



2004 Metro Transit Bus Strike

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CE 5212 case study #4

Oct 6, 2004

Twin Cities Bus Strike

- March 2004 – Members of Amalgamated Transit Union local 1005 voted to strike.
- Were Objecting to:
 - Council's proposal to increase health insurance premiums for working members and cut health care coverage for retirees.
 - Its proposal to freeze wages for 2004 and have a 1% increase the next year
- Strike lasts 6 weeks. Members agree to terms that are much less than what they were demanding.





Transit Labor Relations - History

- Unions in transit industry go back a long way
 - Mid 1800s – Workers on New York’s Third Avenue streetcars unionized Short lived.
 - 1885 a more stronger union formed – got concessions from management – encouraged unionization elsewhere in transit industry.
 - 1892 – 1st Nation wide transit workers union – what has today become the ATU.
- 1910 – 1920 Emergence of Bus Transport in cities.
- Bus transport provided by private companies
- Through World War II increased use of busses.
 - Fuel was scarce
 - Rubber was scarce
- After WWII Roads Expanding
 - Rising Incomes
 - Cars becoming affordable
- Transit ridership declines.
- 1950s and 60s – Transit firms in financial crisis - pay cuts, strikes, financial woes – many transit companies went out of business.



History...Continued

- 1964 - UMTA passed by congress.
 - Provided federal funds for states/cities to own and operate their own transit systems.
 - Ensured that collective bargaining rights would be preserved as employees moved from privately owned transit companies to public companies.
- At the state level, ATU and local leaders push for legislation for local public transit systems.
- States had to allow collective bargaining for transit workers in order to qualify for federal funding.
- By 1970's most transit systems are publicly owned and operated.
- Workers right's to strike without loss of job is assured.



To Strike or Not to Strike...

- Labor –Why not strike?
 - Loss of income
 - Company may end up in a worse financial situation
- Labor– Why strike?
 - Last bargaining chip.
 - Gives company incentives to settle disputes.



Incentives to Settle

■ Private Sector

- Profit maximizers
- Loss of Revenue
- Loss of trained workers
- Competition can harm company's position in industry

■ Public Sector

- Not profit maximizers
- No competition, except from other modes
- Loss of revenue not as big a player here.
- Indirect pressure from the public through the Legislature and Governor's office.



Who was affected?

- **Bus Drivers/Passengers**
 - Loss of job/regular form of travel
- **Drivers**
 - Heavier traffic levels
 - Greater usage of parking lots
- **Bikers/Pedestrians**
 - Theft
 - Increase in density

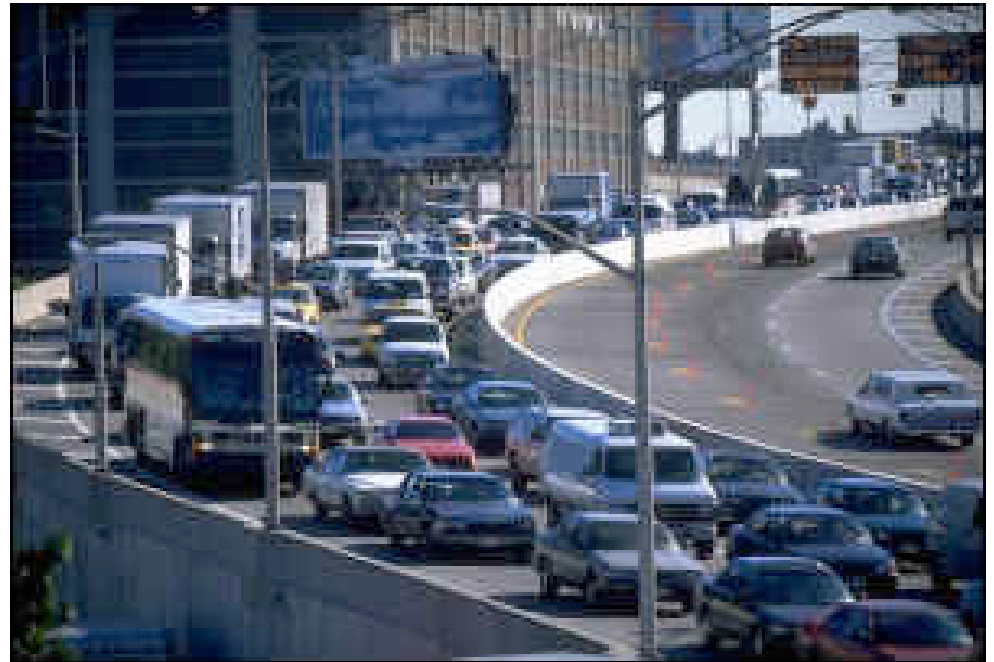
Strategies for Mitigation

- Few and far between
- Drive, bike or walk
- Commuters ->
parking lots/meters
- Timeframe of strike (early March until mid-April) was an issue
- Slushy/snowy/wet roads and sidewalks



