

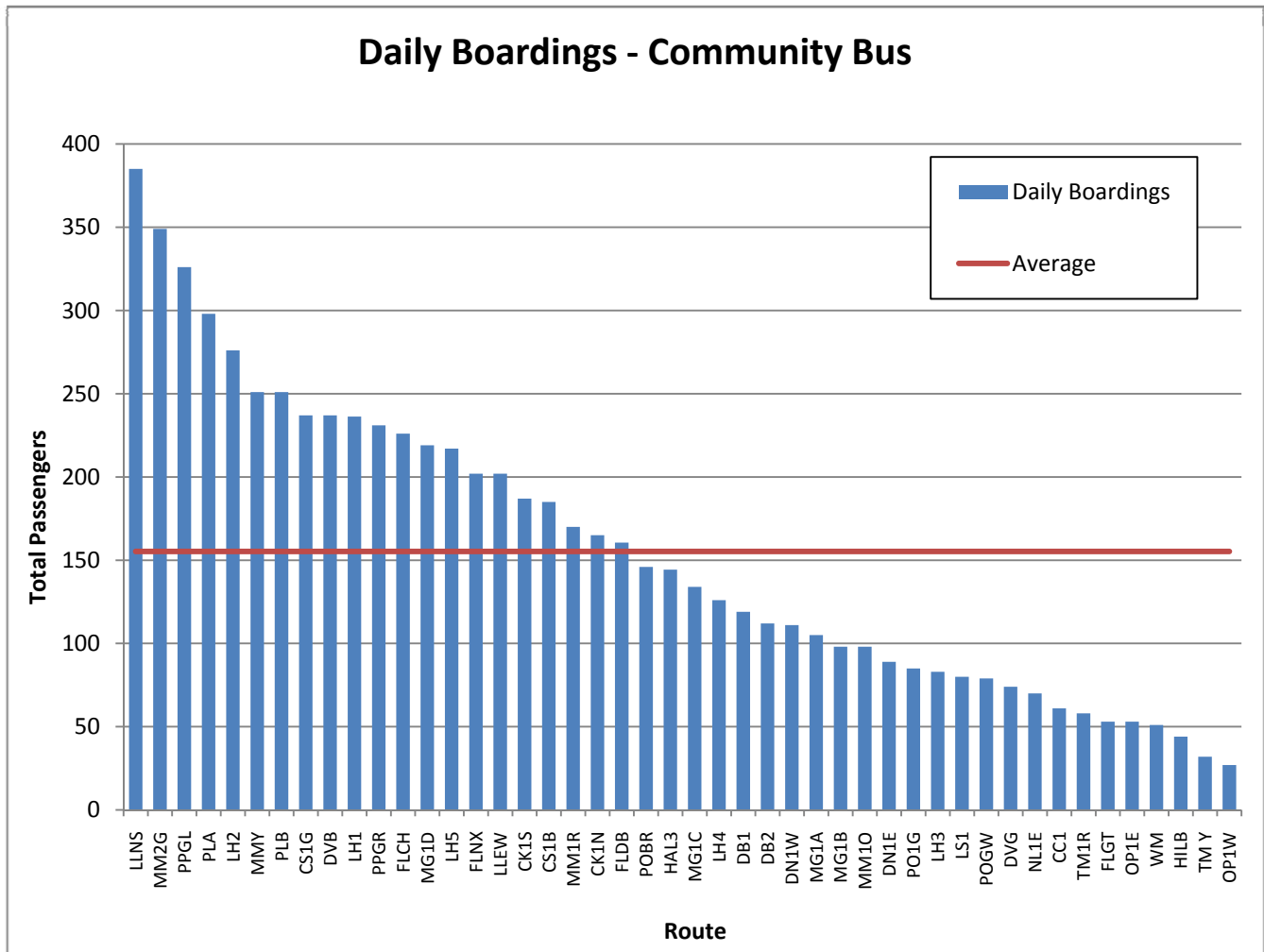
4. Community Bus Analysis

Community bus routes are operated by 20 individual municipalities with funding from the cities and BCT. These routes provide local circulation to passengers traveling short distances, as well as provide “first-mile” and “last-mile” connections to BCT fixed routes. A complete survey of the community bus system occurred along with the BCT COA ridecheck during March and April of 2009. Each trip on each route operating at the time of the ridecheck was surveyed (46 routes in total). The ridecheck provided the data reviewed below.

