

PROGRAM NOTICE: AirTalk is moving to 9-11am on Monday, November 7. The Takeaway will air at 9pm.

After ridership declines, Metro head urges taking the long view

By **Meghan McCarty Carino**

Published January 29, 2016 05:31 AM



▶ **LISTEN • 0:55**



MTA Library/Flickr Creative Commons

Ridership declines on Metro buses and trains in the past two years are cyclical, says Metro's CEO Phil Washington.

The head of Los Angeles County's transportation agency responded Thursday to concerns over the falling ridership on buses and trains that is occurring as officials invest billions in expanding transit lines.

Metro CEO Phil Washington, in his first-ever state of the agency speech at a Metro board

 

decades out in its planning.

"We know that ridership increases and declines are cyclical. We also know that we are looking at a 30-year horizon," he said.

Over the last two years, Metro has lost about 9 percent of its boardings, from 1.49 million average weekday boardings in 2014 to 1.36 million in the second quarter of fiscal year 2016.

The decline is in line with countrywide trends, although Metro's ridership losses on bus lines have been less acute than the national average.

The recovery of the economy, low gas prices and the rise of ride-hailing services like Uber and Lyft have contributed to lighter use of public transit nationally.

Metro also found employment changes and car purchases were among the biggest factors affecting its own ridership, followed by service disruptions due to maintenance on the Blue Line.

The Metro board [received a staff report](#) last week recommending several strategies to boost ridership, including new marketing tactics and increasing service frequency to emerging employment centers and on busy corridors.

Metro also hopes to attract more riders by building out a more robust network. Five new rail lines are currently under construction, including the extension of the Gold Line to Azusa, opening March 5, followed by the Expo Line to Santa Monica opening in May.

But those investments have also raised questions about the wisdom of spending taxpayer money on systems that may have fewer riders.

Moreover, the agency is looking to put a sales tax initiative on the November ballot to raise up to \$90 billion to fund projects over the next 40 years.

The board did not discuss the report or the ridership recommendations at its Thursday meeting. But the update is part of an ongoing effort by a task force established last year by Washington to tackle ridership declines.



Meghan McCarty Carino

See stories by Meghan McCarty Carino

Sign up for our newsletter.

The latest information you need to start your day.



SUBSCRIBE

Latest LAist Headlines

Long Beach Mayor

53 minutes ago

A Year Later, Los Angeles Has Refunded 60% Of Child Care Providers Who Were Overcharged For Fire Permits

1 hour ago

Twitter Layoffs Begin, Sparking A Lawsuit And Backlash

1 hour ago

[MORE ON LAIST](#)

Latest From NPR

Reporter's notebook: Haiti's at a breaking point but few want foreign intervention

1 hour ago

Oprah rejects her protégé Dr. Oz and backs Democrat John Fetterman in Pa. senate race

2 hours ago



3 hours ago

KPCC | 89.3FM  

KPCC is part of Southern California Public Radio (SCPR), a member-supported public media network. For the latest news, visit our partner site:



[The Brief](#) [Podcasts](#) [Events](#)

©2022 Southern California Public Radio

[About KPCC](#)

[Program Schedule](#)

[AirTalk](#)

[FilmWeek](#)

[FilmWeek Marquee](#)

[Hollywood, The Sequel](#)

[KPCC In Person](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[KPCC Story Archive](#)

[Careers](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[Donate Your Vehicle](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

[Privacy](#)

[EEO Public Reports](#)

[FCC Public Files KPCC-FM](#)

[FCC Public Files KUOR-FM](#)

[FCC Public Files KVLA-FM](#)

[FCC Public Files KJAI-FM](#)

[FCC Applications Public Notices](#)

