



# WILKES TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

## COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION SERVICE PLAN

### FINAL REPORT

March 2011



*Prepared for*

Wilkes Transportation Authority  
and North Carolina  
Department of Transportation,  
Public Transportation Division

*Prepared by*

**KFH Group, Inc.**



# KFH GROUP, INC.

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# Executive Summary

## INTRODUCTION

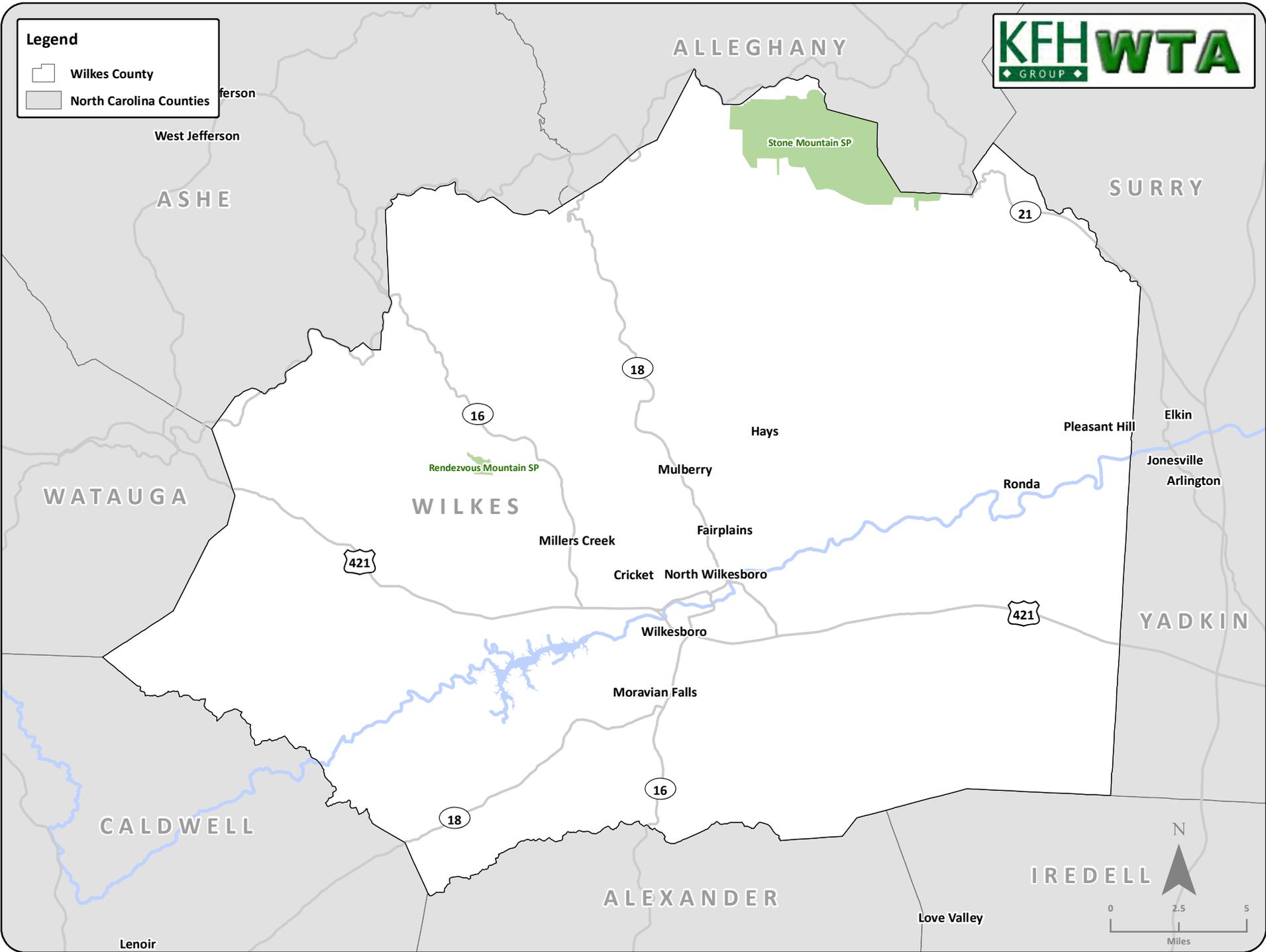
Wilkes Transportation Authority (WTA), organized under Chapter 160A, Article 25 of the North Carolina General Statutes, serves Wilkes County, North Carolina. The County, located between Western North Carolina's Piedmont and High Country, is shown in Figure ES-1.

Prior to 2005, WTA was a private non-profit organization, which is still in existence and will be until all of the vehicles that were purchased under the non-profit are retired. In 1998 the system experienced significant financial, legal, and staff difficulties. WTA has largely recovered from these problems with new Board Members, new administrative staff members, and a new organizational structure.

The primary service modes provided by WTA are demand-response and subscription, with one deviated fixed-route (the WE Shuttle) in place to serve Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro. WTA has between 20 and 30 contracts with local agencies. These contracts represent the majority of the transportation provided by WTA.

This Executive Summary provides an overview of the Community Transportation Service Plan (CTSP) process that has been completed for WTA. A CTSP is a Short-Range Transit Plan that outlines the services that WTA intends to implement during the five-year planning horizon, estimates what resources will be needed, and what funding opportunities are likely to be available. The CTSP was guided by a Steering Committee that provided input throughout the study process. The technical study tasks were undertaken by KFH Group, Inc., in close consultation with the Steering Committee, NCDOT-PTD, and WTA staff. Task work for the CTSP began in April 2010 and was completed in January 2011. The WTA Board of Directors adopted the draft plan in February 2011.

Figure 9G!%Wilkes County, North Carolina



The CTSP was developed with a thorough community outreach effort, including public surveys, rider surveys, and stakeholder interviews. The outreach efforts resulted in a plan that highlights transit service improvements that are desired by the community.

## EXISTING SERVICES

The first major task for the CTSP was to document and analyze the existing community transportation resources in Wilkes County, with a focus on WTA's services.

WTA provides public transportation for any resident of Wilkes County. WTA currently operates one deviated fixed-route in the Wilkesboro/North Wilkesboro area, demand-response, subscription, and agency-contracted community transportation services.

In FY 2010 WTA provided 53,544 passenger trips, recording 27,090 vehicle service hours, and 530,184 vehicle service miles. The FY 2010 operating and administrative expenses were \$946,000. WTA's deviated fixed-route service averaged 2.5 passenger trips per hour and the demand-response/contract services averaged 1.9 passenger trips per hour. The combined average cost per passenger trip in FY 2010 was \$17.68. The total system operating/administrative budget for FY 2011 is \$ 1.13 million.

There are five taxicab/private transportation providers in the County, as well as intercity bus service along the US421 corridor between Boone and Greensboro (Mountaineer East-West). Three other human-service-oriented transportation programs also operate in the County, using a combination of volunteer drivers and program staff drivers.

## TRANSIT NEEDS ANALYSIS

The transit needs analysis, which is fully documented in Chapter 3 of the Final Report, included a significant data collection effort that considered demographics and land use, previous planning efforts, public opinion, rider opinion, and stakeholder opinion. Demographic data indicate that the region is growing slowly, with this trend likely to continue over the next several years.

In reviewing and analyzing the various data concerning transit needs, a number of unmet transit needs and potential services were echoed by several of the data sources. These key unmet needs and potential services are highlighted below and helped form the basis for the recommendations included in the five-year plan:

- The County is growing slowly, so future public transportation demand is likely to be similar to existing demand, with some growth experienced as the population ages.
- There is not enough density for traditional fixed-route services in any areas of the County; deviated fixed-route service is appropriate for the Wilkesboro/N. Wilkesboro area.
- The WE Shuttle provides excellent geographic coverage in relation to major trip generators, though this has resulted in a very long route.
- Some of the more rural areas of the county are home to a relatively high percentage of people displaying transportation needs characteristics.
- For the 22% of Wilkes County residents who work outside the County, the primary direction of travel is east.
- The Towns of Wilkesboro and N. Wilkesboro specifically mention transit amenities in their pedestrian plans and the comprehensive plans for each town discuss multimodal transportation options.
- Unmet transit needs generally include the need to expand the hours of service, examine ways to make the services more affordable and accessible.
- The primary need currently being met by WTA is access to medical appointments, and more than 50% of the trip activity takes place in Wilkesboro/N. Wilkesboro.
- Riders indicated a desire for larger vehicles, more accessible vehicles, scheduling improvements, Saturday service, and more geographic coverage for the WE Shuttle.

To the extent possible, these needs were addressed in the alternatives and reflected in the five-year plan.

## **FIVE-YEAR PLAN**

The five-year plan for WTA was developed from a series of potential service and organizational alternatives that were presented in November, 2010. The plan incorporated several of the alternatives, with improvements phased over time based on Steering Committee priorities.

The plan is somewhat expansionary in nature and assumes that new revenue will be available, either through grant opportunities, additional contractual revenue, a modest level of local revenue, or through new federal funds, pending the re-authorization of SAFETEA-LU. If additional revenue is not available, then the plan will need to be scaled back accordingly.

Table ES-1 provides a summary of the recommended projects for the five-year plan, including project descriptions, purposes, estimated revenue service hours, proposed implementation years, estimated expenses, and recommended funding sources. As is shown in Table ES-1, the plan proposes to add 8,676 annual service hours to the current 27,090, an increase of 34% over the five-year period. The annual operating and administrative budget is projected to grow from \$1.13 million (FY 2011) to about \$1.8 million in FY 2016.

Planned improvements for the WE Shuttle include Saturday service, a re-branding effort, and a second vehicle (in the out-years of the plan). Additional passenger wait shelters are also included as part of the WE Shuttle proposed improvements.

A fare assistance program and a purchase of service program, both proposed to be funded under the S.5310 program, are included to help provide additional mobility for elderly people and people with disabilities. Additional demand-response capacity is added in FY 2013 and FY 2014, and Mobile Data Computers (MDC) and Automatic Vehicle Locators (AVL) are included in FY 2015. There are also two coordination projects with neighboring transit agencies that are included as near-term projects (FY 2012).

Table ES-2 provides the financial plan for operations for the five-year period, Table ES-3 provides the financial plan for vehicle replacement and expansion, and Table ES-4 provides the financial plan for facilities, equipment, and other capital.

At this time the current federal and state funding sources for operations are shown at the FY 2011 levels for the five-year plan, with inflation absorbed by contractual revenues and local funds. The only new federal or state funding for operations shown in the plan, are associated with the proposed S.5310 grant opportunities. If the federal and state funding scenario improves, WTA can make adjustments to the financial plan using the electronic tool that has been provided with this plan.

**Table ES-1: WTA CTSP Summary of Service Improvements**

<b>Service Improvement</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Annual Revenue Hours</b>	<b>Annual Operating Cost</b>	<b>Capital Cost</b>	<b>Proposed Year</b>	<b>Proposed Funding Sources</b>
Saturday service on the WE Shuttle	To provide mobility options on Saturdays for people in the Wilkesboro and N. Wilkesboro area.	416	\$ 17,472	\$ -	2012	RGP, Town of Wilkesboro, Town of North Wilkesboro
Re-brand WE Shuttle	To further differentiate the shuttle from other WTA services and attract new riders.			\$ 10,000	2012	CTP capital program, WTA local match
Add a second vehicle to the WE Shuttle	To accommodate additional geographic areas in the Wilkesboro/N. Wilkesboro area.	3,000	\$ 126,000	\$ 73,500	2015	RGP, Town of Wilkesboro, Town of North Wilkesboro
Fare Assistance Program	To subsidize the fares for elderly people and people with disabilities so they can afford to ride WTA.	1,100	\$ 50,000	\$ 41,150	2013	S.5310 program, State match, DSS-WSCC match
Purchase of Service Program	To provide additional capacity for elderly people and people with disabilities.	1,100	\$ 50,000	\$ 41,150	2013	S. 5310 program, State match, DSS-WSCC match
Add Demand-Response Capacity	To meet additional demand for community transportation in Wilkes County.	1,530	\$ 64,260	\$ 41,150	2013	RGP, EDTAP, EMPL, contracts, fares
Add Demand-Response Capacity	To meet additional demand for community transportation in Wilkes County.	1,530	\$ 64,260	\$ 41,150	2014	RGP, EDTAP, EMPL, contracts, fares
Additional Shelters	To provide shelter for people waiting for the WE Shuttle			\$ 50,000	2012	CTP Capital, WTA local match, developer contributions

**Table ES-1: WTA CTSP Summary of Service Improvements**

<b>Service Improvement</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Annual Revenue Hours</b>	<b>Annual Operating Cost</b>	<b>Capital Cost</b>	<b>Proposed Year</b>	<b>Proposed Funding Sources</b>
MDC/AVL	To improve the efficiency of WTA demand-response operations			\$ 150,000	2015	NCDOT Technology Program, WTA local match
Coordinate services with YVEDDI in the Elkin area	To reduce duplication of service	Modest savings in service hours	\$ -	\$ -	2012	
Coordinated long distance medical trips with ACTA	To maximize the use of regional vehicles travel toward the Triad for medical appointments	Modest savings in service hours	\$ 1,800	\$ 1,500	2012	CTP and WTA local match
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>8,676</b>	<b>\$ 373,792</b>	<b>\$ 449,600</b>		

Note: These improvements are in FY 2011 dollars and are based on a fully allocated operating cost of \$42 per hour.

**Table ES-2: WTA Financial Plan for Operations**

<b>Projects</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>
<i>Annual Service Hours</i>						
WTA Services- FY2010 Level of Service	27,090	27,090	27,090	27,090	27,090	27,090
CTSP Proposals:						
Saturday Service on the WE Shuttle	-	416	416	416	416	416
S. 5310 Fare Assistance Program (1)	-	-	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
S. 5310 Purchase of Service Program (1)	-	-	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
Add Demand Response Capacity	-	-	1,530	3,060	3,060	3,060
Second Vehicle on WE Shuttle	-	-	-	-	3,000	3,000
Proposed Additional Hours of Service	-	416	4,146	5,676	8,676	8,676
<b>TOTAL CURRENT HOURS AND NEW PROPOSED SERVICES</b>	<b>27,090</b>	<b>27,506</b>	<b>31,236</b>	<b>32,766</b>	<b>35,766</b>	<b>35,766</b>
<b>Percent Increase in Community Transit Service Hours from Previous Year</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Increase in Service Hours</b>	<b>32%</b>					

(1) Both of these programs will flow through other agencies.

**Table ES-2: WTA Financial Plan for Operations- Projected Operating Expenses**

<b>Projects</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>
<i>Projected Operating Expenses</i>						
WTA FY2011 operating budget for existing services, with inflationary increases and rent increase	\$ 1,133,411	\$ 1,190,747	\$ 1,238,377	\$ 1,287,912	\$ 1,339,429	\$ 1,393,006
CTSP Proposals:						
Saturday Service on the WE Shuttle	\$ -	\$ 18,171	\$ 18,898	\$ 19,654	\$ 20,440	\$ 21,258
S. 5310 Fare Assistance Program (1)	\$ -		\$ 49,970	\$ 51,970	\$ 54,049	\$ 56,212
S. 5310 Purchase of Service Program (1)	\$ -		\$ 49,970	\$ 51,970	\$ 54,049	\$ 56,212
Add Demand Response Capacity	\$ -		\$ 69,504	\$ 144,572	\$ 150,356	\$ 156,370
Coordinated trips with ACTA		\$ 1,872	\$ 1,947	\$ 2,025	\$ 2,106	\$ 2,190
Second Vehicle on WE Shuttle					\$ 147,407	\$ 153,303
<b>Total New Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 20,043</b>	<b>\$ 190,289</b>	<b>\$ 270,191</b>	<b>\$ 428,407</b>	<b>\$ 445,545</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 1,133,411</b>	<b>\$ 1,210,790</b>	<b>\$ 1,428,666</b>	<b>\$ 1,558,103</b>	<b>\$ 1,767,836</b>	<b>\$ 1,838,551</b>
<b>Percent Increase in Expenses from Previous Year</b>						
			<b>7%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Total Increase in Expenses</b>						
	<b>62%</b>					

(1) Both of these programs will flow through other agencies.

**Table ES-2: WTA Financial Year for Operations - Projected Operating Revenues**

<b>Anticipated Funding Sources for Operating</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>
<i>Federal</i>						
FTA S.5311 Administrative	\$ 182,625	\$ 182,625	\$ 182,625	\$ 182,625	\$ 182,625	\$ 182,625
S. 5310 (fare assistance) through the DSS			39,976	41,576	43,240	44,969
S.5310 (purchase of service), through the DSS or WSCC			39,976	41,576	43,240	44,969
<b><i>Subtotal, Federal</i></b>	<b>\$ 182,625</b>	<b>\$ 182,625</b>	<b>\$ 262,577</b>	<b>\$ 265,777</b>	<b>\$ 269,105</b>	<b>\$ 272,563</b>
<i>State</i>						
State Funds in Support of Administrative Expenses	\$ 11,414	\$ 11,414	\$ 11,414	\$ 11,414	\$ 11,414	\$ 11,414
Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program	\$ 90,725	\$ 90,725	\$ 90,725	\$ 90,725	\$ 90,725	\$ 90,725
Rural General Public	\$ 100,405	\$ 100,405	\$ 100,405	\$ 100,405	\$ 100,405	\$ 100,405
Employment	\$ 69,092	\$ 69,092	\$ 69,092	\$ 69,092	\$ 69,092	\$ 69,092
State Funds in Support of S.5310 Projects			\$ 9,994	\$ 10,394	\$ 10,810	\$ 11,242
<b><i>Subtotal, State</i></b>	<b>\$ 271,636</b>	<b>\$ 271,636</b>	<b>\$ 281,630</b>	<b>\$ 282,030</b>	<b>\$ 282,446</b>	<b>\$ 282,878</b>
<i>Local</i>						
Local Cash Match	\$ 34,243	\$ 53,784	\$ 65,929	\$ 68,568	\$ 218,719	\$ 227,468
Contract Revenue	\$ 559,340	\$ 581,714	\$ 674,486	\$ 785,855	\$ 830,121	\$ 876,912
Passenger Fares	\$ 124,675	\$ 133,187	\$ 169,494	\$ 159,958	\$ 182,571	\$ 189,874
<b><i>Subtotal, Local</i></b>	<b>\$ 718,258</b>	<b>\$ 768,684</b>	<b>\$ 909,909</b>	<b>\$ 1,014,381</b>	<b>\$ 1,231,411</b>	<b>\$ 1,294,254</b>
<b>Total Projected/Proposed Operating Funds</b>	<b>\$ 1,172,519</b>	<b>\$ 1,222,945</b>	<b>\$ 1,454,116</b>	<b>\$ 1,562,188</b>	<b>\$ 1,782,962</b>	<b>\$ 1,849,695</b>
<b><i>Surplus/Deficit</i></b>	<b>\$ 39,108</b>	<b>\$ 12,155</b>	<b>\$ 25,450</b>	<b>\$ 4,085</b>	<b>\$ 15,126</b>	<b>\$ 11,144</b>

Note: Contract revenue is inflated by 6% for FY 2014, FY 2015, and FY 2016 to compensate for level state and federal funding.

**Table ES-3: WTA CTSP Financial Plan for Vehicle Replacement and Expansion**

Number of Vehicles	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Replacement	4	3	4	3	1	1
Expansion			3	1	1	
<b>Total Vehicles</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

Vehicle Types:	2 mini vans with ramps	3 conversion vans with lifts	1 mini van with ramp 6 conversion vans with lifts	4 conversion vans with lifts	1 conversion van with lift	1 LTV
	2 LTVs				1 LTV	

**Vehicle Costs**

Replacement	\$ 196,000	\$ 128,388	\$ 177,869	\$ 138,869	\$ 48,141	\$ 89,427
Expansion	\$ -		\$ 133,524	\$ 46,290	\$ 63,175	\$ -
Bus Wraps		\$ 10,400				
<b>Total Projected Vehicle Costs</b>	<b>\$ 196,000</b>	<b>\$ 138,788</b>	<b>\$ 311,393</b>	<b>\$ 185,159</b>	<b>\$ 111,316</b>	<b>\$ 89,427</b>

**Anticipated Funding Sources**

Federal S. 5311	\$ 156,800	\$ 111,030	\$ 249,114	\$ 148,127	\$ 89,053	\$ 71,542
State	\$ 19,600	\$ 13,879	\$ 31,139	\$ 18,516	\$ 11,132	\$ 8,943
Local	\$ 19,600	\$ 13,879	\$ 31,139	\$ 18,516	\$ 11,132	\$ 8,943
<b>Total Vehicle Funding</b>	<b>\$ 196,000</b>	<b>\$ 138,788</b>	<b>\$ 311,393</b>	<b>\$ 185,159</b>	<b>\$ 111,316</b>	<b>\$ 89,427</b>

**Table ES-4: WTA CTSP Financial Plan for Facilities, Equipment, and Other Capital**

<b>Projects</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>
<i>Technology</i>						
MDC/AVL	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 175,485	\$ -	\$ -
Computer Upgrades	\$ -	\$ 1,560	\$ 1,622	\$ 1,687	\$ 1,755	\$ 1,825
Computer Software	\$ -	\$ 1,040	\$ 1,082	\$ 1,125	\$ 1,170	\$ 1,217
<i>Passenger Amenities</i>						
Shelters	\$ -	\$ 52,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Projected Non-Vehicle Capital Expenses</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 54,600</b>	<b>\$ 2,704</b>	<b>\$ 2,812</b>	<b>\$ 178,410</b>	<b>\$ 3,042</b>
<i>Anticipated Funding Sources</i>						
NCDOT Advanced Technology	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 157,937	\$ -
Federal S. 5311	\$ -	\$ 43,680	\$ 2,163	\$ 2,250	\$ 2,340	\$ 2,433
State	\$ -	\$ 5,460	\$ 270	\$ 281	\$ 292	\$ 304
Local	\$ -	\$ 5,460	\$ 270	\$ 281	\$ 17,841	\$ 304
<b>Total Projected Non-Vehicle Capital Funds</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 54,600</b>	<b>\$ 2,704</b>	<b>\$ 2,812</b>	<b>\$ 178,410</b>	<b>\$ 3,042</b>

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### BACKGROUND AND PROCESS

The North Carolina Department of Transportation, Public Transportation Division (NCDOT-PTD), helps provide planning assistance for the transit programs that it supports through federal and state grants. One of the planning tools utilized by the NCDOT-PTD for its local grantees is the Community Transportation Service Plan (CTSP). NCDOT-PTD guidance indicates that a CTSP is:

“A dynamic planning tool to be utilized by the transit system as a guideline in order to effectively accomplish the following:

- Identify the current performance and organizational direction of the system.
- Recommend strategies and propose performance measures of operating or managing that increase mobility options for passengers.
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization and transportation services.
- Support and encourage defensible, results-based budgets.
- Promote the coordination of public transportation services across geographies.”<sup>1</sup>

This final report documents the CTSP process that has been undertaken for the Wilkes Transportation Authority (WTA). The CTSP was directed by a Steering Committee comprised of community stakeholders, with input from WTA staff and

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<sup>1</sup> NCDOT-PTD, 2009 Community Transportation Conference, Community Transportation Service Plan presentation, November 2009.

