Chapter 2

Existing Services

BACKGROUND

The Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority (WPRTA), doing business as Greenway Public Transportation, was formed in 2007 and operationally consolidated in 2008. WPRTA is a four-county, urban-rural transit authority with seven jurisdictional members, including the Counties of Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba, and the Cities of Hickory, Newton, and Conover. WPRTA was formed after several years of discussion and consensus-building in the region, including a regional transportation feasibility study and a regional transportation implementation plan. The Authority is organized under Chapter 160A, Article 25 of the North Carolina General Statutes.

This chapter provides a full description and analysis of WPRTA and provides a brief inventory of the other transit providers in the region. The information contained in this chapter was used as the base data for the development of the five-year plan.

ADVISORY AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

WPRTA is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors and is guided by a Transportation Advisory Board, which is an 18-member group comprised of representatives from each of the four counties.

WPRTA Board

The WPRTA Board is the legal governing body of the Authority and provides policy and legislative direction for the Authority. It is comprised primarily of the City and County Managers of the seven jurisdictional members, with one jurisdiction (Hickory) appointing its Assistant City Manager to the Board rather than the Manager.

The officers of the Authority include a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and a Secretary. The Chairman is currently the Alexander County Manager. The Executive Director of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments serves as an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors.

The Rules of Procedure indicate that the governing body of each member jurisdiction appoints a Board Member. The term of service is three years, with the initial WPRTA Board terms staggered so as not to have a full Board turnover in any particular year.

Meeting Schedule

WPRTA Board meetings are held at least quarterly. The Executive Committee also meets at least quarterly, in the month prior to the quarterly meeting of the full Authority.

Transportation Advisory Board (TAB)

The TAB is comprised of representatives from each of the four counties, including a mix of human service professionals, public citizens (including transit users), and transportation providers (private and human service/public). Currently the TAB represents the needs of the general public, people with disabilities, elderly people, people with low incomes, minorities, and people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). There are 18 members on the TAB.

TAB members are appointed by the WPRTA Board of Directors and serve two-year terms. Appointees may represent more than one stakeholder category to reflect the demographic composition of the WPRTA service area. A staff person from WPRTA performs the duties of Secretary for the TAB. Meetings of the TAB are held at least four times a year.

The following are the purposes of the TAB, as listed in the TAB By-Laws:

1. To provide community input into the planning, management and operation of WPRTA.

2. To assist in the coordination and development of transportation services that will increase mobility options and choices for citizens and to promote the development of the Community Transportation Program (CTP) in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties.

3. To assist and advise WPRTA in achieving its goals and purposes.

4. To work with agencies, organizations, units of local government, and other TABs in the region to maintain a coordinated and cost-effective approach to the delivery of transportation services in the region.

5. To make funding and policy recommendations related to the delivery of community transportation program services.

6. To provide the public with information regarding transportation services and resources available to address the transportation needs of citizens in the region.

7. To provide a structure for an appeals process for individuals who have been denied paratransit eligibility or their transportation services have been suspended.

8. To perform other functions and responsibilities as may be requested by the WPRTA Board of Directors.

New TAB members are provided with a history of WPRTA and receive the TAB By-Laws. The composition of the TAB is in keeping with the guidelines put forth by North Carolina Department of Transportation-Public Transit Division (NCDOT-PTD).

ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS

As a new regional transit authority, the WPRTA staff, Board, and TAB have been developing the identity and organizational focus for the Authority over the past 24 months. This section of the report describes the mission, vision, key initiatives, and performance measures for WPRTA and also presents the organizational structure and staffing.

Mission

Greenway Public Transportation's mission is to enhance the quality of life in the region by delivering safe, convenient and more environmentally efficient transportation solutions.

Vision

"Transit as an attractive, and competitive alternative to the automobile"[1]

[1] Greenway website.

Key Initiatives for FY 2011

WPRTA has planned for a number of initiatives and projects that will improve the public transportation infrastructure, workplace, and service in the region. These are listed below.[2]

1. Complete a van pool program feasibility study by February 2011. (Note: This initiative will be expanded to include the full range of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) activity based on this CTSP).

2. Purchase S&W property within 90 days of receiving environmental clearance.

3. Issue a Request for Proposal for the design and upfit of the Warlong building to be used for administrative offices.

4. Begin implementation of the transition to bring van fleet maintenance in-house:
   - Implement new fleet maintenance tracking and management software by June 2011
   - Secure an interim maintenance site by May 2011
   - Secure a new site in Morganton by September 2010

5. Implement a bus system "trip planner" feature on the Greenway web page by June 2011.

6. Implement a corporate sponsored employee wellness program (Health TRACK) by January 2011.

7. Implement a total of at least 5 "flex routes" by June 2011.

8. Conduct an Employee of the Year Award Ceremony by September 2010.

9. Complete the fleet rebranding project by December 2010.

10. Complete biodiesel fuel conversion on all buses by December 2010.

Performance Measures

WPRTA has also developed some key indicators for FY 2011. These indicators are presented in Table 2-1.[3]

[2] WPRTA Board packet, February, 2010.

Table 2-1: Key Indicators for FY 2011

Indicator	Target
Total Operating Revenue per Month - Farebox - Contract Revenue	 $19,580 $52,500
Total Customer Complaints Per Month	Less than 12
Reportable Accidents per 100,000 Vehicle Service Miles	Less than 1
Miles between Mechanical Failure	More than 10,000 miles
Workers Compensation Claims per Month	Less than 1
Cost per Vehicle Revenue Hour	$53.94
Cost per Passenger Trip	$15.47
Passengers Per Vehicle Revenue Hour	3.6
Farebox Recovery Ratio (fares and contracts as a percentage of total operating cost)	18.1%
On-Time Performance	90%

Organizational Structure and Staffing

WPRTA is structured as an independent transit authority. WPRTA employees manage and operate public transportation services in the region. The Executive Director serves as the liaison between the Board, the community, and staff and aligns Authority activities with the mission and goals of the agency. The Executive Director oversees the following departments and managers:

- **Finance Department**. Responsible for coordinating the accounting, budgeting, procurement, and the personnel functions, including payroll and benefits.

- **Operations Department.** Responsible for the day to day operation of the van and bus service, including: bus stop and passenger shelter programs, driver supervision, and customer relations.

- **Planning and Grants Management Department.** Oversees the Authority's grant and service development process, including: service and fare changes, facility planning, coordination with advisory boards, reviewing service performance, and applying for and administering State and federal grants.

[3] WPRTA Board Packets, February, 2010 and July, 2010.

- **Fleet and Facility Maintenance Manager.** Responsible for fleet and facility maintenance, including coordinating with the Authority's primary and secondary maintenance contractors.

- **Marketing and Communications Manager**. Responsible for managing public/media relations, advertising, developing public and private partnerships, and promoting the authority and its services.

As the Authority has developed over the past 24 months, there have been a few adjustments to the roles and responsibilities of the management and supervisory team. As the Authority matures it is likely that there may be additional adjustments as the team finds the best "fit" for each staff member. The current WPRTA organizational chart is provided in Figure 2-1.

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

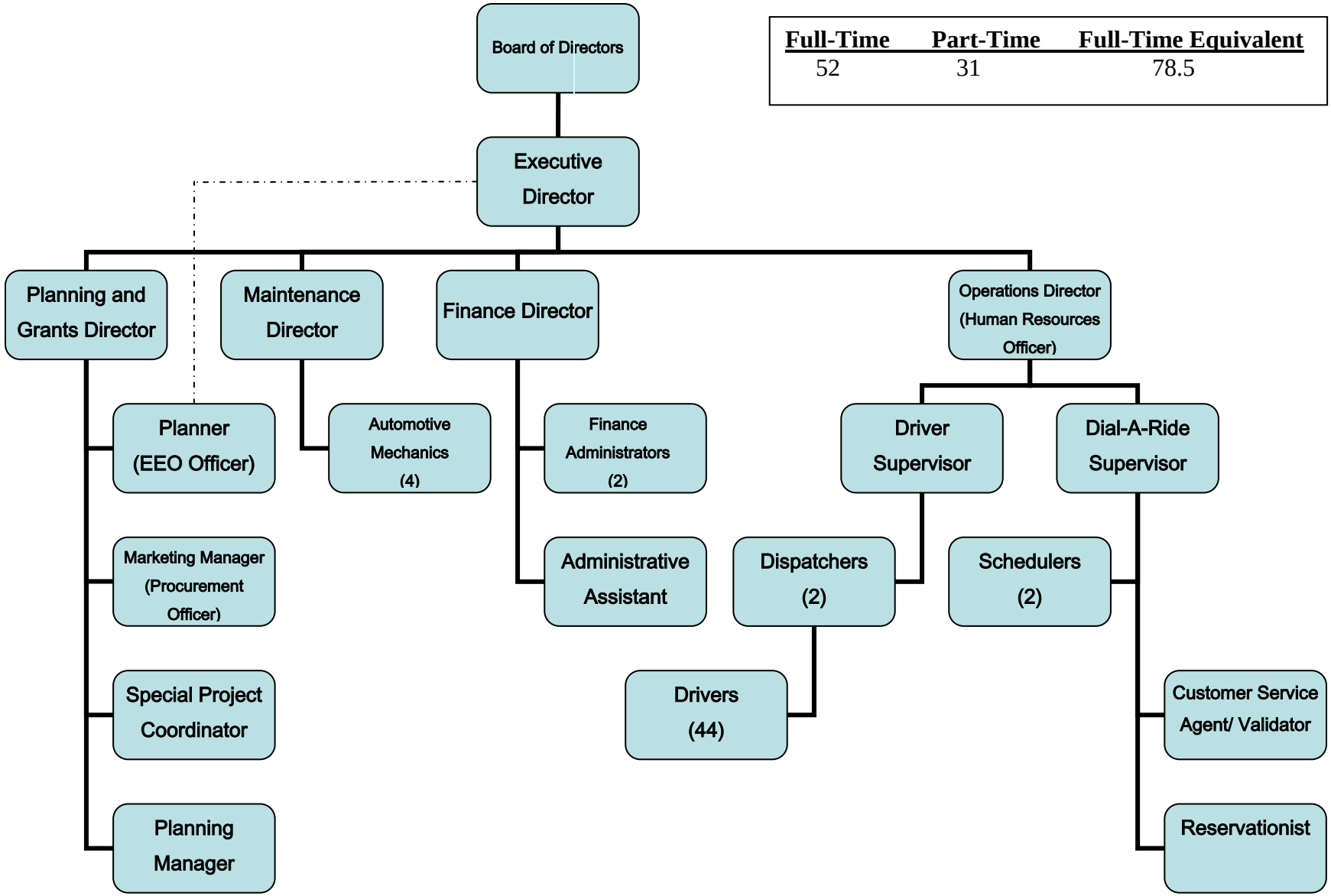
WPRTA provides demand-response and subscription transportation services in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties. WPRTA also operates fixed-route transit services in the Cities of Hickory, Newton, and Conover. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit is provided in conjunction with the fixed routes. This section provides the service details for each of the services provided by WPRTA, organized by mode and area.

Maintenance for most of the fleet is provided by Penske, under a contractual arrangement. The Alexander County-based vans are maintained by Alexander County via an agreement. The Penske facility is located in the same industrial area as the WPRTA primary facility, at 1215 Fourth Street, SW, in Conover. As noted in the organizational section of this chapter, WPRTA is planning to bring the maintenance function in house, both to save money and to have more control over the program. WPRTA is looking to lease a facility for this function (short-term), purchase the equipment needed, and hire mechanics. WPRTA already has a Maintenance Director who currently oversees the maintenance contractors.

