



Peer Systems Review



February 2004

Presentation Overview

An **Examination** of Three Tiers of Peer Systems
based on Treasure Valley's Current & Future Population

Three Tiers

The Peers

Transit Funding

Delivery of Service

Marketing & Technology

Conclusions



Identification of Peers

Three Tiers

- Peer systems within three targeted population sizes
- History of rapid growth and/or “suburban” development
- Western but not coastal
- State capitols and/or major universities
- Relevant story for the future of Ada/Canyon region

Three Tiers of Peers

Three Tiers

1. Current population & high level of service

Washoe County, NV
Lane County, OR
Omaha, NE

2. 2010 Projected population + & considering multiple modes

Spokane, WA
Austin, TX
Tucson, AZ
Albuquerque, NM

3. 2020 Projected population with established light rail

Denver, CO
Sacramento, CA
Salt Lake County, UT

(All information in the report was based on 2003 National Transit Database)



Boise (Ada-Canyon Co.)

The Systems

Valley Regional Transit (ValleyRide)

Governance: Board of Directors

- 27 members appointed by cities, counties and highway districts and one representative each from BSU, ITD and CCDC

Urban Area: 109 sq. mi.

Urban Area Population: 272,625

Service Area: 66 sq. mi.

Service Area Population: 185,787

Annual Revenue Hours: 73,551 (Bus)

"Looking towards the Future"



Washoe County, Nevada

The Systems

RTC-Citifare (Washoe County Regional Transportation Commission)

Governance: Board of Directors

- 5 members representing Reno, Sparks & Washoe County

Urban Area: 119 sq. mi.

Urban Area Population: 304,000

Service Area: 69 sq. mi.

Service Area Population: 304,000

Annual Revenue Hours: 251,000 (Bus)

- Tourism Industry
- Major University
- Studying BRT



Lane County Oregon (Eugene)

The Systems

LTD (Lane Transit District)

Governance: Board of Directors

- 7 members appointed by Governor

Urban Area: 68 sq. mi.

Urban Area Population: 224,000

Service Area: 241 sq. mi.

Service Area Population: 272,000

Annual Revenue Hours: 262,000 (Bus)

- Major university
- Extensive rural fixed routes
- Embarking on BRT



Omaha Nebraska

The Systems

MAT (Metro Area Transit Authority of Omaha)

Governance: Board of Directors

- 5 members appointed by Mayor

Urban Area: 226 sq. mi.

Urban Area Population: 627,000

Service Area: 1932 sq. mi.

Service Area Population: 544,000

Annual Revenue Hours: 290,000 (Bus)

- Property Tax Funding Approach



Spokane Washington

The Systems

STA (Spokane Transit Authority)

Governance: Board of Directors

- 9 Members (made up of elected officials from Spokane, the county and smaller communities in the service area)

Urban Area: 143 sq. mi.

Urban Area Population: 335,000

Service Area: 371 sq. mi

Service Area Population: 371,000

Annual Revenue Hours: 350,000 (Bus)

- "Exploring BRT/LRT to Connect to New Growth Areas"



Austin Texas

The Systems

CMTA (Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority)

Governance: Board of Directors

- 7 members representing city, county and smaller communities in service area

Urban Area: 318 sq. mi.

Urban Area Population: 902,000

Service Area: 572 sq. mi

Service Area Population: 902,000

Annual Revenue Hours: 1,108,000 (Bus)

- University (16)
- State Capitol
- Downtown Shuttle System (7)



Tucson Arizona

The Systems

SunTran (City of Tucson)

Governance: 7 member Board

- Mayor and six city council members

Urban Area: 291 sq. mi.

Urban Area Population: 720,000

Service Area: 291 sq. mi.

Service Area Population: 720,000

1980 – 2000 Population Growth: 47%

Annual Revenue Hours: 506,000 (Bus)

- Major University
- Growth Pressures



Albuquerque, New Mexico

The Systems

SunTran (City of Albuquerque)

Governance: Mayor, City Council and 6-Member Transit Advisory Board made up of citizens appointed by Mayor

Urban Area: 224 sq. mi. Urban Area Population: 598,000

Service Area: 124 sq. mi. Service Area Population: 498,000

Annual Revenue Hours: 264,000 (Bus)

- Urban Productivity Focus
- Eye Toward Future Regional Approach



Denver, Colorado

The Systems

RTD (Regional Transportation District)

Governance: Board of Directors

- 15 publicly-elected members

Urban Area: 499 sq. mi.