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NCDOT-PTD. Appendix A provides a list of the Steering Committee members. The study tasks were undertaken by KFH Group, Inc., in close consultation with the Steering Committee, WTA staff, and NCDOT-PTD.

The primary task work for the CTSP began in April 2010 and was completed in January 2011. The following interim work products were completed and presented to the Steering Committee, WTA staff, and NCDOT-PTD during the study time frame:

- Technical Memorandum #1: Existing Services (May 2010)
- Technical Memorandum #2: Transit Needs Analysis (August 2010)
- Technical Memorandum #3: Service and Organizational Alternatives (October/November 2010)
- Draft Final Report (February 2011)

The Draft Final Report was presented to the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at a public meeting in February, 2011. The WTA Board approved the Draft Plan on February 14, 2011.

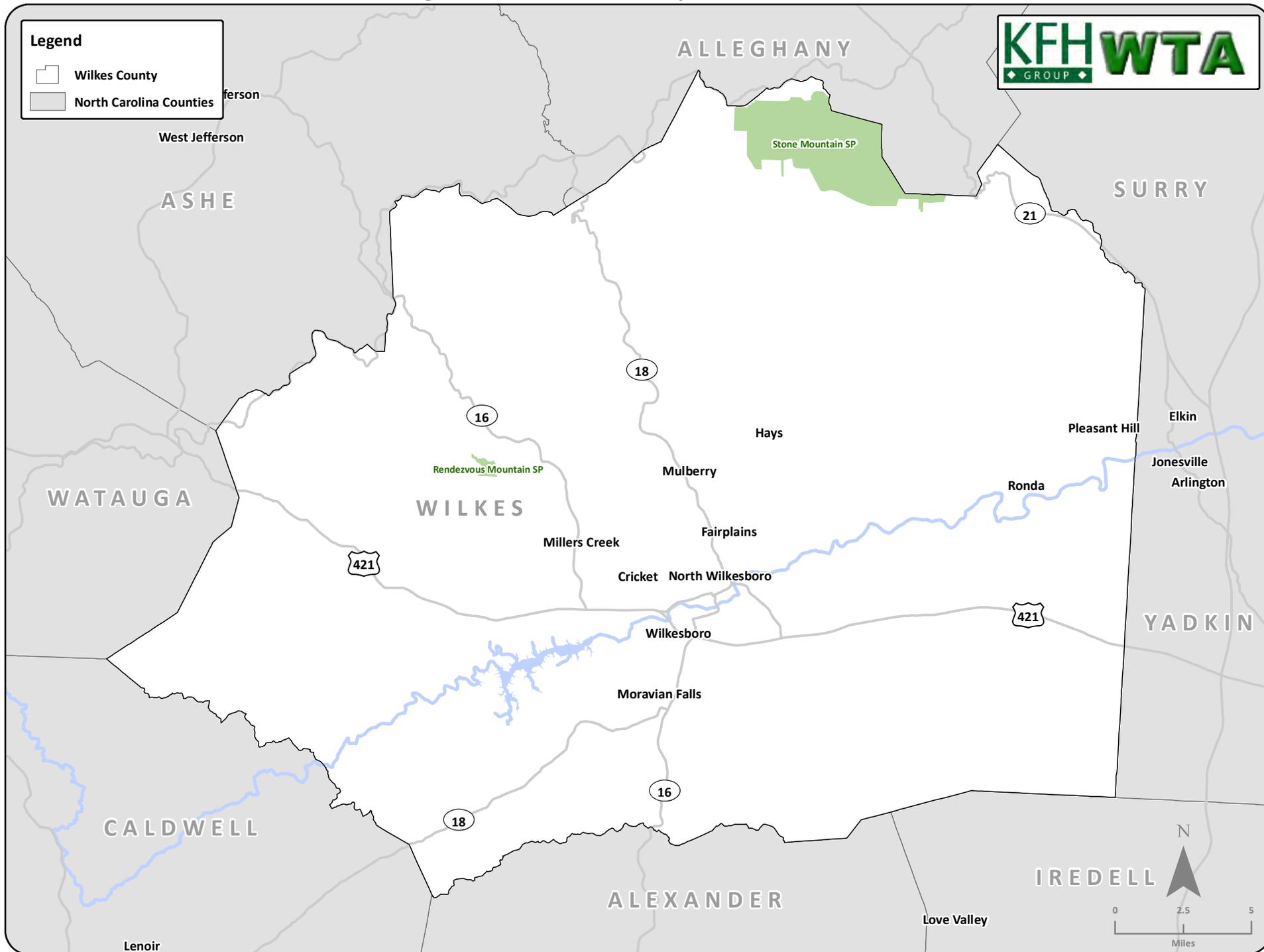
## **WTA BACKGROUND**

WTA, organized under Chapter 160A, Article 25 of the North Carolina General Statutes, serves Wilkes County, North Carolina. The County, located between Western North Carolina's Piedmont and High Country, is shown in Figure 1-1.

Prior to 2005, WTA was a private non-profit organization, which is still in existence and will be until all of the vehicles that were purchased under the non-profit are retired. In 1998 the system experienced significant financial, legal, and staff difficulties. WTA has largely recovered from these problems with new Board Members, new administrative staff members, and a new organizational structure.

The primary service modes provided by WTA are demand-response and subscription, with one deviated fixed-route (the WE Shuttle) in place to serve Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro. WTA has between 20 and 30 contracts with local agencies. These contracts represent the majority of the transportation provided by WTA.

Figure %%Wilkes County, North Carolina



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## SPECIFIC ISSUES CONSIDERED DURING THE CTSP

At the initial Steering Committee meeting for the CTSP, held May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Steering Committee members were asked to indicate what issues they thought were important to consider during the study process. These issues are summarized below and are not presented in any particular priority order.

- There is a need to make the WTA vehicles more mother and child friendly by ensuring that car seats are available and properly installed in each vehicle. It was mentioned that some transit systems in North Carolina are able to get car seats donated by community businesses and/or organizations.
- Occasionally there are scheduling issues that result in riders waiting long periods of time for a return trip from Elkin. There may be a need to look at posting some vehicles closer to Elkin to help alleviate this issue.
- WTA has seen an increasing number of calls to get veterans to Veteran's Administration (VA) hospitals in Salisbury, Asheville, and Winston-Salem. WTA can use Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP) funds for these trips, but would like to investigate other revenue sources as EDTAP funds are limited.
- The State's human service network has experienced significant funding cuts and these cuts have impacted the ability to pay for transportation for agency clients. Some of these clients are transported as EDTAP or Rural General Public (RGP) riders, which impacts the ability of WTA to grow service. It is also currently unclear how health reform initiatives will impact Medicaid transportation.
- Regional coordination opportunities may exist and should be explored. WTA's transit "neighbors" include AppalCART, Yadkin Valley Public Transportation, Iredell County Area Transit System, Greenway Public Transportation, Ashe County Transportation Authority, and Alleghany in Motion.
- Wilkes County is promoting tourism in the area. The concept of using public transportation to access recreational opportunities should be explored. The public opinion survey for the project should ask about using public transportation to access recreational opportunities.
- Additional bus stop amenities (i.e., shelters) are needed in Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro for users of the WE Shuttle.

- WTA is replacing some of its vans with light transit vehicles (LTVs) which will add more capacity for the WE Shuttle and other selected routes.
- Committee members would also like to explore what impact the WE Shuttle could/does have on downtown visitation (Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro).

### **Issues Previously Discussed**

Prior to the full Committee meeting, KFH Group staff and WTA staff met to discuss the primary issues for the study. These issues that were not articulated by Committee members (above) are discussed below.

- Maintaining and improving WTA's financial position is a critical component for the five-year plan. Any new services will need to have a viable financial plan for implementation.
- There may be a need for additional regional services between economic centers, including locally (i.e. economic centers within and adjacent to Wilkes County) and more broadly (i.e., intercity bus service).
- WTA is in need of an operations and maintenance facility. WTA currently leases space and does not have a maintenance garage. Maintenance is performed by contractors.
- WTA is interested in building its base of general public riders and transforming its image from a service only for people who are transit dependent to a service that is open to everyone.
- WTA would like to partner with the local community college to provide transportation for the college community.
- WTA would like to partner with additional local human services agencies to coordinate transportation scheduling and human services data collection.

These issues have been reflected to the extent possible in the CTSP recommendations.

## **FINAL REPORT**

This final report documents the study process and is organized in the following manner:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Existing Services
- Chapter 3: Transit Needs Analysis
- Chapter 4: Service and Organizational Alternatives
- Chapter 5: Facility Needs Assessment
- Chapter 6: Five-Year Plan

## Chapter 2

# Existing Services

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the CTSP provides a full description and analysis of WTA and provides a brief inventory of the other transportation providers in the region. The information contained in this chapter was based on Technical Memorandum #1 and was used as the base data for the development of the five-year plan. There were some updates to the data used in the original technical memorandum, and these are reflected in this chapter.

### ADVISORY AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

#### WTA Board of Authority (WTA Board)

The WTA Board is the legal governing body of the WTA, and provides policy and legislative direction for WTA. The WTA Board creates and amends organizational policy, approves budgets, monitors performance, (operationally and fiscally), empowers the Executive Director with authority, and is the final authority on all business conducted by the organization. Responsibilities of the WTA Board are, but not limited to:

- Formulation of Mission, Purpose, Vision, and/or Long-Term Strategies,
- Selection of the Executive Director,
- Supporting and reviewing Executive Director's performance,
- Ensuring organizational planning,
- Ensuring adequate resources,
- Determining and maintaining the organization's programs and services,
- Enhancing the organization through advocacy, and
- Regularly assessing the Board's own performance.

The membership of the WTA Board is appointed by the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners, and consists of representatives from:

- One current member of the County Board of Commissioners
- One member from the County Department of Social Services (DSS)
- One member from the County Planning Department or Grants Administration
- One member from the County Health Department
- One member from an agency serving the needs of senior citizens
- One member from an agency serving the needs of mental health citizens
- Five at-large community representatives not employed by the County

The officers of the Authority consist of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Executive Director, and Financial Manager. WTA Board meetings are held not less than quarterly, with called meetings whenever the Chairperson deems it necessary and/or upon request of the WTA Executive Director.<sup>1</sup>

### **CTSP Steering Committee**

WTA formed a Steering Committee to serve in an advisory capacity for the CTSP process. This Committee has guided the process and includes representatives from the following agencies and organizations:

- WTA system customer
- Town of Wilkesboro Planning Department
- Wilkes Regional Dialysis Center
- Wilkes County DSS
- Wilkes Senior Citizens Council
- Wilkes County Health Department
- Wilkes County Planning Department
- North Carolina Department of Transportation

## **ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS**

This section of the report describes the mission, vision, key initiatives, and performance measures for WTA and also presents the organizational structure and staffing.

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<sup>1</sup> WTA Board of Authority By-Laws.

## **WTA Mission Statement / Vision**

As noted on the WTA Website, the authority's vision is to:

- Ensure greater transportation choices and more travel options tailored to the varying needs of residents, visitors, businesses, and industry.
- Commit to the deployment of new systems, services, and technologies that ease the travel burden and increase the efficiency of the available transport systems.
- Increase the choices that minimize the burden of travel and allow safe and convenient use of a variety of travel options.
- Be the most efficient value provider of transportation within the Wilkes County region.
- Take a leadership role in the development of a truly seamless multi-modal transportation network which links access to services and facilities for those with limited transportation options in rural areas.
- Coordinate and engage the local community, business, and industry toward the joint cooperative effort to satisfy human needs and utilize existing resources for the long-term betterment of the surrounding communities.

## **Organizational Structure and Staffing**

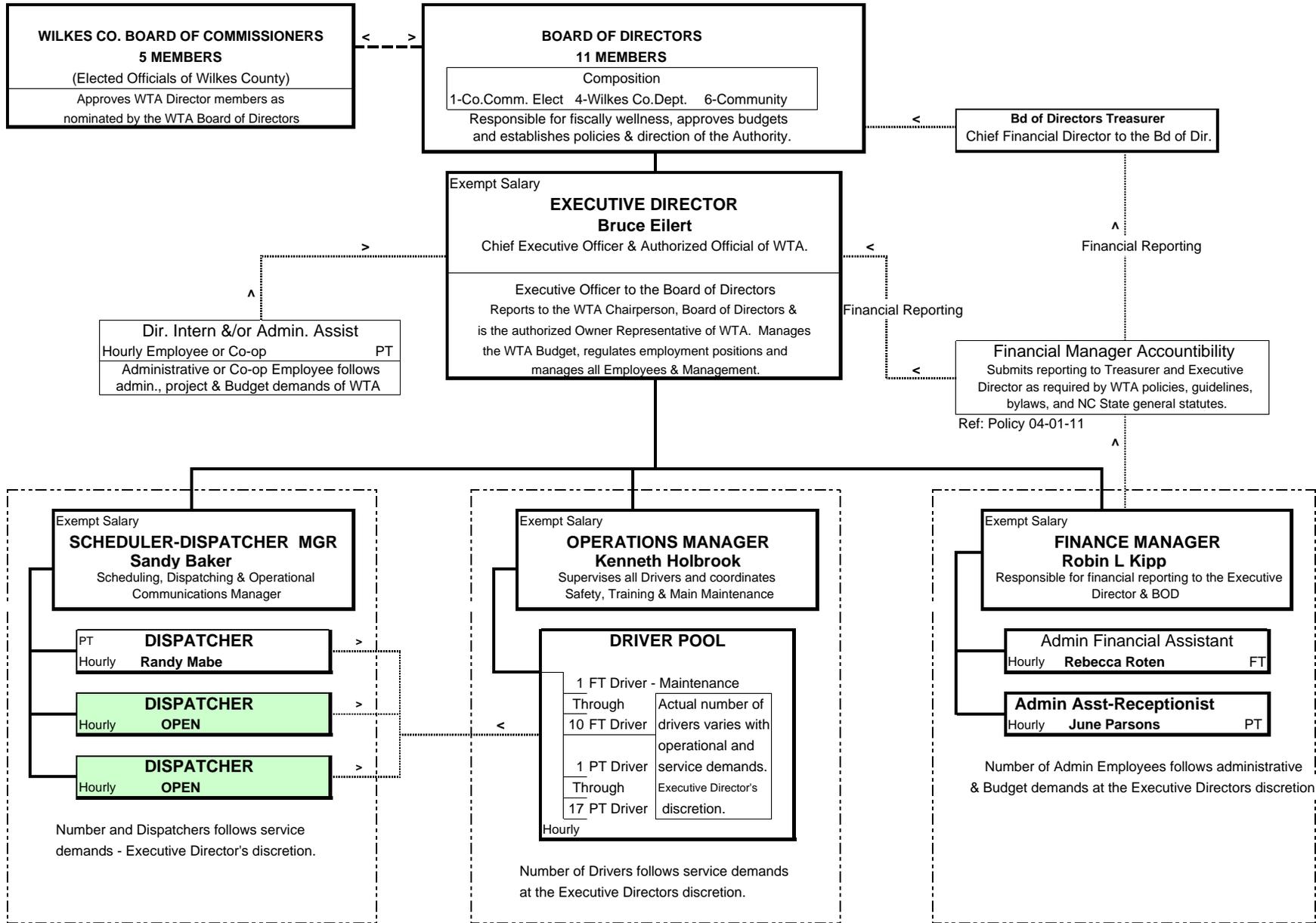
WTA is structured as an independent transit authority. The Executive Director serves as the liaison between the Board, the community, and staff and aligns the Authority activities with the mission and goals of the agency. The Executive Director manages the WTA budget, and oversees all employees and managers.

As noted in the WTA Organizational Chart located in Exhibit 2-1, the following departments and managers report to the Executive Director:

- Scheduler-Dispatch Manager
- Operations Manager
- Finance Manager

Additional information on the organizational structure and job responsibilities can also be found in Exhibit 2-1.

## Exhibit 2-1: WTA Organizational Chart



2-4

<b>1 Executive Director</b> (Executive Officer)		
<b>1 Operations Mgmt.</b>	<b>1 Financial Manager</b>	<b>1 Scheduling</b>
12 Full-Time Drivers	1 Admin. Fin. Asst.	3 Dispatcher
14 Part-Time Drivers	1 Admin - Receptionist	

**4 Exempt Salary**  
**6 Admin. Hrly**      6 Exec Dire Discretion FT/PT  
**26 Driver Hrly**      12 Full-Time    14 Part-Time  
**36 Total Max. Budgeted Employees**

## SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

WTA provides public transportation for any resident of Wilkes County. As noted earlier, WTA currently operates one deviated fixed-route in the Wilkesboro/N. Wilkesboro area, demand-response, subscription, and agency-contracted services. These services are detailed in this section. Vehicle maintenance is performed through local vendors, and as mentioned with the current issues facing WTA, the Authority does not have a maintenance facility.

### WE Shuttle

The WE Shuttle operates on an hourly basis, with runs beginning at 7:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m. The WE Shuttle operates Monday through Friday (excluding holidays). The route originates at the WTA Building in downtown North Wilkesboro and makes scheduled stops, designated with route signs, at locations throughout Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro. A schedule for the WE Shuttle is provided in Exhibit 2-2.

Customers can also board the WE Shuttle at any point along the main route through flag stops. The WE Shuttle also deviates for people who use wheelchairs and non ambulatory customers within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of the route with 24 hour notice. A map of the WE Shuttle is provided in Figure 2-1.

The fare for the WE Shuttle is \$1.00 per trip. Day passes are available for \$5.00. Children under 12 years of age and accompanied by a paying adult may ride free. Fares are also payable through \$25.00 coupons purchased from the WTA offices.

### Demand-Response Services

WTA provides demand-response services to locations within the State of North Carolina. Customers need to call the WTA offices at least one business day prior to their trip to schedule local service, and two days for out-of-county trips. WTA office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Regular services hours are from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and extended service hours from 6:01 p.m. through 5:59 a.m. Monday through Friday and on Saturdays and Sundays.

The exception to these hours is for dialysis services. For this service, regular service hours are from 3:00 a.m. through 9:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday and holidays, and extended service hours from 9:01 p.m. through 2:59 a.m. Monday through Friday, and on Saturdays and Sundays.