Dial-A-Ride/Demand-Response/Subscription Services

WPRTA offers three different types of dial-a-ride services:

- **Complementary ADA paratransit service**, which provides origin to destination service for people with disabilities for trips that are within ¾ mile of the fixed routes. This service operates weekdays from 5:45 a.m. to 6:50 p.m. and on Saturdays from 8:45 a.m. to 4:50 p.m. ADA paratransit customers are



Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time Equivalent
52	31	78.5

Figure 2-1: WPRTA Organizational Chart (Effective July 1, 2010)

required to be pre-certified as having a disability that prevents them from using the fixed-route buses. Riders may call to schedule their trips up until 5:00 p.m. the day before the requested trip. Same day service is provided on a space available basis.

- **Demand-Response** service, which provides curb to curb service for the general public anywhere within Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties, based on seat and route availability. The general public demand-response service operates weekdays from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Riders may call to schedule their trips up until 1:00 p.m. the day before the requested trip, though WPRTA recommends that riders call three days ahead if possible. Same day service is provided on a space-available basis.

- **Contractual/Subscription** service, providing service for specific local agencies, based on their prescribed guidelines, routes, and policies.

Riders of these three different types of dial-a-ride services are co-mingled, as is feasible, in order to provide efficient and effective community transportation service.

Typical Daily Routes

WPRTA has established demand-response routes that operate throughout the region. While they fluctuate depending upon the demand for the day, between 58 and 61 runs (a run is either a morning or afternoon manifest of trips) are operated each weekday by 30-31 drivers.

In order to gain a better understanding of how the demand-response network operates, KFH Group analyzed a week's worth of driver manifests, reviewed ITRE's Vehicle Utilization Analysis, and the WPRTA Performance Planning Analysis. The information gathered from the manifests is presented below, along with the data gathered and analyzed by ITRE (from August, 2009).

The sample week chosen was October 5-9, 2009. The data and analysis is organized by the WPRTA hub.

Alexander County Hub. Between five and seven of the vehicles stationed in Alexander County are used on a daily basis. For the sample week there were 340 passenger trips provided out of the Alexander County hub, with Wednesday having the highest ridership (80 passenger trips).

The ITRE analysis (August 2009) showed a similar pattern of operation, with between five and six vehicles used and 356 passenger trips provided. Wednesday also had the highest ridership during the August week (111 passenger trips).

Typical vehicle runs originating in Alexander County are as follows:

- Alexander In-Town (Taylorsville area)
- Friendship Nutrition Site
- Stony Point Nutrition Site
- Western Alexander County
- Eastern Alexander County
- Hickory
- Statesville (typically Tuesdays and Thursdays)

Other out–of-county trips are also made regularly to Winston-Salem and to Chapel Hill.

The following programs and services are supported on a regular basis by the Alexander County-based WPRTA services:

- Alexander Opportunities
- Alexander County Senior Center
- Family Care Center (Taylorsville)
- Adult Day Care
- Adult Life Services (Hickory)
- Lifeskills (Hickory)
- Stony Point Nutrition Site (New Salem Presbyterian Church)
- Friendship Nutrition Site (Taylorsville)
- FMC Dialysis (Tate Boulevard, Hickory, and Conover)

Cancellations and No Shows

For the week analyzed by KFH Group, there were 54 cancellations and 11 no shows for the Alexander-based runs, for a combined cancellation/no-show rate of 19.1%. This compares to a WPRTA overall cancellation/no show rate of 26% cited in ITRE's WPRTA Performance Planning Analysis.

Burke County Hub. In Burke County, a typical service day requires between eight and nine vehicles. For the week of October 5-9, 2009, there were 535 passenger trips that originated from the Burke County hub, with Thursday recording the highest ridership (131 passenger trips).

The ITRE analysis from August showed a similar pattern of operation, with between eight and nine vehicles operating each day, with a total weekly ridership of 525 passenger trips. For the August week, Wednesday was the highest ridership day (116 passenger trips).

Typical runs originating from the Burke County hub are as follows:

- Eastern Burke County
- Burke- Morganton area
- Hickory
- Vocational Rehabilitation- Morganton
- Burke Dialysis (Morganton)
- Burke Adult Day Care
- Western Burke County
- VA- Asheville
- Nutrition

The following programs and services are supported on a regular basis by the Burke County-based WPRTA services:

- Adult Day Care – Morganton
- Burke Literacy Council, located at Grace Episcopal Church
- Burke County Senior Center
- FMC Dialysis – Morganton
- McLeod Center – Hickory
- Valdese Hospital – Connelly Springs
- Vocational Rehabilitation – Morganton
- Western Piedmont Community College – Morganton
- VA Hospital – Asheville

Cancellations and No Shows

For the week analyzed by KFH Group, there were 184 cancellations and 36 no shows for the Burke County-based runs, for a combined cancellation/no-show rate of 41%. This is quite a bit higher than the WPRTA overall cancellation/no show rate of 26% cited in ITRE's WPRTA Performance Planning Analysis. It should be noted that for one of the October days of analysis, the Vocational Rehabilitation program was closed, without having notified WPRTA, which resulted in a higher than normal cancellation rate. The ITRE data concerning cancellations showed that a number of the Burke County-based programs had high cancellation/no-show rates, including the Burke Literacy Council, the Burke RGP, and the Burke Work First.

Caldwell County Hub. Between nine and eleven of the vehicles stationed in Caldwell County are used on a daily basis. For the sample week there were 438 passenger trips provided out of the Caldwell County hub, with Monday having the highest ridership (106 passenger trips).

The ITRE analysis (August 2009) showed a slightly different pattern of operation, with between six and seven vehicles used and 411 passenger trips provided. The August data showed that Wednesday had the highest ridership (94), but that Monday, Wednesday, and Friday were very similar in ridership (92, 94, and 90, respectively).

Typical vehicle runs originating in Caldwell County are as follows:

- General Caldwell County (between two and three runs, both morning and afternoon)
- Caldwell County Community College and Technical Institute
- McLeod Center, Hickory
- Caldwell County Nutrition
- VA Hospital – Asheville

The following programs and services are supported on a regular basis by the Caldwell County-based WPRTA services:

- Caldwell County Community College and Technical Institute
- Dialysis Center – Lenoir
- Family Resources Center
- Kings Creek Nutrition Site
- McLeod Center – Hickory
- MLK Nutrition Site
- Mulberry Recreation Center
- New River Behavioral Health Center – Lenoir
- VA Hospital – Asheville
- Westpoint Medical – Lenoir
- Whitnel School – Lenior

Cancellations and No-Shows

For the week analyzed by KFH Group, there were 113 cancellations and 27 no-shows for the Caldwell County-based runs, for a combined cancellation/no-show rate of 32%. This is higher than the overall WPRTA cancellation/no-show rate of 26%. The ITRE Performance Planning Analysis showed that the Family Resource Center contract had a high cancellation rate (46%), as did the nutrition and general public programs (35%).

Catawba County Hub. The data for the Catawba County hub include both the Catawba County community transportation program and the ADA paratransit program that supports the fixed routes. Between 10 and 12 of the vehicles stationed in Catawba County are used on a daily basis. For the sample week there were 935 passenger trips

provided out of the Catawba County garage, with Friday having the highest ridership (239 passenger trips -- there was a special trip associated with the senior program on that day).

The ITRE analysis (August 2009) showed higher ridership (1,171 passenger trips provided). This week may have been an anomaly, as the total annual ridership for the Catawba-based van services in FY 2009 was 49,187, which translates to 946 passenger trips per week.

Typical vehicle runs originating in Catawba County are as follows:

- Two am and two pm ADA paratransit runs
- East Hickory Nutrition
- West Hickory Nutrition
- Catawba Nutrition
- Newton Nutrition
- Medical/DSS runs

The following programs and services are supported on a regular basis by the Catawba County-based WPRTA services:

- Catawba Nutrition Site
- Catawba Valley Community College
- East Hickory Nutrition Site
- FMC Dialysis
- Graystone Eyes
- Lifeskills
- Maiden Nutrition Site
- Newton Nutrition Site
- VIP Mini-Center (Mays Chapel Church)
- West Hickory Nutrition Site

Cancellations and No-Shows

For the week analyzed by KFH Group, there were 122 cancellations and 24 no-shows for the Catawba County-based runs, for a combined cancellation/no-show rate of 15.6%, which is the lowest of the four WPRTA van hubs. The ITRE data indicated that the highest cancellation rate among the Catawba-based services was for the Nutrition program (27%).

Operating Statistics

The basic operating statistics for the van operations for FY 2009 are provided in Table 2-2. These data were provided by the Executive Director and the Finance Manager.

Table 2-2: FY 2009 Operations Data-Van Operations

Alexander County	Actual
Boardings	19,529
Service Hours	10,178
Service Miles	191,601
Boardings/Vehicle Service Hour	1.92
Burke County	
Boardings	34,274
Service Hours	18,625
Service Miles	305,543
Boardings/Vehicle Service Hour	1.84
Caldwell County	
Boardings	26,612
Service Hours	16,512
Service Miles	257,090
Boardings/Vehicle Service Hour	1.61
Catawba County	
Boardings	49,187
Service Hours	21,366
Service Miles	333,124
Boardings/Vehicle Service Hour	2.30
Total Van Operations	
Boardings	129,602
Service Hours	66,790
Service Miles	1,087,289
Boardings/Vehicle Service Hour	1.94
Miles Per Hour	16.3
Total Administrative and Operating Expenses (Van Operations, including ADA)	$ 2,943,182
Cost per Service Hour	$ 44.07
Cost per Passenger Trip	$ 22.71
Cost per Service Mile	$ 2.71

Peer Comparison

In order to provide a context for WPRTA's operating data, KFH Group gathered data from NCDOT concerning other regional demand-response transportation providers in the State. While each system is unique, with particular factors that drive their statistics, it is helpful to see how WPRTA compares with other regional programs. Table 2-3 provides these data. As these data indicate, the WPRTA van service program is larger than the mean, in terms of service hours and number of vehicles. WPRTA's service miles are lower than the mean, reflecting that there is an urbanized area in the region, which typically requires fewer miles of travel. The productivity in terms of trips per hour is lower than the mean and the cost per trip is higher.

The ITRE study also collected data concerning wheelchair riders and these data showed that WPRTA carried 50% more wheelchair riders than its peers. The relatively high percentage of wheelchair trips reduces productivity (boarding time), reduces the vehicle capacity, and requires a more accessible fleet.

Analysis of the Service Characteristics of the Demand-Response Program

From all of the data compiled concerning the demand-response component of WPRTA's operations, there are a few areas that should be addressed to achieve higher productivity and lower per trip expenses. These are as follows:

- Reducing the cancellation/no-show rate. Both in the recent analysis of the driver manifests and in the ITRE analysis of driver manifests, the cancellation/no-show rate remains higher than is optimum. Cancellations and no-shows can have a dramatic result in productivity, as these occurrences result in service hours without corresponding trips. A proposed goal for the program is to reduce the cancellation/no-show rate to the lowest among the current hubs, which is 15.6%. In discussing the cancellation/no-show rate, WPRTA staff indicated that this rate does not have as large an impact on productivity as one would expect, as the program trips run the same path nearly every day. A certain level of late cancellations/no shows is inherent to providing subscription service for programs that serve the elderly and people with disabilities whose health status may change the morning of the trip when it is too late to change the manifest.

- Reducing the deadhead miles. The ITRE analysis showed that some of the WPRTA runs had greater than 40% deadhead. As with cancellations/no-shows, operating vans without riders adds to the costs without producing trips.

