

# Chapter 2: Overview of Existing Transit Services

COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT-HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

FRENCH BROAD RIVER MPO & LAND OF SKY RPO

## BUNCOMBE COUNTY

### ASHEVILLE REDEFINES TRANSIT

The City of Asheville plans for, manages, funds and administers the Asheville Transit service, also known as Asheville Redefines Transit (or ART). Transit operation is contracted out to a third-party private operator (most recently RATP Dev/McDonald Transit). ART system consists of 18 fixed transit routes throughout the City of Asheville and in Swannanoa-Black Mountain area. All routes operate Monday through Saturday and nine routes operate on Sundays and holidays (all of ART routes were expected to add Sunday and holidays service in January of 2018). Since the adoption of Asheville Transit Master Plan (2009), the City of Asheville has been working on implementing the recommended changes. In 2012, the system was rebranded as “ART: Asheville Redefines Transit” and updated routes and route names were implemented. Route W4 was added, providing service out New Leicester Highway. Since 2012, additional small changes have occurred. The Crosstown route was discontinued and replaced with W5 and S5 routes which connect to the Downtown Transit Station. In 2015, Sunday service was added on nine routes—those are the same routes which operate

on holidays. In January 2017, route S6 was added to serve Biltmore Park. Also in January 2017, Route 170 has stopped providing service to Warren Wilson College campus due to Warren Wilson budget cuts and a lack of local match. Route 170 continued to provide service to Swannanoa and Black Mountain. The hours of service on weekdays are generally from 5:30 AM-10:30 PM; the routes serving UNCA operates later on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Sunday and holiday service hours are generally 8:00am - 6:00pm. One-way standard fare is currently \$1.00 and paratransit fare is \$2.00.



**Image: ART Vehicle**

Asheville’s Transit Committee serves as the advisory board, which forwards recommendations

to the Asheville Multi-Modal Transportation Committee.

ART routes are configured as a hub-and-spoke system, with service on most routes once an hour, originating and terminating at the transit center. The transit center is located downtown at 49 Coxe Avenue--here the passengers can make transfers between busses and purchase monthly or discounted passes; restrooms and indoor/outdoor seating are also available.

The City of Asheville has started using automated passenger count technology on some of its buses in 2015, which has been resulting in higher passenger count numbers as compared with farebox data. ART system currently does not utilize electronic reloadable fare cards, and it is possible that utilizing paper tickets and transfers was resulting in undercounting unlinked passenger trips in the absence of automated passenger counters. Table 2-1 below illustrates the month-to-month count trends; during 2016, ART system saw an approximately 47.8% increase in ridership numbers collected, as compared with the same period in calendar year

2015. Fiscal year 2017 ridership was slightly down (by about one percent). Routes S4, E1, W1 and W3 are the best-performing routes and routes 170, S2 and N have some of the lower ridership numbers in the system, whether using APC (automated passenger count) or fare box data. August, September and October are typically the highest ridership months.

**Table 2-1: ART Monthly Ridership, FY 2014-2017**

Montly Ridership FY 2014-2017					
Month	FY 14	FY 15	FY16	FY17	Percent Change 2016-2017
July	120,209	125,475	186,280	177,678	-4.62%
Aug.	132,468	132,602	201,833	195,220	-3.28%
Sept.	122,799	128,983	190,418	196,216	3.04%
Oct.	133,418	134,744	189,125	186,475	-1.40%
Nov.	113,671	109,726	176,821	175,403	-0.80%
Dec.	110,701	113,339	172,552	170,908	-0.95%
Jan.	104,437	116,560	170,785	171,666	0.52%
Feb.	104,887	100,953	164,804	170,677	3.56%
Mar.	119,206	125,137	177,046	174,297	-1.55%
April	122,218	123,133	179,413	167,109	-6.86%
May	126,528	123,048	168,215	172,315	2.44%
June	120,586	124,606	178,516	177,811	-0.39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,431,128</b>	<b>1,458,306</b>	<b>2,155,808</b>	<b>2,135,775</b>	<b>-0.93%</b>



NextBus technology with a mobile app in addition to online interface has also been implemented in 2014-2015, and passengers can now text or check the website ([www.nextbus.com](http://www.nextbus.com)) or a phone app to determine the expected arrival time for their bus based on GPS location of the bus.