Effect on Congestion

- Some, but not more than expected
- Commuters into the metro area experienced some delays of *up to* 30 minutes compared to usual travel time
- Delays with parking as well, plus the increase in payment for a ramp space or at a meter





Where was the congestion?

- Knowing a strike was imminent, affected citizens and communities mobilized
 - Deeply discounted parking rates in city-owned ramps for carpoolers.
 - Carpools, shuttles, schedule shifts
- Some people made fewer trips
 - Transit dependent workers traveled less
 - Fewer peak-period trips to avoid congestion



Where was the congestion? Cont.

- Many Bus systems were still operational
 - Opt Out providers (MVTA, SW Metro, etc.) were still in business, except for MetroTransit-operated routes (These routes use freeways).
- Congestion predictions misinformed
 - “75,000 riders”, “40% of downtown workers”
 - Downtown Minneapolis drive/ride mode split calculations can be confusing...



Downtown Mode Split

- Calculated in different ways, all depend on:
 - Methodology (question asked, sample size)
 - Geographical area in question (CBD vs. entire “downtown”- Loring Park to Riverfront)
 - Time of day: peak period, “peak hour”, all day, 24-hour, inbound versus outbound.
 - Type of trip: work, shopping, short-term, long-term.
 - Mode of transit: LRT vs. bus trips (a new issue)



A few examples of mode splits

- United States Census: 25.0%
 - How do you get to work? For all downtown Mpls workers (136,000), 34,000 said “transit”.
 - Measured all downtown, 24 hrs, work trips
- Cordon Count: 34% (Mpls Plan)
 - Survey teams at 100+ entrance points counting people entering downtown
 - Measured peak period, all downtown, all trips
- Employer Survey- 24-58%

(source: SRF Consulting, 2000 Downtown Transportation Study)

 - Survey responses at dozens of major employers in downtown area, 1990 & ‘98-99
 - Looks at short term vs. long term trips, all day, by downtown area



Travel Behavior Inventory

- Sample of 5% of households in Metropolitan area, asked question “how do you get to/from work?”
- For downtown Mpls (split into 3 areas), work trips, 24 hours (split into AM/PM peak, off peak, peak hours)
- Results affected by small sample size for some areas.

Results from TBI

“Inbound” transit users	AM peak hour	AM peak period	PM peak hour	PM peak period	Off peak	Entire day
Core	55.8	52.2	68.2	17.0	29.7	39.6
Outer core	29.2	31.6	39.1	28.3	19.1	24.8
Frame	26.3	20.2	8.5	13.8	6.8	10.8
All	<u>43.4</u>	<u>40.6</u>	31.0	19.7	18.8	26.8