Exhibit 2-2: WE Shuttle Schedule

Drive-By / Stop Locations	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	
1	Wilkes Transportation Authority Bldg	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM
2	Hickory Circle Apartments	7:02 AM	8:02 AM	9:02 AM	10:02 AM	11:02 AM	12:02 PM
	Walgreen's				Must Call		
	Rite Aid - CVS Pharmacy's				See Instructions Below		
3	Wilkes County Library	7:05 AM	8:05 AM	9:05 AM	10:05 AM	11:05 AM	12:05 PM
4	N. Wilkesboro Post Office	7:07 AM	8:07 AM	9:07 AM	10:07 AM	11:07 AM	12:07 PM
5	Hinshaw / Finley	7:09 AM	8:09 AM	9:09 AM	10:09 AM	11:09 AM	12:09 PM
6	State Empl. Credit Union & Pizza Hut	7:13 AM	8:13 AM	9:13 AM	10:13 AM	11:13 AM	12:13 PM
	Wilkes Senior Citizens				Must Call		
7	North Park Shop Center	7:16 AM	8:16 AM	9:16 AM	10:16 AM	11:16 AM	12:16 PM
8	Finley Village Living Center	7:18 AM	8:18 AM	9:18 AM	10:18 AM	11:18 AM	12:18 PM
9	3rd & 'J' Street	7:20 AM	8:20 AM	9:20 AM	10:20 AM	11:20 AM	12:20 PM
10	Main Street Park N. Wilkesboro	7:24 AM	8:24 AM	9:24 AM	10:24 AM	11:24 AM	12:24 PM
11	Wilkes Towers on Main	7:25 AM	8:25 AM	9:25 AM	10:25 AM	11:25 AM	12:25 PM
12	Lowe's Food Midtown Plaza	7:27 AM	8:27 AM	9:27 AM	10:27 AM	11:27 AM	12:27 PM
13	Main Str. Wilkesboro (Smithy's Hotel)	7:29 AM	8:29 AM	9:29 AM	10:29 AM	11:29 AM	12:29 PM
	Wilkes County Office Building				Must Call		
	Wilkes County Court House				Not included in regular stops		
	Wilkes DSS				See Instructions Below		
	Wilkes Health Dept						
14	Federal Building - Post Office	7:31 AM	8:31 AM	9:31 AM	10:31 AM	11:31 AM	12:31 PM
	Social Security Office				Must Call		
	Glen Hill Apartments				Not included in regular stops		
15	Wilkes Community College	7:36 AM	8:36 AM	9:36 AM	10:36 AM	11:36 AM	12:36 PM
16	Windmere Apartments	7:37 AM	8:37 AM	9:37 AM	10:37 AM	11:37 AM	12:37 PM
17	Tyson & Taste Freeze	7:40 AM	8:40 AM	9:40 AM	10:40 AM	11:40 AM	12:40 PM
	Holiday Inn Express				Must Call		
18	Lowe's Foods of Winkler Mill	7:45 AM	8:45 AM	9:45 AM	10:45 AM	11:45 AM	12:45 PM
	Good Will Store				Must Call		

Exhibit 2-2: WE Shuttle Schedule

	Walden Ridge Apartments				Not included in regular stops		
	Lowes Home Improvement				See Instructions Below		
19	Super WalMart - West	7:48 AM	8:48 AM	9:48 AM	10:48 AM	11:48 AM	12:48 PM
20	Super WalMart - East	7:49 AM	8:49 AM	9:49 AM	10:49 AM	11:49 AM	12:49 PM
	Bojangles				Must Call		
	West Park Medical				Not included in regular stops		
	Grandview Apartments				See Instructions Below		

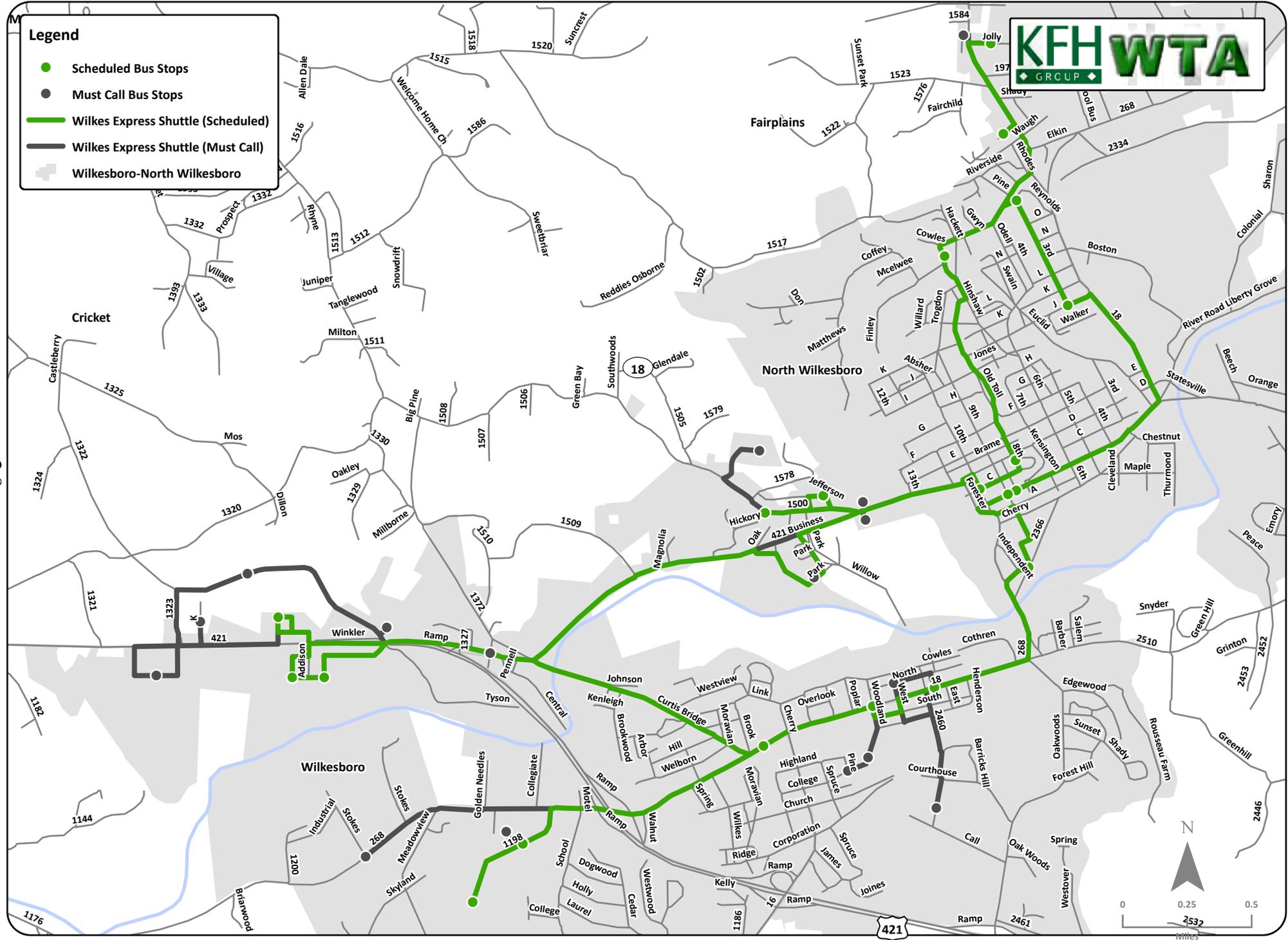
Afternoon

	Drive-By / Stop Locations	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12
1	Wilkes Transportation Authority Bldg	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM
2	Hickory Circle Apartments	1:02 PM	2:02 PM	3:02 PM	4:02 PM	5:02 PM	6:02 PM
	Walgreen's				Must Call		
	Rite Aid - CVS Pharmacy's				See Instructions Below		
3	Wilkes County Library	1:05 PM	2:05 PM	3:05 PM	4:05 PM	5:05 PM	6:05 PM
4	N. Wilkesboro Post Office	1:07 PM	2:07 PM	3:07 PM	4:07 PM	5:07 PM	6:07 PM
5	Hinshaw / Finley	1:09 PM	2:09 PM	3:09 PM	4:09 PM	5:09 PM	6:09 PM
6	State Empl. Credit Union & Pizza Hut	1:13 PM	2:13 PM	3:13 PM	4:13 PM	5:13 PM	6:13 PM
	Wilkes Senior Citizens				Must Call		
7	North Park Shop Center	1:16 PM	2:16 PM	3:16 PM	4:16 PM	5:16 PM	6:16 PM
8	Finley Village Living Center	1:18 PM	2:18 PM	3:18 PM	4:18 PM	5:18 PM	6:18 PM
9	3rd & 'J' Street	1:20 PM	2:20 PM	3:20 PM	4:20 PM	5:20 PM	6:20 PM
10	Main Street Park N. Wilkesboro	1:24 PM	2:24 PM	3:24 PM	4:24 PM	5:24 PM	6:24 PM
11	Wilkes Towers on Main	1:25 PM	2:25 PM	3:25 PM	4:25 PM	5:25 PM	6:25 PM
12	Lowe's Food Midtown Plaza	1:27 PM	2:27 PM	3:27 PM	4:27 PM	5:27 PM	6:27 PM
13	Main Str. Wilkesboro (Smithy's Hotel)	1:29 PM	2:29 PM	3:29 PM	4:29 PM	5:29 PM	6:29 PM
	Wilkes County Office Building				Must Call		
	Wilkes County Court House				Not included in regular stops		
	Wilkes DSS				See Instructions Below		
	Wilkes Health Dept						
14	Federal Building - Post Office	1:31 PM	2:31 PM	3:31 PM	4:31 PM	5:31 PM	6:31 PM
	Social Security Office				Must Call		
	Glen Hill Apartments				Not included in regular stops		
15	Wilkes Community College	1:36 PM	2:36 PM	3:36 PM	4:36 PM	5:36 PM	6:36 PM
16	Windmere Apartments	1:37 PM	2:37 PM	3:37 PM	4:37 PM	5:37 PM	6:37 PM
17	Tyson & Taste Freeze	1:40 PM	2:40 PM	3:40 PM	4:40 PM	5:40 PM	6:40 PM
	Holiday Inn Express				Must Call		
18	Lowe's Foods of Winkler Mill	1:45 PM	2:45 PM	3:45 PM	4:45 PM	5:45 PM	6:45 PM
	Good Will Store				Must Call		
	Walden Ridge Apartments				Not included in regular stops		

Exhibit 2-2: WE Shuttle Schedule

	Lowes Home Improvement				See Instructions Below		
19	Super WalMart - West	1:48 PM	2:48 PM	3:48 PM	4:48 PM	5:48 PM	6:48 PM
20	Super WalMart - East	1:49 PM	2:49 PM	3:49 PM	4:49 PM	5:49 PM	6:49 PM
	Bojangles				Must Call		
	West Park Medical				Not included in regular stops		
	Grandview Apartments				See Instructions Below		

Figure 2-1: WE Shuttle



### ***General Public Fares and Rates***

An overview of the fares for the WE Shuttle, demand-response trips within Wilkes County, and out-of county trips is presented in Exhibit 2-3. This rate sheet also includes information on WTA policies related to the general public services. WTA has recently raised the RGP out-of-county fares to reflect higher fuel, insurance, and labor expenses. The new rates, which took effect April 1, 2010, represent the first rate increase since September, 2007.

### **Subscription Services**

WTA also offers subscription services for customers wanting to schedule regular pick-up and drop-off trips on a regular basis for work, school, etc.

### **Agency Contracted Services**

WTA provides transportation for groups, agencies, and corporations wanting to schedule regular pick-up and drop-off trips for others. Agency contracted service hours are similar to the demand-response services -- regular services hours are from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and extended service hours from 6:01 p.m. through 5:59 a.m. Monday through Friday, and on Saturday and Sundays.

### ***Contract Fares and Rates***

Exhibit 2-4 provides information on WTA's contract fares and rates. These rates were recently raised (April 16, 2010) to reflect increased expenses for fuel, insurance, and labor. These rates had previously remained unchanged since July 2006.

### ***Medicaid Billing Rate***

Exhibit 2-5 provides information on the contractual transportation provided for the Wilkes County DSS – Medicaid program. As noted, this rate sheet includes rates during regular service hours, evening and weekends, and other associated charges and fees. WTA recently raised the Medicaid billing rate to reflect increased expenses for fuel, insurance, and labor. WTA had not raised the Medicaid billing rate since September 2007.

### **Service Level and Destinations**

In order to gain a greater understanding of the nature and level of services provided by WTA on a regular basis, KFH Group staff examined driver manifests from a two-week period in September, 2009.

# Exhibit 2-3: WTA General Public Fares Rates

Effective April, 2010

**SHUTTLE FARES** Shuttle Run Times 7:00 am through 7:00 pm Monday Through Friday  
 Shuttle travels through Wilkesboro, North Wilkesboro ten times per day. No wait times allowed. [Follows set route only]

**WE SHUTTLE** ..... One Way Trip **\$1.00** **\$5.00** **WE SHUTTLE** .... Ride All Day

Maximum 3900 foot (3/4 mile) deviation for mobility impaired from regular route requires a one business day prior notice. Two deviations per client per day only.

**Save Money - Buy Tokens**

**Scheduled Demand Trips** Regular Demand Trip Times: 6:00 am through 6:00 pm Additional charges for trips after 6:00 pm & before 6:00 am Monday Through Friday  
 One day prior scheduling requested for local county trips.

Zone	Charge	Zone	Charge	Dialysis Service Hours
One round trip from North Wilkesboro to town destinations in appropriate zone per passenger	1 <b>\$2.00</b>	8	<b>\$12.00</b>	<b>Note:</b> Dialysis passengers only may consider "Regular Operation Hours" from 3:00 AM to 9:00 PM.
	2 <b>3.00</b>	9	<b>14.00</b>	
	3 <b>4.00</b>	10	<b>16.00</b>	<b>Other Destinations</b> Destinations not listed require an individual quotation taking into consideration day, time, number of passengers and availability of WTA Drivers.
Wait Time charges will be added to cost of trip at the rate of \$16.50 per hour.	4 <b>5.00</b>	11	<b>18.00</b>	
	5 <b>6.00</b>	12	<b>20.00</b>	
	6 <b>8.00</b>	<b>Beyond Zone 12</b>	<b>24.00</b>	
	7 <b>10.00</b>	<b>Elkin/Jonesville City Limits</b>	<b>30.00</b>	

**WTA Policies & Disclaimers**

**Availability** - Trips are scheduled base on availability of resources at the time the trip is confirmed by the scheduler.

**Bus Rate**-20 Seat (WTA CDL-P License Driver) \$0.85/Mile & \$16.75/Hour (\$21.60 Extended Times) combined billing. Requires WTA GP Contract to schedule trip agenda.

**Billing** - Billing miles and hours are calculated using odometer readings beginning at the WTA Base until the vehicle returns to WTA Base plus manifest hours.

**No Show** - Passengers will be charged for WTA's expense.

**Trips** scheduled during WTA Operational Hours only and are dependant upon WTA resource availability & weather.

**Driver will not be allowed** to transport Stretchers, Gurneys, Geri-Chairs, or other devices in a reclining position, or exceeding 30 inches in width, 48 inches in length, or total weight exceeding 600 pounds including equipment.

**No child** under the age of 8 will be allowed to travel without adult supervision. No minors under the age of 18 will be permitted to travel without written guardian consent. (WE Shuttle exempt)

**Two children** 12 or under, & accompanied by a paying adult in Wilkes to the same destination may ride at no charge. More than two children, there will be an addition charged of \$2.00 per child.

**Wait Time** is added to the bill after 10 minutes loading time. It is calculated in five minute intervals, less driver lunch time. Wait Time charges are \$16.50 per hour [\$21.00 extended hours].

**Attendants** must be provided for passengers needing medical attention, specialized supervision, or for accompanying minors. One attendant may ride with a disabled or mobility impaired passenger free of charge.

**Holiday Rates:** call during regular office hours for a WTA quotation.

**Extended Times** = Weekends, and before 6am & after 6pm Monday thru Friday.

**RGP Out of County Demand Trips**

Two days prior scheduling notice required for O.O.C. trips. Trips cannot be guaranteed if less than two days. City limit destination restrictions apply.

Destinations	Round Trip	Estimated	Each
	Without Wait Charges	Miles One Way	Added Pass
<i>Revised 12/20/07</i>			
Raleigh	<b>\$194.00</b>	180	<b>\$22.00</b>
Durham	<b>174.00</b>	160	<b>20.00</b>
Asheville	<b>146.00</b>	120	<b>17.00</b>
Charlotte & Int'l Airport	<b>121.00</b>	110	<b>14.00</b>
Greensboro	<b>110.00</b>	96	<b>13.00</b>
Salisbury	<b>105.00</b>	90	<b>12.00</b>
High Point	<b>94.00</b>	90	<b>11.00</b>
Piedmont Area Airport	<b>104.00</b>	88	<b>12.00</b>
Mooresville	<b>81.00</b>	64	<b>9.00</b>
Morganton	<b>77.00</b>	60	<b>9.00</b>
Winston Salem	<b>65.00</b>	56	<b>8.00</b>
Hickory	<b>60.00</b>	46	<b>7.00</b>
Lenoir	<b>48.00</b>	44	<b>6.00</b>
Yadkinville	<b>48.00</b>	44	<b>6.00</b>
Statesville	<b>51.00</b>	44	<b>6.00</b>
Sparta	<b>45.00</b>	40	<b>5.00</b>
Boone	<b>45.00</b>	40	<b>5.00</b>
Taylorsville	<b>33.00</b>	30	<b>4.00</b>

Actual charges may vary dependant on the number of passengers, stops, available resources, service hours, wait times, actual destination miles & driving conditions.

Price for each added passenger traveling with the person paying for the trip. Additional passengers may be scheduled on your trip.

**All Fares & Rates**

**Effective April 1, 2010**

**Special Needs Clients**

**Special Needs Clients**  
 Passengers with special transportation requirements such as:  
 \* Physical Disabilities  
 \* Income Limitations  
 \* Medical Requirements  
 \* Other Special Limitations  
 Passenger must make application with the Wilkes Transportation Authority's Executive Director for information and approval of programs & assistance one week in advance of desired trip.

WTA's Executive director reserves the right to refuse trips based on environmental conditions & available resources. Safety is & continues to be WTA's primary goal.

All Fares & Rates Subject to change without notice

## Exhibit 2-4: Wilkes Transportation Authority Contract Fares Rates Effective April 16, 2010

**Important Notice - Attach this document to your copy of the Wilkes Transportation Authority contract**

- The following rates apply only to customers currently contracting services in writing with WTA.
  - All trips must be completed during the same business day.
  - Contracting agencies are entitled to "Shared Cost Billing" for the number of passengers on board the same vehicle.
  - Total charges are based on the miles generated from garage pull-out, pick-up, drop-off, wait times in 5 minute increments, and return to base.
- ± Actual cost per miles will vary dependent upon boarding time, wait times, weather conditions, traffic conditions, road construction, and other factors.

**Regular Contract Services** (6:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday Through Friday)

Regular Rates per Vehicle Mile	
<b>0.80</b>	Van - Rate per mile - Vehicle Cost Only
<b>0.85</b>	Bus - Rate per mile - Vehicle Cost Only
Regular Charges per Driver Hours	
<b>16.50</b>	Van Driver - Charge per Hour
<b>17.25</b>	Bus Driver - Charge per Hour
Effective 4/1/110	

Dialysis Service Hours
Note: Dialysis passenger trips may consider "Regular Operation Hours" to be 3:00 AM to 9:00 PM.

± Approx Cost/Mile (No Wait Time)	
<b>\$1.44</b>	Van
<b>1.46</b>	Bus

**Total Trip Cost = Regular Driver Time + Regular Vehicle Miles**

**Extended Contract Services** - Trips that are scheduled outside the Regular Hours (before 6:00 AM, after 6:00 PM, Saturdays, and Sundays).

Extended Rates per Vehicle Mile	
<b>0.80</b>	Van - Rate per mile - Vehicle Cost Only
<b>0.85</b>	Bus - Rate per mile - Vehicle Cost Only
Extended Charges per Driver Hours (+\$4.90/Hour)	
<b>21.40</b>	Van Driver - Charge per Hour
<b>22.25</b>	Bus Driver - Charge per Hour
Effective 4/1/110	

Dialysis Service Hours
Note: Dialysis passenger trips may consider "Extended Operation Hours" to be 9:00 PM to 6:00 AM.

± Approx Cost/Mile (No Wait Time)	
<b>\$1.47</b>	Van
<b>1.55</b>	Bus

**Total Trip Cost = Extended Driver Time + Extended Vehicle Miles**

**Holiday Contract Services** - Trips scheduled on the 9 national holidays for WTA.

Holiday Rates per Vehicle Mile	
<b>0.80</b>	Van - Rate per mile - Vehicle Cost Only
<b>0.85</b>	Bus - Rate per mile - Vehicle Cost Only
Holiday Charges per Driver Hours (+\$8.65/Hour)	
<b>25.15</b>	Van Driver - Charge per Hour
<b>25.80</b>	Bus Driver - Charge per Hour
Effective 4/1/110	

Holidays that WTA is Closed	
<i>New Years</i>	<i>Memorial Day</i>
<i>Veterans Day</i>	<i>Labor Day</i>
<i>Good Friday</i>	<i>Thanksgiving</i>
<i>July 4th</i>	<i>Christmas'</i>
	<i>M. Luther King</i>

Dialysis Service Hours
Note: Dialysis passenger trips may consider "Extended Operation Hours" to be 9:00 PM to 6:00 AM.

**Total Trip Cost = Holiday Driver Time + Holiday Vehicle Miles**

± Approx Cost/Mile (No Wait Time)	
<b>\$1.56</b>	Van
<b>1.63</b>	Bus

**Administrative Cancellation Charge**

Rate	Description
<b>\$30.00</b>	A charge per vehicle applied when a scheduled vehicle is cancelled with less than one (1) hour remaining before pick-up time or cancelled on the day of a weekend or holiday trip.
No Change	
<b>\$35.00</b>	Minimum use charge per vehicle when mileage use charge is less than the \$35.00 minimum and/or when vehicle is not available for WTA scheduling.
No Change	

\* Rate per mile approximations are based on WTA's average of 32 mile per hour with minimal wait times.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce Eilert - Executive Director  
Wilkes Transportation Authority (Body Public & Politic)

## Exhibit 2-5: Wilkes Transportation Authority, Inc.

- - - Effective April 16, 2010 - - -

### Wilkes Co. Department of Social Services - Medicaid Rate

- Attach this document to your copy of the Wilkes Transportation Authority contract.
- Billing is calculated using the actual odometer readings and manifest reports summarizing trips.

#### Regular Service Hours (6:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday Through Friday)

All trips must be completed during the same business day.

Regular Rate	Description	Dialysis
<b>\$1.43</b>	Van - Rate per Service Mile	Note: Dialysis passenger trips may consider "Regular Operation Hours" to be 3:00 AM to 9:00 PM.
<b>1.64</b>	Bus - Rate per Service Mile	
Incr. of \$.04 Effective 4/1/10		

#### Extended Service Hours - Trips that are scheduled outside the Regular Hours (before 6:00 AM, after 6:00 PM, Saturdays, and Sundays).

Contract Rate	Description	Dialysis
<b>\$1.94</b>	Van - Rate per Service Mile	Note: Dialysis passenger trips may consider "Extended Operation Hours" to be 9:00 PM to 3:00 AM.
<b>2.09</b>	Bus - Rate per Service Mile	
Incr. of \$.04 Effective 4/1/10		

#### Holiday Hours - Trips scheduled during the nine national recognized holidays for WTA.

Rate	Description	Holidays that WTA is Closed	
<b>\$2.79</b>	Van - Rate per Service Mile	New Years	Memorial Day
<b>3.24</b>	Bus - Rate per Service Mile	Veterans Day	Labor Day
Incr. of \$.04 Effective 4/1/10			
		Good Friday	Thanksgiving
		July 4th	Christmas
			M. Luther King

#### Minimum Use Charges

Min. Use Fee	Description
<b>\$35.00</b>	A minimum use charge per vehicle may be charged when time & mileage usage charges are less than the "minimum use fee" or when the agency negotiates a contract & schedule with WTA and cancels the services before initiating the first trip outside regular service hours.
No Change	

#### Administrative Cancellation Charge

Rate	Description
<b>\$30.00</b>	Administrative Fee for signed contracts that are cancelled prior to implementation to avoid wta from providing services or avoiding billing. A charge per vehicle applied when a scheduled vehicle is cancelled with less than one (1) hour remaining before pickup-up time.
No Change	

This review provided an overview of common destinations as well as indicating the number of vehicles that are needed on a regular basis. Typical service locations include:

- Dialysis centers in North Wilkesboro and Elkin
- Wilkes County Health Department
- Wilkes County DSS
- Wilkes Smart Start
- Wilkes Regional Medical Center
- New River Behavioral Health
- A variety of work locations

The following areas outside of Wilkes County were also served during the two-week period:

- Boone
- Hickory
- Mooresville
- Statesville
- Winston-Salem

During the two-week review period, between 14 and 18 vehicles were typically needed each day for the level of service provided. This level of demand has increased since the manifest review, with the most recent analysis (August, 2010) showing that between 16 and 23 vehicles were needed on a daily basis.