Paratransit service for Asheville Redefines Transit routes, including route 170, is contracted out through Mountain Mobility, which provides comparable paratransit transportation to all qualifying individuals who are unable to use the bus due to a disability. Paratransit service is now available on Sundays to qualifying individuals who live within a three-quarter mile buffer of Sunday ART routes.

ART provided 1,458,306 unlinked fixed route passenger trips and 29,098 demand-response ADA paratransit trips in fiscal year 2015, for a total of 1,487,404 passenger trips. ART provides 4,703 passenger trips on an average weekday, and 1234 passenger trips on an average Sunday (based on Sunday service numbers for the first two quarters of FY 2015).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.citizen-times.com/story/opinion/contributors/2015/10/23/syndicate>

ART provides transit service within a quarter mile distance of about 73% of all households in the city<sup>1</sup>. It also offers service between Asheville and the Town of Black Mountain, and serves the University of North Carolina-Asheville campus and Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College. Asheville Transit provides connection to three Mountain Mobility Trailblazer (deviated fixed) routes which serve the Enka-Candler area, Black Mountain-Swannanoa area and North Buncombe area including Woodfin and Weaverville. About 30% of all passenger trips provided by ART are transfers made at the downtown transit center. The other 70% of users either terminate their trip at the transit center or are moving along the routes they originally boarded.

Asheville Transit operates 21 30-foot buses and two 35-foot buses, with 17 vehicles typically utilized for AM and PM peak operating hours; 10 of the buses are low-floor vehicles equipped with ramps. The majority of buses are diesel, running on a biodiesel fuel mix, and seven vehicles in the

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fleet are hybrid-diesel buses. 18 buses operate on regular routes, and five buses are kept as spares. Buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts, automated vehicle announcement system, and bicycle racks. Automated Passenger Counter equipment is being rotated between buses.

Asheville Transit is primarily funded through Federal Transit Administration 5307 urban transit funds allocation to Asheville Urbanized Area, local funds and SMAP (state) operating assistance funding, with some additional funding from JARC and 5310 grants and partnerships with local institutions. The operating budget for fiscal year 2015 was approximately \$5.6 million, with \$929,000 collected in revenues to offset the federal, state and local funding required. The City of Asheville invests approximately \$2.3 million in ART Operations on an annual basis, to match the federal and state funding available.

#### MOUNTAIN MOBILITY

Mountain Mobility is Buncombe County's Community Transportation System, established in 1989. Mountain Mobility provides transportation services to clients of human service agencies including the Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical

Transportation (NEMT) Program, departments of local governments, and general public transportation services primarily for persons residing outside of the City of Asheville. ADA Complementary Paratransit services and transportation for seniors (60+) are also provided.

Services have been provided under differing structures including: third-party contracts with private transportation companies (1989-2005), Buncombe County (2005-2011), and recently (FY 2012 – Present) contracted out to Land-of-Sky Regional Council (administration) and private provider, McDonald Transit Associates (operations). Buncombe County Planning and Development provides management oversight and compliance monitoring, financial and grant administration, and planning direction. Mountain Mobility employs over 50 drivers, dispatchers, and other system staff for administration and operation of the system. The Buncombe County Community Transportation Advisory Board (CTAB) serves as an advisory board to Buncombe County staff and the Board of Commissioners and is actively involved in the planning and operation of the system.

Mountain Mobility transportation services are available Monday-Saturday, 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ADA paratransit services are available during Asheville Redefines Transit (ART) service hours (Sunday-Saturday). The system primarily offers demand response transportation service, which is a shared-ride service operating in response to advance reservation calls from passengers or their agents. Shopping (grocery and retail) and multipurpose (e.g., banking, personal business) trips are offered during non-peak hours, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on specific days via community service routes established for each geographical area of the County. Fares for general public passengers are \$3 per trip. Fares for the ADA Complementary Paratransit Program are established by the City of Asheville/ART and were at \$2.00 per trip as of September 2017.

