

Where Have the Riders Gone?



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Golden Gate Bridge, Highway & Transportation District

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An Introduction

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- Golden Gate Bridge, Highway & Transportation District
 - ▣ Golden Gate Bridge – 1928 (opened in 1937)
 - ▣ Golden Gate Ferry – 1970
 - ▣ Golden Gate Transit – 1972
- Bus + ferry system provides regional transit service
- Linking San Francisco, Marin, Sonoma & Contra Costa Counties
- Overlaps 6 local transit systems + 1 rail system
- GGBHTD does not have taxing authority
- 49% of transit funding comes from Golden Gate Bridge tolls

Golden Gate Bridge District Services

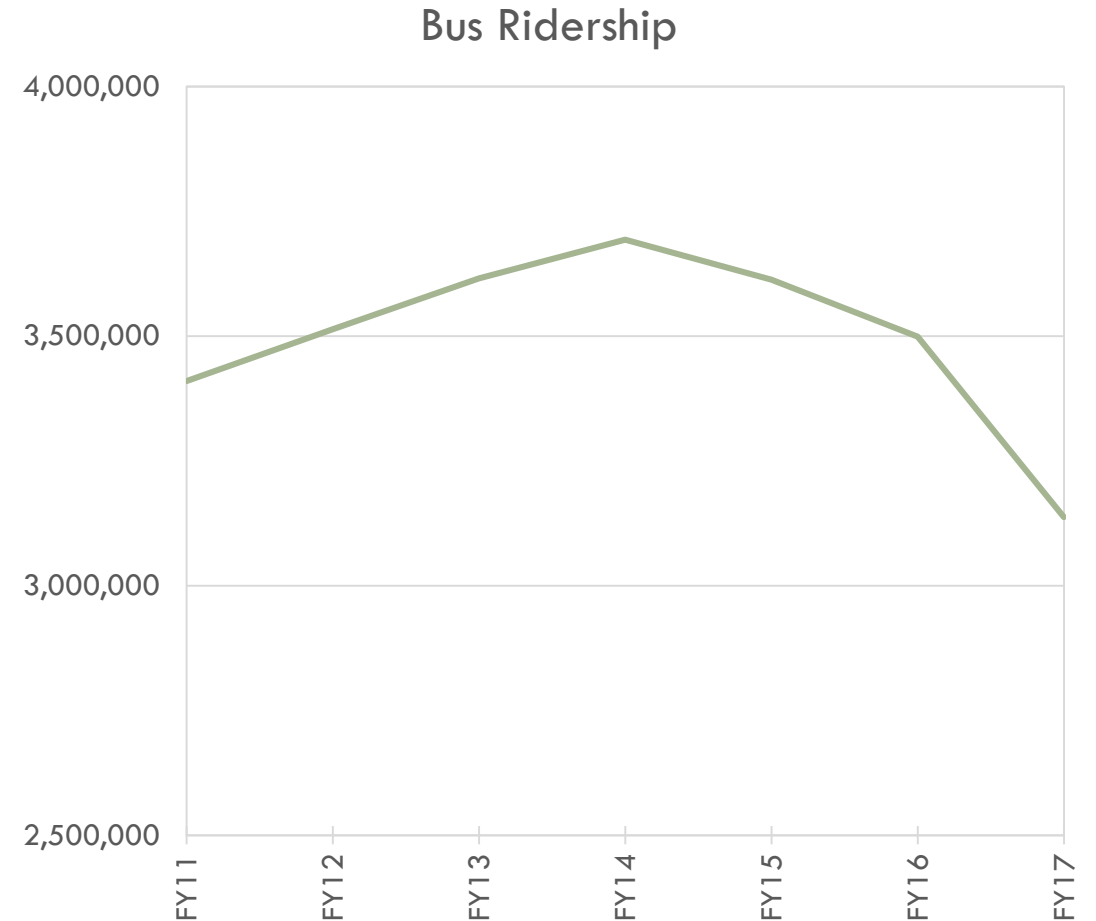
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Ridership Is Trending (Down)