Table 2-3: Regional Demand-Response Peer System Analysis

System	Number of Vehicles	Percent Lift Vehicles	FY 2009 Ridership	Total Service Hours	Total Service Miles	Trips Per Service Hour	Trips Per Service Mile	Cost Per Trip	MPH
Albemarle Regional Health Services	33	85%	86,631	42,235	838,207	2.05	0.10	$ 17.33	19.8
Choanoke Public Transportation Authority	37	76%	202,673	53,316	1,301,025	3.80	0.16	$ 9.35	24.4
Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority	22	95%	93,397	41,072	688,452	2.27	0.14	$ 14.61	16.8
Kerr Area Transportation Authority	45	73%	161,519	83,214	1,536,790	1.94	0.11	$ 12.10	18.5
Randolph County Senior Adults Association	17	53%	76,358	29,425	665,135	2.60	0.11	$ 15.09	22.6
Tar River Transit	34	79%	89,962	48,817	1,112,829	1.84	0.08	$ 16.65	22.8
WPRTA- Van Services	**52**	**55%**	**129,602**	**66,790**	**1,087,289**	**1.94**	**0.12**	**$ 22.71**	16.3
Yadkin Valley Economic Development District, Inc.	69	36%	258,296	95,190	1,709,307	2.71	0.15	$ 10.41	18.0
Mean	**38.6**	**69%**	**137,305**	**57,507**	**1,117,379**	**2.39**	**0.123**	**$ 14.78**	**19.4**

Source: NCDOT and WPRTA.

- Increasing the number of wheelchair-accessible vehicles so that the fleet is more flexible and responsive to the rider base.

- Using slightly larger vehicles that can accommodate more than one wheelchair.

- Examining ways to fully utilize the existing trip patterns – for example vehicles from Alexander, Burke, and Caldwell travel to Hickory on a daily basis. These runs could be more fully advertised to the public. WPRTA is in the process of purchasing some larger vehicles for the county-based runs to explore this type of idea.

WPRTA is currently working to improve the efficiency of the demand-response services and maximize the resources available by developing deviated fixed routes, where feasible, that will be based on current subscription demand. The first set of these routes are being developed around the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG)-funded trips in Catawba County, which will become the core or frame for the deviated fixed routes. The core/frame will then be expanded to provide for additional service for general public passengers

Fixed-Route Transit Services

WPRTA operates fixed-route public transit services in Conover, Hickory, and Newton. The fixed-route network is based on the Piedmont Wagon Transit System, previously operated by the City of Hickory. The following routes are provided:

- ***Hickory-Conover-Newton*** -- This route is the longest one in the route network, connecting the three cities and providing service to the major commercial areas along U.S. Route 70. This route takes one hour from point to point and is provided on approximately hourly headways. This route also serves key locations in Newton, including the Catawba County Governmental complex, Newton City Hall, and the Soup Kitchen.

- ***West Hickory*** -- The West Hickory Route provides service primarily to residential areas on the west side of the City of Hickory. The Senior Citizen Center and the Ridgeview Library are also served. This route is a relatively short loop, taking 25 minutes. Hourly service is provided.

- ***NC 127/Springs Road*** -- This loop route serves a number of housing areas in northwest Hickory, along with the N. Center Street commercial area, the Patrick Beaver Library, and Lenoir-Rhyne College. This route takes 30 minutes to complete and is provided on hourly headways.

- ***Tate Boulevard/Conover*** -- The Tate Boulevard/Conover route is also a long route, connecting Hickory and Conover to the Tate Boulevard medical area. Several key locations in Conover are also served, including City Hall, the YMCA, Goodwill, and the Walmart.

Four heavy-duty transit vehicles are used to operate these routes. A route map is provided in Figure 2-2.

Operating Statistics

The fixed-route operating statistics for FY 2009 are provided in Table 2-4.

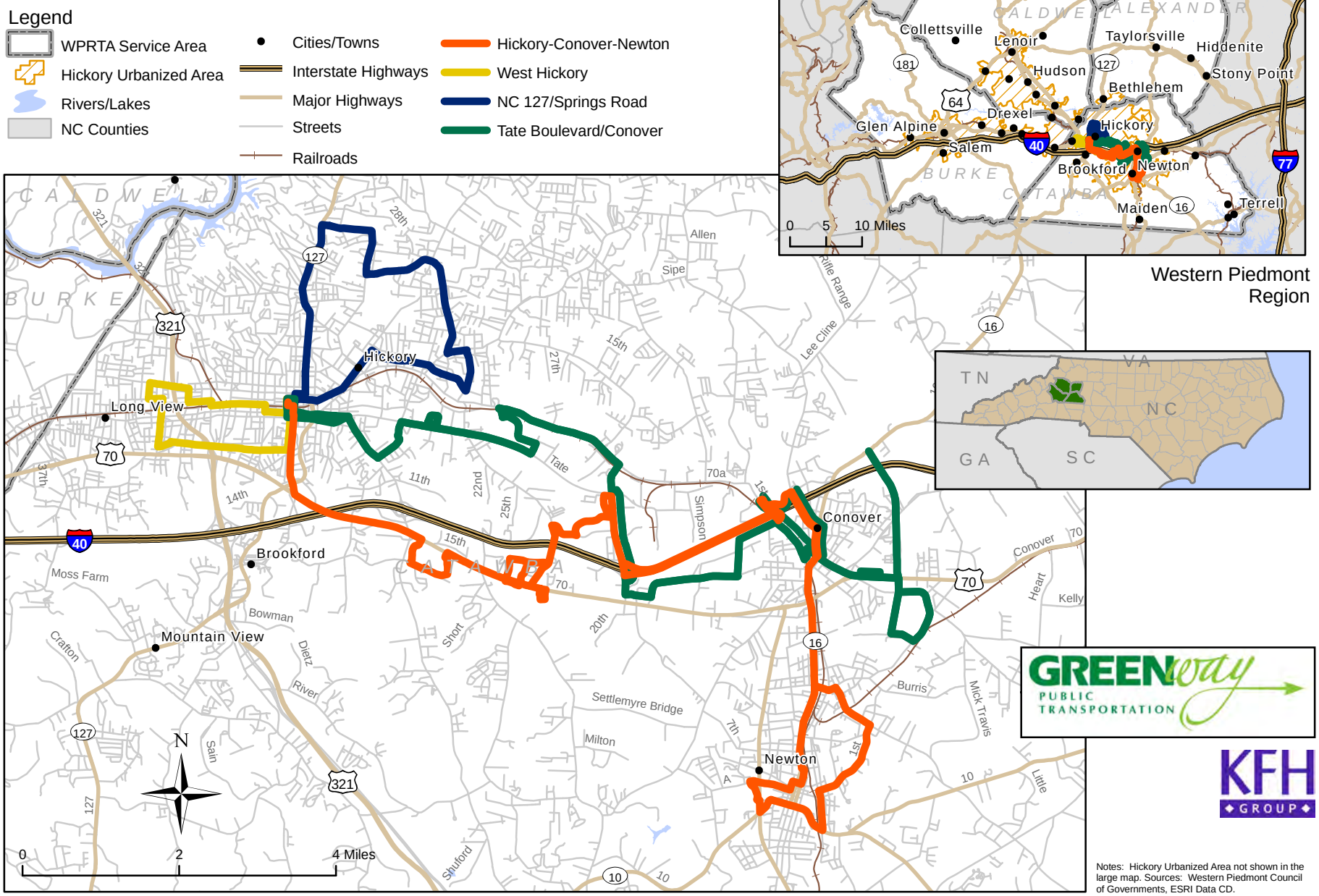
Table 2-4: FY 2009 Fixed-Route Operating Statistics

Fixed Route Bus	
Boardings	157,999
Service Hours	14,706
Service Miles	218,976
Boardings/Vehicle Service Hour	10.74
Total Administrative and Operating Expenses-Fixed Route	$ 722,030
Cost per Service Hour	$ 49.10
Cost per Mile	$ 3.30
Cost per Boarding	$ 4.57
Miles per Hour	14.89

Route Level Ridership Data

Ridership by route and stop were collected by WPRTA staff and compiled by ITRE in preparation for the CTSP. These data show the ridership and productivity of each route, as well as the boardings by stop for the fixed-route network. As shown in Table 2-5, total fixed-route ridership for the sample day was 440 passenger trips. The Hickory/Conover/Newton route attracted the most riders (285, or 65% of the total ridership) and also exhibited the highest productivity (11.9 passenger trips per revenue hour). It should be noted that the most resources are also devoted to this route, with 24 revenue hours per weekday. The Tate Boulevard route exhibited the lowest ridership (36 passenger trips) and the lowest productivity (3.6 trips per revenue hour) of the fixed routes.

Figure 2-2: Existing Fixed-Route Transit Services



Notes: Hickory Urbanized Area not shown in the large map. Sources: Western Piedmont Council of Governments, ESRI Data CD.

Table 2-5: WPRTA Fixed Routes: Sample Ridership

Route	Weekday Ridership FY 2009 Sample	Weekday Revenue Hours	Trips Per Hour
Tate Boulevard	36	10	3.6
NC 127/Springs Road	68	6.5	10.46
Hickory/Conover/Newton	285	24	11.88
West Hickory	51	6.5	7.85
Totals	440	47	9.36

This one-day sample was compared to the annual ridership to see how representative the day was, as compared to the year as a whole. This comparison showed that the sample day exhibited lower ridership (86% of typical) than the average for the year (509 boardings/day). The weekday average daily ridership for FY 2009 was likely even higher than this, as the 509 boardings per day includes Saturdays.