4.1 Community Bus Daily Ridership

According to COA ridecheck data, the community bus system averages just over 7,000 boardings per weekday. The highest ridership in the community bus system was viewed on the City of Lauderdale Lakes Route 2 (North/South), with approximately 385 total daily passengers. The second highest ridership was on the City of Miramar Green route, with approximately 350 total daily passengers. Only seven routes operated with more than 250 total passengers per day. The total ridership among these seven routes made up more than 30 percent of the entire community bus system.

Figure 4.1



Approximately three routes are operated with less than 50 passengers per day. Ridership was lowest on the Oakland Park West route, with fewer than 30 daily boardings, followed by Tamarac Yellow and the Town of Hillsboro route.

4.2 Community Bus Productivity

In order to be eligible for BCT funding, a community bus route must demonstrate an average productivity of 7.1 passengers per revenue hour. BCT provided \$20 per service hour for each community bus route at the time of the ridecheck; due to funding constraints, as of Fiscal Year 2010 BCT provides \$15 per revenue hour.

The ridecheck showed widespread productivity of the community bus routes, ranging from 3 to 30 passengers per revenue hour. The average productivity among the community bus system was 13.5 passengers per revenue hour, and the majority of routes fell between 10 and 15 passengers per revenue hour. Eight routes carried more than 20 passengers per revenue hour, while six routes were below the funding threshold of 7.1 passengers per revenue hour.

The highest-performing community bus routes (over 20 passengers per revenue hour) include Lauderhill Routes 1 and 2, Coral Springs Blue and Green Routes, Lauderdale Lakes Route 2 (North/South), Ft. Lauderdale Sun Trolley Courthouse Loop and Northwest Circulator, and Miramar Yellow Route. Several of these high-performing routes serve some of the densest areas in Broward County, such as Lauderdale Lakes and Lauderhill.

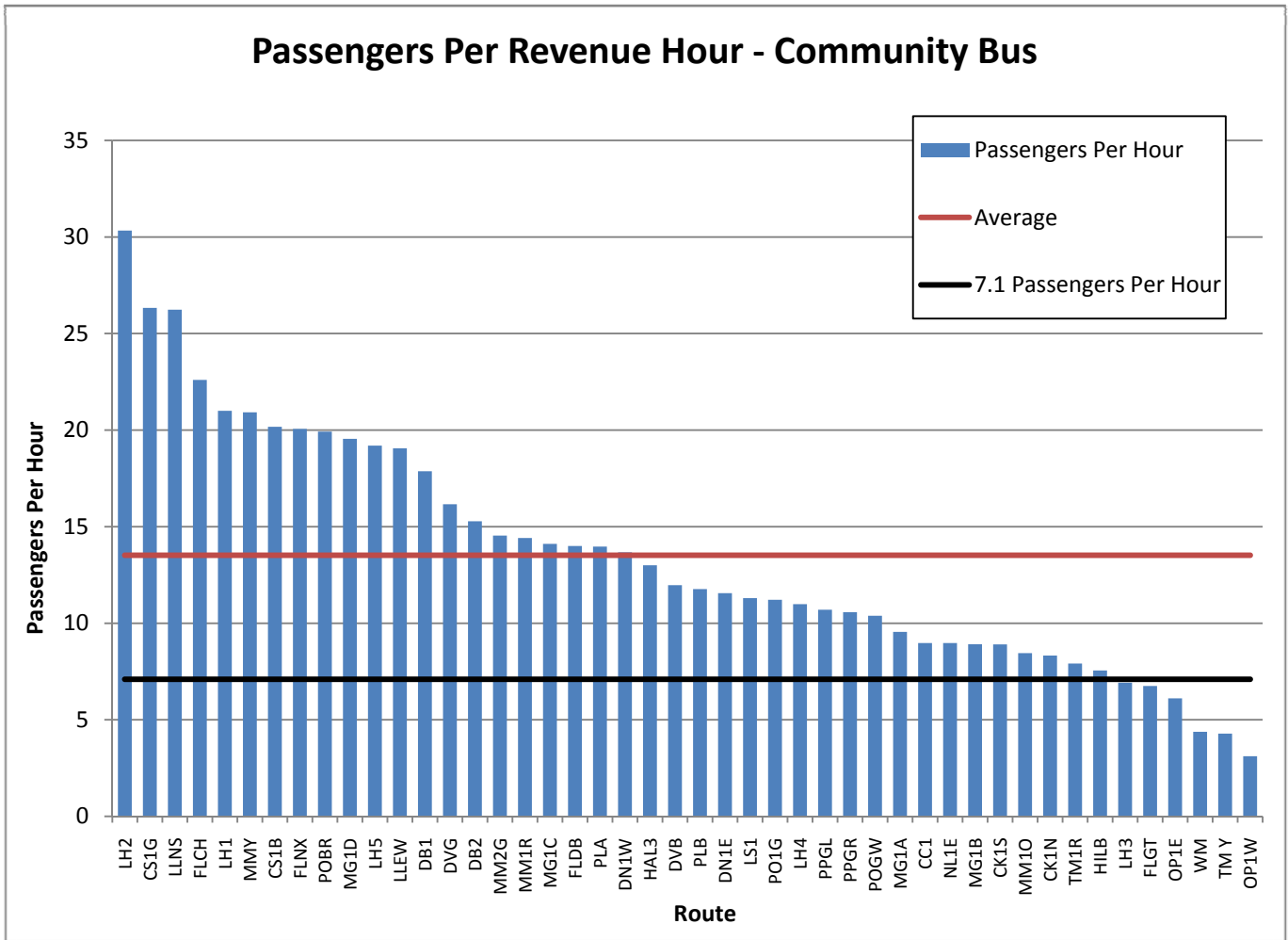
The lowest-performing routes included Oakland Park East and West Routes, Tamarac Yellow, Wilton Manors, Ft. Lauderdale Sun Trolley Galt Ocean Route, and Lauderhill Route 3. All six of these routes fell below 7.1 passengers per revenue hour based on the ridecheck data; however, the Galt Ocean and Lauderhill 3 routes were just under the threshold. Productivity data from BCT was higher than ridecheck data for these two routes, suggesting that the limited sample from the ridecheck did not match longer-term ridership numbers.