In FY 2015, Mountain Mobility provided a total of 165,382 passenger trips (157,645 weekday and 7,737 Saturday and Sunday trips ). This was a 4% increase in overall passenger trips as compared with FY 2011, when 159,373 passenger trips (153,397 weekday and 5,976 Saturday) were provided. Approximately 700 passenger trips are scheduled on a typical weekday.



**Image: ART Bus and Mountain Mobility Trailblazer Bus at Goodwill on Patton**

Mountain Mobility has three (3) deviated fixed routes which connect to ART. These deviated fixed routes, called "Trailblazer" routes, were established in 2002, 2007 and 2009. Service is available Monday through Friday on the Enka-Candler Trailblazer and North Buncombe Trailblazer. Service is available Monday through Friday on the Black Mountain Trailblazer. Trailblazers serve the Black Mountain and Swannanoa communities in east Buncombe County, the Enka-Candler community in west Buncombe County and the North Buncombe, Woodfin and Weaverville areas. The Black

Mountain Trailblazer and North Buncombe Trailblazer offer connections to ART fixed routes. The Enka-Candler Trailblazer offers connections to ART fixed routes at the Goodwill location on Patton Avenue in West Asheville, which functions as a park-and-ride lot and a transfer station. The Enka-Candler Trailblazer offers connections to Haywood Public Transit at the Exit 37 Truck Stop off Interstate 40.



**Image: Mountain Mobility Van**

In FY 2015, the Mountain Mobility Trailblazers provided 28,472 passenger trips (17% of all

Mountain Mobility passenger trips). These routes are funded through various grant sources, County funding, and fare revenues.

Mountain Mobility operations is housed in a 4,800 square foot leased office space with parking facilities located at 2000 Riverside Drive in Woodfin. Mountain Mobility utilizes various advanced technology systems, including RouteMatch software for its passenger database, reservations, scheduling, dispatching, and billing functions. Mountain Mobility employs tablet technology on vehicles which provides automated data transmission of service information, as well as navigation assistance to operators. Mobile radios are used for operations/dispatch communications. In fall 2015, an IVR automated passenger notification module was added, which allows automated phone call reminders to all passengers the night before their scheduled trip. Mountain Mobility passengers are now able to confirm or cancel their trips more easily, which is expected to result in a decrease in no-shows and more efficient scheduling of Mountain Mobility vehicles.



**Image: Passenger Prepares to Board a Mountain Mobility Lift-Equipped Van**

Mountain Mobility currently operates a 43 vehicle fleet, which includes 35 revenue and 8 back-up vehicles. There are 9 LTVs (Light Transit Vehicles) with a passenger capacity of 17-20 each that are equipped with paratransit lifts and bicycle racks; 27 conversion vans and shuttle vans equipped with paratransit lifts and 7 conversion vans without lifts. Vans have a 7- to 12-passenger capacity. Over half of Mountain Mobility vehicles use a form of alternative fuel technology (either dual propane/gas or dual CNG/gas system).

**Table 2-2. Mountain Mobility Vehicles by Fuel Type**

<b>Mountain Mobility Vehicle Fuel System</b>	<b># Vehicles</b>	<b>% of Fleet</b>
Dual Gas/CNG or CNG	15	35%
Dual Gas/Propane	9	21%
Gas w/LP Prep Package*	6	14%
Gas	13	30%
<b>Total Passenger Service Vehicles</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100%</b>

*\*Prepped for Future Liquid Propane Conversion*

Mountain Mobility capital and operating costs are funded through a variety of federal, state, and local resources, including the FTA Section 5311 program, state ROAP (Rural Operating Assistance Program) funds and the Section 5316 JARC program. The bulk of the operating costs are covered through local contracts and County funding. The FY 2015 operating costs for Mountain Mobility approached \$3.6 million, of

which over 80% came from locally-generated funding sources.