Hickory/Conover/Newton

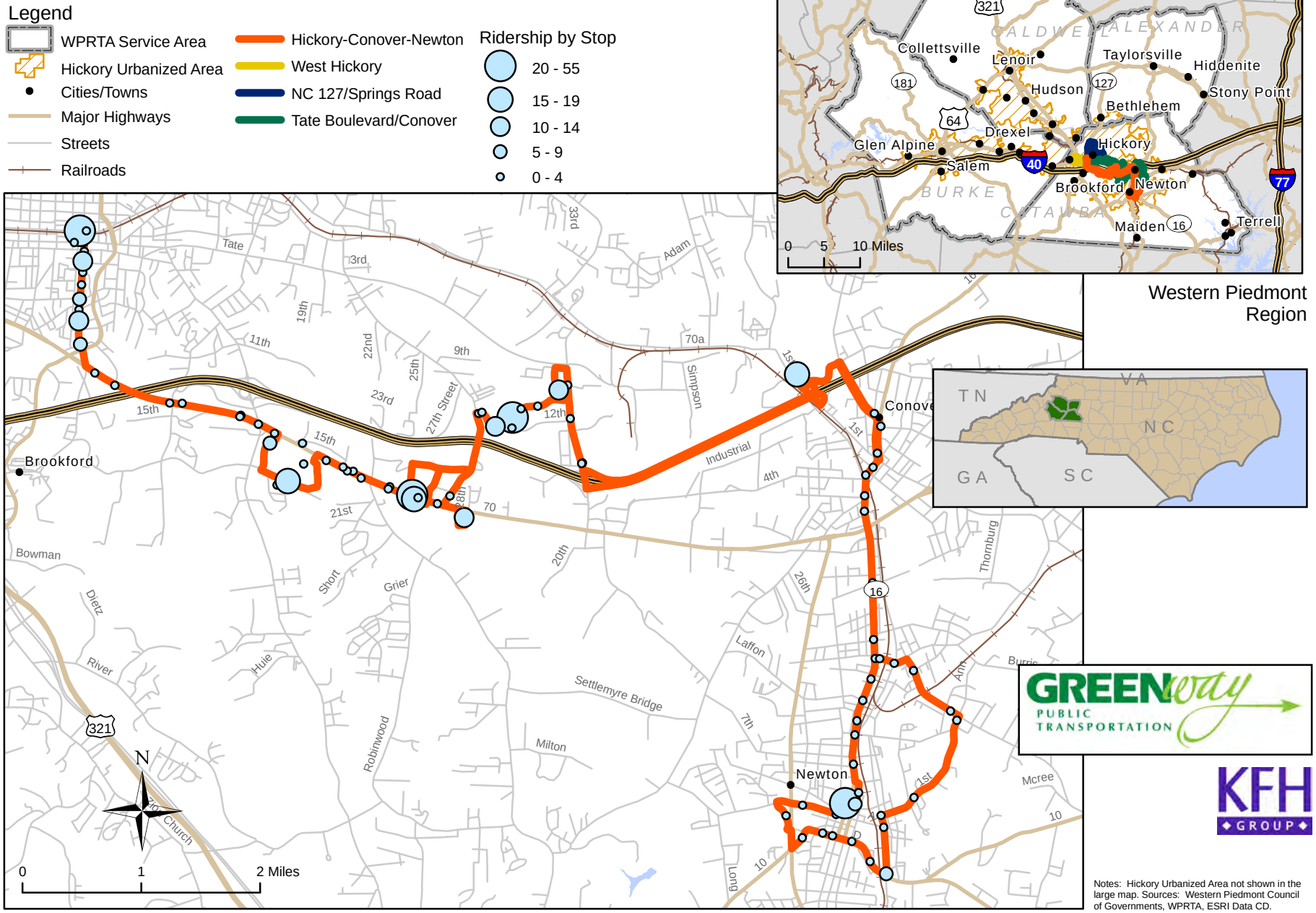
Figure 2-3 provides a map that depicts the ridership by stop for the Hickory/Conover/Newton route for the sample day. The highest ridership stops on this route are highlighted in Table 2-6**.** As these data show, the highest ridership stop is the Hickory Walmart, followed by the Newton Soup Kitchen, the Department of Social Services, and the Catawba Valley Community College, East Campus.

NC127/Springs Road

Figure 2-4 provides a map that depicts the ridership by stop for the NC127/Springs Road route for the sample day. The highest ridership stops on this route are highlighted in Table 2-7. As these data show, the highest ridership stop is Union Square.[4] The remaining ridership is sprinkled along the route, as is typical for a route that serves primarily housing areas.

[4] The highest ridership has likely shifted to the new City of Hickory Transfer Center.

Figure 2-3: Hickory/Conover/Newton Route Ridership by Stop



Notes: Hickory Urbanized Area not shown in the large map. Sources: Western Piedmont Council of Governments, WPRTA, ESRI Data CD.

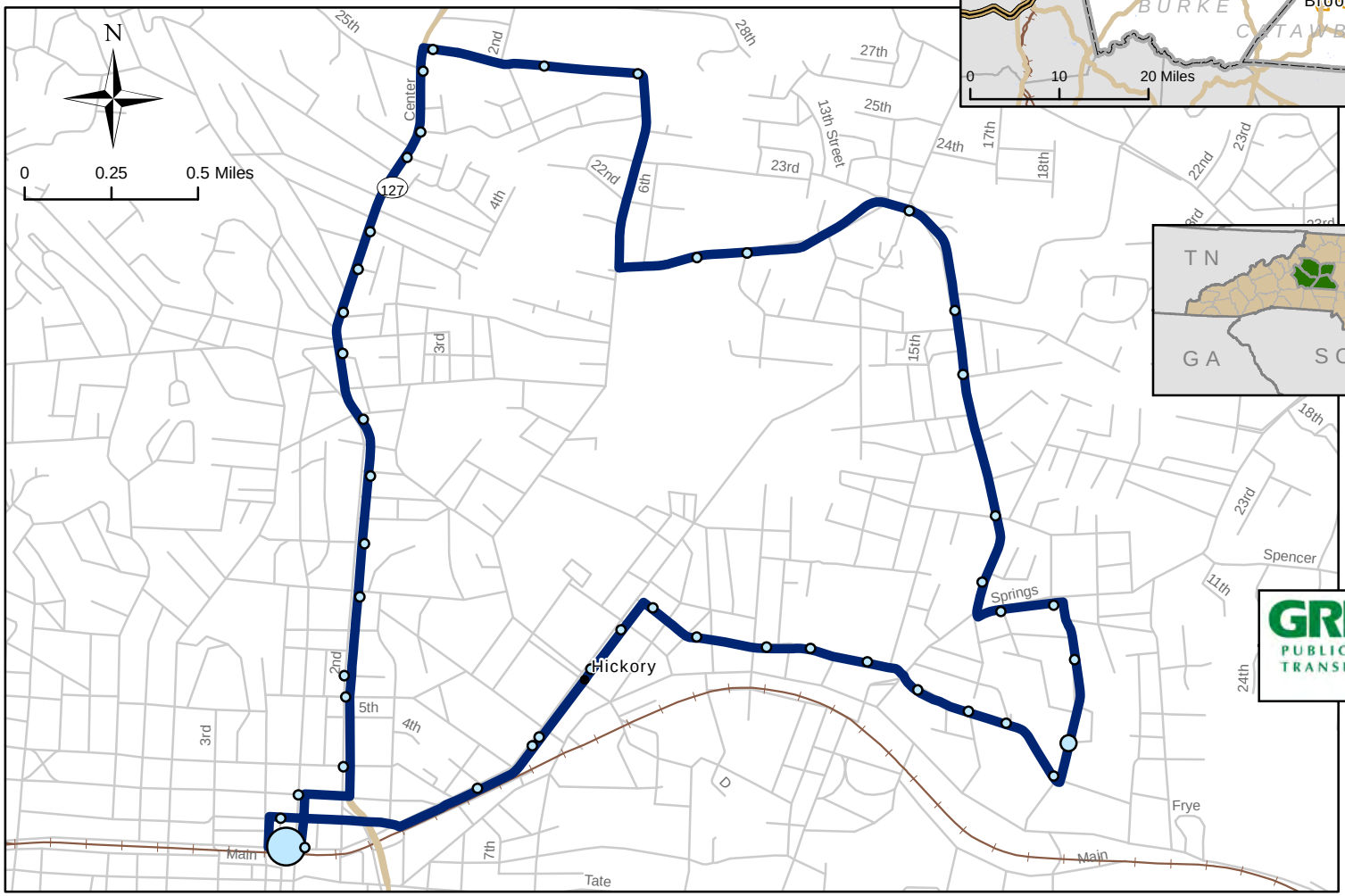
Figure 2-4: NC 127/Springs Road Route Ridership by Stop

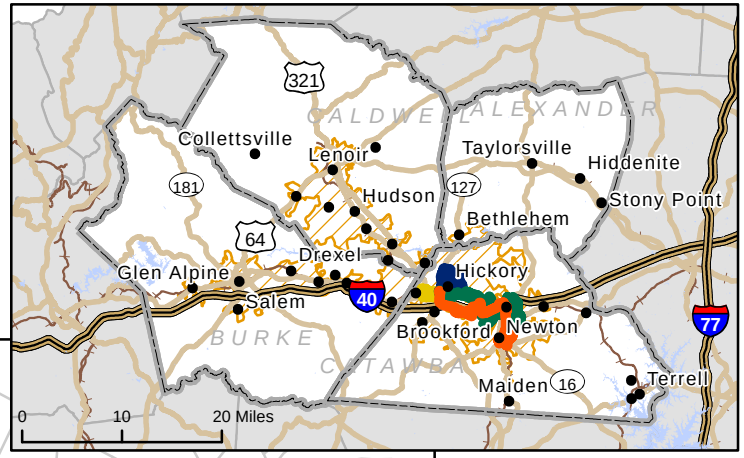
Legend

- WPRTA Service Area
- Hickory Urbanized Area
- Cities/Towns
- Major Highways
- Streets
- Railroads
- Hickory-Conover-Newton
- West Hickory
- NC 127/Springs Road
- Tate Boulevard/Conover

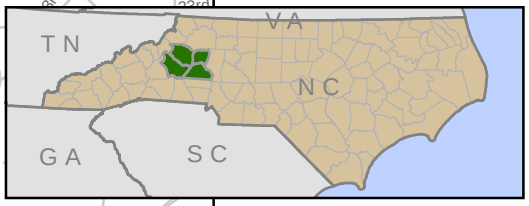
Ridership by Stop

- 20 - 55
- 15 - 19
- 10 - 14
- 5 - 9
- 0 - 4





Western Piedmont Region



Notes: Hickory Urbanized Area not shown in the large map. Sources: Western Piedmont Council of Governments, WPRTA, ESRI Data CD.

Table 2-6
Hickory/Conover/Newton Route
Highest Ridership Stops

	Number of Boardings
Outbound	
Newton Soup Kitchen	20
CVCC East Campus	14
S. Center Street/9th Ave. SW, Hickory	12
S. Center Street/Ridgeview Plaza	10
CVCC Main Campus	8
N. Caldwell Ave. and E. D St	8
Inbound	
Hickory Wal-Mart	31
11st Avenue at DSS	19
Valley Hills Mall	11
Canova Shopping Center	10
CVCC Main Campus	9
CVMC	8
12th Ave, SE	8

Table 2-7: NC 127/Springs Road
Highest Ridership Stops

Stop	Number of Boardings
Union Square	19
20th Street NE Silver Springs Apartments	5
2nd Street NE & 11th Ave NE	4
12th AVE NE & 20th Street NE	4
9th Ave NE @ Exxon Gas Station	4
2nd Street NE @ Catawba Science Center	3
26th Avenue NE & Corner of US Hwy 127 N	3
21st Ave NE @ 8th Street Dr. NE	3

West Hickory

Figure 2-5 provides a map that depicts the ridership by stop for the West Hickory route for the sample day. The highest ridership stops on this route are highlighted in Table 2-8. As these data show, the highest ridership stop is Union Square.[5] The remaining ridership is sprinkled along the route, as is typical for a route that serves primarily housing areas, similar to the NC127/Springs Road Route.

Table 2-8: West Hickory Route - Highest Ridership Stops

Stops	Number of Boardings
Union Square	17
18th Street Pl. NW @ Hilltop Apartments	5
14th Street NW &1st Ave NW	4
7th Ave SW & 13th Street SW	3
Main Ave @ 616 Main Ave. NW	2
Main Ave Dr. & 14th Street NW	2
18th Street Pl. NW & 1st Ave Pl. NW	2
18th Street Pl. NW & 1st Ave. NW	2
17th Street SW @West Hickory Senior Cntr.	2
7th Ave SW & 8th Street SW	2
S. Center Street & 2nd Avenue SW	2

Tate Boulevard

Ridership by stop on the Tate Boulevard route is shown in Figure 2-6. As these data show in Table 2-9, this route had very low ridership on the sample day. The stops do not all match the current route map, as the route has changed since the bus stop data were collected.

[5] The highest ridership stop has likely shifted to the new Hickory Transfer Center.