Urban Area Population: 1,895,000

Service Area: 2,406 sq. mi.

Service Area Population: 2,400,000

Annual Revenue Hours: 2,569,000 (Bus), 165,000 (LRT)

- State Capitol
- Large Regional System
- Established Light Rail



Sacramento, California

The Systems

Sacramento RT (Sacramento Regional Transit District)

Governance: 8 Member Board of Directors

Urban Area: 369 sq. mi.

Urban Area Population: 1,393,000

Service Area: 369 sq. mi.

Service Area Population: 1,393,000

Annual Revenue Hours: 601,000 (Bus), 104,000 (LRT)

- State Capitol
- State University
- Strong LRT Expansion Program
- Park-and-Ride Orientation



Salt Lake County Utah

The Systems

UTA (Utah Transit Authority)

Governance: Board of Trustees

- 15 members appointed by regional elected officials
- Board delegates extensive power to management

Urban Area: 231 sq. mi.

Urban Area Population: 888,000

Service Area: 1,412 sq. mi.

Service Area Population: 1,744,000

Annual Revenue Hours: 942,000 (Bus), 197,000 (LRT)

- State Capitol
- Large University
- "Run Like a Corporation"



Funding

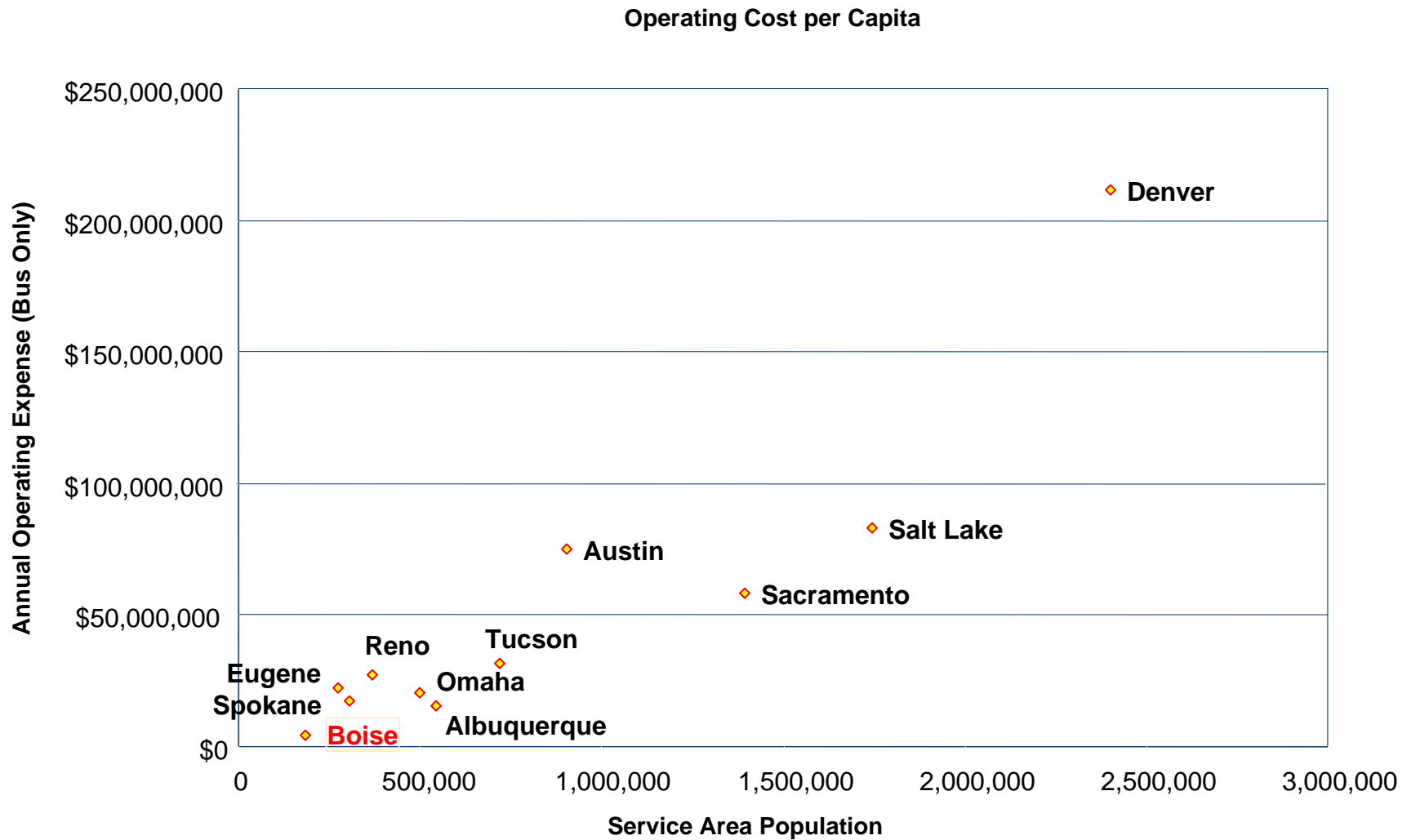
Transit Funding

- Based on peer data, service area populations between 500,000 and 700,000 require between \$28 million and \$43 million per year for fixed-route bus operations
- Capital funding not included – often grant funded, but requires local match
- Establishing a stable funding source is crucial for consistent quality service
 - Tucson, Eugene and Spokane have all faced significant service cuts in recent years due to budget constraints
 - Sales and payroll taxes fluctuate with the economy



