 4 operate primarily as shuttles now. These routes could be redesigned to stay within their local areas, providing an “east side shuttle” and a “west side shuttle” that could be operated with small buses at least during some hours of the day when demand is lower. Ideally, a west side shuttle could be designed to work together with Route 1 and help straighten out and speed up Route 1 as it winds its way through the southwestern part of the City.
5. **Consider deleting segments with poor productivity when it will “buy” more frequency or faster service for the majority of riders.** Currently UCT does not have the resources to improve frequency on key routes. Frequency is almost certainly one of the main reasons for the success of Route 1, and the lack of frequency may depress ridership on the other routes since it can be faster to walk than to wait and ride. To gain frequency and travel time advantages it may be necessary to delete unproductive segments. It may also be reasonable to look at alternative service delivery mechanisms like route deviation or even demand responsive service during low demand periods, outside of the main arterial service rather than continuing the perception of buses running empty.

service, including eliminating some stops even if it means limiting penetration into the neighborhoods and even if it means that some people will have no service?

- Should the system focus exclusively on providing service within Union City, or should it go outside when there are key destinations that Union City residents need to access, even if that means competing with AC Transit and/or BART and even if that means that there is less service available within the City?

## THE ROLE OF TRANSIT IN UNION CITY

Developing a recommended package of improvements requires first taking a step back and deciding what role Union City Transit should play in the City’s transportation system:

- Should the system continue to focus on transit dependant and youth riders even if that means continuing declines in ridership?
- Should the system provide more personalized service even if that puts buses in the residential neighborhoods and makes transit travel speeds slower because routes are less direct?
- Should the system try to attract more choice riders and commuters by looking at ways to speed up