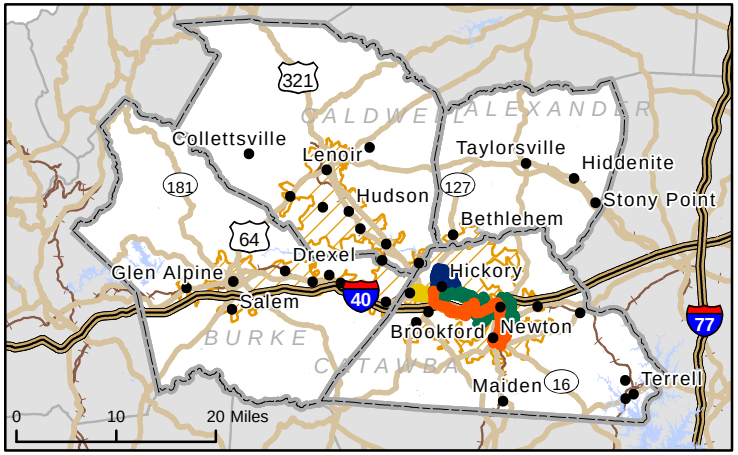
Figure 2-5: West Hickory Route Ridership by Stop

Legend

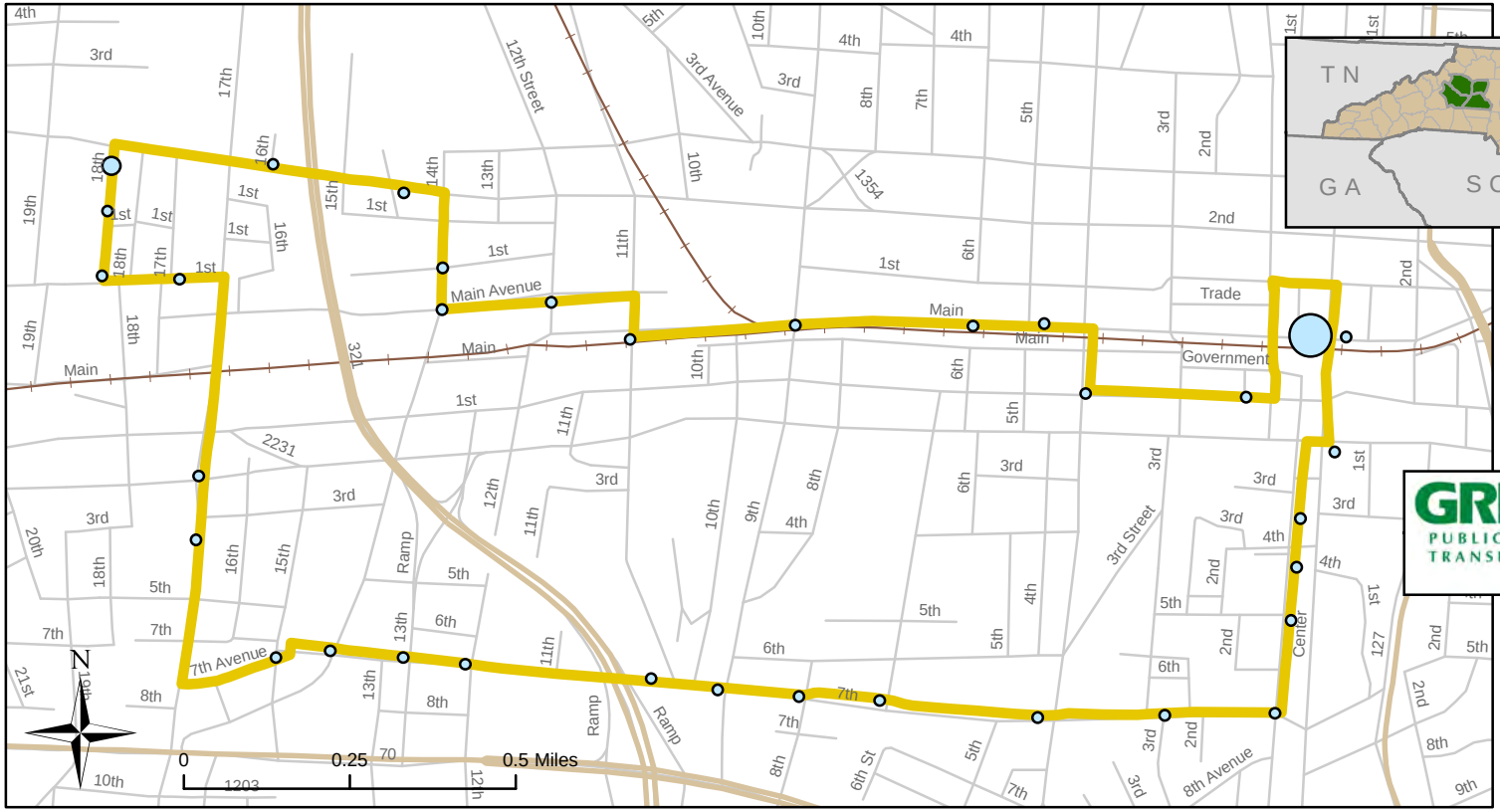
- WPRTA Service Area
- Hickory Urbanized Area
- Cities/Towns
- Major Highways
- Streets
- Railroads
- Hickory-Conover-Newton
- West Hickory
- NC 127/Springs Road
- Tate Boulevard/Conover

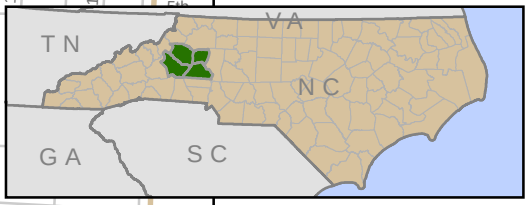
Ridership by Stop

- 20 - 55
- 15 - 19
- 10 - 14
- 5 - 9
- 0 - 4



Western Piedmont Region





Notes: Hickory Urbanized Area not shown in the large map. Sources: Western Piedmont Council of Governments, WPRTA, ESRI Data CD.

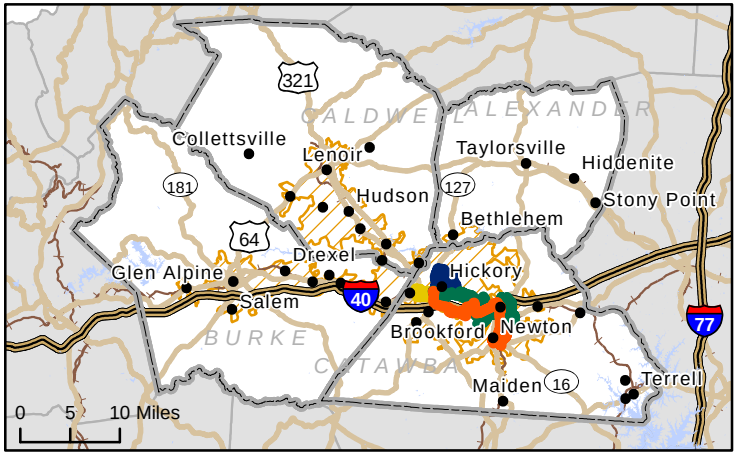
Figure 2-6: Tate Boulevard-Conover Route Ridership by Stop

Legend

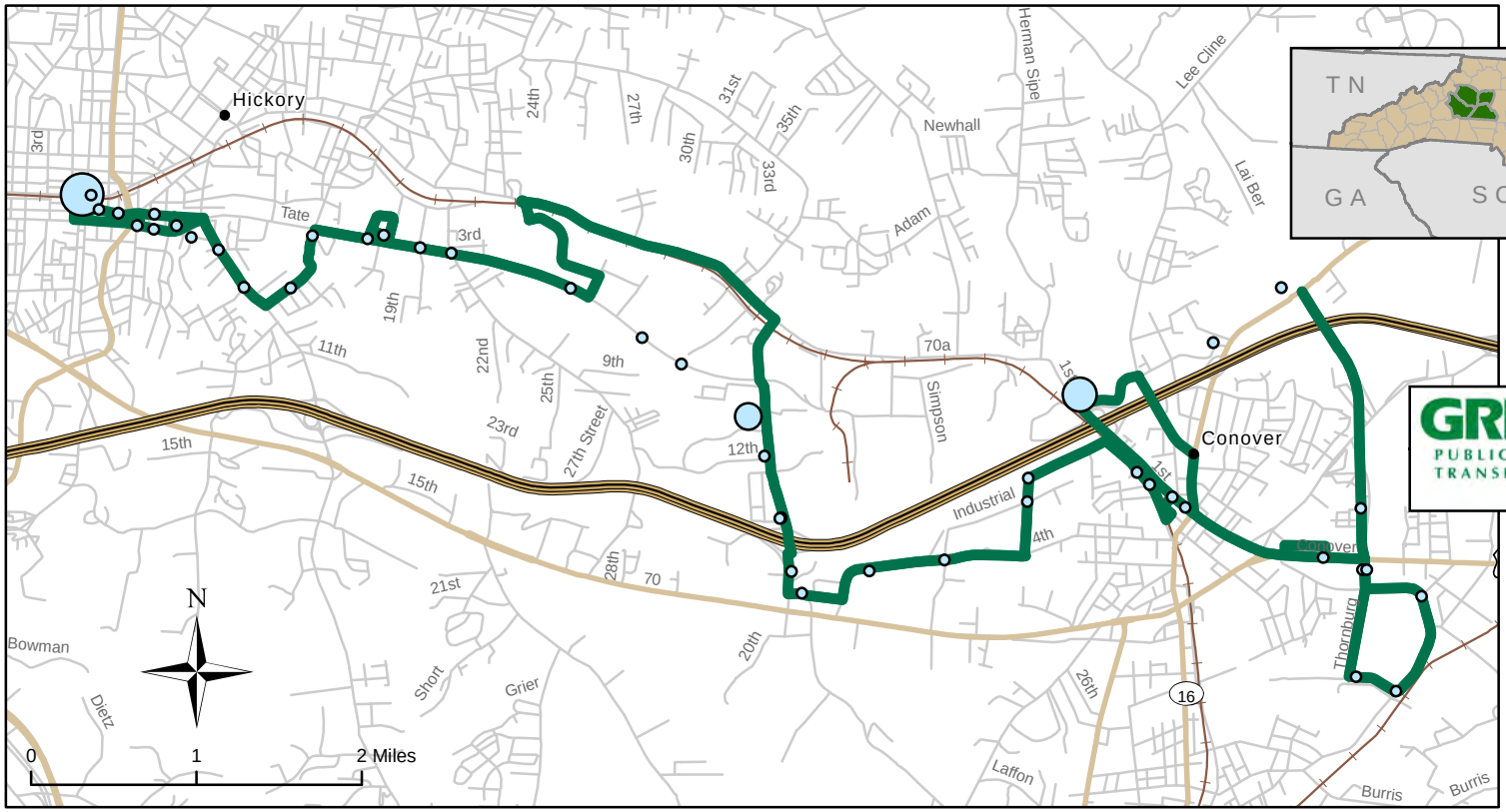
- WPRTA Service Area
- Hickory Urbanized Area
- Cities/Towns
- Major Highways
- Streets
- Railroads
- Hickory-Conover-Newton
- West Hickory
- NC 127/Springs Road
- Tate Boulevard/Conover

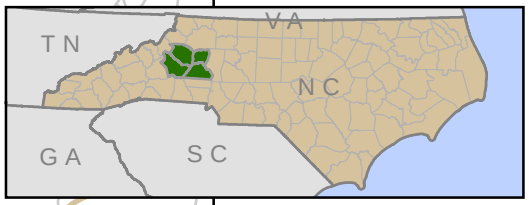
Ridership by Stop

- 20 - 55
- 15 - 19
- 10 - 14
- 5 - 9
- 0 - 4



Western Piedmont Region





Notes: Bus stops and ridership data represent 2009 stops, and may not align exactly with current routing. Hickory Urbanized Area not shown in the large map. Sources: Western Piedmont Council of Governments, WPRTA, ESRI Data CD.