Operating Cost vs. Population

Transit Funding



Sources of Local Funding

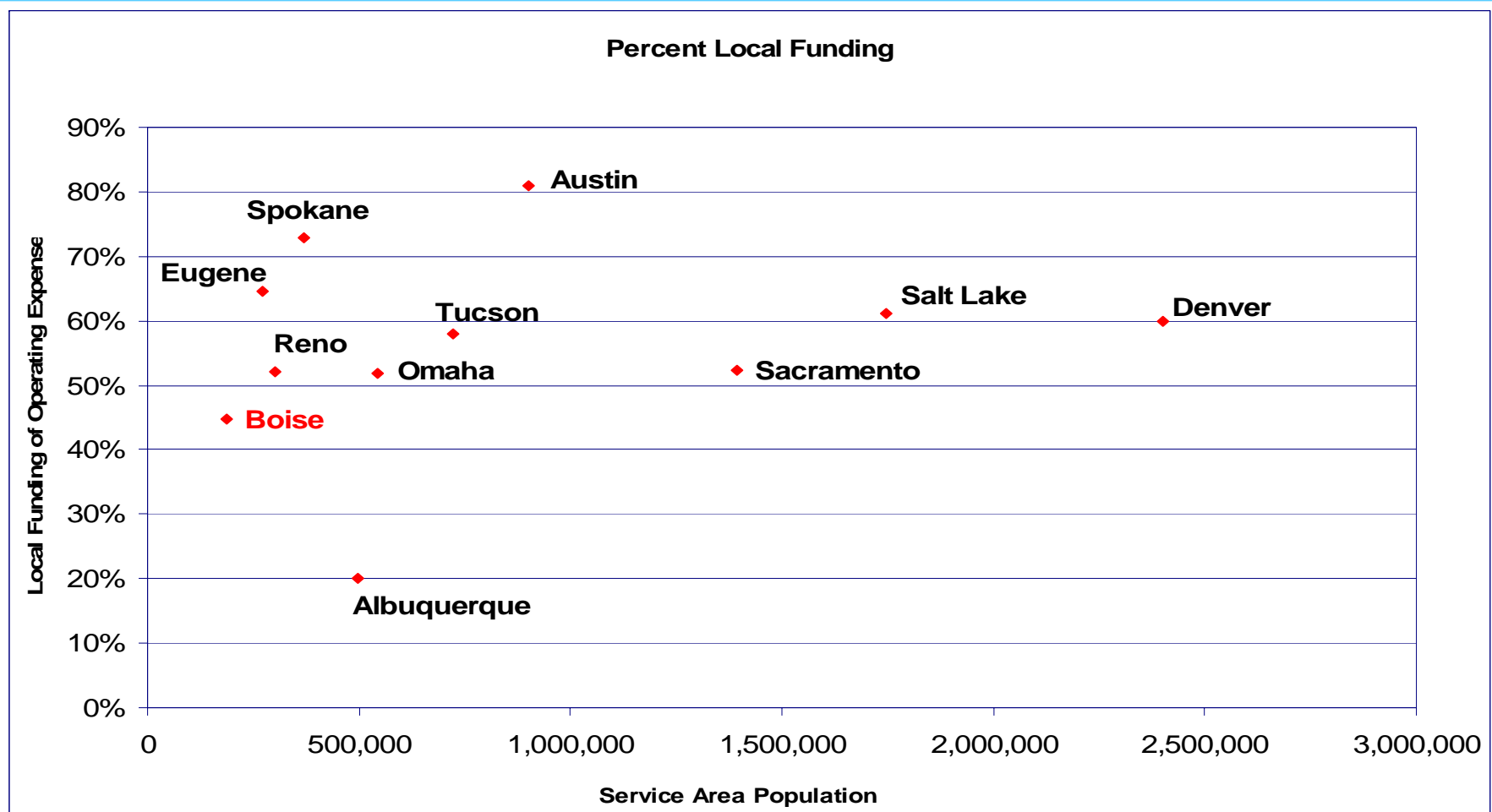
Transit Funding

- Nine of the 10 peers utilize local sales, property or payroll tax as a dedicated source to fund public transportation
- Tax sources range from .05% sales tax in Albuquerque to 1% sales tax in Austin
- Omaha only peer to utilize property tax levy, although common source in Oregon
- Spokane failed to pass sales tax initiative to replace lost state funding in 2002
