

- Peer Performance Comparison in the Public Transit Sector (*Karin Allen, Donna Anderson - Regional Transportation Authority*)

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), with cooperation from each of its Service Boards, implemented a Performance Measurement program in 2008. The RTA uses National Transit Database data to develop a performance measurement “report card” which covers various service measures over a five-year time period; performance measures are reported in an aggregated regional perspective as well as for each Service Board and mode. Additionally, performance is reported in relation to comparable peers, again on a regional and sub-regional (modal) basis, each year. This presentation will focus on the peer comparisons, for which there are three consecutive years of reports available.

The purpose of the report series is that, in the absence of industry standards, performance measures can be used to assess the operations of each agency. The RTA has found that the use of peer analysis significantly enhanced the performance measurement reporting program by establishing benchmarks for performance and identifying areas of relative strength and weakness for each mode. Additionally the peer reports demonstrate unique characteristics or circumstances that may constrain performance or point to potential areas of improvement. For example, CTA rail performance is significantly constrained by the tight curves of the Loop tracks that necessitate the use of smaller cars, impacting many performance measures with no feasible prospect of a rank change, although CTA has the third-highest annual ridership.

Performance measurement as a process needs to include a careful review of each agency’s operating environment so that results can be not only reported, but understood.