Table 2-9: Tate-Conover Highest Ridership Stops

Outbound	Number of Boardings
Union Square	8
Fairgrove Church Rd @ McDonald's Restaurant	3
Wal-Mart-Conover	3
Lenoir Rhyne Blvd & 3rd Ave SE	1
Lenoir Rhyne Blvd & 7th Ave SE	1
15th Street SE & 4th Ave SE	1
4th Street SW & Bumgarner Industrial Dr.	1
Keisler Ave & Goodwill Industries	1
Cline Village	1
Inbound	
Tate Blvd & 18th Street SE	3
Union Square	3
K-Mart @ Canova Shopping Center	2
1st Street W. & 4th Ave SW	2
Lenoir Rhyne Blvd & 3rd Street	2
4th Street SW @ WPRTA's Office	1
Fairgrove Church Road @ Ramada Inn	1
Fairgrove Church Road @ Shell Gas Station	1
Fairgrove Church Road @ CVMC	1

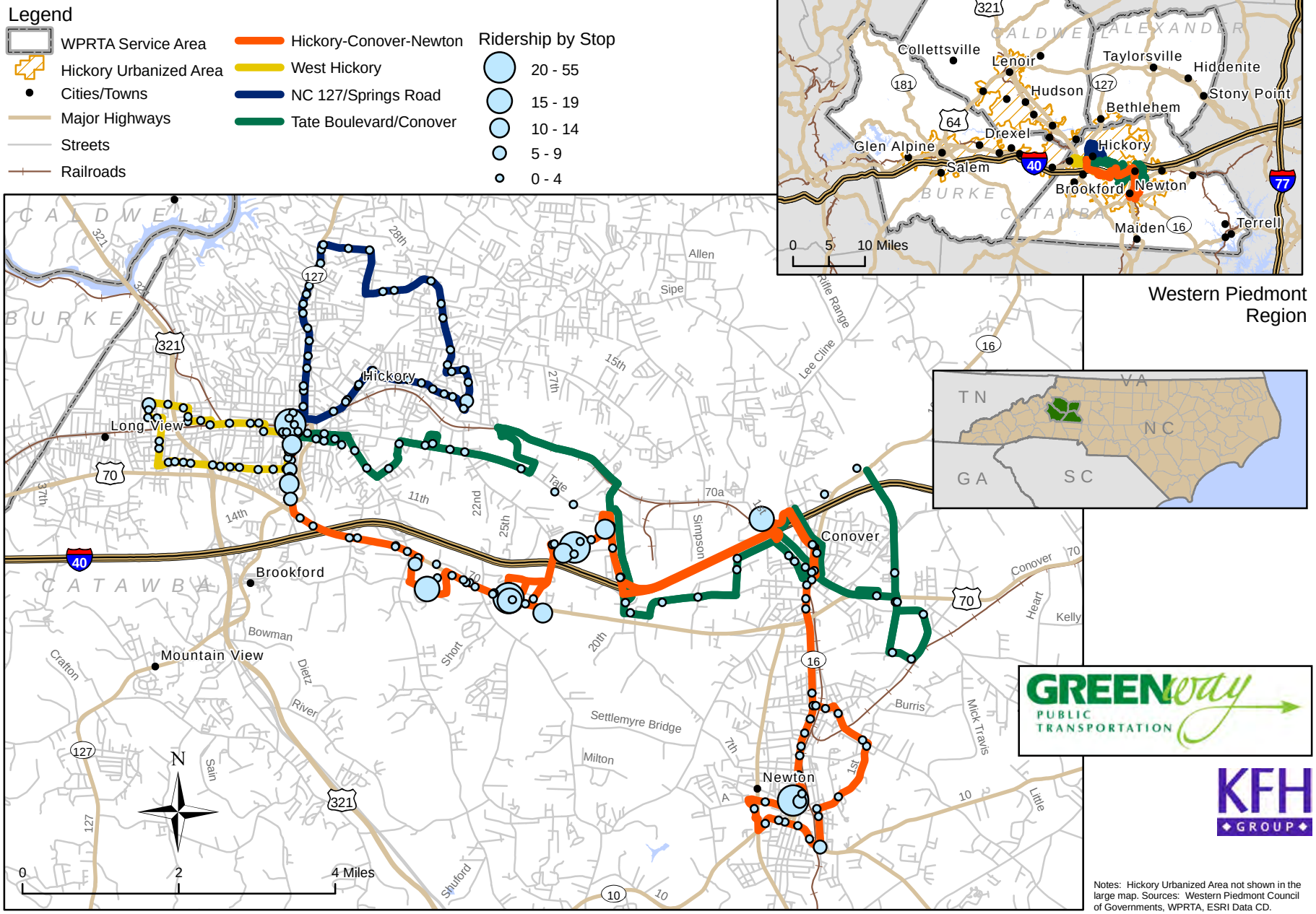
Combined Ridership by Stop

Figure 2-7 provides a map that shows the ridership by stop for the fixed-route network.

Taylorsville Service

WPRTA has also recently implemented a fixed-route in the Town of Taylorsville. The Town is contributing the local match required to support this route. In response to low productivity, this route was converted to a flex route in July 2010.

Figure 2-7: Ridership by Stop for Fixed-Route Network



Notes: Hickory Urbanized Area not shown in the large map. Sources: Western Piedmont Council of Governments, WPRTA, ESRI Data CD.

Fixed-Route Peer Comparison

In order to provide a context for WPRTA's operating data, KFH Group gathered data from NCDOT concerning other relatively small fixed-route transportation providers in the State. While each system is unique, with particular factors that drive their statistics, it is helpful to see how WPRTA's fixed-route network compares with other similar programs in the State. Table 2-10 provides these data.

Table 2-10: Selected Small Urban Fixed-Route Peers- FY 2009

System	Fixed-Route Trips	Revenue Hours	Revenue Miles	Trips Per Hour	Trips Per Mile	Cost Per Trip	MPH
Cary	103,894	26,144	441,081	3.97	0.24	$ 14.47	16.9
Concord/Kannapolis	407,819	30,464	483,491	13.39	0.84	$ 5.02	15.9
Gastonia	252,823	20,545	286,726	12.31	0.88	$ 7.56	14.0
Goldsboro-Wayne	218,169	17,113	221,426	12.75	0.99	$ 2.51	12.9
Greenville	351,173	17,918	235,890	19.60	1.49	$ 3.23	13.2
Henderson	92,257	9,108	170,016	10.13	0.54	$ 4.34	18.7
Jacksonville	47,324	13,701	227,150	3.45	0.21	$ 13.32	16.6
Rocky Mount	280,902	19,429	322,828	14.46	0.87	$ 2.82	16.6
Salisbury	176,856	9,514	129,025	18.59	1.37	$ 5.32	13.6
Wilson	150,277	12,523	188,801	12.00	0.80	$ 7.70	15.1
WPRTA	**157,999**	**14,706**	**218,976**	**10.74**	**0.72**	**$ 4.57**	**14.9**
Mean	203,590	17,379	265,946	11.94	0.81	$ 6.44	15.3

Source: NCDOT and WPRTA.

These data show that WPRTA's fixed-route program is smaller than the mean, in terms of operating hours and passenger trips, with slightly lower productivity. WPRTA's cost per trip was lower than the mean.

Fixed-Route Analysis

The data collected and analyzed for the fixed routes indicate that the performance of the Tate Boulevard route is significantly lower than the three other routes. WPRTA has recognized that productivity is an issue on the Tate Blvd. route and has recently re-structured it and has implemented a marketing campaign for the route. The CTSP alternatives addressed other potential changes to improve this route, as needed (Chapter 4).

The locations generating the highest boardings within the fixed-route system were the Hickory Walmart, Union Square, the Newton Soup Kitchen, the Catawba County DSS, and the Catawba Valley Community College. It should be noted that the boarding activity at Union Square, previously used as the downtown's transfer center, has likely shifted to the new downtown transit center.

Combined Operating Statistics

Tables 2-2 and 2-4 provided a break-down of WPRTA's FY 2009 operating statistics by service type. Table 2-11 combines these data to see the combined operating statistics for all operations.

Table 2-11: FY 2009 Total System Operating Statistics

Total System	
Boardings	287,601
Service Hours	81,496
Service Miles	1,306,265
Boardings/Vehicle Service Hour	3.53
Total Administrative and Operating Expenses	$ 3,665,212
Cost per service hour	$ 44.97
Cost per service mile	$ 2.81
Cost per passenger trip	$ 12.74
Miles per Hour	16.03

FUNDING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

As a multi-jurisdictional, urban-rural public transportation/human service transportation operator, the funding sources for WPRTA are varied and include federal, state, local, and contractual revenues. These sources are described below:

WPRTA FY 2010 Revenue Sources

Federal Programs

Federal Section 5307 -- This program is used to support public transportation programs in urbanized areas. For small urbanized areas (i.e., areas of between 50,000 and 200,000 in population), these funds can be used for either capital purchases or operating expenses. Urbanized areas receive an annual allocation for this program, based on a formula. The match ratio for S.5307 funds is up to 80% federal, with the remainder locally funded for capital items and for specific expenses that can be

"capitalized," including preventive maintenance, planning, and ADA paratransit (up to 10% of the total allocation). The allowable match ratio for operating expenses is up to 50% federal (not deficit) and the remainder locally-funded, and contractual revenue can be used as match. For FY 2010 WPRTA is expected to receive $1,142,730 in S.5307 funds for capitalized expenses and operating and another $20,000 for capital.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) -- Federal Stimulus Funding. This program is part of the federal effort to stimulate the economy by investing in needed infrastructure. For transit programs, these funds have been a valuable source of capital assistance. ARRA funding is 100% federal, requiring no local match. WPRTA is expected to receive $3,499,113 in ARRA funds in FY 2010. An additional $138,568 in supplemental AARA funds is also expected. These funds will be used to support a number of capital programs, including the purchase of vehicles, a bus stop improvement program, capitalized maintenance, fleet re-branding, mobile data terminals, on-board cameras, fare boxes for the van fleet, office furniture and equipment for the new transfer facility and the Alexander site, and computer software and hardware. This is a one-time source of funding for the Authority.

Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG*).* These funds are used to support transportation services for the elderly. WPRTA is the direct recipient of these funds for Alexander, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties. WPRTA is expected to receive $180,000 in HCCBG funds in FY2010.

State Programs

State Maintenance Assistance Program (SMAP). This state program is used to help provide operating assistance for transit programs in urbanized areas of the State. In FY 2010 WPRTA is expected to receive $204,435 in SMAP funds.

Community Transportation Program (CTP). These funds are used to support the administrative, capital, and operating expenses incurred by local transit agencies in North Carolina. This program is funded with S.5311 federal and State matching fees. The FY 2010 CTP includes the following as shown in Table 2-12:

Transition Funding- WPRTA has been awarded a one-time transition grant to help complete the transition from four county systems to one consolidated regional system. The grant amount is $200,000.

Rural Operating Assistance Program. This program combines the Rural General Public (RGP), Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP), and the Employment program into one grant. WPRTA is expected to receive $ 849,748 from this program in FY 2010.

Table 2-12
FY 2010 Community Transportation Program Funds

Category	Total	Federal	State	Local
Administration	$ 358,490	$ 286,792	$ 17,924	$ 53,774
Capital	$ 224,426	$ 179,540	$ 22,443	$ 22,443
Operating	$ 37,497	$ 18,748	$ -	$ 18,749
Total	$ 620,413	$ 485,080	$ 40,367	$ 94,966

Community Transportation Service Plan assistance. This CTSP has been funded as follows as shown in Table 2-13.

