Why is Transit Ridership Falling?

In the last ten years transit use in Southern California has fallen significantly. This presentation reports on a recent UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies report on what might be causing this trend by examining patterns of transit service and patronage over time and across the region. It considers an array of explanations for falling transit use: declining transit service levels, eroding transit service quality, rising fares, falling fuel prices, the growth of Lyft and Uber, the migration of frequent transit users to outlying neighborhoods with less transit service, and rising vehicle ownership.

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Brian D. Taylor, PhD, FAICP is Professor of Urban Planning, Director of the Institute of Transportation Studies, and Director of the Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies in the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs. His research centers on transportation policy and planning – most of it conducted in close collaboration with his many exceptional students. Professor Taylor’s research examines travel behavior, traffic congestion, transportation economics & finance, public transit, transportation equity & politics. Prior to UCLA, Professor Taylor was on the planning faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Before that, he was a planner with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission in the San Francisco Bay Area. He was recently named one of the Top Ten Academic Thought Leaders in Transportation by the Council of University Transportation Centers and the Eno Center for Transportation, and was recently honored as a National Associate by the National Academies for his work with the Transportation Research Board.