### **Operating Statistics**

The overall operating statistics for WTA in FY 2009 and FY 2010 are depicted in Table 2-1. These data were taken from WTA's internal database. These data indicate that overall ridership grew 9% between FY09 and FY10. WE shuttle ridership was up 26% and the demand-response/subscription ridership was up 6.7%, for an overall increase of 9%. Service hours decreased 6%, allowing productivity to improve to 2.5 passenger trips per service hour on the WE Shuttle and to 1.98 trips per service hour on the demand-response/subscription trips. The overall cost per trip decreased from \$18.72 per passenger trip to \$17.68 per passenger trip between FY09 and FY10. With fewer service hours, the cost per revenue hour increased from \$31.86 to \$34.94.

**Table 2-1: Total System Operating Statistics - FY 2009 and FY 2010**

	Deviated Fixed-Route		Demand-Response/Subscription		Total	
	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2009	FY 2010
Total Passenger Trips	6,035	7,607	43,057	45,937	49,092	53,544
Total Service Hours	3,184	3,055	25,651	24,035	28,835	27,090
Total Service Miles	44,894	50,505	498,746	479,679	543,640	530,184
Passengers per Service Hour	1.90	2.49	1.68	1.91	1.70	1.98
Passengers per Service Mile	0.13	0.15	0.09	0.10	0.09	0.10
Operating Expenses					\$918,775	\$ 946,650
Cost per Passenger Trip					\$18.72	\$17.68
Cost per Service Hour					\$31.86	\$34.94
Cost per Service Mile					\$1.69	\$1.79

Source: WTA data and FY10 Audit Report.

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## Peer Comparison

In order to provide a context for WTA's operating data, KFH Group gathered data from NCDOT concerning other transportation providers in the State. While each system is unique, with particular factors that drive their statistics, it is helpful to see how WTA compares with other programs in the State that have been designated as appropriate members of their peer group.

ITRE has recently developed a new method of grouping transit programs in the State for analysis. The new method includes the following factors: 1) Range of elevation - a geographic factor indicating potential difficulty in operating transportation service due to lower operating speeds resulting from long driveways, steep includes, curvy roads, etc.; 2) Highway density - indicates the potential mobility network constraints, as fewer highways limit mobility options; 3) Population density; and 4) Rural population ratio, which indicates the level of demand for trips outside the service area.

Using these factors, the following counties generally in the western half of the state can be considered peers:

- Chatham
- Haywood
- Macon
- Rutherford
- Watauga

The FY 2010 opstats data for the transit programs that operate in these counties is provided in Table 2-2. As these data indicate, WTA's program is larger than the mean in terms of miles, hours, and operating expenses. Ridership is also higher than the mean, as would be expected with a larger program. WTA's productivity is slightly lower than the mean (1.98 trips per hour versus 2.02 trips per hour) and the cost per trip is about \$1.00 higher.

The lower productivity numbers and higher cost per trip values reflect the large service area.

## FUNDING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The funding sources for WTA are varied and include federal, state, local, and contractual revenues. An overview of the funding sources for FY 2010 and the projected funding sources for FY11 are provided in Table 2-3 (operating) and Table 2-4 (capital), and the sources are described in this section.

Table 2-2: Selected Peer Comparison, FY 2010 Data

County	Dev. FR Trips	D/R Subscription Agency Trips	Total	Service Hours	Service Miles	Admin.& Operating Expenses	Fleet Size	Trips Per Veh.	Hours Per Veh.	Trips Per Hour	Trips Per Mile	Cost Per Trip	Cost Per Hour	Cost Per Mile
Chatham	-	44,397	44,397	18,452	478,130	746,784	25	1,776	738	2.41	0.09	\$ 16.82	\$ 40.47	\$ 1.56
Haywood	-	58,868	58,868	27,476	500,679	918,274	18	3,270	1,526	2.14	0.12	\$ 15.60	\$ 33.42	\$ 1.83
Macon	7,518	27,004	34,522	15,874	288,832	540,044	12	2,877	1,323	2.17	0.12	\$ 15.64	\$ 34.02	\$ 1.87
Rutherford	16,874	40,325	57,199	34,391	623,736	846,708	37	1,546	929	1.66	0.09	\$ 14.80	\$ 24.62	\$ 1.36
Watauga (1)	-	28,059	28,059	13,970	234,992	589,239	14	2,004	998	2.01	0.12	\$ 21.00	\$ 42.18	\$ 2.51
<b>Wilkes</b>	<b>7,607</b>	<b>45,937</b>	<b>53,544</b>	<b>27,090</b>	<b>530,184</b>	<b>946,650</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2,328</b>	<b>1,178</b>	<b>1.98</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>\$ 17.68</b>	<b>\$ 34.94</b>	<b>\$ 1.79</b>
Mean	10,666	40,765	46,098	22,876	442,759	764,617	22	2,144	1,064	2.02	0.10	\$ 16.59	\$ 33.43	\$ 1.73

Source: NCDOT Opstats and WTA data.

(1) Paratransit portion of system only, expenses are estimated.

**Table 2-3: Wilkes Transportation Authority  
Operating Funding and Revenue, FY 2010 and Projected FY11**

**FY 2010**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Federal Section 5311 - CTP Funds - Administrative	\$ 164,263
State Assistance - CTP Funds - Administrative	\$ 10,998
State Operating Assistance - ROAP Funds	\$ 204,762
Local Assistance - Operating Funds	\$ -
Contract Revenue	\$ 545,532
Fares/Donations from Passengers	\$ 18,596
Proceeds from Vehicle Sales	\$ 7,972
Interest Income	\$ 285
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 952,408</b>

Source: FY 2010 OPSTATS Form.

**Projected FY 2011**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Federal Section 5311 - CTP Funds - Administrative	\$ 182,625
State Assistance - CTP Funds - Administrative	\$ 11,414
Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program	\$ 90,725
Rural General Public	\$ 100,405
Employment	\$ 69,092
Local Cash Match	\$ 34,243
Contract Revenue	\$ 559,340
Fares/Donations from Passengers	\$ 126,540
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,174,384</b>

**Table 2-4: Wilkes Transportation Authority  
Capital Funding Sources - FY 2010**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Federal/State - Vehicles and Others	\$ 164,999
Local Funding	\$ 21,878
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 186,877</b>

Source: FY2010 OPSTATS Form

**Approved FY 2011**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Federal/State - Vehicles and Others	\$ 176,400
Local Funding	\$ 19,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 196,000</b>

## Funding Sources

### *Federal Programs*

**Federal Section 5311** -- This program is used to support public transportation services in rural areas with a population less than 50,000. These funds can be used for either capital purchases or operating expenses. The match ratio for S.5311 funds is up to 80% federal for capital expenses, and up to 50% federal for operating expenses. Local funding and contractual revenue can be used for the remaining required match.

In FY 2010, WTA received a total of \$329,262 in federal funding through the S.5311 Program:

- \$164,263 for administrative expenses
- \$164,999 for capital expenses

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For FY 2011, WTA will receive a total of \$359,025 in federal funding through the S.5311 Program:

- \$182,625 for administrative expenses
- \$176,400 for capital expenses

### *State Programs*

**Community Transportation Program (CTP).** These funds are used to support the administrative expenses incurred by local transit agencies in North Carolina. WTA received \$10,998 in CTP funds in FY 2010, and will receive \$11,414 from this program in FY 2011.

**Rural Operating Assistance Program.** This program combines the RGP, EDTAP, and the Employment program into one grant. WTA received \$204,762 from this program in FY 2010. In FY11, WTA is expecting a total of \$260,222 for the ROAP programs.

### *Local Programs*

**Local Governmental Matching Funds.** For FY 2010, WTA received \$40,500 in funds from Wilkes County to support operations. WTA is not expecting to receive funds from Wilkes County in FY 2011.

### *Other*

**Passenger Fares.** According to the 2010 Opstats Form, passenger fares generated \$18,596 in FY 2010. this figure is likely incorrect, as WTA is projected to receive \$126,540 in fares in FY11. This fare revenue equates to just under a 11% farebox recovery ratio.

**Contract Revenue.** As indicated in Table 2-3, the greatest source of revenues in FY10 was through contracted services. The revenue derived from contracts to provide transportation for groups, agencies, and corporations was \$545,532 in FY 2010. A review of driver manifests that note the funding source indicates that many of these trips are funded through Medicaid. In FY 2011, WTA is expecting to receive \$559,340 in contractual revenue.

### **FY 2010 Expenses**

The total administrative and operating expenses for FY 2010 were \$946,650. A breakdown of these expenses, as published in WTA's FY 2010 audit is provided in Table 2-5.

**Table 2-5: WTA FY 2010 Operating Expenses**

<b>Expense</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Salaries and Wages	\$ 560,621
Employee Benefits	\$ 75,801
Professional Services	\$ 24,695
Supplies and Materials	\$ 124,240
Current Obligations and Services	\$ 82,801
Fixed Charges and other Services	\$ 78,492
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 946,650</b>

Source: WTA FY 2010 Audit.

### **FY 2010 Capital Projects**

In FY 2010, WTA capital projects financed with assistance from the CTP included the acquisition of three lift-equipped vehicles and a mini-van. WTA purchased an additional three lift-equipped vans, bus stop signs, and facility security/surveillance equipment through an American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) grant.

### **FY11 Budget**

Table 2-6 provides the line item budget for WTA for FY 2011.

## **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 WTA.

### **Facilities and Maintenance**

WTA currently operates out of leased space and does not have a maintenance garage. As noted earlier, WTA would like to develop an operations and maintenance facility, rather than leasing space. Maintenance is currently performed by contractors. A new facility would help address operational issues and allow WTA to explore the possibility of performing vehicle maintenance in-house. Chapter 5 of this CTSP provides a full facility needs assessment.

**Table 2-6: WTA FY 2011 Budget**

<b>Line Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b><u>Administration</u></b>	
Salaries, Wages, and Fringe	\$ 262,232
Audit	\$ 9,206
Financial Management Consultant	\$ 10,000
Bank Service Charges	\$ 500
Janitorial	\$ 500
Office Supplies	\$ 9,000
Name Tags and ID Badges	\$ 150
Fax Equipment	\$ 500
Furniture, Storage, File Cabinets	\$ 500
Air Conditioning/Furnace Filters	\$ 65
Travel and Meetings	\$ 2,750
Telephone and Pagers	\$ 941
Internet	\$ 1,707
Postage	\$ 650
Electricity	\$ 4,050
Water/Sewer	\$ 490
Printing	\$ 400
Repairs/Maintenance Office Equipment	\$ 3,766
Advertising	\$ 4,710
Promotional Items/Business Cards	\$ 1,177
Brochures	\$ 1,500
Computer Support Services	\$ 15,000
Legal Advertising	\$ 900
Laundry and Dry Cleaning	\$ 250
Cleaning Services	\$ 800
Training and Education	\$ 2,600
Rent of WTA Central Facility	\$ 12,000
Rent of Elkin Office	\$ 1,200
Maintenance Contract- Copier	\$ 3,000
Maintenance Contract- DET	\$ 6,500
Route Match Maintenance Contract	\$ 14,825
Insurance- Property & Gen. Liability	\$ 1,950
Insurance- Vehicles & Umbrella	\$ 36,000
Insurance- Professional Liabilities	\$ 2,800
Insurance- Special Liabilities	\$ 10,250
Dues and Subscriptions	\$ 976
Facility Improvement	\$ 1,500
Damages/Settlements	\$ 500
Debt Service	\$ 2,800
<b>Subtotal Administration</b>	<b>\$ 428,645</b>

Table 2-6: WTA FY 2011 Budget

Line Item	Amount
<b><u>Operating</u></b>	
Salaries, Wages, and Fringe	\$ 485,216
Drug Testing Contract	\$ 3,530
Drug Tests	\$ 1,275
Background Checks	\$ 515
Uniforms	\$ 250
First Aid Equipment	\$ 300
Fuel	\$ 160,000
License, Tags, and Fees	\$ 5,530
Vehicle Cleaning	\$ 2,500
Hand Tools	\$ 500
Fire Extinguisher Inspection	\$ 250
Vehicle Maintenance	\$ 40,000
Radio Air Time	\$ 2,500
Other Radio Expenses	\$ 2,400
Subtotal, Operations	\$ 704,766
<b>Total Admin and Operations</b>	<b>\$ 1,133,411</b>

## **Coordination Opportunities**

As noted in the review of current issues, WTA is interested in exploring opportunities to improve the coordination of services with transportation providers in adjacent counties and regions. In addition, WTA would like to expand partnerships with human service agencies and other organizations within the community.

## **Technology**

WTA currently uses RouteMatch software for scheduling demand-response, subscription, and agency-contracted transportation services. WTA has not historically provided enough trips to qualify for funding assistance to acquire Mobile Data Terminals (MDC) or Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), but current ridership trends would suggest that they may qualify within the five-year planning horizon of this CTSP.

## **Fleet**

WTA currently operates a fleet of 30 vehicles, with seating capacity ranging from 7-20 based on the vehicle. The fleet includes 26 lift-equipped vehicles. Seven of the 30 vehicles were replaced in 2010 and due to be retired from the WTA fleet. WTA has been experiencing an increase in demand in FY2010 and management is worried about system capacity when these vehicles are retired. The current vehicle inventory is presented in Table 2-7.

## **OTHER TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS**

While WTA is the primary provider of community transportation in the County, 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 operate in the region:

- AA 1 Cabs, 206 Sixth Street, North Wilkesboro
- City Cab, 679 Hunter Road, North Wilkesboro
- Surry Elkin Cab Company, 111 Church Street, Elkin, NC
- Wilkes Taxi Service, 140 Sidney Avenue, North Wilkesboro, NC
- Better Airport Service, based in Charlotte

Table 2-7: WTA Vehicle Inventory

Vehicle ID	Vehicle Model		Type Vehicle	# Seats	W/C	Mileage	Ops	Status	Notes
	Yr	Make				October 2010	Status		
1 0549M	2006	Chrysler	Mini Van	7	0	68,345	Good	Active	
2 0875LR	2009	Ford	Conv Van Lift-R	8	2	41,421	Good	Active	
3 3924LS	2007	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	8	2	94,344	Fair	Active	
4 3944LS	2008	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	8	2	63,272	Good	Active	
5 3945LS	2008	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	8	2	73,977	Good	Active	
6 3946LS	2008	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	8	2	79,691	Good	Active	
7 5110BS	2007	Ford	LTV- Lift-S	20	2	9,512	Good	Active	
8 5551LS	2006	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	122,931	Fair	Active	
9 5552LS	2006	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	118,032	Fair	Active	
10 5553LS	2006	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	157,440	Fair	Active	
11 6679C	2002	Dodge	CONV VAN No Lift	13	0	151,109	Fair	Active	
12 6739C	2002	Dodge	CONV VAN No Lift	13	0	128,700	Fair	Active	
13 6832LS	2003	Dodge	Conv Van Lift-S	12	2	173,729	Fair	Active	Replaced in 2010
14 6834C	2003	Dodge	CONV VAN No Lift	12	2	148,468	Fair	InActive	Replaced in 2010
15 9936LR	2009	Ford	Conv Van Lift-R	8	2	49,191	Good	Active	
16 9949LR	2009	Ford	Conv Van Lift-R	8	2	22,915	Good	Active	
17 9951LR	2009	Ford	Conv Van Lift-R	8	2	29,711	Good	Active	
18 6937LS	2003	Dodge	Conv Van Lift-S	12	2	164,402	Good	Active	Replaced w/ARRA
19 4745LS	2002	Dodge	Conv Van Lift-R	12	2	179,302	Fair	Active	Replaced w/ARRA
20 6828LS	2003	Dodge	Conv Van Lift-S	12	2	176,755	Fair	Active	Replaced w/ARRA
21 6755LS	2002	Dodge	Conv Van Lift-S	12	2	165,215	Fair	InActive	Replaced in 2010
22 9532LS	2006	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	104,397	Poor	InActive	
23 5101C	2001	Dodge	CONV VAN No Lift	13	0	101,434	Poor	InActive	Replaced in 2010
24 2558IS	2010	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	7,829	New	Active	
25 2559LS	2010	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	9,230	New	Active	
26 2561LS	2010	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	7,668	New	Active	
27 5436LS	2010	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	8,535	New	Active	
28 8092LR	2010	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	4,079	New	Active	ARRA
29 8093LR	2010	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	4,665	New	Active	ARRA
30 8094LR	2010	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	3,665	New	Active	ARRA

## Human Service Transportation Programs

While WTA is the designated coordinated transportation program for Wilkes County, there are a few other programs that provide transportation for their clients. These are:

- Wilkes Senior Citizens Council - personal staff cars are used to transport seniors.
- Blue Ridge Opportunity Coalition - provides senior nutrition and Head Start transportation.
- Wilkes County DSS - provides some services using County-owned sedans.

There are also a number of faith-based organizations and nursing homes that own vans that are used to transport members/clients.

## Intercity Bus Services

Wilkesboro is served by the Mountaineer East/West, which provides service between Greensboro and Boone, via Winston-Salem, Baptist Hospital, Forsyth Hospital, Yadkinville, Wilkesboro, and Boone. The stop in Wilkesboro is located on the campus of Wilkes Community College. There are two westbound trips each day (7:30 a.m. and 5:10 p.m., weekdays; 10:00 a.m. and 5:10 p.m., weekends), and two eastbound trips each day (9:45 a.m. and 7:35 p.m., weekdays; 12:30 p.m. and 8:05 p.m., weekends). The fare from Wilkes County to Boone is \$3.00 and the fares from Wilkes County to Winston-Salem and Greensboro are \$5.00 and \$7.00, respectively. There are discount fares available for children aged 2-11, senior citizens, students, and people with disabilities.

## AMTRAK

The closest AMTRAK stations are in High Point (about 71 miles) and Salisbury (about 70 miles). These cities 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.<sup>2</sup> The closest station to Wilkesboro will be Statesville, at 46 miles.

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<sup>2</sup> North Carolina Rail Plan, 2009, NCDOT.

## Chapter 3

# Transit Needs Analysis

### INTRODUCTION

The focus of this transit needs analysis is to analyze quantitative land use and population data, along with qualitative data provided by area stakeholders and the public, to develop a solid understanding of the current and future travel needs of the diverse group of current and potential community transportation users.

The initial section provides the service area description and demographic analysis of the region, followed by the land use analysis. The second section provides a review of recent plans that are relevant to the region's public transportation landscape. The remaining sections provide the results from an on-board passenger survey, a public opinion survey, and stakeholder discussions.

The combination of these data analyses will provide a good understanding of transit demand in the region, including demand that is already being met, demand that is currently unmet, and expected future demand that may result from growth and development in Wilkes County.

### SERVICE AREA DESCRIPTION AND DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

In order to provide transit services that effectively meet the needs and demand of existing and potential users, it is necessary to understand the geographical setting and demographic composition of the service area. The initial step of this process was to define the service area in terms of geographical situation and jurisdictional demarcation. The remainder of this section examines specific population characteristics to understand potential transit needs and demands within the service area.

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## Service Area Description

Wilkes County (Figure 3-1) is located in northwestern North Carolina in the foothills, south of the Blue Ridge. It is bordered by Alleghany and Ashe Counties to the north, Watauga and Caldwell Counties to the west, Alexander and Iredell Counties to the South, and Yadkin and Surry Counties to the east. Wilkes County is one of the larger counties in North Carolina (17<sup>th</sup> largest, geographically, of the 100 counties), covering 759 square miles.

Land uses in the County are a mix of woodland (70%); crop/pasture/orchard (12%); developed land; and water.<sup>1</sup> Significant water features include the Yadkin River, the W. Kerr Scott Reservoir, the Roaring River, and the Reddies River.

There are three incorporated municipalities in Wilkes County, including N. Wilkesboro, Wilkesboro, and Ronda, with the Town of Wilkesboro serving as the County seat. The County is divided into 21 townships, shown on Figure 3-2.

## Demographic Analysis

### *General Population and Growth*

According to the *Wilkes County Growth Management Plan (2001)*, about 50% of the County's population lives within five miles of Wilkesboro/N. Wilkesboro. The County's total population (2009) was 67,533.<sup>2</sup> The Census 2000 population of the County was 65,778, which equates to a growth rate of 2.7% over the nine-year period, or .3% per year. This growth rate is significantly slower than the overall statewide growth rate during that same period (16.6%), and that of the growth experienced in Wilkes County during the previous ten-year period (1990-2000 - 10.7%). Previous population trends and future population estimates are shown in Table 3-1. As these data indicate, demographers have predicted slow growth for the County for the planning period covered by this CTSP.

N. Wilkesboro has the highest population of the three incorporated municipalities (4,176), followed by Wilkesboro (3,181), and Ronda (482).

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<sup>1</sup> Wilkes County Growth Management Plan, December 2001.

<sup>2</sup> North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management website.