Table 2-13
CTSP Financing

Funding Source	Amount
S.5311 Federal	$ 33,183
S.5307 Federal	$ 58,993
State Match	$ 11,522
Local Match	$ 11,522
Total	$ 115,220

Local Programs

Local Governmental Matching Funds. Each of the member jurisdictions provides locally-generated funds that WPRTA uses to match federal and state grant funds. The amounts that each contribute were negotiated as part of the development of the Authority based on the service levels at that time. For FY 2010, the member jurisdictions will contribute $290,854 to help support operations and $2,500 for capital.

Passenger Fares. Passenger fares are expected to generate about $225,000 in FY 2010.

Contract Revenue. A large component of the dial-a-ride service in each County is based on the transportation needs of human service agency clients. The revenue derived from this service is expected to be $ 499,943 in FY 2010 and can be used to match Federal and State grants.

Operating Expenses and Budget

The line-item operating expenses for the first full year of WPRTA operation (FY 2009) are provided in Table 2-14**.** The FY 2009 expenses were slightly less than the FY 2009 operating budget of $ 3,893,956. This table was constructed using data provided by the WPRTA Finance Manager and has not yet been audited.

The administrative expenses were 23% of the total expenses, which is a significantly lower percentage than was experienced by three of the four previously-operated programs (Alexander, Burke, and Caldwell). This administrative expense rate is typical of transit authorities. City and county-operated systems sometimes show lower administrative expense rates, typically because not all of the administrative expenses are captured. This rate will likely be reduced over time as the service base increases with largely the same administrative infrastructure in place.

The revised budget for FY 2010 is $3.92 million and the proposed FY 2011 budget is $4,786,438. The 2010 and 2011 budgets were increased from FY 2009 to provide for a Contingency Fund and to reflect higher operating expenses.

FY 2010 Capital Projects

A number of capital projects will be able to move forward in FY 2010 and FY 2011 due to the influx of federal capital funds from the ARRA. WPRTA is expecting to receive over $3.6 million in ARRA funds. These projects include a number of priorities for WPRTA, including re-branding the fleet to "Greenway Public Transportation," ordering bio-diesel light transit vehicles, an extensive bus stop improvement program, and technology upgrades. Table 2-15 provides the full list of the capital projects planned for implementation using ARRA funds.

The light transit vehicles purchased with ARRA funds will be used to expand capacity so that deviated fixed rates can be operated. Capital items funded through the CTP grant are listed in Table 2-16.

Table 2-14: WPRTA Operating Expenses, FY 2009 (unaudited)

Line Item		Amount
Administrative Expenses:		
Administrative Salaries and Wages	$	348,333
FHI/FICA Taxes	$	25,986
Retirement Contributions	$	15,098
Group Insurance	$	45,225
FUTA/SUI Taxes	$	894
Workers Compensation	$	1,602
Accounting	$	8,474
Legal	$	11,565
Drug Testing	$	2,782
Janitorial Supplies	$	1,628
Uniforms	$	4,389
Office Supplies & Materials	$	7,035
Computer Supplies	$	4,871
Travel	$	2,791
Travel Subsistence	$	5,031
Telephone Service	$	23,725
Internet Service Provider Fee	$	544
Combined Service Fee	$	19,214
Postage	$	1,319
Electricity	$	1,047
Water	$	103
Sewer	$	145
Trash Collection	$	137
Printing & Reproduction	$	2,863
Other Printing & Binding	$	1,276
R&M - Office/Computer Equipment	$	565
Marketing - Paid Advertisements	$	8,424
Promotional Items	$	562
Other Advertising/Promotion Media	$	279
Computer Support/Tech Assistance Services	$	5,548
Legal Advertising	$	7,960
Cleaning Services	$	2,925
Training - Employee Education	$	4,109
Other Services	$	2,377
Rent of Offices	$	61,866
Other Rental	$	1,100
Lease of Reproduction Equipment	$	1,140
Lease of Postal Meter	$	510
Maint Contracts - Repro Equipment	$	567
Insurance - Property & General Liability	$	2,769

Table 2-14 (continued)

Administrative Expenses (continued):		**Amount**
Insurance - Vehicles	$	14,927
Insurance - Fidelity	$	750
Insurance - Professional Liabilities	$	9,050
Insurance - Special Liabilities	$	23,961
Dues and Subscriptions	$	1,589
Subtotal, Administrative Expenses	$	687,053
Direct Operations Expenses		
Operating Salaries and Wages	$	1,382,532
FHI/FICA Taxes	$	95,203
Retirement Contributions	$	50,942
Group Insurance	$	186,011
FUTA/SUI Taxes	$	9,219
Workers Compensation	$	73,321
Wages Allocated - Medicaid Coordinator (benefits)	$	6,398
Employee Recognition/Welfare	$	341
Fuel & Lubricants	$	442,416
Capital Maintenance	$	474,958
Criminal Backround Checks	$	1,679
Uniforms	$	11,867
Fire Extinguisher	$	540
License, Tags , Fees	$	5,000
Other Operating	$	404
Finance Charges	$	6
Penalties/Late Fees	$	55
Supplies & Materials - Other	$	7,024
Postage	$	134
R&M - Other	$	5,900
Telephone	$	1,112
Operations Travel	$	1,043
Op Travel Subsistence	$	241
Training/EE Education	$	426
Other Services	$	915
Other Rentals	$	36
Insurance - Vehicles	$	40,358
Transition/Close-out Costs incurred by CCATS	$	9,228
Subtotal, Direct Operations Expenses	$	2,807,308

Table 2-14 (continued)

Planning Expenses		**Amount**
Planning salaries	$	95,619
FHI/FICA Taxes	$	7,281
Retirement Contributions	$	4,590
Group Insurance	$	11,353
FUTA/SUI Taxes	$	224
Workers Compensation	$	440
Consultants	$	29,750
Management Services - Contracted (CCATS)	$	21,230
Office Supplies (consultant costs)	$	88
Computer Supplies (consultant costs)	$	36
Telephone (consultant costs)	$	240
Subtotal, Planning Expenses	$	170,851
Total Annual Operating Expenses, FY 2009 *(unaudited)*	**$**	**3,665,212**

Table 2-15: FY 2010 WPRTA ARRA Capital Procurements

Item	Approved Expense
Nonurbanized Area ARRA Projects:	$966,891
Two hybrid 22-ft. lift equipped light transit vehicles	
Two hybrid 28-ft. lift equipped light transit vehicles	
Scheduling software upgrade	
Mobile data devices	
Preventive maintenance	
Urbanized Area ARRA Projects:	
Replacement vans	$51,200
Replacement buses- light transit vehicles	$528,000
Replacement buses- light transit vehicles (4) 22' hybrids	$422,000
Routine capital- preventive maintenance	$323,200
Routine capital- shelters with solar lighting, bus stop signs, office equipment, computer hardware and software, re-logo Authority fleet, scanners, fareboxes, support vehicles, ticket vending machine, on-board cameras	$987,822
Advanced technology: on-board mobile data terminals for paratransit fleet	$220,000
Subtotal, Urbanized Area ARRA Projects	$2,532,222
TOTAL ARRA PROJECTS	**$ 3,499,113**

Table 2-16: FY 2010 CTP Capital Procurements

Item		Approved Expense
Office Equipment/Furniture	$	9,206
Computer	$	3,000
Printer	$	200
Computer Software	$	3,420
Lift-equipped Van Replacement	$	40,200
Fareboxes	$	17,200
Vehicle lettering and signs	$	108,000
Support Vehicle	$	43,200
TOTAL CTP CAPITAL	$	224,426

Fare Structure

Table 2-17: WPRTA's Fare Structure

Van Fares (Dial-A-Ride)		*Local Fixed-Route Bus Fares*	
Fare for a single ride	$2.50	Single Ride Fare	$1.25
Children Under 5	Free	Seniors (65 or older) or Disabled Persons	$0.60
Out-of-Service Area	$5.00	Children Under 5	Free
ADA	$2.50	Transfers	No charge
10-Ticket Book	$22.50	One-day pass	$3.00
		Seven-day pass	$12.00
		Thirty-day pass	$45.00

Agency Billing Rate

As a newly consolidated transportation provider, WPRTA has inherited a number of different contractual terms and rates, based on differing parameters. Some of these rates had remained the same for several years, even as costs increased. Reconciling these differences and fully understanding the true cost of providing coordinated contractual transit services has been a challenge for the Authority during the first 24 months of consolidated operation. The contractual revenue is an important revenue source for WPRTA, as it is used as matching funds to draw down Federal Section 5307 (urban) and Section 5311 (rural) operating funds. WPRTA is charged with finding a balance that covers its costs and builds some reserves, while at the same time remaining affordable for participating agencies.

In 2009, as part of the WPRTA Performance Planning Analysis, ITRE recommended that WPRTA develop a zone-based billing method that would charge all passengers the same rate (based on geographic zones), regardless of funding source. ITRE's analysis further indicated that a zone-based system would make it easier to attract new riders and funding agencies because the cost is pre-determined, tickets/passes can be sold to agencies, and efficiencies would not result in lower revenues.

KFH Group staff and WPRTA staff discussed this recommendation at length and agreed in concept that there is merit to a zone-based system for WPRTA, but that WPRTA does not yet have a long-enough history of costs and ridership patterns to

accurately set the rate to ensure financial stability. WPRTA would like to re-visit this concept after another year or two of operation to ensure that the cost and operating data are stable enough to set an appropriate rate. Until that time, WPRTA will base its agency billing on a shared-mileage based rate setting model. There may still be exceptions for particular contracts, based on the peculiarities of the rules that govern particular agencies.

WPRTA is addressing the concept of zone-based system by modifying service delivery to deviated fixed routes where feasible. Recently acquired GIS technology is allowing for historic origins and destinations to be mapped and then the data projected into corridors of deviated fixed route service that will allow for more blending of human service agency and general public ridership on advertised routes.

Mileage-Based Rate Setting Model

In order to determine what the true costs of the contracted service have been during the first full year of operation and use this information to re-calculate agency billing rates, KFH Group staff and WPRTA staff together constructed a preliminary rate setting model. The method used for this exercise was to start with the fully-allocated costs to provide van services, and then apply federal, state, and local subsidies to calculate what the remaining, unsubsidized portion of the van expenses were for FY 2009. After arriving at this cost figure, a similar exercise was conducted to calculate the number of miles that were associated with these expenses.

Table 2-18 provides the results of these calculations. As is shown, an agency billing rate of $1.92 per shared mile will cover the cost of service, including a small portion to be applied to a reserve fund.

Subsequent to this calculation, the WPRTA Finance Manager left the organization. The new Finance Manager will review these calculations and make adjustments as needed. There is some question concerning the accuracy of the data supplied by the previous Finance Manager.

CAPACITY ANALYSIS

This section of the inventory provides a description and analysis of the facilities, fleet, and technologies currently in use by or planned for WPRTA.