Conclusions about mode split

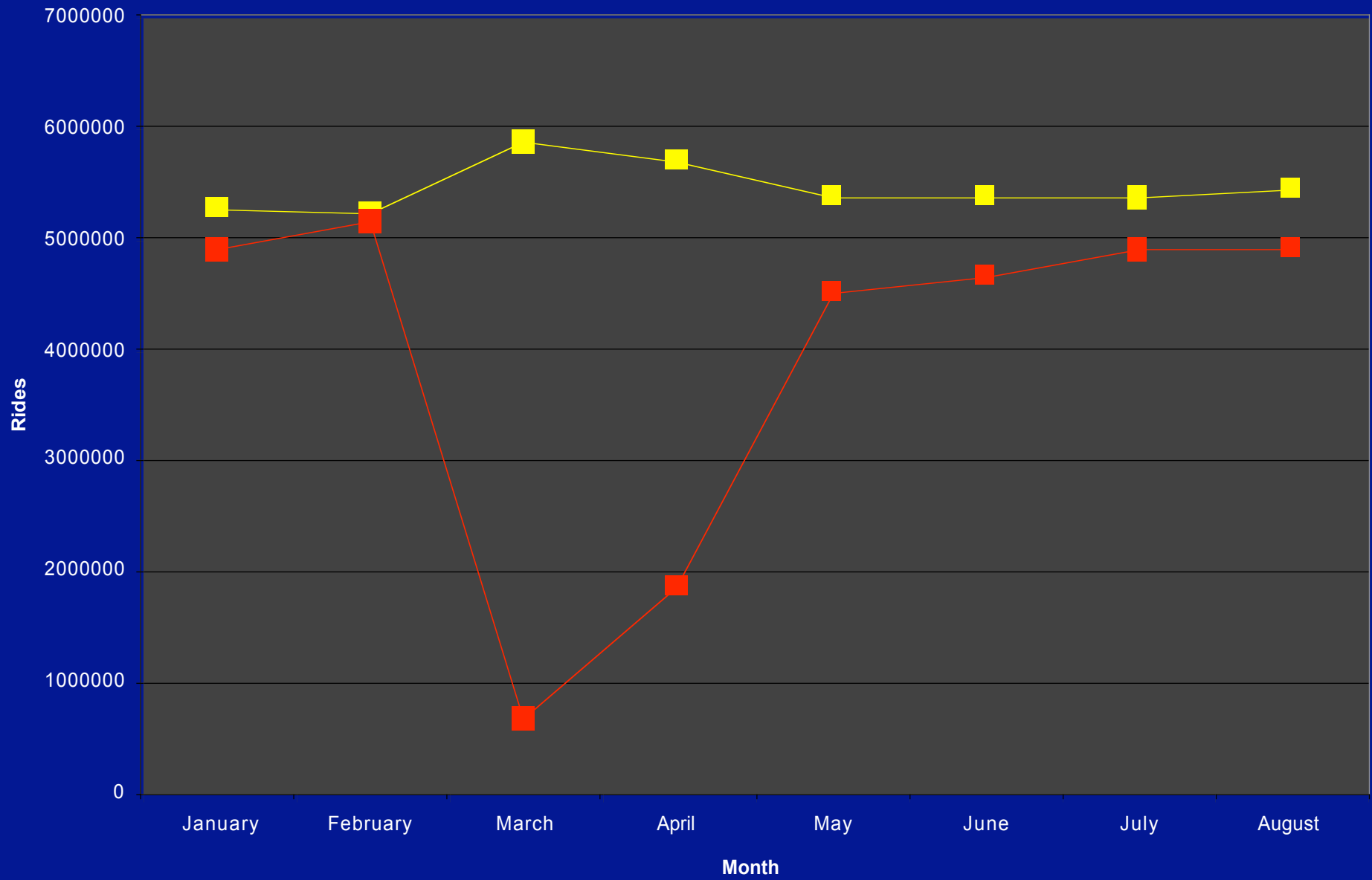
- Mode split depends on question asked
 - For total “displaced” workers, rely on census data
 - Popular Misconception: 55,000 workers take the bus to downtown Minneapolis for work every day during rush hour. In reality, 34,000 ride in ALL DAY
 - For Peak Period congestion forecasting, much trickier
 - Depends on time, direction, CBD area, trip type, destination
 - All of these factors affect congestion
- What about downtown St. Paul?
 - Small mode split (12.5% in census) and fewer jobs (<45,000 vs 135,000+ in Mpls) = ~5,000 workers ride to work



Since the Strike... recovery

- Post-strike ridership was initially quite low
 - May '04 rides 16% below May '03, despite comparable February months in each year
 - Opt-out operated routes fared worse: 45% lower in May '04 vs. May '03
- Recovery occurred quickly
 - Reg. Route MT ridership only down 8% in July '04 vs. July '03, without accounting for LRT
- Difficult to gauge recovery in exact terms
 - LRT opened June 26
 - Many “opt-out” routes contracted to MetroTransit reverted back to private operators
 - Annual variation/long term will tell real story

Total MT-Operated Regular Route Rides, Jan-Aug 2003 & 2004





Questions

- Which side won in the transit strike?
- Which side(s) lost in the strike?
- Is the transit system important for the reduction of congestion? For “the poor”?
- What alternatives exist to transit? Are any feasible?
- Did the Met council aim to “bust the union”, as many strikers charged?