Figure 3-1: Wilkes County, North Carolina

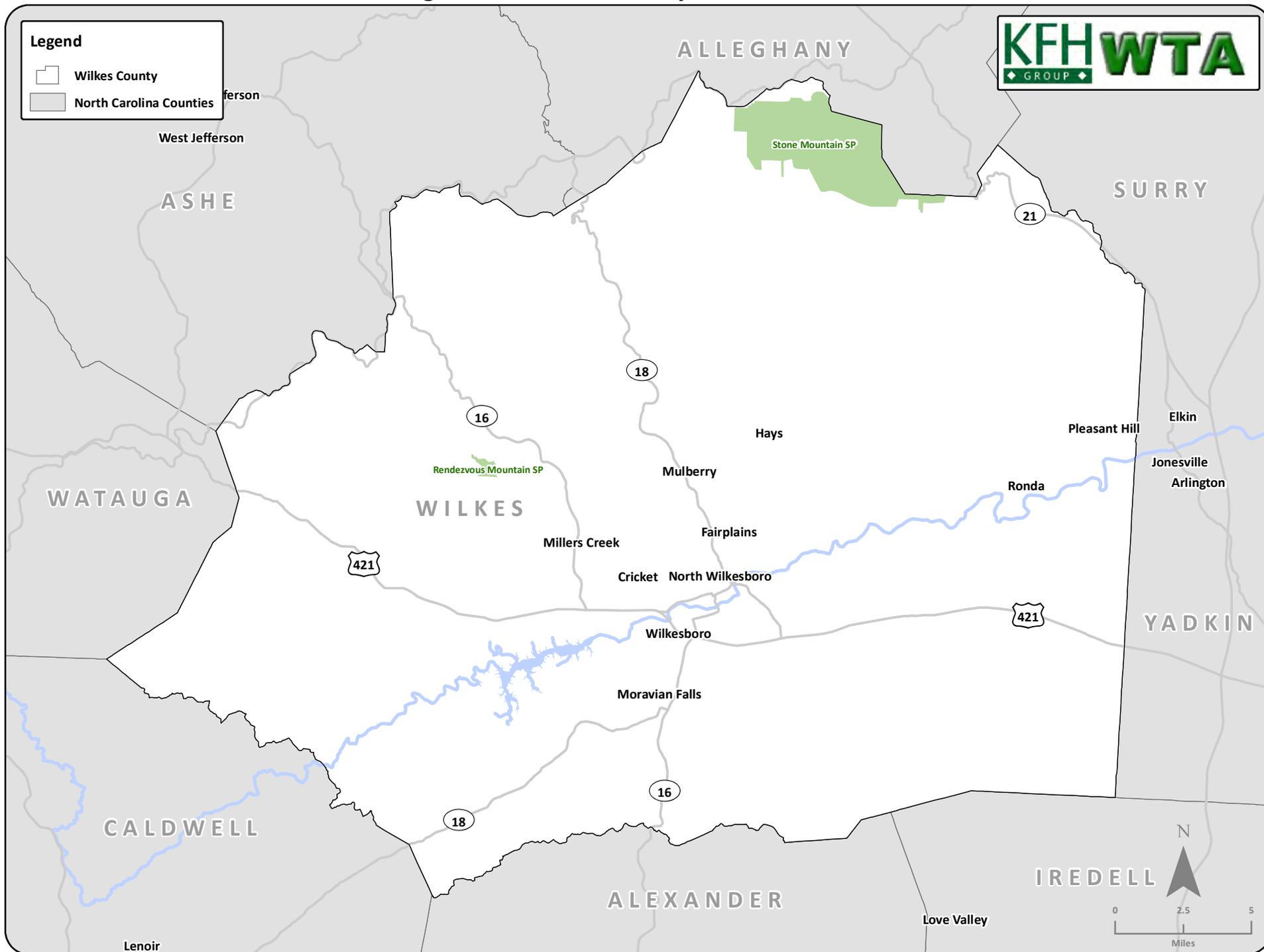
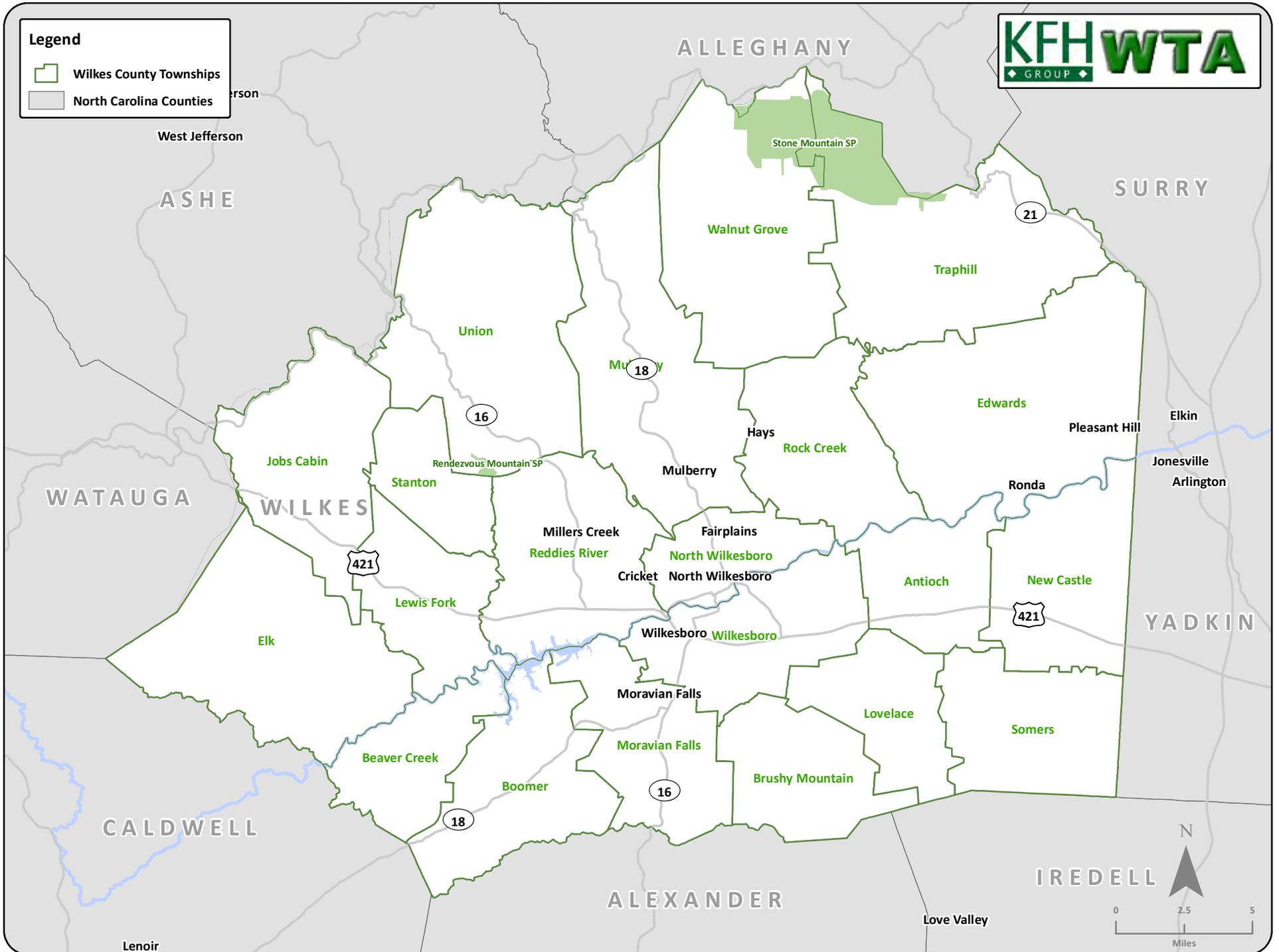


Figure 3-2: Townships of Wilkes County, North Carolina



**Table 3-1: Wilkes County  
Population Growth and Expected Growth**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
1990	59,393	
2000	65,778	10.8%
2009	67,533	2.7%
2015	68,263	1.1%
2019	68,750	0.7%

Sources: US Census and the NC Office of State Budget and Management.

### *Population Density*

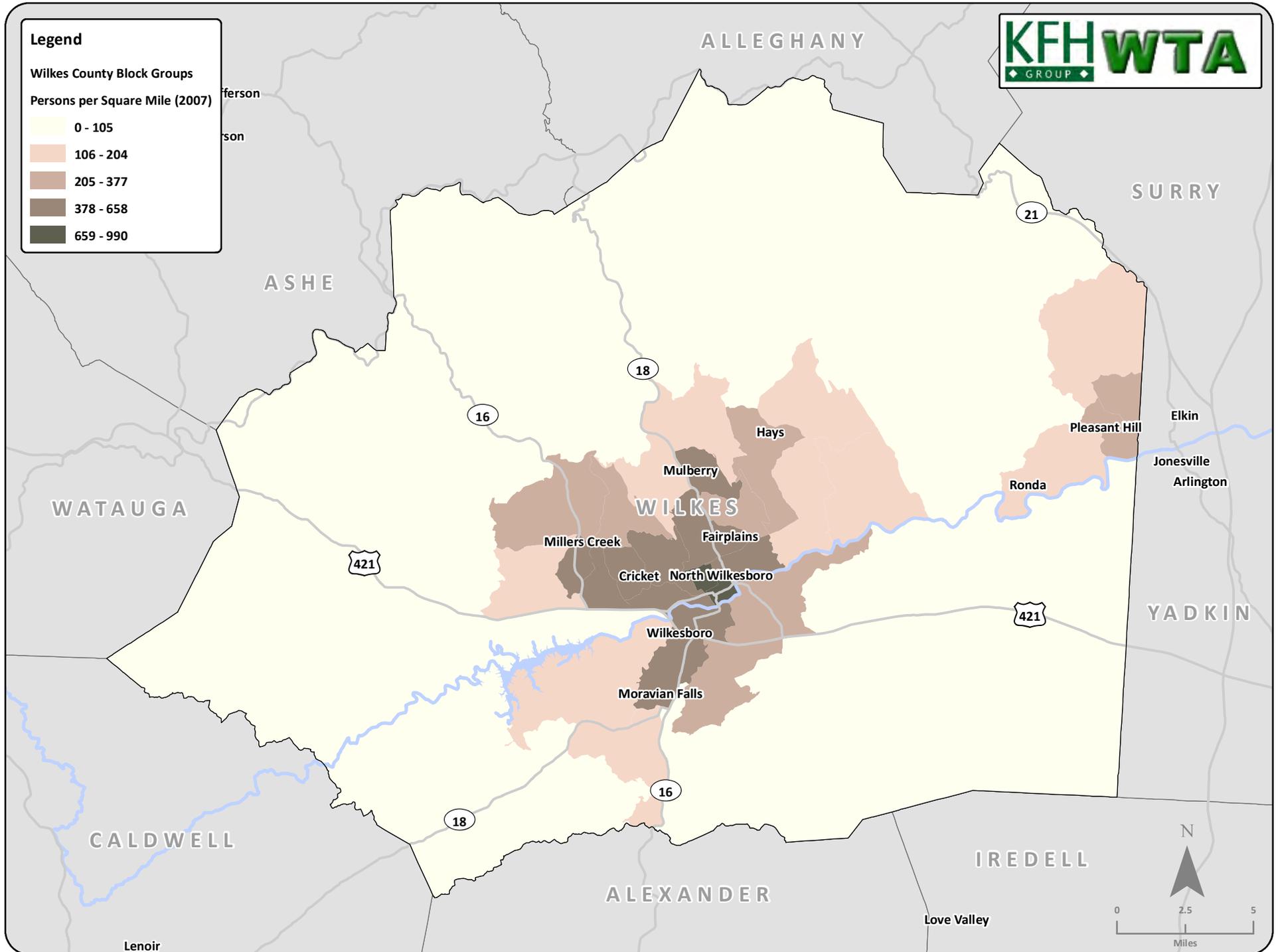
Population density is important to the assessment of transit potential, because it may be used as an indicator to the types of transit services that are most feasible for a particular area. While there will always be exceptions attributed to land use patterns, an area with a population density of over 2,000 persons per square mile should generally be able to support frequent daily fixed-route bus services. For this transit needs analysis, the population density for Wilkes County was calculated at the physical unit of a block group, which is determined by the United States Census Bureau.

As is shown in Figure 3-3, there are no areas of Wilkes County that could be considered feasible for regularly scheduled fixed-route transit, using the 2,000 person per square mile rule of thumb. North Wilkesboro exhibits the highest population density in Wilkes County, with between 659 and 990 people per square mile. Wilkesboro, Moravian Falls, Cricket, Fairplains, and Mulberry each exhibit population densities in the second highest category for Wilkes County, with between 378 and 658 people per square miles. The overall population density of Wilkes County is 89 people per square mile.

### **Overview of Transit Dependent Populations**

Transportation needs are defined in part by identifying the relative size and location of the population most likely to be dependent upon some form of public transportation service. Once the locality of populations with transportation needs is

Figure 3-3: Population Density for Wilkes County



determined, it is possible to analyze the extent to which present transit services are fulfilling the demand of the community. To identify the areas of highest transportation need, a demographic analysis examining several factors was conducted. Those factors included the previously examined population density as well as the rankings of population segments in regard to the aggregate quantity, percentage, and density of five specific 2000 US Census categories. The five categories of populations that tend to more likely rely upon public transportation include:

- **Autoless Households:** Categorized as the number of households without ownership of an automobile. A significant factor in determining transit need is detailing concentrations of households whose members lack vehicular access.
- **Elderly:** Categorized as persons aged 60 and above. These individuals may include persons who choose to no longer drive, previously relied on a spouse for personal mobility, or are unable to drive due to obstacles associated with age.
- **Mobility Limited:** Categorized as persons over the age of five who have a mobility or self-care limitation. These individuals may experience difficulty in leaving the home for any array of trips including shopping or medical visits.
- **Poverty Status:** Categorized as persons who are living below the national poverty line. These individuals may not have the economic means to possess or maintain an automobile.
- **Youth:** Categorized as persons between the ages of 12 and 17. Many of these individuals are in a position to complete trips without an accompanying adult, but are often not of a legal driving age or in a position to access an automobile.

The aggregate total, percentage, and density for each of the population categories were assembled or calculated from the 2000 US Census at the block group level, which is the smallest geographic area for which these data are presented. Next, the block groups were ranked based upon the aforementioned five population categories. Since the data are not mutually exclusive, the block groups must be ranked and not simply totaled. Having ranked the categories, the acquired rankings for the block groups were then separated by equal intervals into three distinct classifications (low, moderate, and high), which correspond to the determined level of transportation needs representing the geographical area. After determining the relative level of need by block group for each category, a collective ranking of the five categories was determined by aggregate

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number (total), percent, and density. Appendix B provides a table and corresponding map that shows the Census block groups in Wilkes County and their associated demographics with regard to transportation needs characteristics.

As an aside, there is acknowledgement that the use of 2000 US Census data is not ideal for reasons associated with its perceived irrelevance due to the dataset's age. Alternative data sources and techniques for modifying the 2000 US Census dataset were examined, which included the application of a coefficient to each of the five population categories based upon the population change of the block group from the decennial Census' report to the latest annual estimates. However, it has been concluded that this approach would provide more distortion to the figures than any benefit it would offer the analysis. Furthermore, there is a confidence that the current composition of areas where transit dependent persons reside is comparable to those areas determined with data from 2000 (particularly given the relatively slow rate of growth in the County) and that any potential alterations to this makeup would be found in the complementing land use analyses.

### *Numeric Ranking of Transit Dependent Characteristics*

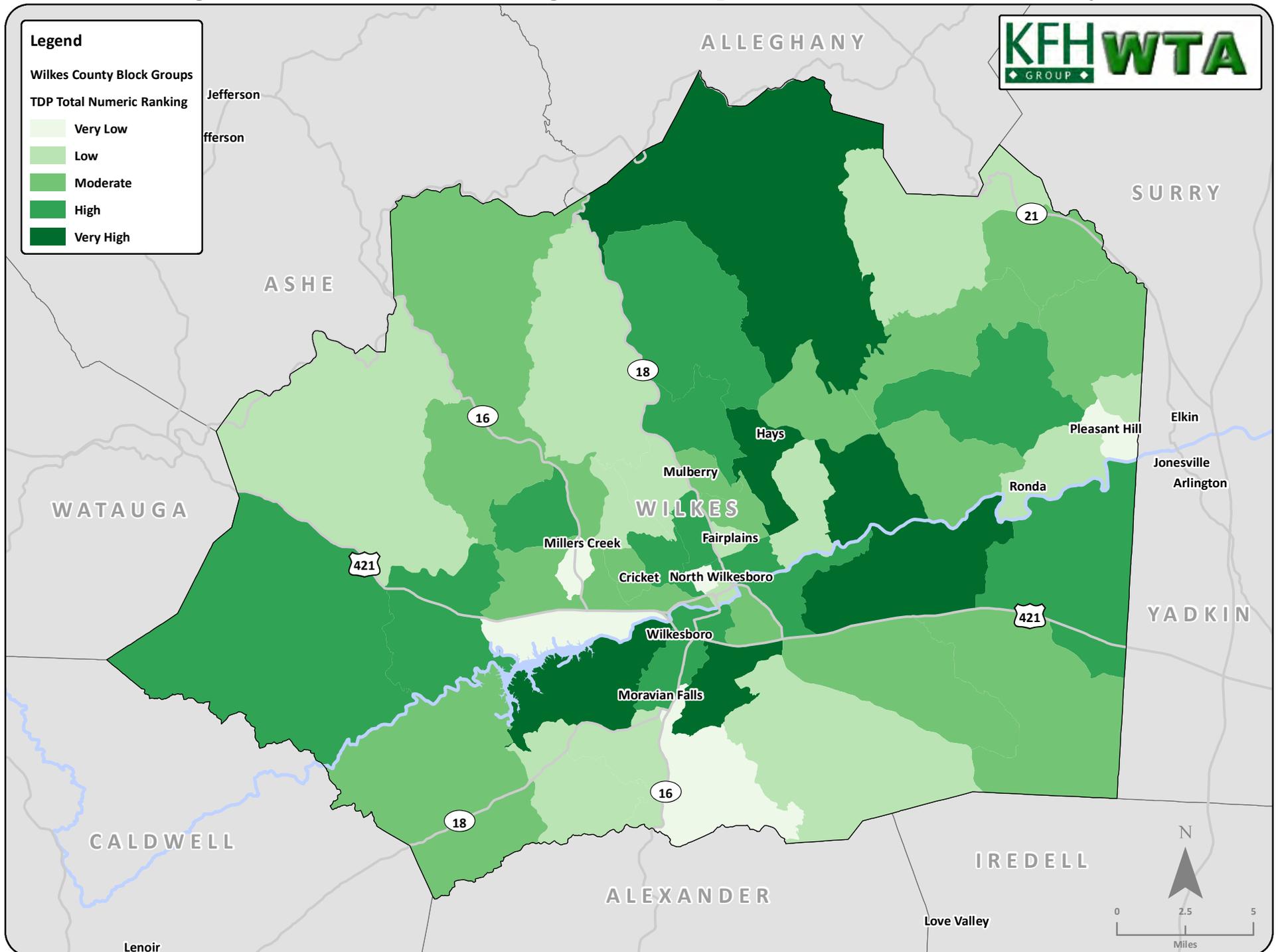
Data on the number of persons represented by each of the five designated categories concerning transportation dependent populations were collected and individually ranked by block group. The categorical rankings within the block groups were then summed and the block groups representing Wilkes County were equally divided into three unique classifications of need (low, moderate, and high) based upon the calculated aggregate rankings. These classifications are displayed within Figure 3-4, which provides a map of the findings concerning numeric ranking of the block groups.

As the map indicates, the following areas of the County exhibit potentially high transit need, based on the numbers of people displaying transportation needs characteristics:

- Walnut Grove (northern Wilkes County, just south of Alleghany County)
- Hays
- Antioch
- An area south of the Kerr Scott Reservoir
- An area S. of US 421 and east of NC 16

The numeric ranking is a beneficial analysis, but has the potential to lead to deceiving results. Since the size of the block group is not considered into the aggregation, only the total number of persons displaying the determined transit dependent characteristics is factored. In theory, a block group that is large in size may have a relatively high number of autoless households, but their location may be spread

Figure 3-4: Total Numeric Ranking of Transit Dependent Riders for Wilkes County



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over a large geographic radius. In this circumstance, it may be difficult to serve the autoless households, as their location is not concentrated. For this reason, the ranking of block groups with regard to the percentage and density of people displaying transit dependent characteristics has also been conducted.