Table 2-18: Contract Rate Calculation

Line Item		Expense/Credit
Total Administrative Costs	$	687,053
Less 5307-funding	$	(256,322)
Less CTP admin funding	$	(170,168)
Unfunded Administrative Expenses	$	260,563
Total Admin and Operations, Van Service	$	2,361,136
Apply EDTAP funds	$	395,638
Apply RGP funds	$	395,486
Apply employment funds	$	16,733
Apply local match van side	$	13,852
Apply Section 5311 operating funds	$	18,748
Apply hccbg funds	$	189,525
Apply 5307 operating, urban, not fixed route	$	765,023
Apply Fares-gp rural side	$	46,200
Subtotal funds available to subsidize van services	$	1,841,205
Estimated Cost of Contract Services	$	519,931
		Mileage/Credit
Total Van Mileage		1,087,289
Subtract RGP and EDTAP miles		387,022
Subtract ADA miles		46,250
Subtract urban miles		123,000
Subtract HCCBG miles		233,446
Subtotal, already funded mileage		789,718
Estimated Contract Mileage		297,571
		Per Mile Estimates
Estimated Cost Per Shared Mile	$	1.75
Reserve Fund Contribution	$	0.17
Proposed Contract Shared Mileage Charge	$	1.92

Facilities

The Authority's primary facility is a leased space located at 1515 4th Street, Conover, adjoining a trucking facility (Watkins Shepard). The administrative offices are located at this facility, along with the scheduling and dispatching functions. This facility also serves as the operating base for the fixed-route service, the ADA paratransit service, and the Catawba-County-based services. While this space does meet the basic needs of the Authority, WPRTA is looking to purchase a facility, not only to save on the lease expenses, but also so that maintenance can be brought in-house. Transit facilities are eligible for federal and state capital funding, typically at a matching ratio of 80% federal, 10% State, and 10% local.

Facility Planning

WPRTA has recently completed a facility study, the purpose of which was to determine an optimum location for a permanent maintenance and operations facility that would be purchased/constructed by WPRTA. The facility study provided an in-depth analysis of three potential sites. The preliminary site chosen by WPRTA is the former S&W Chemical site, located at 1530 1st Avenue SW, in Hickory. This site is 5.74 acres and is centrally located, close to US321 and US70. This site is currently undergoing environmental testing to determine the level of effort needed for site clean-up. WPRTA is also planning to use administrative space that is available at the Warlong Glove Factory site in Conover, as the City has offered the space for free.

Regional Facilities

As a regional transportation provider, WPRTA uses smaller hubs in each of the three other counties. These hubs provide a local presence in each of the Counties for WPRTA and serve to reduce deadhead mileage. These hubs are located as follows:

Alexander County: the Wittenburg School, in Taylorsville. Nine vehicles are stationed at the Alexander County site.

Burke County: 300 N. Green Street, in Morganton. Thirteen vehicles are stationed at the Burke County site.

Caldwell County: 840 Connelly Springs Road, in Lenoir. Fifteen vehicles are stationed at the Caldwell County site.

A lead driver is assigned to each of the three hubs to make sure the daily operations are performed as planned.

Transfer Center

The City of Hickory has recently constructed a new transfer facility. This new facility, located between 1st and 2nd Avenues, SW, downtown, allows the vehicles to pull in and transfer passengers off-street. In addition, the facility is staffed to allow for ticket sales. Restrooms and a driver break area are also part of the new Hickory facility. The facility was completed in June 2010. Figure 2-8 provides a photo of this new facility.

Figure 2-8: City of Hickory Transfer Center

Fleet

WPRTA owns a fleet of 63 vehicles, including 61 transit vehicles and two administrative vehicles. Of the 61 transit vehicles, 51 are used regularly for service and 10 are used primarily as back-ups. The typical daily vehicle requirement is 39, though this number does fluctuate somewhat with demand. The fleet includes 34 lift-equipped vehicles (56% if the fleet). All of the vans and light transit vehicles are fueled by gasoline and the heavy-duty transit vehicles are fueled by diesel. As part of its mission to become more environmentally-friendly, WPRTA is converting the diesel engines to bio-diesel and will be ordering bio-diesel vehicles with ARRA funds. The current vehicle inventory is presented in Table 2-19.

WPRTA is in the process of "right-sizing" the fleet to become more productive and responsive. This "right-sizing" includes: 1) reducing the size of the fleet; 2) buying larger vehicles (LTVs) with more seating and three wheelchair stations; and 3) buying only accessible vehicles. These changes should increase driver productivity, reduce deadhead mileage, and reduce fleet maintenance costs.

Table 2-19: WPRTA Vehicle Inventory

Vehicle Location	Current Local Fleet Number	Model Year	Model	Vehicle Type	Seating Capacity	Wheel-chair Stations	Fuel	Vehicle Use (1)
Catawba - Admin. Vehicle	00504MV	2000	Dodge	Minivan	6	0	Gas	Admin
Catawba - Admin. Vehicle	02250MV	2002	Dodge	Minivan	5	0	Gas	Admin
Alexander County	06814L	2006	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R
Alexander County	06815L	2006	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R
Alexander County	06668MV	2006	Dodge	Minivan	6	0	Gas	R
Alexander County	07751L	2007	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R
Alexander County	08914C	2008	Ford	Conversion Van	12	0	Gas	R
Alexander County	08915L	2008	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	8	2	Gas	R
Alexander County	01077CA	2001	Dodge	Center Aisle Van	14	0	Gas	B
Alexander County	09926L	2009	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	8	2	Gas	R
Alexander County	09003LTV22L	2009	Ford	22-FT LTV	14	2	Gas	R
Burke County	06945L	2006	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R
Burke County	01084CA	2001	Dodge	Center Aisle Van	14	0	Gas	R
Burke County	01083CA	2001	Dodge	Center Aisle Van	14	0	Gas	B
Burke County	02343CA	2002	Dodge	Center Aisle Van	14	0	Gas	R
Burke County	02344CA	2002	Dodge	Center Aisle Van	14	0	Gas	B
Burke County	03792LTV22L	2003	Ford	22-FT LTV w/Lift	15	1	Gas	R
Burke County	03565LTV	2003	Ford	25-FT LTV	24	0	Gas	R
Burke County	03566LTV	2003	Ford	25-FT LTV	24	0	Gas	R
Burke County	03214C	2003	Dodge	Conversion Van	14	0	Gas	R
Burke County	07910L	2007	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R
Burke County	08897L	2008	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	8	2	Gas	R
Burke County	08896L	2008	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	8	2	Gas	R
Burke County	08092MV	2008	Dodge	Minivan	6	0	Gas	R
Caldwell County	01723C	2001	Dodge	Conversion Van	13	0	Gas	R
Caldwell County	01722C	2001	Dodge	Conversion Van	13	0	Gas	R
Caldwell County	03860L	2003	Dodge	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R
Caldwell County	03883L	2003	Dodge	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R
Caldwell County	03885L	2003	Dodge	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R
Caldwell County	03898L	2003	Dodge	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R
Caldwell County	08929L	2008	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	8	2	Gas	R
Caldwell County	01489HSB	2001	GMC	Head Start Bus	14	0	Gas	B

Table 2-19: WPRTA Vehicle Inventory

Caldwell County	09946L	2009	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	8	2	Gas	R
Caldwell County	09962L	2009	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	8	2	Gas	R
Caldwell County	09928L	2009	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	8	2	Gas	R
Caldwell County	09931L	2009	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	8	2	Gas	R
Caldwell County	07793L	2007	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R
Caldwell County	02249MV	2002	Dodge	Minivan	6	0	Gas	R
Caldwell County	10867MV	2010	Dodge	Minivan	6	0	Gas	R
Catawba County	02738L	2002	Dodge	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	B
Catawba County	97014LTV	1997	Ford	25-FT LTV	16	0	Gas	B
Catawba County	97162LTV	1997	Ford	25-FT LTV	16	0	Gas	B
Catawba County	01919C	2001	Dodge	Conversion Van	13	0	Gas	B
Catawba County	02281C	2002	Dodge	Conversion Van	13	0	Gas	R
Catawba County	02697C	2002	Dodge	Conversion Van	13	0	Gas	R
Catawba County	02277C	2002	Dodge	Conversion Van	13	0	Gas	R
Catawba County	02767C	2002	Dodge	Conversion Van	13	0	Gas	R
Catawba County	03823C	2003	Dodge	Conversion Van	13	0	Gas	R
Catawba County	06876L	2006	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R
Catawba County	06977L	2006	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R
Catawba County	07786C	2007	Ford	Conversion Van	12	0	Gas	R
Catawba County	08890L	2008	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	8	2	Gas	R
Catawba County	08889L	2008	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	8	2	Gas	R
Catawba County	06938B	2006	Gillig	Bus	32	2	Diesel	R
Catawba County	06939B	2006	Gillig	Bus	32	2	Diesel	R
Catawba County	06940B	2006	Gillig	Bus	32	2	Diesel	R
Catawba County	06941B	2006	Gillig	Bus	32	2	Diesel	R
Catawba County	06942B	2006	Gillig	Bus	32	2	Diesel	R
Catawba County	01167LTV	2001	Ford	LTV	22	0	Diesel	B
Catawba County	02064LTV	2002	Ford	LTV	22	0	Diesel	B
Catawba County	07366L	2007	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R
Catawba County	07367L	2007	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R
Catawba County	07368L	2007	Ford	Lift Equipped Van	9	2	Gas	R

(1) R denotes revenue vehicle, B denotes back-up vehicle.

Technology

Scheduling Software

WPRTA uses Route Match software to manage the demand-response operation. The Authority purchased the software upon consolidation and transferred the data from each of the four pre-existing scheduling programs.

ITRE's Performance Planning Analysis included a number of specific recommendations to improve the scheduling function by ensuring that the scheduling software is being used to its full potential. WPRTA has been working towards implementing these recommendations.

Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) and Automatic Vehicle Locators (AVL)

WPRTA is using ARRA funds to purchase MDTs for the demand-response fleet. It is anticipated that MDTs will improve the productivity of the demand-response program by providing real-time information to dispatchers, schedulers, and drivers.

OTHER TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

While WPRTA is the primary provider of community transportation in the region, there are several private transportation providers that also serve the community. These are listed below.

Taxi Services and Private Transportation Providers

The following taxi services and private transportation providers operate in the region:

- ABBY Cab, 301 Linville Street, Morganton
- Ace Cab Company, 385 E Fleming Drive, Morganton
- City Cab Company, 215 Eastview Street, Morganton
- Diamond Cab Company, 117 1st Avenue Southwest, Hickory
- Dixie Cab Company, 307 W Union Street, Morganton
- Handi-Care, 304 South Main Street, Drexel
- Hickory Hop (scheduled service to the Charlotte Airport, to Boone, and to Blowing Rock)
- Howard's Yellow Cab, 403 Main Street Northwest, Lenoir
- Medical Transportation, LLC, 113 West McDowell Street, Morganton

- Medical Van Transportation Specs, 1015 Second Street, NW, Hickory
- Newton Yellow Cab, 116 N College Avenue, Newton
- Specialized Transport, PO Box 852, Drexel
- Yellow Cab, 117 1st Avenue Southwest, Hickory

Intercity Bus Services

On October 1, 2010, an intercity bus route was introduced to Hickory providing north-south service in the US 321 corridor between Boone and Charlotte. Stops include Boone, Lenoir, Hickory, Lincoln, Gastonia, and Charlotte. There is one southbound and one northbound bus each day. The Hickory Hop also provides service from the Hickory Airport to Boone, Blowing Rock, and the Charlotte Airport, but does not connect with the national intercity bus network.

AMTRAK

The closest AMTRAK station is located in Gastonia (about 37 miles south of Hickory), which is served once a day in each direction by the Crescent. AMTRAK also serves Salisbury, Charlotte, and Greensboro, which are served by the Carolinian/Piedmont and the Crescent. The passenger rail portion of the 2009 North Carolina Rail Plan includes five major intercity passenger service additions, including a new service for Western North Carolina that would connect Salisbury to Asheville via Statesville, Conover, Valdese, Morganton, Marion, Old Fort, and Black Mountain.[6]

[6] North Carolina Rail Plan, 2009, NCDOT.