### **Additional Services**

The RIDE Program is a curb-to-curb subsidized transportation program allowing eligible residents to purchase private transportation provider services at a significant discount. The goal of the RIDE Program is to increase independence, freedom of choice, and transportation options. The RIDE Program is offered through Mountain Mobility. Funding for the program is provided through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5317 New Freedom Program. Buncombe County and revenues from the sale of vouchers provide matching funds for the program.

In Buncombe County, elderly persons may qualify for the Buncombe County Council on Aging's Call-A-Ride Volunteer Transportation Program if the person needs special assistance or cannot board a van or bus. Call-A-Ride provides volunteer transportation for older adults who are unable to use public transit and require additional assistance, such as help with navigating a doctor's office, that fixed route and community

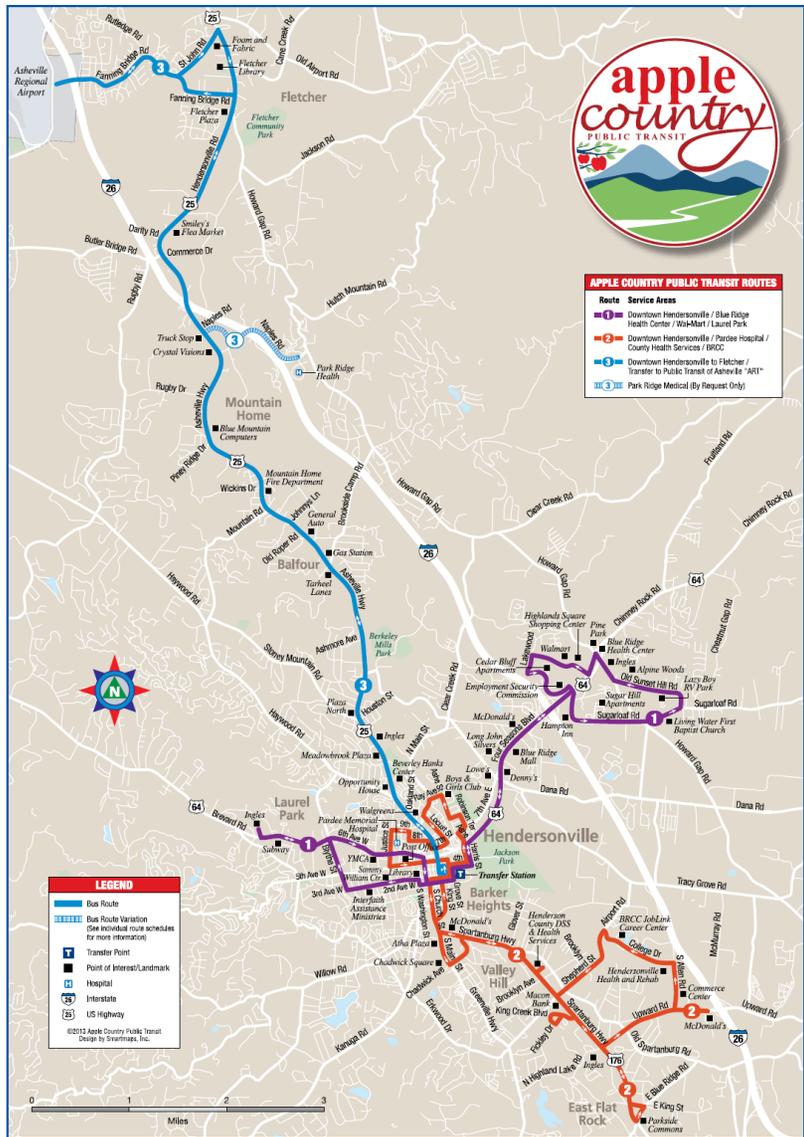
transportation services cannot accommodate. Volunteers drive personal vehicles to take eligible seniors to doctors' appointments, pharmacies and other destinations.

## HENDERSON COUNTY

### APPLE COUNTRY TRANSIT

Henderson County's public transit service (Apple Country Transit) provides both fixed route transit and on-demand community transportation. Henderson County contracts with Western Carolina Community Action, Inc., to operate Apple Country Transit urban transit routes. WCCA receives funding from the state and through additional contracts to provide on-demand community transportation services. WCCA has a Transportation Advisory Board which meets on a quarterly basis to review fixed route and community transportation needs.