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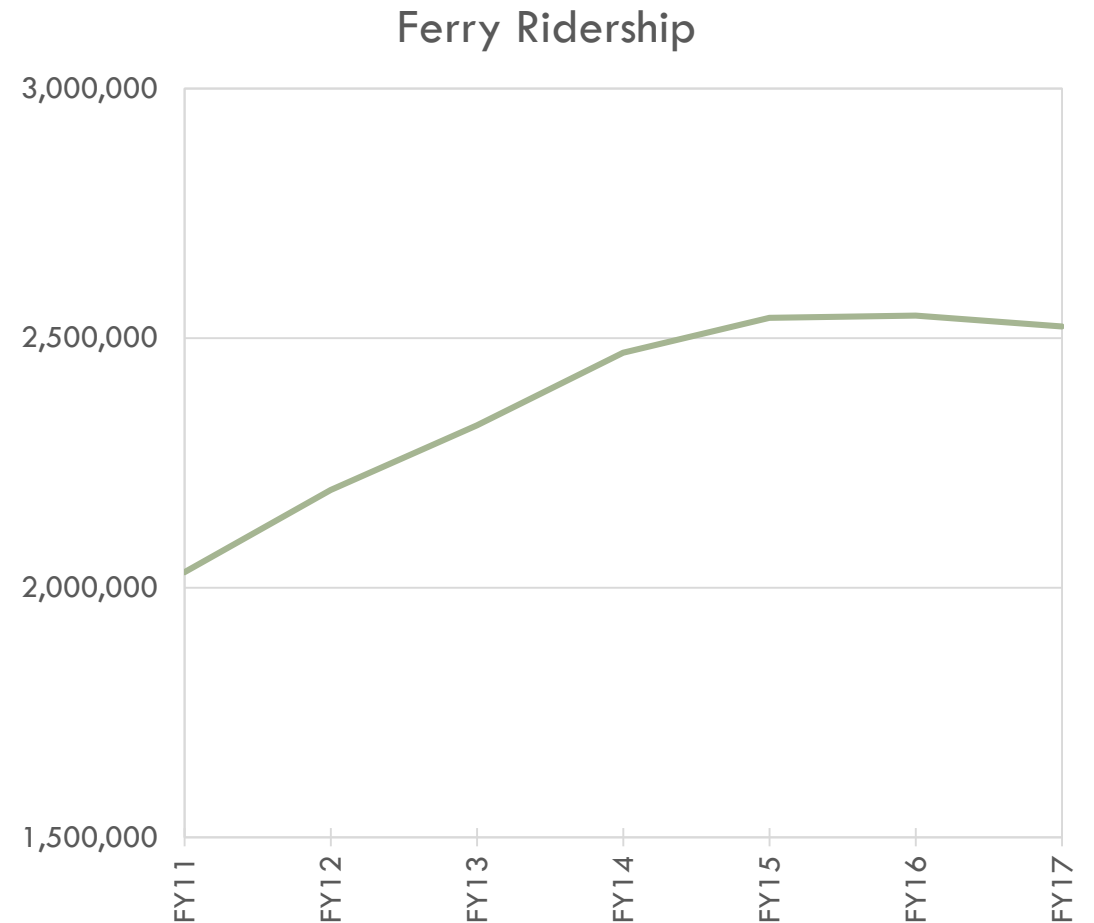
- Golden Gate Transit:
 - ▣ Annual ridership was up each year from FY 2011 to FY 2014
 - ▣ Ridership has declined 2%, 3% & 10% in subsequent years
 - ▣ Adjusting for a major service change that transferred service to a local operator, FY 2017 is still down 6% (rather than 10%)
- Declines are cause for concern



Ridership Was Trending (Up)

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- Golden Gate Ferry:
 - ▣ Annual ridership was up each year from FY 2011 to FY 2016
 - ▣ Ridership is down 1% for FY 2017
- Commute trips are at capacity on busiest ferry route



The Big Picture

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Why is ridership declining?

- More telecommuting
 - More flexible work schedules
 - Sustained lower gas prices
 - Increased traffic congestion
 - Higher housing costs
 - Easier access to driver licenses

Reasons for Declining Ridership

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- More telecommuting
 - ▣ Marin County is 1st in CA and 6th in the U.S.
 - ▣ Rate has been increasing for more than 2 decades
- More flexible work schedules
 - ▣ “9 to 5” could be “6:30 to 3” or “10 to 7”
 - ▣ 5-day work week could be 9/80 or 4/10
- Sustained lower gas prices
 - ▣ Gas prices have decreased over the past 5 years
 - ▣ Bay Area average: \$3.88 in 2011, \$2.81 in 2016

Reasons for Declining Ridership

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- Increased traffic congestion
 - ▣ More traffic means slower buses
 - ▣ Slower buses have higher operating costs
 - ▣ Higher operating costs result in lower farebox recovery rates
- Higher housing costs
 - ▣ Cheaper housing is further away from the city center
 - ▣ Suburban communities are less conducive to public transit usage
 - ▣ Retirees age in place because smaller homes aren't available
 - ▣ Wealthy homeowners don't necessarily have traditional work routines

Present, Meet Past

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Can Ridership Trend (Up)?

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- Retain, Reclaim, Recruit!
- Be price and payment method competitive
- Be responsive to changing work schedules and commute patterns
- Work with local jurisdictions to speed up buses
- Don't be afraid to make bold changes, even if they're experimental
 - ▣ Especially if grant funding is available
 - ▣ Ferry feeder routes
 - ▣ Suburb-to-suburb commute routes
 - ▣ Keep trying

Remember the Customer

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- Need:
 - ▣ Effective, reliable transportation solution
 - ▣ Not necessarily public transit
- Wants:
 - ▣ Amenities – on board & at stops/terminals
 - ▣ Great service – on time, frequent & fast
 - ▣ Easy access to information – real time, integrated travel planning
 - ▣ A comprehensible system – KISS, or “Keep It Simple Sir”

Consider **Bold** Changes

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- Ask riders what they want & what led them to take transit
- Add shoulder peak trips
- Add reverse peak trips
- Provide express routing along existing corridors
- Simplify/combine routes to improve core service
- Bypass congestion points, but don't skip important stops
- Respond to market conditions, including modal shifts
- Build political and popular will over time
- Know when not to go bold

Bold Changes Keep People Moving

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Conclusion

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- There are no easy answers.
- We wouldn't have a job if there were easy answers.
- We won't have a job if we don't find any answers.

Thank You

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