- Tucson failed to pass a 3/10 cent sales tax initiative in 2003
- Reno recently increased sales tax by 1/16 of one percent in a bundled transportation package



Local Contribution

Transit Funding



Lessons Learned

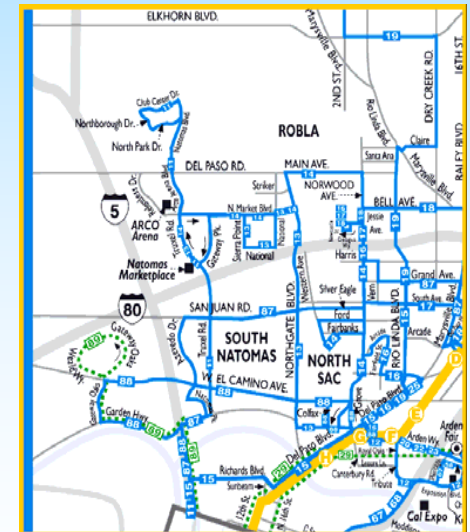
Transit Funding

- A dedicated funding source is crucial
- Sales and payroll taxes can fluctuate rapidly with economy
- Property taxes fluctuate much less
- Tax measures often pass after several attempts
- Broad tax measures addressing many constituencies do better than narrowly focused measures