### *Percent Ranking of Transit Dependent Characteristics*

As with the previous process of numeric ranking, the percent ranking was found by separately ranking the five assigned categories by block group and obtaining a summation comprising all five rankings into one collective ranking for each block group. The resulting records were then grouped into the three classifications (low, moderate, and high), similar to the method used for numeric ranking in which the block groups were equally divided amongst the three classifications based upon the cumulative total. The different strata represent a ranking of transit dependent characteristics for each block group as a percentage of the block group's overall population, as shown in Figure 3-5. Those block groups in Wilkes County with a high percent ranking for transit dependent characteristics are located as follows:

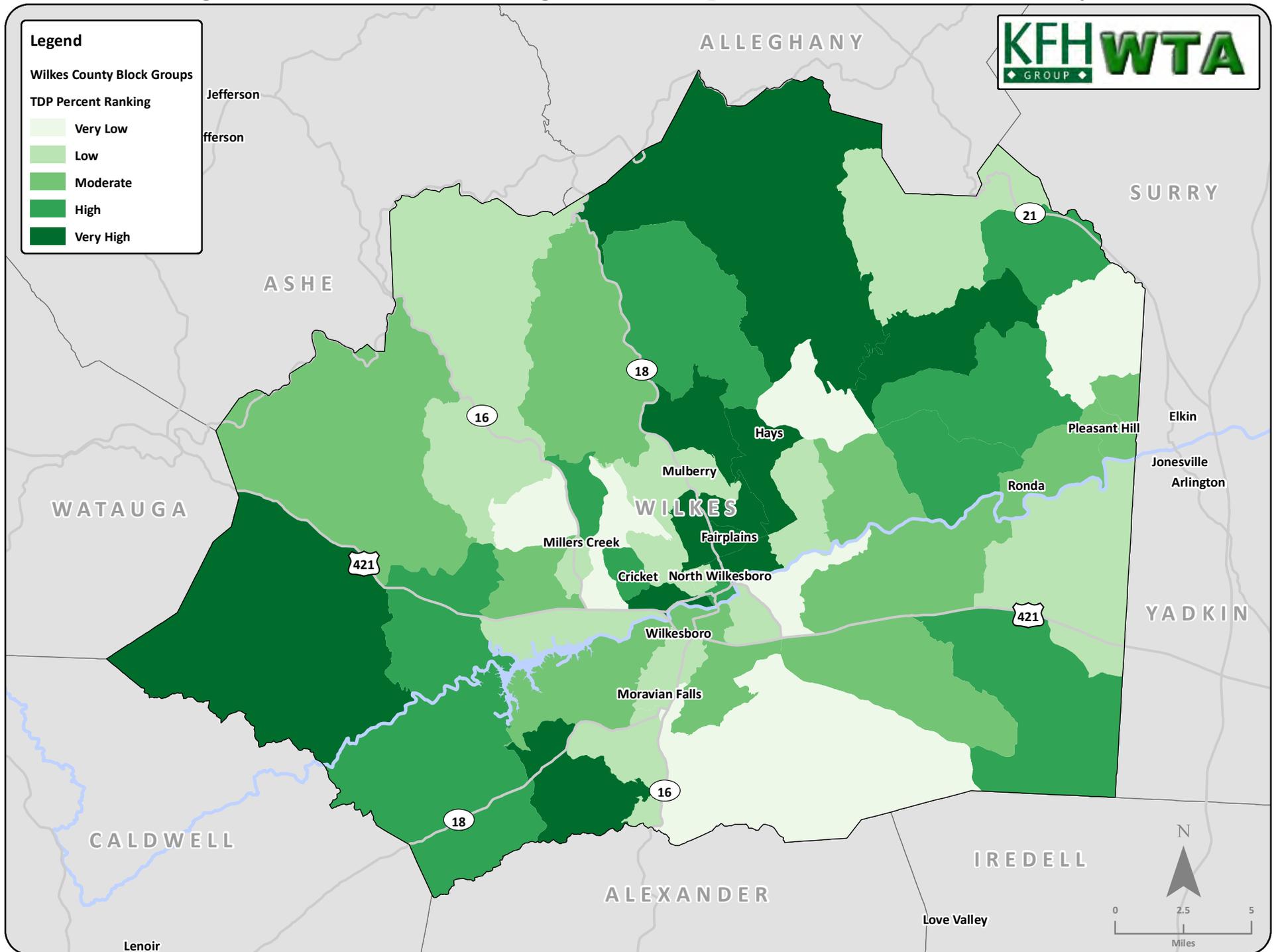
- The northern rural portion of Wilkes County, adjacent to Alleghany County.
- The westernmost portion of the County, south of US 421, adjacent to Watauga and Caldwell Counties.
- Central Wilkes County, from North Wilkesboro to Hays, east of NC 18.
- An area in southern Wilkes County, bordering Alexander County, west of NC 16 and generally south of NC18.

These areas do not necessarily have high *numbers* of people needing community transportation services, but rather a high *percentage* of the population of these areas are likely to need community transportation services.

### *Density Ranking of Transit Dependent Characteristics*

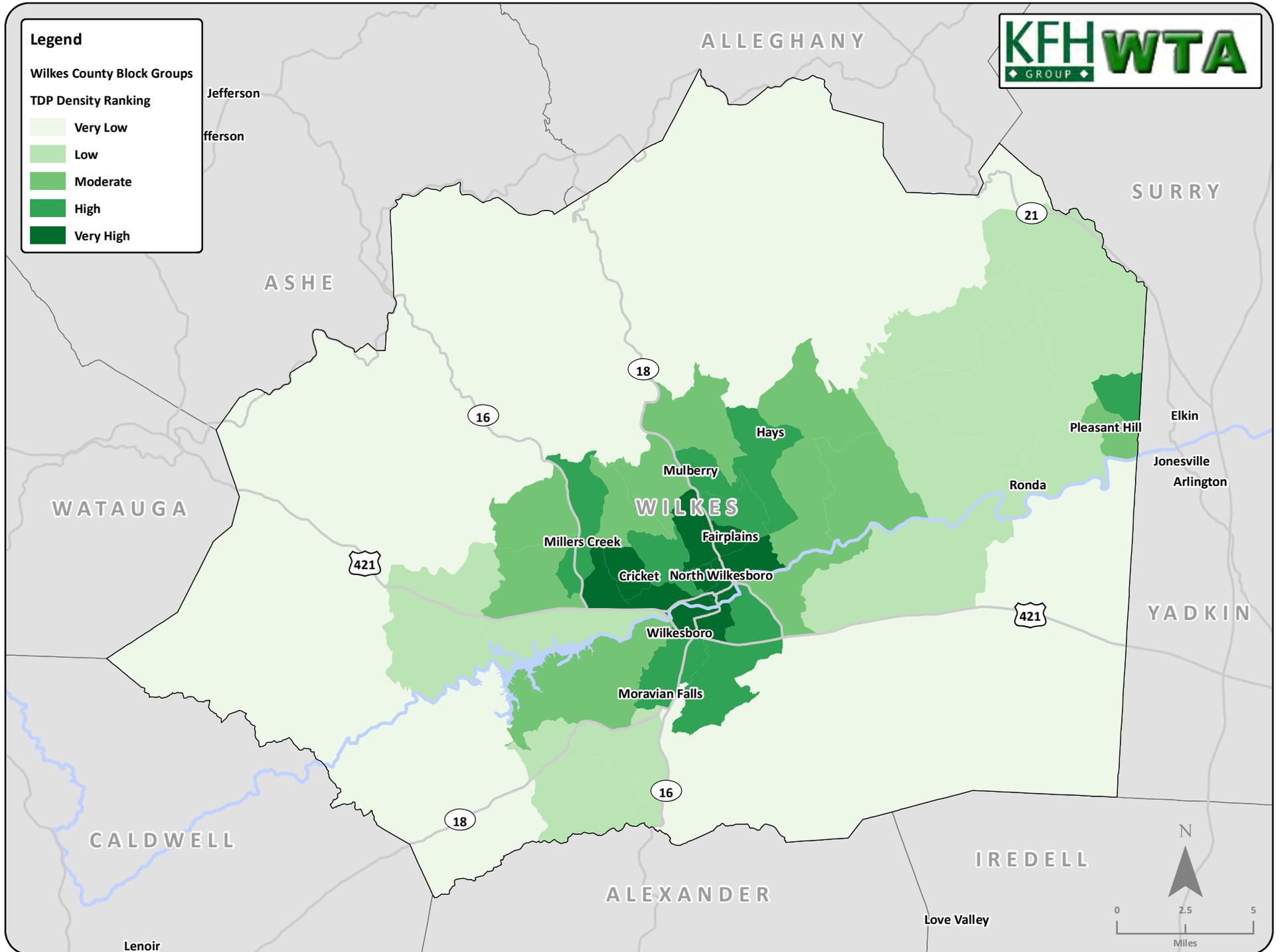
The density ranking of transit dependent characteristics for each block group was determined in an equivalent manner to the calculations utilized to discover the numeric and percent rankings, as was the classifying of the block groups representing Wilkes County into the separate levels of need (low, moderate, and high). Density ranking of transit dependent characteristics for Wilkes County is represented in Figure 3-6, and is unique to the previous rankings in that it is a measurement that accounts for the area through the division of transit dependent persons by the area in square miles for each examined block group. Those block groups with a high density ranking of

Figure 3-5: Total Percent Ranking of Transit Dependent Riders for Wilkes County



3-11

Figure 3-6: Total Density Ranking of Transit Dependent Riders for Wilkes County



3-12

transit dependent characteristics are generally located in Towns of Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro and the immediate surroundings, specifically west to NC16 and north along the NC18 corridor to just south of Mulberry.

### *Autoless Households*

Households without access to at least one personal vehicle are more likely to rely on public transportation than those households with access to an automobile. Figure 3-7 provides a map displaying the density of autoless households by block group for Wilkes County. Density was used, rather than the numerical figure, so the large block groups would not skew the data. Areas within Wilkes County with a relatively high density of autoless households include:

- Wilkesboro,
- Portions of N. Wilkesboro,
- The area of Millers Creek west of NC16,
- Fairplains, and
- The Hays area.

## **LAND USE PROFILE, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION**

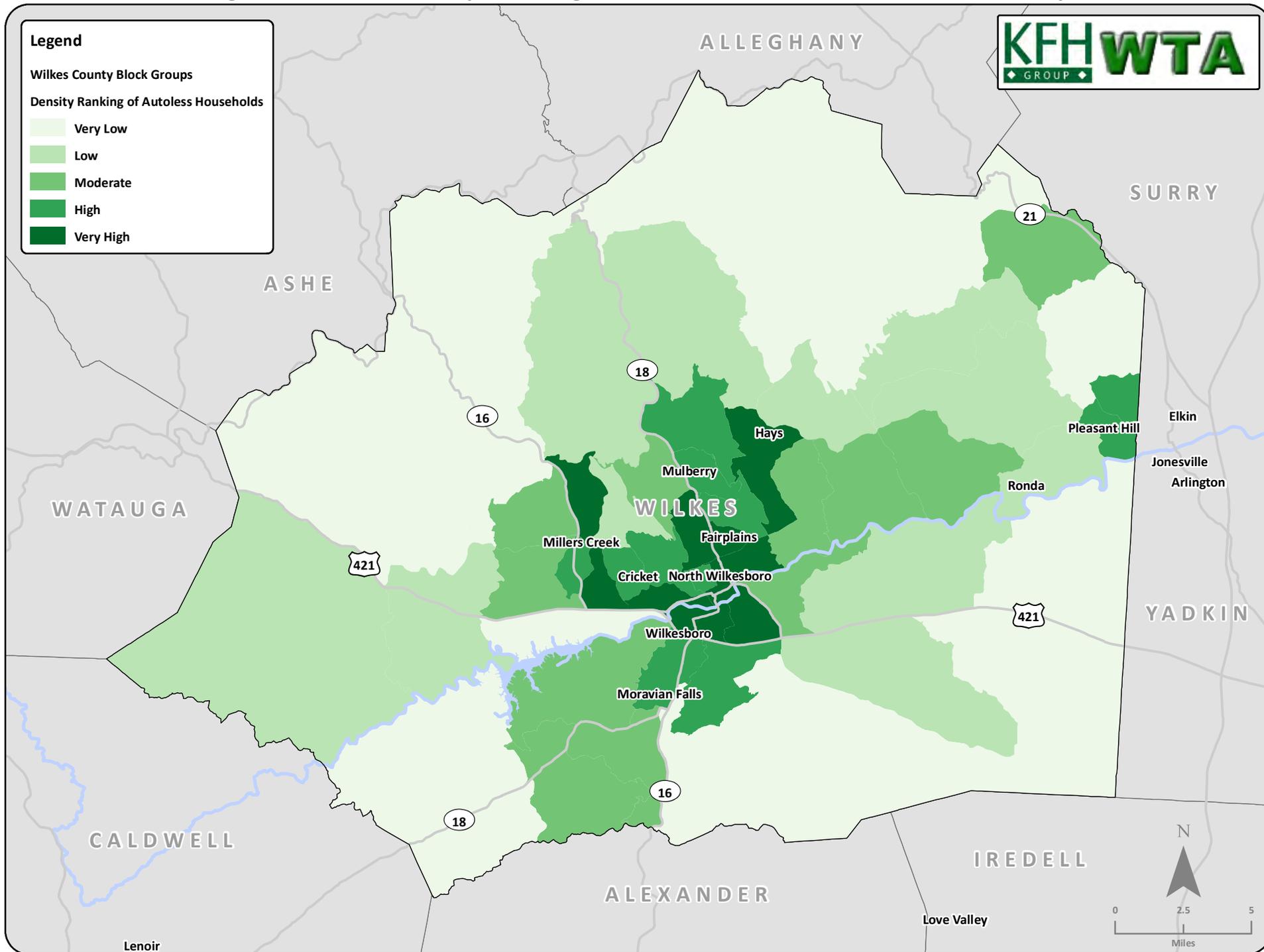
In addition to establishing the locations where potentially transit dependent populations reside within the region, another important component of the service planning process is determining the destinations to which these populations need to travel. The extent to which major origins and destinations are accessible through existing public transportation services was also evaluated.

### **Assessment of Major Trip Generators**

Major trip generators include those origins and destinations that people need to access on a daily basis, whether going to work or school, seeking medical care or social services, shopping, or pursuing other recreational activities. Identifying such frequented places will contribute to service development later in the CTSP process that promotes residents' access to the services and opportunities they seek. Thorough identification of major trip generators is particularly important to develop services for those who are reliant upon public transit services, as well as making transit as convenient as possible to attract "choice riders."

This component of the transit needs analysis identified higher density housing origins as well as destinations such as educational institutions, human service agencies,

Figure 3-7: Total Density Ranking of Autoless Households for Wilkes County



3-14

major employers, medical facilities, and shopping centers. Each type of trip generator and its distribution within the study area is described further below.

### *High Density Housing*

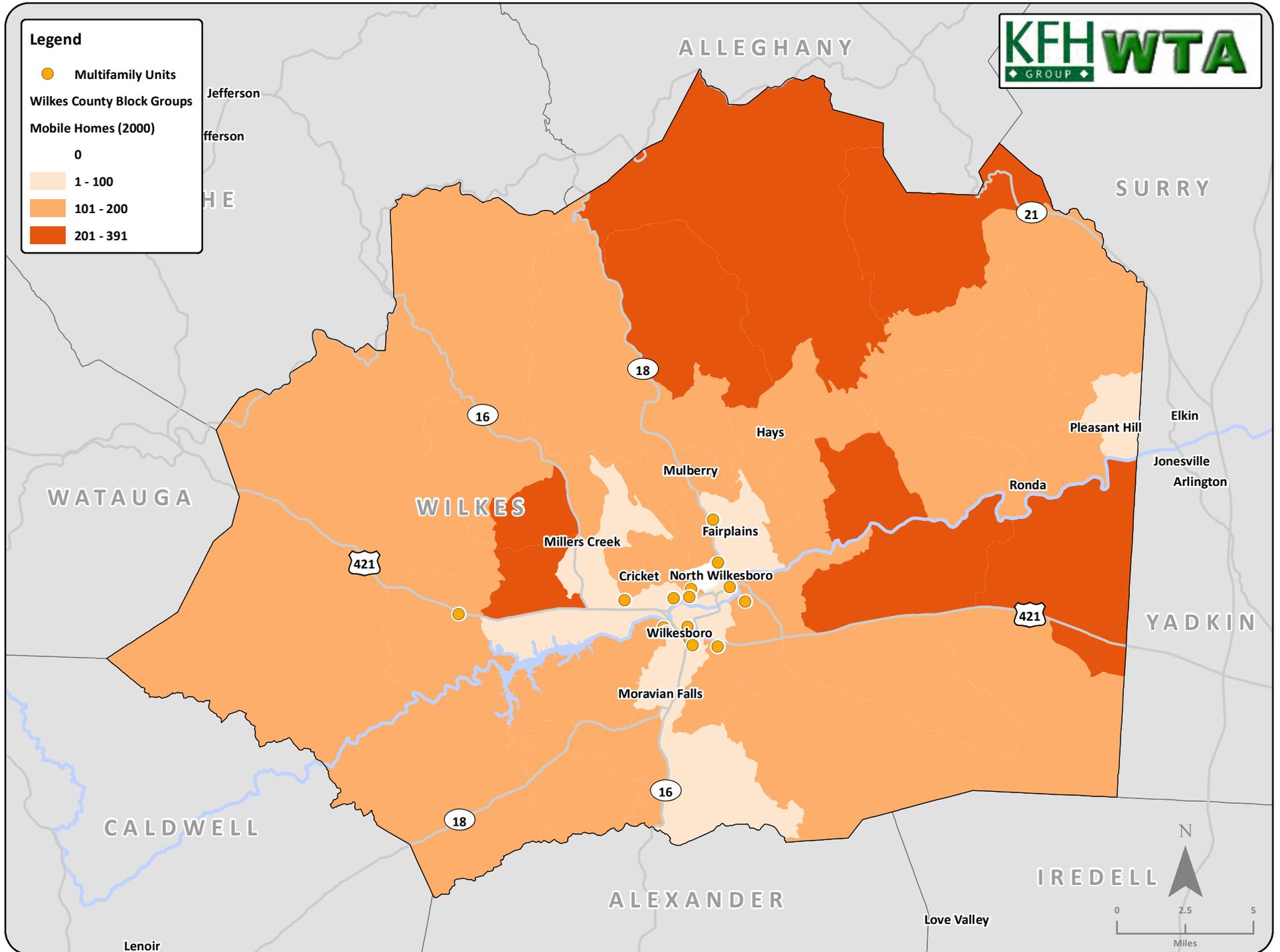
In addition to the process of mapping population density, the identification and analysis of high density housing locations provided another effective tool to understand where larger pockets of the population reside. For the purposes of this analysis, high density housing included multi-unit complexes such as apartments, condominiums, senior housing, and subsidized housing. Most of the senior housing complexes have age and income eligibility requirements; a number of these complexes are also open to persons with disabilities. Subsidized housing is available to low-income individuals and families under the Section 8 Program of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. For Wilkes County, we have also included a representation of mobile home parks, as there are a significant number of them in the County and they are a more rural form of high density housing.

High density housing is often served by transit due to the high number of potential transit riders that may be served relatively ease at one stop. Residents of senior and subsidized housing facilities also tend to have high relative transit needs. Residents who choose to live in high density housing complexes near transit services may also prefer using transit, so it is important to provide this option to driving alone. Figure 3-8 displays the location of high density housing sites within Wilkes County, as well as the number of mobile home parks per Census block group. As this map shows, the multi-family housing complexes are generally located in the Wilkesboro-N. Wilkesboro area, while the mobile home parks are located in the more rural portions of the County. Table 3-2 includes the specific addresses for the high density housing locations, not including the mobile home parks.

### *Major Employers*

Wilkes County is home to a few very large employers, including Tyson and Lowes. For the purpose of this transit needs analysis, large employers, defined as those with 100 or more employees, were mapped. Figure 3-9 displays the locations of the major employers in Wilkes County. Table 3-3 provides a list of these employers. As the map indicates, most of the major employers in Wilkes County are clustered in the Wilkesboro/N. Wilkesboro area.

Figure 3-8: Multifamily and Mobile Home Parks in Wilkes County

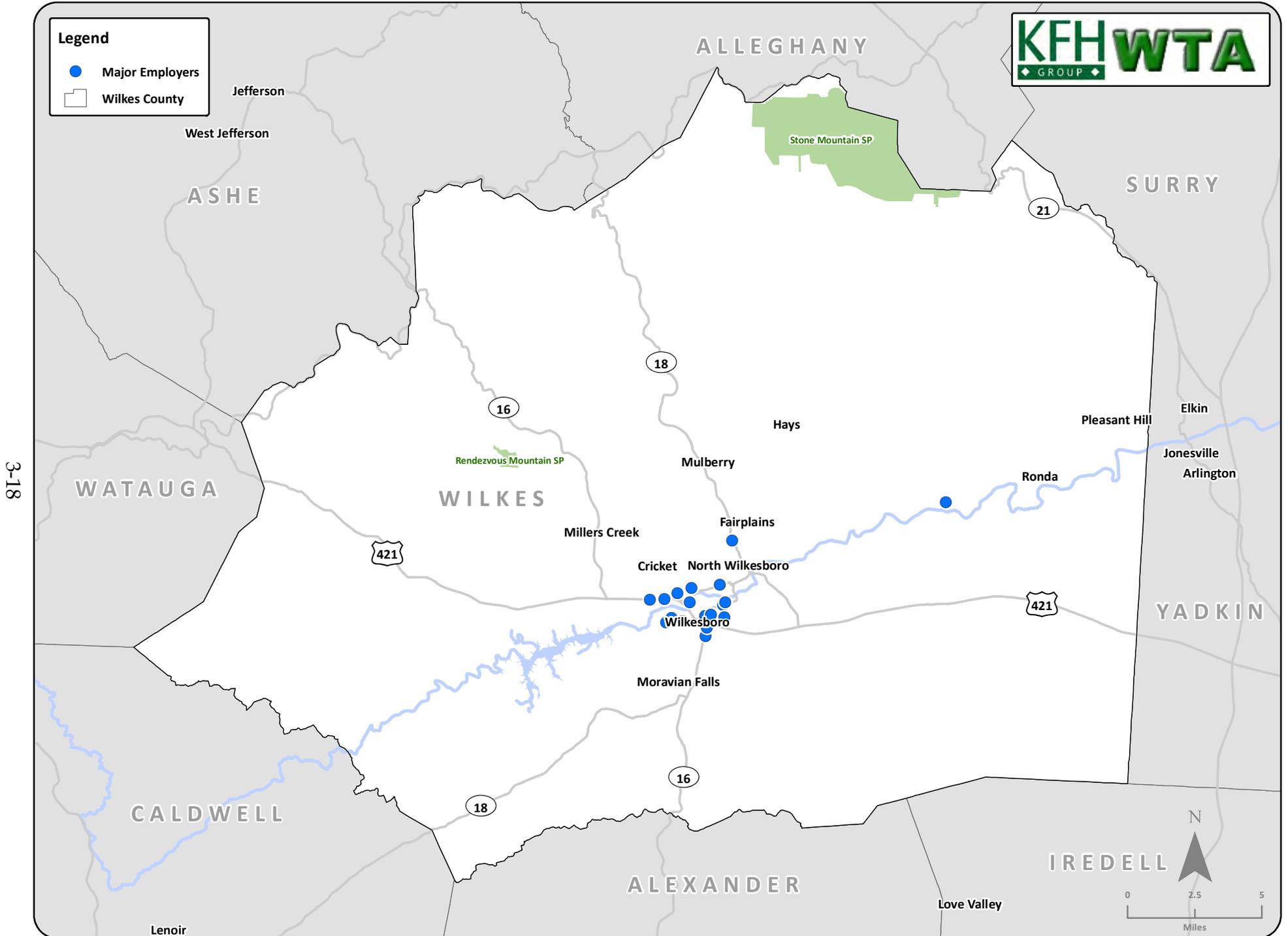


3-16

**Table 3-2: Multi-Family Housing in Wilkes County**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Zip Code</b>	<b>Type</b>
Avante at Wilkesboro	1000 College Street	Wilkesboro	NC	28659	Nursing Home
Britthaven of Wilkesboro	1016 Fletcher Street	Wilkesboro	NC	28697	Nursing Home
Cub Creek Apartments	1201 Industrial Park Road	Wilkesboro	NC	28697	Independent Living
Finley Village Apartments	309 Finley Avenue	North Wilkesboro	NC	28659	Assisted Living
Glenn Hill Apartments	1401 River Street	Wilkesboro	NC	28697	Apartments
Grandview Ridge Apartments	150 Keener Drive	North Wilkesboro	NC	28659	Independent Living
Hickory Circle Apartments	106 Hickory Street	North Wilkesboro	NC	28659	Apartments
Mountain House Assisted Living	176 Resthorne Road	Wilkesboro	NC	28697	Assisted Living
Mountain View Apartments	113 Gentry Street	North Wilkesboro	NC	28659	Apartments
The Villages of Wilkes	206 Old Brickyard Road	North Wilkesboro	NC	28659	Assisted Living
Walden Ridge Apartments	126 Walden Point Drive	Wilkesboro	NC	28697	Apartments
Wilkes Towers	80 Main Street	North Wilkesboro	NC	28659	Independent Living
Windemere Apartments	1325 Collegiate Drive	Wilkesboro	NC	28697	Apartments
Wintergreen Supported Housing	1203 Industrial Park Road	Wilkesboro	NC	28697	Independent Living
Woodfield Oaks Apartments	1300 Oak Hill Drive	Wilkesboro	NC	28697	Apartments
Woodlawn Apartments	111 Reynolds Road	North Wilkesboro	NC	28659	Independent Living
Woods Edge Apartments	226 Peace Street	North Wilkesboro	NC	28659	Apartments