Apple Country Transit operates three fixed routes funded with 5307 urban funding and a deviated fixed route funded with rural transit funding. The urban transit routes provide service primarily in Hendersonville, Fletcher, and Laurel Park,



**Map 2-2. Henderson County (Apple Country Transit) Urban Fixed Transit Routes.**

including service to the Blue Ridge Community College and major retail destinations. Route 3, also known as "The Link" provides a link to Asheville Transit at the park-and-ride lot near the Asheville Regional Airport. Route 3 can also deviate, if requested, to Park Ridge Medical Hospital. Apple Country Transit's transfers occur in downtown Hendersonville, where all routes meet at 30 minutes after the hour. Transfers occur at the corner of 4th Avenue and Grove Street. Transfers within the Henderson County public transit service are free (transfers to Asheville Transit are \$1.00). ADA Paratransit services are available for passengers who reside within ¾ mile radius of urban fixed routes, primarily throughout the municipalities of Hendersonville, Fletcher, and Laurel Park; the ADA Paratransit service area includes a small portion of Buncombe County. Persons living within the paratransit service area who are unable to navigate the fixed route system, who require a lift-equipped vehicle and persons whose disability makes it impossible for them to travel to or from the nearest transit stop can request paratransit service.



**Image: Apple Country Transit Lift-Equipped Van**

The three existing urban fixed routes provided a total of 107,331 one-way passenger trips in fiscal year 2014, with an additional 3280 passenger trips provided through ADA/Paratransit dial-a-ride service. This compares with a total of 92,670 one way trips in fiscal year 2011, with an average incremental increase in ridership of a little over 5% per year. The service operates five days per week Monday through Friday (no Saturday service), 6:30 AM-6:30 PM. The fare is 75 cents per one way trip, with paratransit fare set at \$1.50. Seniors 65 and older pay \$0.35 and children under 12 ride for free. Monthly passes

are available for \$15.00. The rural deviated fixed route (Edneyville, or green route) charges a higher fare, of \$1.50 for one-way trip; FY 2015 ridership was at 1177 unlinked passenger trips, which is a decrease from 1,631 unlinked passenger trips in FY 2011.

The fixed route fleet includes six (6) 25-foot passenger buses (capacity of 17-19 passengers) and one passenger minivan (4 passenger capacity) equipped with a lift. Buses are equipped with bicycle racks. Out of 24 drivers that Apple Country Transit employs six full-time positions and two part-time positions are dedicated to fixed route and deviated fixed route transit.

Administrative staff includes four positions: Transportation Director, Operations Manager, Administrative Assistant, and a Transportation Technician. Approximately 30% of their time is dedicated to urban (fixed route) service.

Funding for the fixed route transit portion of Apple Country Transit comes from Federal Transit Administration 5307 fund allocation for Asheville Urbanized Area, state and local funding. Fixed route transit is not eligible for NCDOT Public Transportation Division funding for rural operating assistance (ROAP).

Apple Country Transit community transportation (demand response transportation) service operates Monday through Friday with two demand response transit vans. The general public can access those vans by requesting a seat on an existing community route if the passenger lives within 1.5 miles of the route. Seniors 60 plus and disabled residents of Henderson County can request door-to-door transportation at no charge, with donations requested. Daily trips for older adults (60+) are available to dozens of destinations for retail and grocery shopping. Several routes are currently running daily to transport interested older adults (60+) to the Sammy Williams Senior Center for lunch and entertainment. Next day and same day medical trips are provided to and from doctors' offices, clinics and hospitals five days per week. Work First clients are also eligible for transportation for employment, training and education purposes. 34,334 unlinked passenger trips were provided through the rural community transportation service model in FY 2015 (plus an additional 1177 unlinked passenger trips on the deviated fixed route), of which approximately 20,000 trips were contracted through the Council on Aging and 2960 trips were contracted through Vocational Services. Relatively few trips are provided under Medicaid

transportation funding. This is a decrease from 44,049 demand response trips provided during fiscal year 2011; the decreases were likely due to cuts in Rural Operating Assistance (ROAP) funding.