System Design

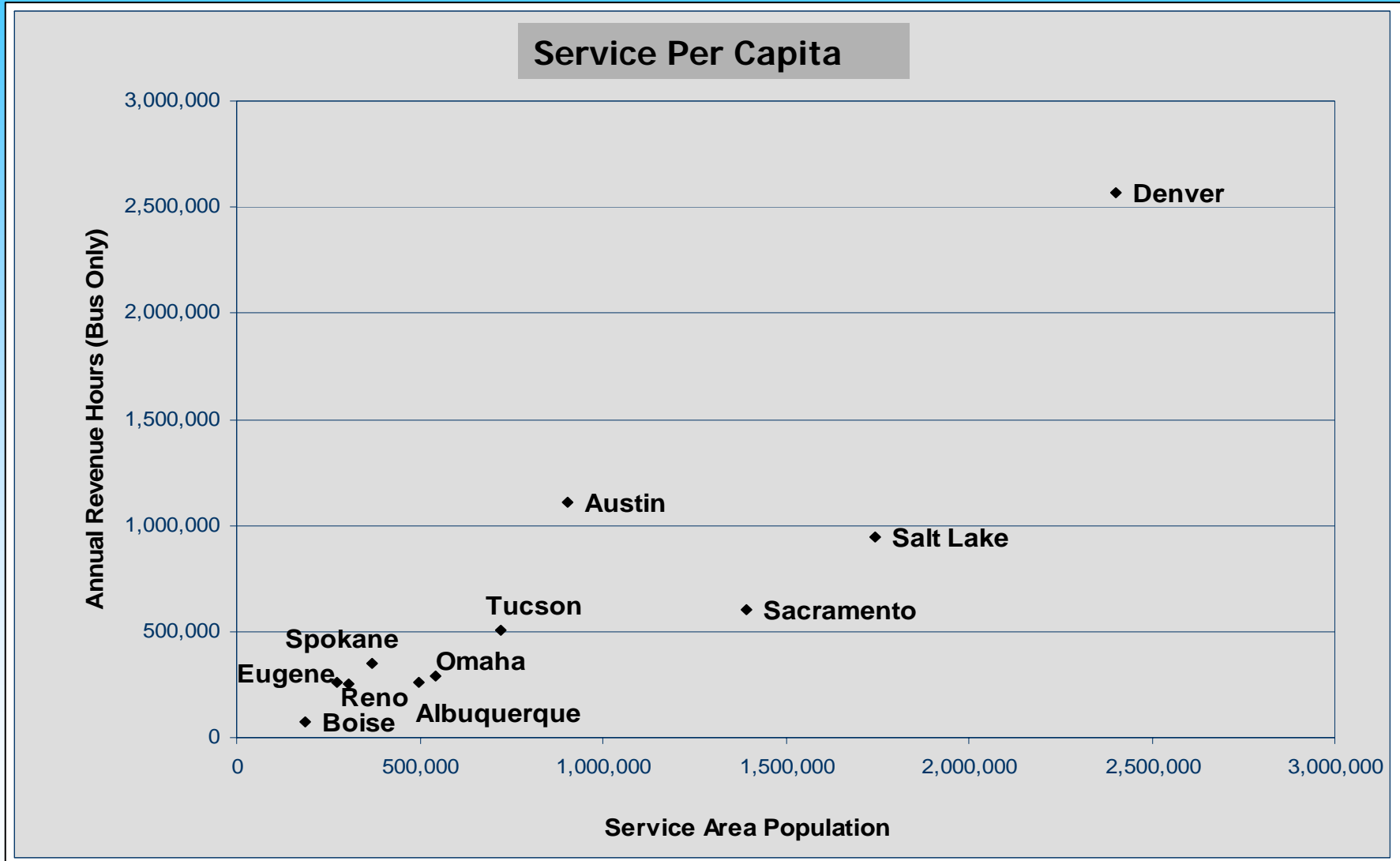
Delivery of Service

- All Peers Focus on Productivity
 - Reno plans for 80% productivity and 20% coverage
 - Eugene plans for 75% productivity, 20% coverage and 5% discretionary
 - No Peer focuses on majority of resources on coverage
- Rural/Suburban vs. Major Corridor Focus
 - Salt Lake City and Lane County, OR both provide commuter bus service to rural communities outside of the urban core
 - Spokane, Reno and Albuquerque focus on major corridor service at the expense of rural/suburban service
- Special Services
 - All larger systems operate numerous school and employment trippers
 - Tucson partners with Raytheon to provide tripper service to office park