Community bus passengers per revenue hour is displayed on the following page in Figure 4.2.

Community Bus Ridership and Productivity Findings

- More than 30 percent of all ridership occurs on the top seven routes.
- Two routes operate with less than 50 passengers per day.
- The average community bus productivity is approximately 13.3 passengers per revenue hour.
- At the time of the survey and ridecheck, six routes performed below 7.1 passengers per revenue hour, the eligibility limit for BCT funding.
- Ridecheck data showed overall slightly higher performance than BCT data.

Figure 4.2



4.3 Comparison with City Operator Data

As was the case with BCT’s fixed-route service, when comparing ridecheck data to BCT’s data, the ridecheck data produced different ridership and performance results than municipal operators in some cases. In general, ridecheck data reported slightly higher performance than city-operator data, although the routes performed in comparatively similar order.

In a few cases, including the Lauderhill 3 Route and the Ft. Lauderdale Galt Ocean Mile route which performed below the 7.1 passengers per revenue hour threshold, ridecheck data was lower than that reported municipal operators. It is recommended that any routes below the threshold be monitored by BCT staff.

Table 4.1 shows a route-by-route comparison of weekday passengers per revenue hour between ridecheck data and municipal operator data. The municipal operator data provided encompasses March and April of 2009.

Table 4.1

Community Bus Route	Ridecheck PPH*	BCT PPH*
Lauderhill - Route 2	30.3	16.1
Coral Springs-Green Route	26.3	18.3
Laud. Lks-Route 2 (North/South)	26.2	31.7
Ft Laud.-Courthouse	22.6	17.5
Lauderhill - Route 1	21	17
Miramar - Yellow Route	20.9	18.4
Coral Springs-Blue Route	20.2	17.4
Ft Laud.-Northwest Circ.	20.1	24.1
Pompano Beach-Blue Route	19.9	15.6
Margate - Route D	19.6	12.3
Lauderhill - Route 5	19.2	18.8
Laud. Lakes-Route 1 (East/West)	19.1	17.9
Deerfield Bch-Rte 1	17.9	10.2
Deerfield Bch-Rte 2	15.3	11.9
Miramar - Green Route	14.5	16.4
Miramar - Red Route	14.4	16.2
Margate - Route C	14.1	12.3
Ft Laud.-Las Olas/Bch (Friday only)	14	14.4
Dania Beach-West Route (Green)	13.7	10.6
Hallandale Beach	13	9.3
Plantation A & B	13	11.4
Davie-Blue Route (Old Route 75)	12	13.6

Community Bus Route	Ridecheck PPH*	BCT PPH*
Davie-Blue Route (Old Route 75)	12	13.6
Dania Beach-East Route (Blue)	11.6	9
Lauderdale By The Sea	11.3	10.8
Pompano Beach-Green Route	11.2	9.5
Lauderhill - Route 4	11	11.2
Davie SFEC	11	10.2
Pembroke Pines-Green	10.7	12.5
Pembroke Pines-Gold	10.6	12
Pompano Beach-Green West Route	10.4	11.6
Davie - Green Route	9.8	9.9
Margate - Route A	9.6	9.2
Cooper City	9	8.3
North Lauderdale-East Route	9	12
Coconut Creek - S Route	8.9	9.8
Margate - Route B	8.9	9.4
Miramar - Orange Route	8.5	13.3
Coconut Creek -N Route	8.3	16.9
Hillsboro Beach	7.6	9.4
Lauderhill - Route 3	6.9	9.6
Ft Laud.-Galt Ocean	6.8	19.2
Tamarac	6.1	7.4
Oakland Park - East Route**	6.1	6.2
Wilton Manors***	4.4	7.5
Oakland Park - West Route**	3.1	3.8