Apple Country Transit community transportation service utilizes 20 vehicles, of which 10 are wheelchair accessible. Table 2-3 below illustrates the vehicle types present in the fleet.

**Table 2-3: Apple Country Transit Community Transportation Fleet**

YEAR	VEHICLE TYPE	SEATING CAPACITY (All / Wheelchair)	ODOMETER READING (June 2014)	YEAR OF PLANNED REPLACEMENT
2000	Lift Van	11/2	121,700	2015
2009	Conversion Van	12	127,622	2017
2009	Conversion Van	12	118,851	2017
2009	Conversion Van	10	132,551	2015
2009	Lift Van	8/2	121,392	2017
2010	Lift Van	8/2	74,582	2018
2010	Conversion Van	10	78,154	2018
2010	Conversion Van	10	97,259	2018
2010	Minivan	6	58,983	2018
2011	Lift Van	8/2	56,159	2018
2011	Van	10	67,492	2018
2014	Van	10	14,424	2018
2014	Lift Van	8/2	13,745	2018

There are four administrative staff and 17 drivers allocated to Apple Country Transit community transportation. Four additional drivers are assigned to urban fixed route operations.

Administrative staff includes four positions: Transportation Director, Operations Manager, Administrative Assistant, and a Transportation Technician. Approximately 70% of their time is dedicated to rural (on-demand / community) transportation. Vehicle maintenance is contracted out to a local provider.

As of July 2017, Apple Country Transit has been utilizing HBSS software paired with tablets on vehicles for trip scheduling and tracking.

Apple Country Transit on-demand transportation operations are financed through a combination of state assistance including Rural Operating Assistance-- ROAP funds (53% of on-demand transportation operating costs in FY 2015), 5311 federal rural transit funding (approximately 24% of operating funding in FY 2015), local government assistance and local contracts.

### **Other Services**

Henderson County DSS has an eight-passenger van that is sometimes used for client

transportation; it appears to not be used very frequently since Apple Country Transit is the preferred option to transport DSS clients.

Similarly to Volunteer Call-A-Ride Program in Buncombe County, there is a volunteer driver service called FISH (Fellowship in Service) in Henderson County. FISH provides transportation to medical appointments for anybody unable to drive when their family and friends are not able to assist. FISH provides approximately 3,000 trips per year and uses senior volunteers. FISH generally provides daytime transportation and is not available in the evenings.

Carolina Taxi, a local taxi company in Henderson County is approved to provide Medicaid transportation services.

Additional transportation services are available through the following private companies:

- A CAB-taxi service
- Air Trek Inc.-can accommodate wheelchairs
- All Seasons Errand Service
- Apple Cab-taxi service
- Blue Bird-taxi service
- Carolina Taxi and Industrial Transportation-taxi service

- Carolyn’s Errands and Sitting Service
- Checker Cab Company-taxi service
- David’s Transportation-based out of Asheville but can serve Henderson County; also provides paratransit trips
- Mountain Senior Services
- Night and Day Taxi and Transportation Services-taxi service
- Quality Transportation-can provide paratransit trips
- Wheel Chair Traxi-can accommodate wheelchairs

Jewish Family Services has recently started an Elder Club in Hendersonville which meets on Wednesdays mid-day and provides meals and social and educational activities; JFS contracts with Apple Country Transit to provide transportation for seniors to activities at the new Elder Club.

## HAYWOOD COUNTY

### HAYWOOD PUBLIC TRANSIT

Haywood Public Transit is the community transportation service for Haywood County. It was established in 1990 through the consolidation of several county agencies’ client transportation

systems. The system is operated and administered by Mountain Projects, Inc.: a community based non-profit organization founded in 1965 as a Community Action Agency. Mountain Projects has a Board of Directors with 18 members representing three distinct groups: representatives of low income target area communities, representatives from other organizations that provide services to the community, and elected officials representing Haywood and Jackson Counties and the towns and municipalities in both counties. The Transportation Advisory Committee meets four times a year to discuss Haywood Public Transit issues.