Figure 3-9: Major Employers in Wilkes County



**Table 3-3: Major Employers in Wilkes County**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Zip Code</b>	<b>Employment</b>
Avante at Wilkesboro	1000 College Street	Wilkesboro	28697	100 - 249
Carolina West Wireless, Inc.	1307 Curtis Bridge Road	Wilkesboro	28697	100 - 249
East Coast Millwork Distribution, Inc.	2 Grandview Street	North Wilkesboro	28659	100 - 249
Holly Mountain Enterprises	1200 Woodfield Way	Wilkesboro	28697	100 - 249
Key City Furniture Company, Inc.	1804 River Street	Wilkesboro	28697	100 - 249
Louisiana Pacific Corporation	Highway 268	Roaring River	28669	250 - 499
Lowe's Companies, Inc.	1605 Curtis Bridge Road	Wilkesboro	28697	Over 1,000
Lowe's Home Centers, Inc.	2003 US Highway 421	Wilkesboro	28697	250 - 499
Outer Banks Haven, Inc.	1016 Fletcher Street	Wilkesboro	28697	100 - 249
Tyson Foods, Inc.	1600 River Street	Wilkesboro	28697	Over 1,000
Tyson Foods, Inc.	706 Factory Street	Wilkesboro	28697	Over 1,000
Walmart Associates, Inc.	1801 US Highway 421	Wilkesboro	28697	250 - 499
Wilkes Community College	1328 S Collegiate Drive	Wilkesboro	28697	500 - 999
Wilkes County Board of Education	201 W Main Street	Wilkesboro	28697	Over 1,000
Wilkes County Offices	408 Call Street	Wilkesboro	28697	250 - 499
Wilkes County Offices	110 North Street	Wilkesboro	28697	250 - 249
Wilkes Regional Medical Center	1370 W D Street	North Wilkesboro	28659	500 - 999
Wilkes Senior Village	204 Old Brickyard Road	North Wilkesboro	28659	100 - 249

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### *Medical Facilities*

Medical facilities, mainly general hospitals and their immediate network of outpatient services, represent a significant destination for riders of public transportation, particularly within the WTA system. Since many transit-dependent persons are older adults or persons with disabilities, who may need medical services more often than other population segments, it is imperative that medical facilities are accessible through public transportation. Mapped in Figure 3-10, these medical facilities include regional hospitals, local clinics, medical specialists' offices, and dialysis treatment centers. As the map indicates, there are only a few medical destinations within Wilkes County; however the Wilkes Regional Medical Center (N. Wilkesboro) is the largest hospital in the High Country and West Park (N. Wilkesboro) is home to a large concentration of medical practitioners. The addresses are listed in Table 3-4.

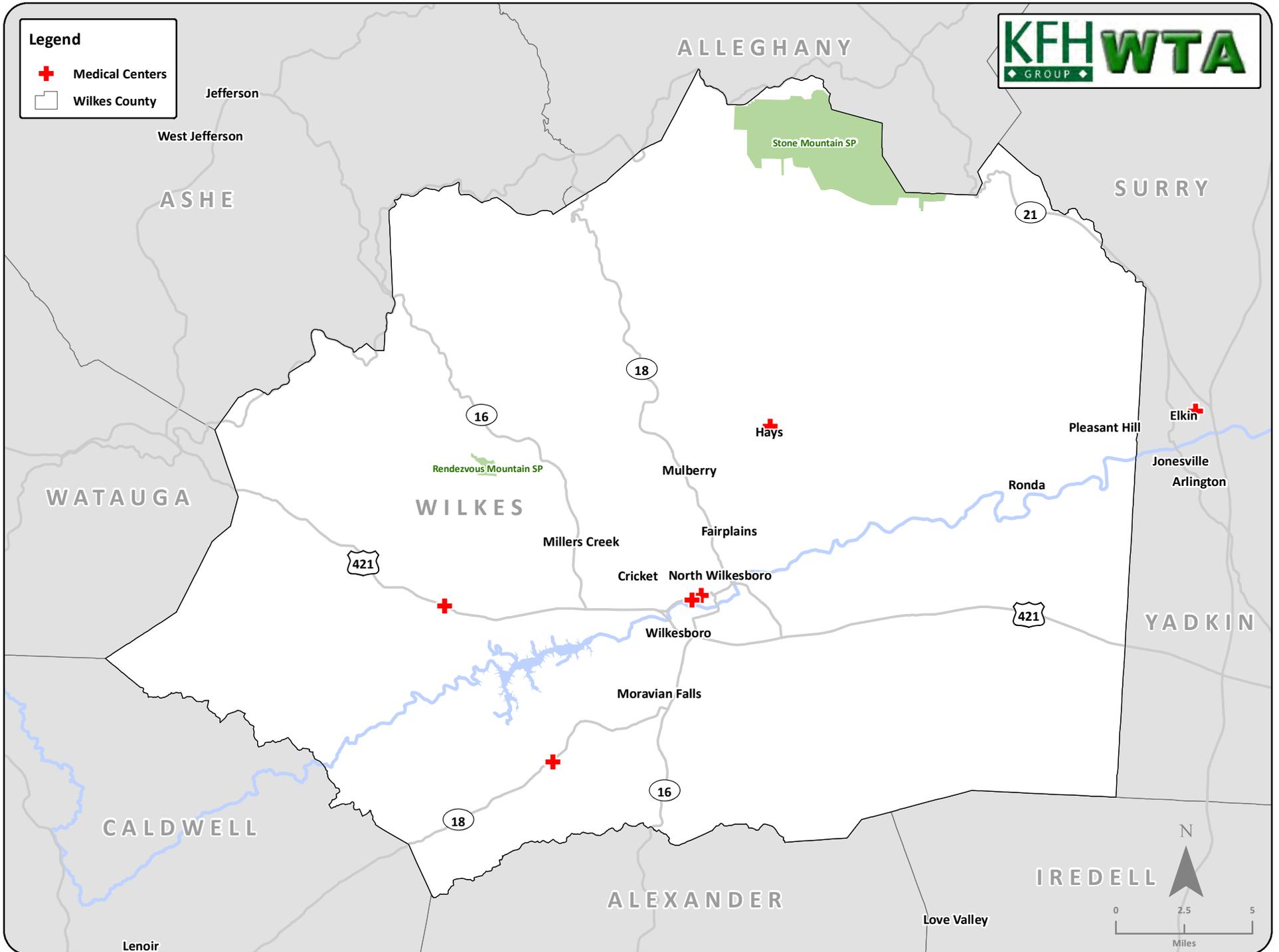
### *Educational Institutions*

Given that a sizeable share of transit use can sometimes be attributed to the patronage of the youth population, it is important to detail the location of educational institutions, or schools. Transit is an important option for people who cannot drive, including youth who may not have driver's licenses yet, and those who do not have a personal vehicle available to access educational opportunities. Several types of educational institutions were included in this analysis: both public and private middle schools and high schools, colleges and universities, vocational schools, and workforce development centers. The locations of these educational facilities are displayed in Figure 3-11, while the list of physical addresses is included in Table 3-5. As would be expected, these facilities are dispersed throughout the County. One of the most significant educational destinations in Wilkes County is Wilkes Community College, both as trip generator and as the location of the bus stop for the Mountaineer East-West.

### *Social Service Agencies*

Social service agencies provide assistance and aid to residents in fields such as aging, child support, mental health and rehabilitation, as well as other general social services. Shown in Figure 3-12, the social service agencies within Wilkes County include a number of different organizations dedicated to assisting persons with a variety of human needs, including seniors, children, low income persons, and person with mental or physical disabilities. Public transportation is often the only means of transportation for people who need the assistance offered by human service agencies. As the map indicates, the majority of the social service agencies in Wilkes County are located in the Wilkesboro/N. Wilkesboro area. Further information regarding these destinations is included in Table 3-6.

Figure 3-10: Medical Centers in Wilkes County

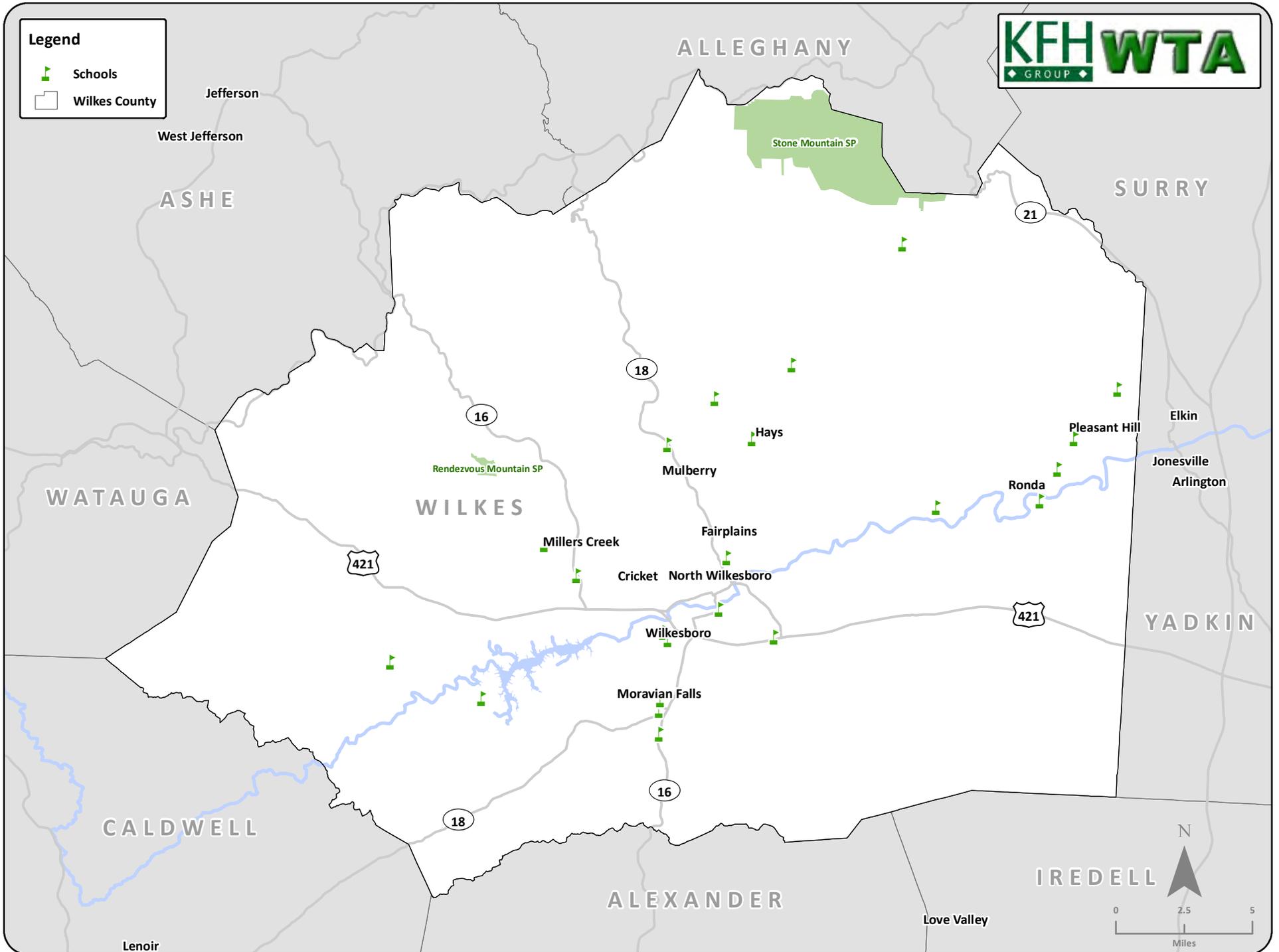


3-21

**Table 3-4: Medical Facilities in Wilkes County**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Zip Code</b>
Boomer Medical Center	156 Boomer Community Center Road	Boomer	28606
Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital	180 Parkwood Drive	Elkin	28621
Mountain View Medical Center	5229 Rock Creek Road	Hays	28635
West Wilkes Medical Center	171 W Wilkes Medical Center Road	Ferguson	28624
Wilkes Regional Medical Center	1370 W D Street	North Wilkesboro	28659
Wilkes Regional Medical Center: West Park	1917 West Park Drive	North Wilkesboro	28659

Figure 3-11: Schools in Wilkes County

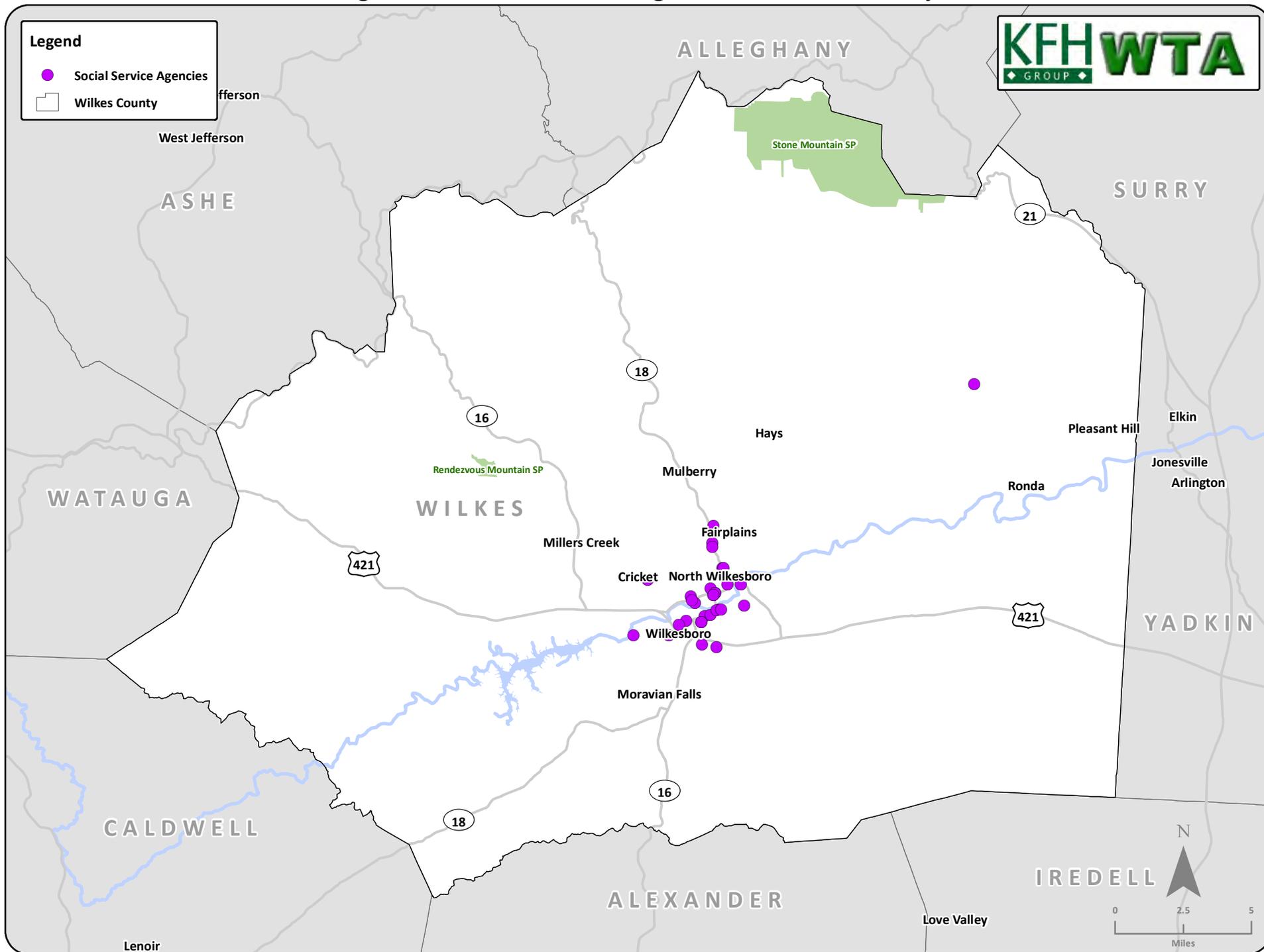


3-23

**Table 3-5: Schools in Wilkes County**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Zip Code</b>	<b>Type</b>
Boomer-Ferguson Elementary School	556 Boomer-Ferguson School Road	Boomer	28606	Elementary
CB Eller Elementary School	1288 CB Eller School Road	Elkin	28621	Elementary
CC Wright Elementary School	200 CC Wright School Road	North Wilkesboro	28659	Elementary
Central Wilkes Elementary School	3541 S NC Highway 16	Moravian Falls	28654	Middle
East Wilkes High School	13315 Elkin Highway	Ronda	28670	High
East Wilkes Middle School	2202 Macedonia Church Road	Ronda	28670	Middle
Foothills Christian College	400 Winston St	Wilkesboro	28697	College
Millers Creek Elementary School	4320 N NC Highway 16	Millers Creek	28651	Elementary
Moravian Falls Elementary School	2001 Moravian Falls School Road	Moravian Falls	28654	Elementary
Mount Pleasant Elementary School	532 Champion/Mount Pleasant Road	Ferguson	28624	Elementary
Mountain View School	5464 Mountain View Road	Hays	28635	Elementary
Mulberry Elementary School	190 Mulberry School Road	North Wilkesboro	28659	Elementary
North Wilkes High School	2986 Traphill Road	Hays	28635	High
North Wilkes Middle School	2776 Yellow Banks Road	North Wilkesboro	28659	Middle
North Wilkesboro Elementary School	200 Flint Hill Road	North Wilkesboro	28659	Elementary
Roaring River Elementary School	283 White Plains Road	Roaring River	28669	Elementary
Ronda-Clingman Elementary School	316 Ronda Clingman School Road	Ronda	28670	Elementary
Traphill Elementary School	9794 Traphill Road	Traphill	28685	Elementary
West Wilkes High School	6598 Boone Trail	Millers Creek	28651	High
West Wilkes Middle School	1677 N NC Highway 16	Wilkesboro	28697	Middle
Wilkes Central High School	1179 Moravian Falls Road	Wilkesboro	28697	High
Wilkes Community College	1328 S Collegiate Drive	Wilkesboro	28697	College
Wilkesboro Elementary School	1248 School Street	Wilkesboro	28697	Elementary

Figure 3-12: Social Service Agencies in Wilkes County



**Table 3-6: Social Service Agencies in Wilkes County**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Zip Code</b>
American Red Cross (Wilkes-Alleghany)	104 S West Street	Wilkesboro	28697
Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission, Inc.	710 Beech Street	North Wilkesboro	28659
Care Connection Pharmacy	110 Jefferson Street	North Wilkesboro	28659
Catherine H Barber Memorial Shelter, Inc.	86 Sparta Road	North Wilkesboro	28659
Child Abuse Prevention Team	203 E Main Street	Wilkesboro	28697
Easter Seals United Cerebral Palsy Woodlawn Development Center	1302 Second Street	North Wilkesboro	28659
Head Start (Cub Creek)	1201 A & B Industrial Park F	Wilkesboro	28697
Head Start (Lomax)	5728 Greenhorn Road	Roaring River	28669
Head Start (North Wilkesboro)	4 Jolly Street	North Wilkesboro	28659
New River Behavioral Healthcare	1430 Willow Lane	North Wilkesboro	28659
North Wilkesboro Department of Housing and Community Development	101 Hickory Street	North Wilkesboro	28697
Northwest Regional Housing Authority	1201 Industrial Park Road	Wilkesboro	28697
Ruby Pardue Blackburn Adult Day Health Care Center	1915 West Park Drive	North Wilkesboro	28659
Samaritan Christian Ministry of Wilkes, Inc.	164 Union School Drive	Wilkesboro	28659
Sheltered Aid to Families in Emergency	110 Jefferson Street	North Wilkesboro	28659
Smart Start of Wilkes	1006 F Street	North Wilkesboro	28659
Synergy Recovery at the Bundy Center	118 Peace Street	North Wilkesboro	28659
Triumph LLC	207 10th Street	North Wilkesboro	28659
United Way of Wilkes County	910 C Street	North Wilkesboro	28659
Wilkes Adult Developmental Activity Program	902 Boston Avenue	North Wilkesboro	28659
Wilkes Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	910 C Street	North Wilkesboro	28659
Wilkes County 4-H	201 Curtis Bridge Road	Wilkesboro	28697

**Table 3-6: Social Service Agencies in Wilkes County**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Zip Code</b>
Wilkes County Department of Social Services	304 College Street	Wilkesboro	28697
Wilkes County Health Department	306 College Street	Wilkesboro	28697
Wilkes County Public Library	215 10th Street	North Wilkesboro	28659
Wilkes Crisis Pregnancy Center	1224 School Street	Wilkesboro	28697
Wilkes Developmental Day School	1021 Welborn Avenue	Wilkesboro	28697
Wilkes Family Resource Center	306 D Street	North Wilkesboro	28659
Wilkes Family YMCA	1801 YMCA Boulevard	Wilkesboro	28697
Wilkes Habitat for Humanity	320 Cothren Street	Wilkesboro	28697
Wilkes Senior Center	228 Fairplains School Road	North Wilkesboro	28659

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### *Shopping Destinations*

The shopping destinations displayed in Figure 3-13 mainly include combinations of stores classified as plazas or shopping centers, rather than identifying every individual retail store in the region. However, several large retail establishments such as Wal-Mart were identified as shopping destinations, since persons with lower incomes may not have access to an automobile and are more likely to depend on transit for shopping opportunities at these relatively affordable retailers. Grocery stores are also included in this category, since they are often housed in the same site or shopping center. The addresses of these destinations are included in Table 3-7. As the map shows, major shopping opportunities are primarily clustered in the Wilkesboro-N. Wilkesboro area.