Service Per Capita

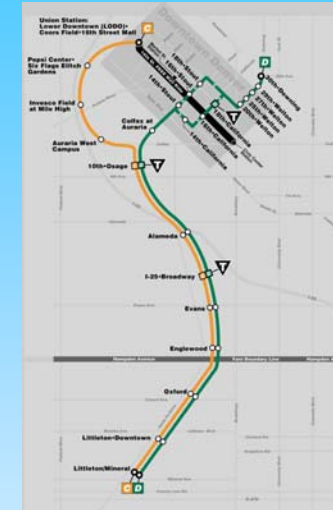
Delivery of Service



Performance

Delivery of Service

- Capitol cities generate high ridership near dense government center
 - Sacramento
 - Austin
 - Denver
 - Salt Lake City
- LRT performs well wherever it exists
 - Denver
 - Sacramento
 - Salt Lake
 - As well as other cities with extensive LRT



Performance

Delivery of Service

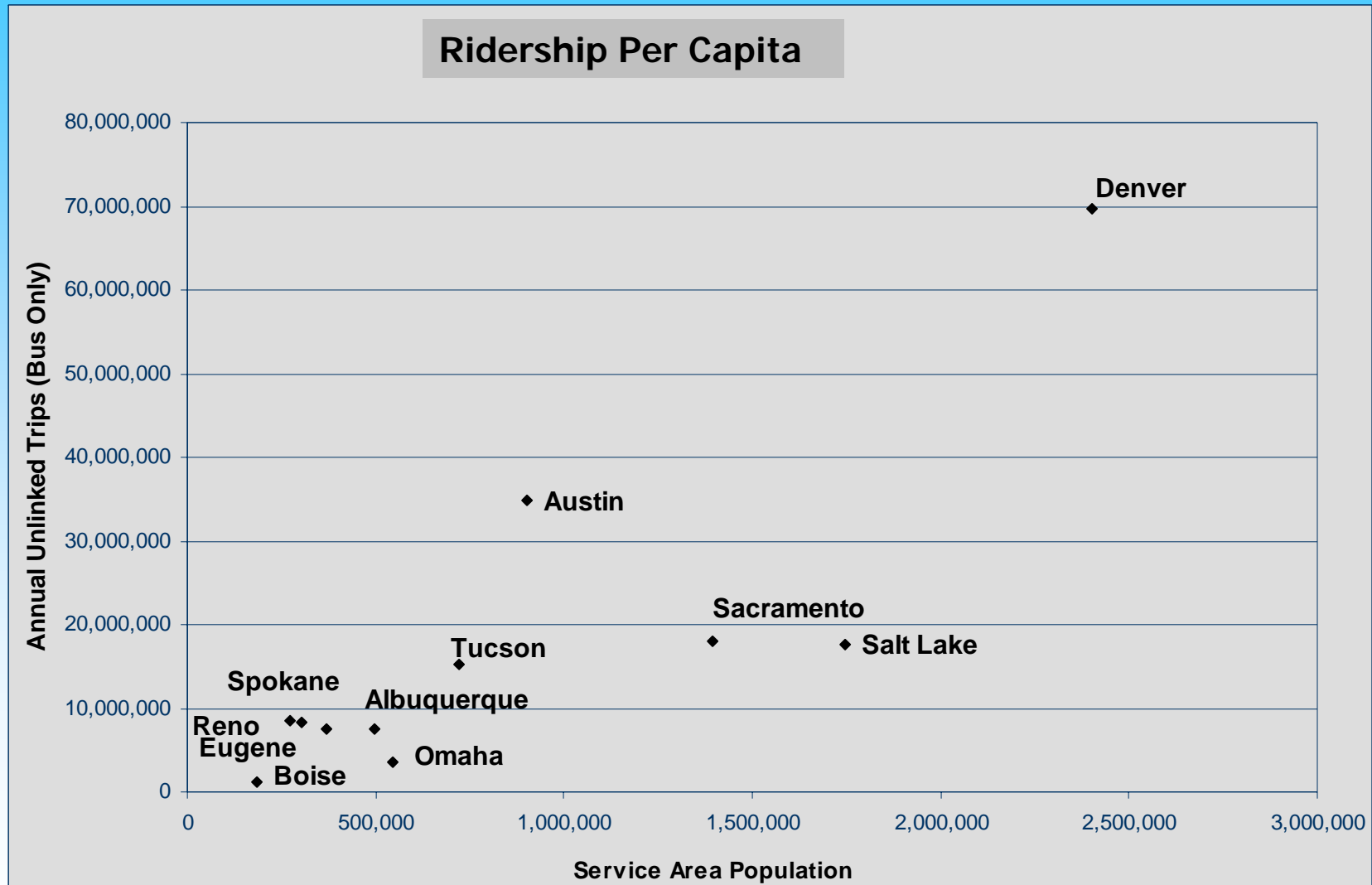
- Most peers view universities as one of the major transit generators in the region
 - Salt Lake City extended LRT from the edge of the University of Utah into the core of the campus
 - Austin operates 16 University of Texas shuttles from the campus to the various student housing areas
 - Eugene provides frequent service on multiple routes to the University of Oregon and Lane Community College