Haywood Public Transit provides transportation for human service agencies, the elderly, people with disabilities, and the general public of Haywood County. Any member of the general public is eligible to call and schedule a ride for the next day. 24-hour notice is required (preferably by 3 PM the previous day.)

Haywood Public Transit offers demand response/coordinated transit service between 6:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except holidays. While most requests require a

24-hour notice, limited demand response service within the Haywood County area is available between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. with at least two hours notice. Limited service is available to Asheville and Sylva. Haywood Public Transit coordinates with Jackson County Transit for Jackson County trips. Haywood Public Transit takes some passengers directly to their destinations in Asheville. Haywood Public Transit also provides connections to and from the Mountain Mobility Enka-Candler Trailblazer Route at the Travel America Center at I-40 Exit 37 multiple times per day; once a passenger transfers to the Enka Candler Trailblazer, they can connect to the ART (Asheville Redefines Transit) system at the Goodwill Industries stop on Smoky Park Highway. Enka Candler Trailblazer transfer requires \$0.50 to ride, and an additional \$1.00 fare is required to ride the ART system. General public including young adults over the age of 13 are eligible to schedule a trip. The standard fare is \$2.00 each way, and no monthly passes are available. Student fare from Haywood Community College to connect to Enka Candler Trailblazer is \$1.00 each way.

Haywood Public Transit provided 39,992 passenger trips in FY 2015, which is a decrease

from 58,223 passenger trips in FY 2011.

Approximately 56% of the passenger trips were provided under agency contracts, including 5403 Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation trips.

Haywood Public Transit/Mountain Projects annual operating and administrative budget is around \$800,000. 44% of the annual revenues utilized for operating and administrative expenses come from local sources-primarily through local agency contracts, which represent a third of overall annual revenue. Federal funding including 5311 (Rural Transit) and 5310 Elderly and Disabled grants represent 36% of overall operating and



**Image: Haywood Public Transit Vehicles at the Transit Facility, with a Propane Charging Station in the Foreground**

administrative funding. State funding accounts for the remaining 20% of annual revenues. Haywood Public Transit uses HBSS software for scheduling and tracking passenger trips, paired with tablets on vehicles.

Haywood Public Transit staff include 21 drivers and three administrative staff positions. Haywood Public Transit has 19 vehicles including eight LTV vehicles with lift equipment and two wheelchair stations each; 6 passenger conversion vans with lift equipment and wheelchair stations, 3 passenger crossover vans without lift equipment, one 7-passenger minivan and one SUV/crossover vehicle.

Haywood Public Transit has moved into a new dedicated facility at 50 Armory Drive in Clyde in January of 2013. This location is near the Haywood Community College campus. The new transit facility features adequate secure parking for transit vehicles, a liquid propane charging station, additional parking for employees and visitors, and space for Transportation Advisory Board meetings inside the 2,300 square feet building.

## MADISON COUNTY

### MADISON COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Madison County Transportation Authority (MCTA) is the coordinated public transportation service for Madison County. MCTA provides transportation services throughout the county, including more populated areas as well as the remote areas of the County. A round trip from the outer edges of the county can require a lot of miles—as much as 140 miles for a round trip.

Madison County Transportation Authority is a demand response transportation service. It provides services for general and medical trips not only within Madison County but to the surrounding counties, including Haywood, Yancey, Buncombe and the towns of Newport and Greenville, Tennessee. There are eight nutrition sites in Madison County: Marshall, Mars Hill, Beech Glen, Upper Laurel, Center Community Center, Hot Springs, Spring Creek and Shelton Laurel, and lunch is provided on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays to adults 60 years of age and older at these sites. MCTA provides transportation to all of the nutrition sites within Madison County. Seniors, individuals with disabilities and general public may utilize MCTA

transportation services with an advanced reservation. A 24-hour advance reservation is required for inside the county trips, and a two-day (or more) advance notice is required for out-of-county trips. MCTA currently provides transportation services from 6:00 am until 4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday. The last pick-up time for the day is flexible to accommodate the ending times of the passengers' medical appointments. During fiscal year 2015, 23,920 passenger trips were provided by MCTA, of which approximately 44% were trips provided under an agency contract; approximately a third of agency contract trips are for Non-Emergency Medicaid trips.