*March-April 2009

** Routes discontinued May 2009

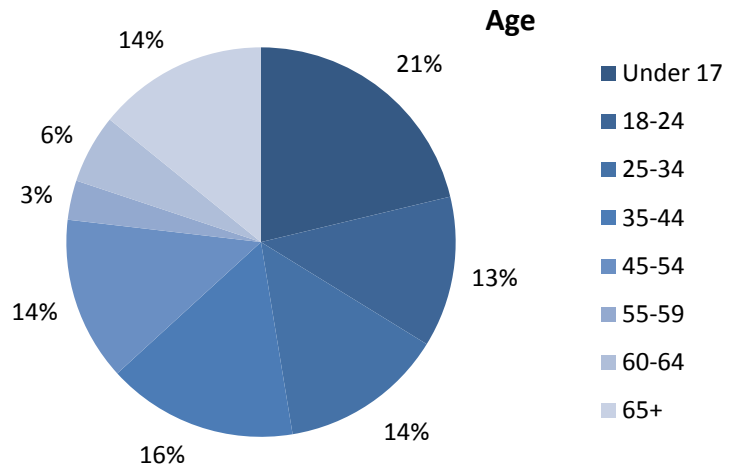
***Route discontinued September 2009

4.4 Community Bus Market Assessment

During the BCT system ridecheck, community bus passengers were surveyed to determine overall demographic characteristics and the ways in which they use community bus services. Results are shown below, as well as in comparison to regular BCT fixed route services.

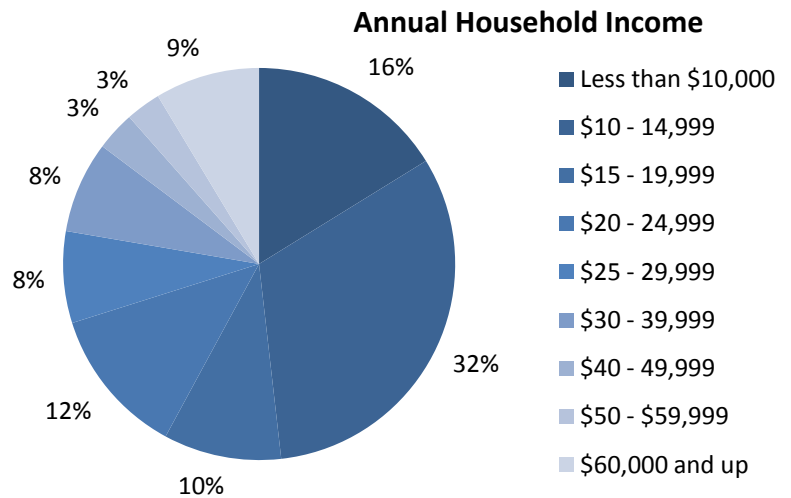
Age

Passengers under the age of 17 are the single largest group using community bus services, likely for transportation to and from local schools. Senior citizens over the age of 65 comprise a larger percent of ridership on community buses (14 percent) as compared with BCT routes (under 7 percent).



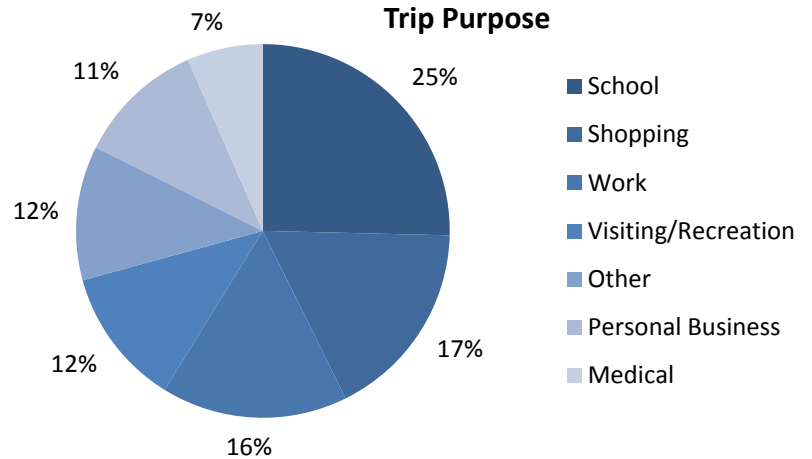
Income

Community bus passengers report overall low incomes, with almost 50 percent of riders earning under \$15,000 per year. Just 16 percent of community bus riders are in the lowest income category, however, versus almost 30 percent on BCT fixed routes. As with BCT fixed routes, roughly 15 percent of riders earn over \$40,000 per year.