–Austin and Salt Lake provide local and commuter/express service to the university campus

Ridership Per Capita

Delivery of Service



Service Planning & Review

Delivery of Service

- All peers use regular review against standards
 - Some use percent against system average – Tucson and Lane County
 - Others use classifications of service
- Re-applying existing resources to improve productivity
 - Reno and Lane County recently implemented redesign for productivity
 - Salt Lake plans dramatic shift to productivity
 - Omaha plans to use existing resources to improve system frequencies and convert to a hub and spoke system from a linear system in March 2004
- Market-based approach
 - Salt Lake tries to achieve a reasonable level of return based on the amount of taxes each community pays toward transit
- Successful LRT is always part of larger integrated system



Land Use

Delivery of Service

- All peers are faced with the intrinsic difficulty of serving many suburban development patterns
- Salt Lake and Lane County have resisted extending service to low-density suburban areas
- Salt Lake discontinued all local service in rural areas (runs commuter trips only)



Lessons Learned

Delivery of Service

- All peers focus on productivity
- Range of approaches to rural service
- Peers provide frequent service to productive centers such as government centers and universities
- Service changes reflect collision of long range plans and resource fluctuations

Public Information is Marketing

Marketing & Outreach

- Clarity, legibility and availability of basic public information is essential
- On-street facilities and vehicles promote services
 - BREEZE in Eugene and DILLO in Austin have distinct look and feel



- System-wide branding for major change
- Emphasis on frequency

Technology

Marketing & Outreach

- Emerging vehicle technologies will change the way transit is perceived
- Denver & Salt Lake have automated trip planners to assist riders and promote system
- Salt Lake allows riders to load maps and schedules on PDAs and pocket PCs
- Salt Lake utilizes real-time informational signs at all light rail stations



Lessons Learned

Marketing & Outreach

- Branding can be used to distinguish service types within the system
- Interactive and trip planning features on websites allows riders and potential riders to plan trips easily
- Real time information enables spontaneous trips
- Targeted marketing strategies can meet specific customer's needs



- Funding
 - Dedicated local funding source is required to reach service levels typical of lowest tier peers
 - Success of local tax measures often require persistence
 - Broad tax measures do better than narrowly focused
- Delivery of Service
 - Peers focus majority of resources on services that maximize ridership
 - Many peers have resisted service extensions to suburban areas
 - Boise has characteristics that produce ridership – University, Capitol City

- Marketing
 - Good public information is the basis for effective marketing
 - System-wide branding can promote major change
 - Critical levels of service frequency required to effectively market the system
- Technology
 - Vehicle technologies will make bus services more efficient and attractive
 - Internet technologies are making it easier for customers to plan and access trips
 - GPS based technologies provide passengers with real-time information

VALLEYRIDE PEER REVIEW



Downtown Circulation

Downtowns & Univ's

- Downtown Shuttle/Circulator
 - Austin, Eugene, Sacramento, Denver, Reno and Omaha
 - Downtown shuttle in Tucson is operated and funded by the City of Tucson Parking Division, not the transit agency
 - Austin operates 7 free downtown shuttle routes
 - Shuttles have special branding, facilities and vehicles
- Downtown Fare Free Zone
 - Salt Lake City utilizes a Fare Free Zone in the urban core for all routes
- Downtown Light Rail System