Madison County Transportation Authority has a Transportation Advisory Board that consists of representatives of elected county officials, local agencies, along with community and business representatives. The Madison County Transportation Facility at 387 Long Branch Road in Marshall was completed and occupied in August, 2007.

Regular fares for non-program qualified riders are \$5.00 for in-county round trip, \$6.00 for a round trip to Weaverville and \$12.00 for a round trip to Asheville. A personal care assistant may ride with

a passenger at no charge. Medicaid transportation clients and other passengers covered under an existing agency contract with MCTA do not have to pay a fare.



**Image: MCTA Transit Vehicles (2013)**

The MCTA transit vehicle fleet consists of 11 vehicles:

- 8 Ford passenger vans with lifts
- 1 Ford standard van, no lift (14 passenger)
- 2 Ford E-350 conversion vans, no lift

MCTA staff include two part-time administrative positions and seven part-time drivers. In Fiscal Year 2015, the total operating and administration

budget was \$168,513. Approximately 41 percent of revenue funds used to cover administrative and operations expenses for the MCTA in FY 2015 came from federal funds, and 58 percent of revenue came from local sources, including contract revenue.

### **Additional Services**

With the assistance of a 5310 Transportation grant for rural counties through NC Department of Transportation, the Land of Sky Senior Companion Program is involving volunteers ages 55+ to provide transportation services to senior individuals in Madison and Transylvania Counties. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2016, volunteers are providing transportation for senior individuals to medical appointments, food shopping, banking and other personal errands.

## TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY

### TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION

Transylvania County Transportation (TRANSPORT) is the coordinated public transportation service in Transylvania County. TRANSPORT provides transportation services across the county, including to destinations in Brevard and Rosman. TRANSPORT has a Transportation Advisory Board

consisting primarily of representatives of the County and other affected agencies. The Advisory Board also includes community and business representatives.

Transylvania County Transportation provides subscription and demand-response transportation services in Transylvania County and surrounding areas. Transportation service hours are Monday through Friday, 6 AM until 6 PM. Under the senior grant category, Transylvania County Transportation provides services for seniors 60 and older to the two Nutrition sites (the Quebec Community Center and Silvermont), as well as for medical, shopping and errand purposes. For passengers with disabilities, transportation from home to Transylvania Vocational Services (TVS) is available on a daily basis, as well as for other purposes. Lift-equipped vehicles are utilized to help passengers who are mobility challenged. The general public may schedule a trip for shopping, errands, employment and medical purpose, and pay a \$1.00 fare per person each way to ride. All requests for transportation must be made prior to 10:00 am at least one (1) workday in advance.

In Fiscal Year 2015, Transylvania County Transportation provided 25,122 passenger trips.

No Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation trips or other agency contract trips were provided. An additional 2287 trips were provided through volunteer and taxi services, for a combined total of 27,409 trips.

Transylvania County Transportation annual administrative and operating budget in Fiscal Year 2015 was at approximately \$428,000. 32% of funding for administrative and operating expenses comes from federal sources, 30.7% came from state funding and 37% of annual revenues for operating and administrative expenses came from local sources, which did not include any contract revenues.

Transylvania County Transportation staff include 3 administrative employees and 8 operating staff members. Transylvania County Transportation currently provides transportation services utilizing a fleet of seven vehicles, of which five are in active service and two serve as back-up. The fleet includes both passenger vans with lifts (which can accommodate 9-12 passengers each) and 14-passenger conversion vans without lifts.



**Image: Transylvania County Transit Van, Courtesy of WLOS**

### **Additional Services**

With the assistance of a 5310 Transportation grant for rural counties through NC Department of Transportation, the Land of Sky Senior Companion Program is involving volunteers ages 55+ to provide transportation services to senior individuals in Madison and Transylvania Counties. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2016, volunteers are providing transportation for senior individuals to medical appointments, food shopping, banking and other personal errands.