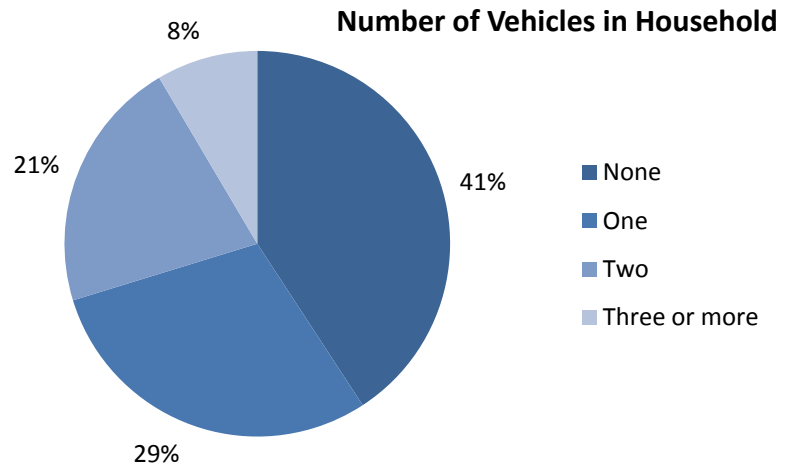
Trip Purpose

Trip purposes on community bus routes are substantially different than BCT fixed routes. One quarter of passengers use community buses to get to school (which corresponds with the large number of passengers under age 17). Work constitutes only 16 percent of community bus ridership, versus almost 60 percent on BCT fixed routes.



Number of Vehicles in Household

Number of household vehicles available to community bus passengers is roughly equivalent to BCT fixed route passengers, with over 40 percent of riders having no vehicles. This suggests that a large portion of community bus riders are dependent on transit for their travel needs.



Community Bus Market Assessment Findings

- More passengers under the age of 17 ride Community Buses than any other age group.
- Community buses carry a higher percentage of senior passengers than BCT fixed routes.
- Roughly half of community bus passengers earn less than \$15,000 per year and over 40 percent do not own a vehicle.
- School is the most common trip purpose for community bus passengers, followed by shopping and work.

4.5 Community Bus Recommendations

The purpose of the community bus system is to complement the BCT fixed route network and provide connections among a variety of local destinations in a given locality. While BCT routes should serve mainly arterial corridors, community buses can penetrate into neighborhoods and create short-distance linkages between origins and destinations. Well-designed community bus routes should serve needs not addressed by BCT routes and should be productive on a boardings per revenue hour basis.

Recommendations to further develop a strong community bus system include:

- **Create a Community Bus Plan.** The plan should include guidelines as to why and where community bus routes make sense, basic design guidelines for route directness and stop spacing, productivity standards and performance monitoring, and guidelines for the shared funding responsibility between municipal operators and BCT.
- **Implement a two-part performance monitoring process.** Currently, BCT policy states that community buses which generate fewer than 7.1 boardings per revenue hour are not eligible for funding. As discussed in Section 5 (Service Standards), the COA recommends a two-part review process: evaluating routes as compared to their peers and also establishing absolute performance values which routes must meet. An example of this process would be to monitor routes which generate less than 50 percent of the system average in terms of passengers per revenue hour, but also set a minimum standard (such as 10 passengers per revenue hour) which community bus routes must achieve. Individual cities may choose to continue operation of low-performing routes, but will not receive BCT assistance.
- **Validate ridership data on an ongoing basis.** Community bus operators collect ridership data daily, while BCT conducts ridechecks of the community bus system at certain intervals. Installing APC units on community buses (as they are on BCT fixed routes) will provide an ongoing source of ridership data without the expense and time of conducting ridechecks. This will allow BCT to monitor community bus performance quarterly, as is recommended for BCT fixed routes.

Community Bus Recommendations

- Create a Community Bus Plan that explains where community bus routes makes sense, provides basic design guidelines, and sets certain standards for service and productivity.
- Implement a two-part performance monitoring process that evaluates routes in comparison to their peers as well as establishing absolute minimum performance requirements.
- Validate ridership data on an ongoing basis to accurately monitor performance.