### *Major Trip Generators and the WE Shuttle*

All of the trip generators in the Wilkesboro and N. Wilkesboro region that were included on the individual maps have been displayed in Figure 3-14, along with the route map for the WE Shuttle. As the map indicates, almost all of the major trip generators in the two towns are included within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of the WE shuttle route.

### **Journey to Work Data**

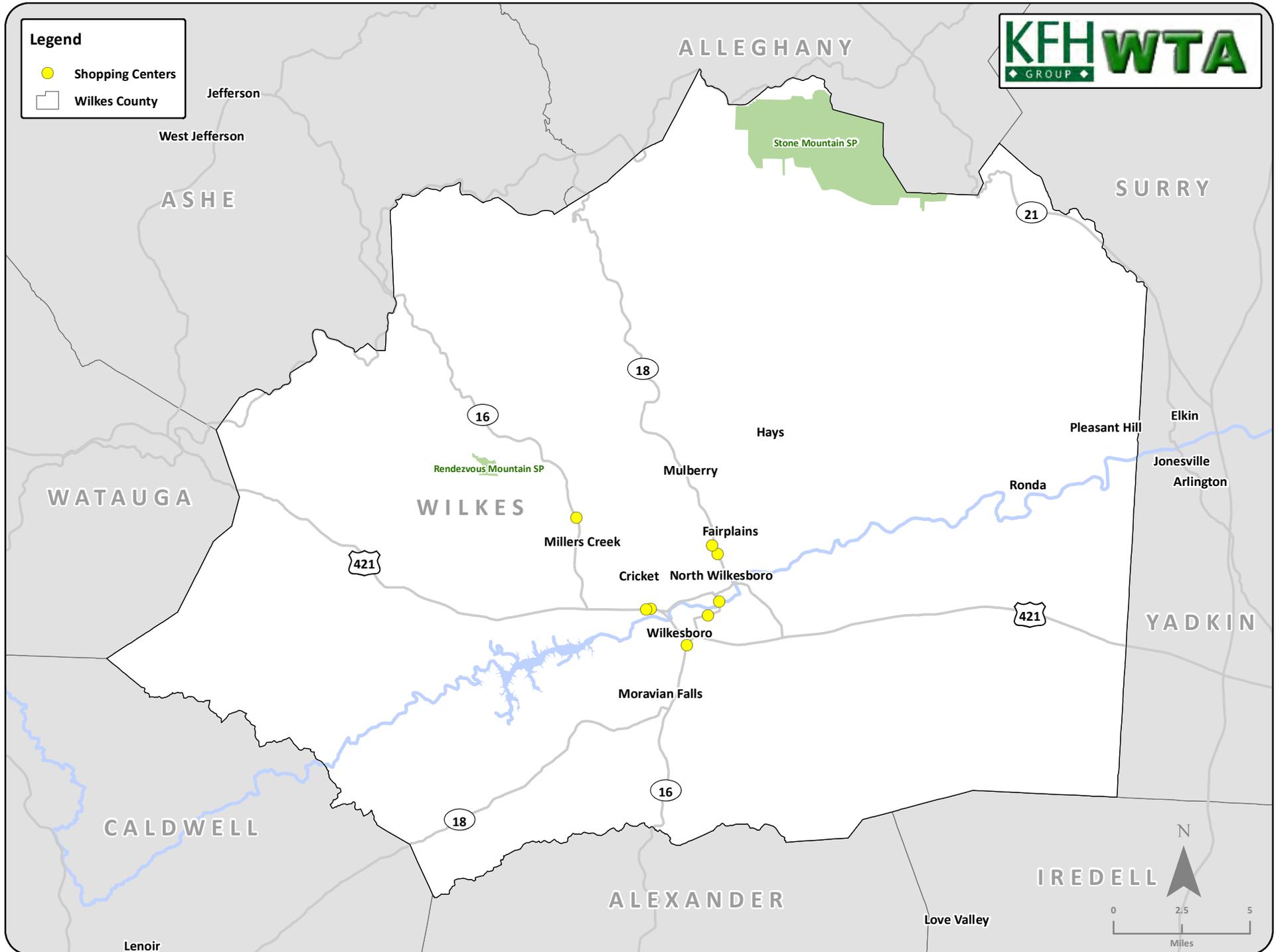
Census 2000 journey-to-work data indicated that there were 31,041 residents of Wilkes County who were employed. Of this group, 78% stayed in Wilkes County for work and 22% work in other counties or states. Of the 6771 out-commuters, the largest number go to work in Surry County (2,345 people), followed by Yadkin (733), Iredell (558), Caldwell (532), and Forsythe (522).

Of the 27,138 jobs in Wilkes County, 10.6 % of them were held by residents of other counties or states, with Ashe County producing the highest number of in-commuters (555 people), followed by Yadkin (390), Surry (374), and Watauga (259). The full Census 2000 journey-to-work data is presented in Table 3-8.

## **REVIEW OF RECENT PLANS AND STUDIES**

This section of the needs analysis includes a review and synopsis of existing plans and studies that have addressed transportation needs in Wilkes County. The plans reviewed included those specific to public transportation, as well as those addressing broader land use and growth issues in the region. The portions of the various plans that articulate public transportation needs and recommend specific projects are highlighted in this section.

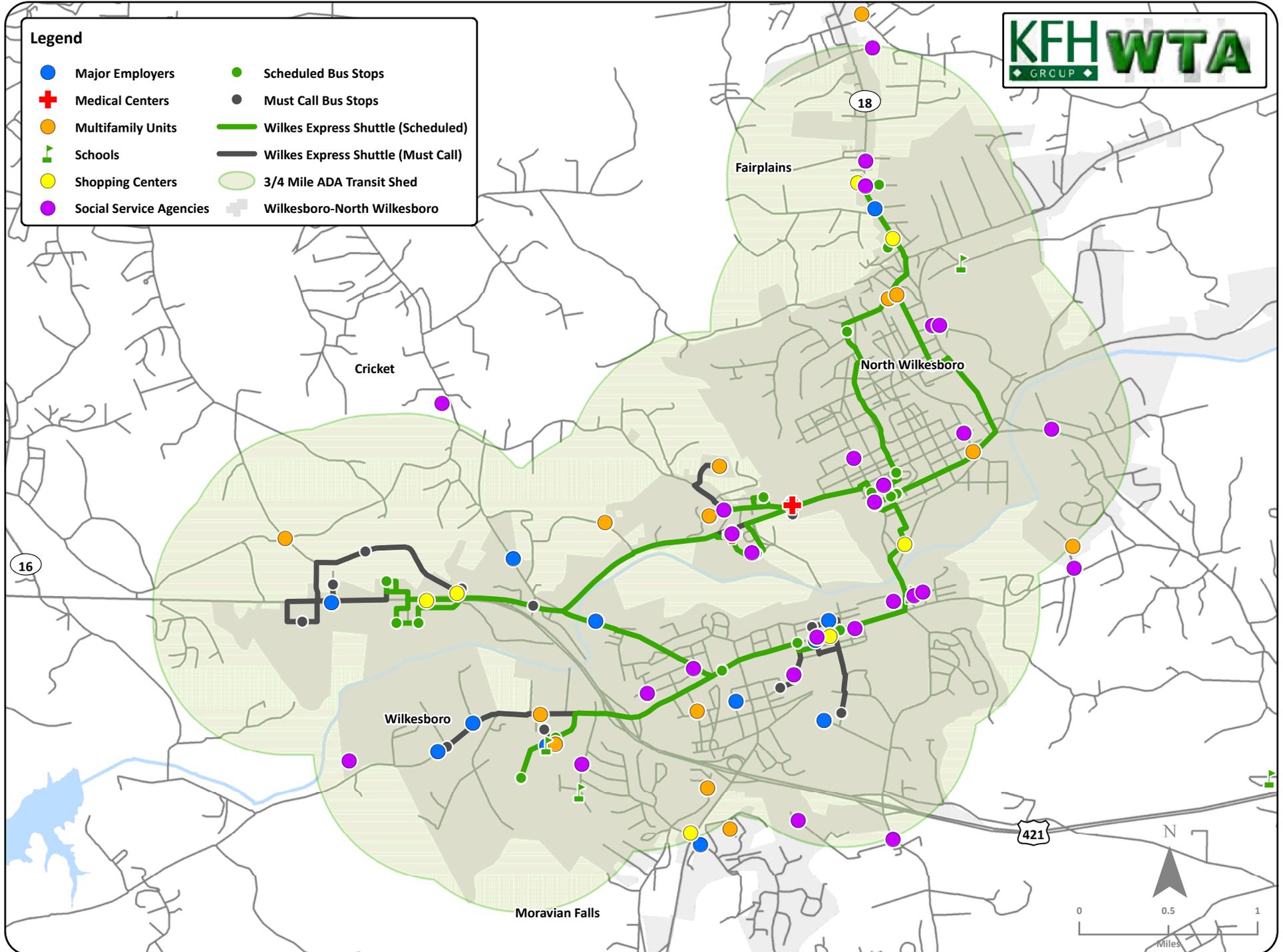
Figure 3-13: Shopping Centers in Wilkes County



**Table 3-7: Major Shopping Destinations in Wilkes County**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Zip Code</b>
Food Lion	1300 Westwood Lane	Wilkesboro	28697
Food Lion	21 Sparta Road	North Wilkesboro	28659
Food Lion	2931 NC Highway 16	Millers Creek	28651
Lowe's Food Store	310 Wilkesboro Avenue	North Wilkesboro	28659
Lowe's Food Store	1828 Winkler Street	Wilkesboro	28697
Lowe's Food Store	101 Northwest Marketplace	North Wilkesboro	28659
Walmart	1801 US Highway 421	Wilkesboro	28697

**Figure 3-14: Trip Generators and Fixed-Route Transit Service in the Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro Area**



3-31

Table 3-8: Commuting Data, Census 2000

Workers Living in Wilkes County Working in Wilkes County 2000--24,270

27,138 jobs in Wilkes County-2,868 in-commuters

<i>Census 2000: Workers Living in Wilkes County Commuting to Work in:</i>	
NC County	Number
Surry County	2,345
Yadkin County	733
Iredell County	558
Caldwell County	532
Forsyth County	522
Catawba County	316
Alexander County	273
Mecklenburg County	264
Watauga County	244
Ashe County	173
Guilford County	93
Rowan County	69
Alleghany County	55
Wake County	54
Davie County	47
Orange County	39
Cabarrus County	32
Davidson County	29
Durham County	27
Avery County	21
Nash County	21
Burke County	13
Alamance County	7
Union County	5
Gaston County	3
<b>Total In State</b>	<b>6,475</b>

State	#
Virginia	63
West Virginia	33
Oklahoma	30
Connecticut	27
Pennsylvania	25
Maryland	24
South Carolina	23
New York	20
Tennessee	17

<i>Census 2000: Workers Commuting to Work in Wilkes County, Living In:</i>	
NC County	Number
Ashe County	555
Yadkin County	390
Surry County	374
Watauga County	259
Forsyth County	181
Iredell County	177
Alleghany County	127
Caldwell County	110
Alexander County	102
Mecklenburg County	66
Burke County	63
Catawba County	49
Gaston County	21
Guilford County	19
Nash County	17
Rowan County	16
Union County	15
Davie County	13
New Hanover County	13
Henderson County	12
Davidson County	9
Duplin County	9
Lincoln County	9
Swain County	8
Avery County	7
Lenoir County	7
Macon County	6
Jones County	6
Craven County	5
Moore County	4
Randolph County	2
Cleveland County	2
Montgomery County	2
Bertie County	2
Stokes County	2
Yancey County	1
Pender County	1
<b>Total In State</b>	<b>2,661</b>
<b>State</b>	

Table 3-8: Commuting Data, Census 2000

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Workers Living in Wilkes County Working in Wilkes County 2000---24,270      27,138 jobs in Wilkes County-2,868 in-commuters

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<i>Census 2000: Workers Living in Wilkes County Commuting to Work in:</i>	
Michigan	7
Hawaii	7
California	7
Indiana	6
Georgia	5
Ohio	2
<b>Total Out of State</b>	<b>296</b>

<i>Census 2000: Workers Commuting to Work in Wilkes County, Living In:</i>	
Virginia	65
Texas	28
South Carolina	34
Florida	17
Tennessee	15
Ohio	13
Mississippi	13
Georgia	8
Indiana	7
Maryland	5
Arkansas	2
<b>Total Out of State</b>	<b>207</b>

### ***Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Land Use Plan)***

The *Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan* provides a 20-year vision for the Town, and includes a review of past and current development trends, analysis of demographic and economic data, and presents a plan of action. In addition to information on population demographics, housing, and community resources, the Land Use Plan included a brief section on transportation that provided 2000 US Census information on Wilkesboro resident's method of travel to work and commute times for people who work outside of their homes. It noted that no workers reported using public transportation to work.

The infrastructure section of the Land Use Plan provided information on the WTA services, highlighting the WE Shuttle, demand-response services, and agency contracted services. This section also discussed the Mountaineer East-West regional transportation services.

The Land Use Plan included transportation system goals, that while not specifically mentioning transit services, highlighted the need to reduce congestion and improve accessibility and mobility, to provide alternatives to traveling by automobile, and to include alternative transportation modes in all new developments. Transportation system policies included the inclusion of pedestrian amenities in new land developments and in existing land development, and to implement the recommendations of the Town of Wilkesboro's Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan.

### ***Town of Wilkesboro Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan (Pedestrian Plan), 2007***

The Town of *Wilkesboro's Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan* provides a guide in the planning, design, financing, implementation, and maintenance of the Town's pedestrian system. The Pedestrian Plan is designed to enhance and prioritize capital improvements and maintenance projects for the Town with special consideration for addressing critical pedestrian transportation and safety and addressing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance issues.

The overall goals of the Wilkesboro Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan are to:

- Enhance the pedestrian environment and increase opportunities to choose walking as a safe mode of transportation;
- Improve the health of citizens in the Town of Wilkesboro;
- Develop standards that enhance livability, economic opportunity, safety, and quality of life; and

- Promote pedestrian activity as a viable alternative to automobile use.

The Pedestrian Plan noted that pedestrian facilities are necessary to provide a means whereby people may choose to walk instead of drive, and is essential to support a user-friendly and accessible transit system. The Pedestrian Plan highlighted that when coordinated, transit and pedestrian infrastructure can provide a seamless means for citizens to move throughout the Town without necessarily utilizing a vehicle. The Pedestrian Plan included information on WTA services, including that the WTA's WE Shuttle has standard bus stops to provide user-friendly service. The Plan also noted that the locations of additional, proposed stops have been coordinated with the proposed pedestrian facilities.

The Pedestrian Plan included a section on transit stop treatments, noting that well-designed transit routes and stops are essential to a usable system. The plan provided guidance on bus stop locations, signage, lighting, and amenities, as well as pedestrian safety features and accessibility. Adequate room should exist to operate wheelchair lifts. It also noted that costs for transit stop facilities may range from \$1,000 to \$10,000, depending on the type of facility or facility improvement.

The Pedestrian Plan's policy recommendations included a "Transit Interface" with WTA, and stressed the importance of the WTA services for many residents in the Town. This recommendation noted that as the system continues to evolve, it will be necessary to provide additional and/or new sidewalks to existing and proposed transit stops. The Plan called for the Town to continue to work with WTA to provide adequate facilities and promote mass transit transportation, and that shelters and street furniture should also be implemented at bus stops. The Plan stressed that the Town of Wilkesboro will need to coordinate with WTA to connect proposed transit stops and pedestrian facilities, particularly since local pedestrians will typically only use transit stops that are safe, protected, and user-friendly as they travel to their respective destinations.

***Town of North Wilkesboro 25-Year Comprehensive Plan, (Comprehensive Plan) December 2006***

The *Town of North Wilkesboro's Comprehensive Plan* provides an analysis of current conditions and issues facing the Town in an effort to address possible improvements, and includes specific goals and necessary steps to achieve them over the long term. The key elements identified by the community as being the most crucial for successful future development serve as the foundation of the plan, and involve population and economy, land use and development, community facilities and infrastructure, and environmental resources.

The Comprehensive Plan does not include specific information on WTA services. However, one of the goals identified in the Comprehensive Plan was to encourage diversity in transportation options and availability, and one of the objectives to meet this goal is to work with other regional entities, public and private, to pursue a multi-modal network of transportation options and facilities. A policy included in the Pedestrian Plan to support this objective is to work with regional public transportation systems to encourage safe and convenient public transportation access.

The Comprehensive Plan also includes additional objectives to support pedestrian accessibility, and encourages commercial development along transportation corridors and mixed use commercial development. The Comprehensive Plan also highlights the need to consider the compatibility of infill development with existing building patterns and impact of high density residential uses on transportation corridors.

### *Town of North Wilkesboro Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan (Pedestrian Plan)*

The Pedestrian Plan serves as a tool to assist in the expansion, promotion and funding of safe and efficient pedestrian facilities, programs and initiatives throughout the Town. The goals of the Pedestrian Plan are to:

- Increase and enhance the safety of pedestrians.
- Enhance public awareness and education of pedestrians in the Town
- Adopt policies that promote connectivity, coordination, and continuity throughout the Town.
- Enhance personal and environmental health in North Wilkesboro.
- Develop a maintenance and implementation plan.

In a section on pedestrian standards and guidelines, the Pedestrian Plan provided information on transit stop treatments. It noted that a transit system must include well-planned routes and safe, accessible stops designed to accommodate the appropriate number of users and highly visible to pedestrians and motorists. The Pedestrian Plan provided guidelines to ensure pedestrian-friendly bus stops, including locating stops near higher density residential areas, commercial or business areas, and schools, and connecting these areas by sidewalk. The plan also stressed safety factors when considering bus stop locations, including the number of lanes and direction of traffic, the near or far side of an intersection, and how and where people who use wheelchairs will exit and enter the bus.

Recommendations in the plan included requiring developers to construct sidewalk and/or greenway connections between trip origins and nearby destinations such as transit stops, and establishing a way-finding system for pedestrians through kiosks that provide route maps and transit information.

### *Wilkes County Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan (Draft)*

To respond to federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) legislation that requires a locally-developed, coordinated public transit/human service plan to access funds through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5310, Section 5316, and Section 5317 Programs, WTA and the High Country Council of Governments have drafted the Wilkes County Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan. FTA guidance defines a coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan as one that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes; provides strategies for meeting those local needs; and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation.

The Draft Plan provides information on the FTA programs and potential projects, a demographic profile of the County, information on WTA services and other transportation providers in the County, and identified transportation gaps and needs.

The Draft Plan included the following needs that had been identified by participants in the coordinated planning process as gaps or barriers to coordination:

- Need to expand hours for those needing transportation to employment.
- Trip costs are not affordable
- Consideration of part-time work schedules
- More veteran medical trip coordination needed to group trips
- Salisbury Veterans Administration contracting with substandard transportation providers
- Need visible shelters and improvements
- Transportation for out of county employment
- Transportation to tourism and recreational destinations
- Shuttle service to public housing
- Elderly do not prefer vans
- Transportation for 2nd shift workers
- Transportation to the farmers market and healthy living activities

As noted in the Draft Plan, this is not an exhaustive list of gaps but represented the ones considered by coordinated planning participants as the most significant and should be the focus of projects and strategies funded under the three FTA programs.

As also noted in the Draft Plan, many of the gaps in transportation for Wilkes County involve extending service hours, high costs, and a need for improved service for veteran medical trips. The Draft Plan commented that as in most of the High Country region, several populations were considered to be underserved; the most notable of which were the low income who need transportation to employment, education, and to the human service agencies, and who typically live in the remote areas of the county.

The Draft Plan notes that coordination strategies and actions were developed to address the following transportation needs and issues confronting Wilkes County (as included in the draft Plan, multiple issues received the same ranking):

1. Marketing - Advertising existing services through faith-based organizations and doctors' offices. Website links from local businesses and home health care agencies.
2. Subsidized vanpool seats for low income population.
3. Park and ride lots along with feeder routes that connect with WE Shuttle.
4. Voucher program
5. Coordinate with high schools to pick up senior citizens and workers in rural areas or organize carpools.
6. Shuttle service from remote areas.
7. Additional dispatching centers to reduce cost to clients.
8. Explore local tax options to fund needed improvements.
9. Expand routes and locate stops at public housing locations.
10. Recruit more volunteer drivers for those agencies providing individualized transportation for the disabled, elderly, and low income populations.
11. ADA compatible stops along the WE Shuttle routes (shelters, sidewalks, etc)

The Draft Plan includes the following action strategies in response to these needs:

- **Need:** Increased marketing targeting low income, disabled, and elderly.
  - *Action Strategies:*
    - Apply for FTA S.5310, S.5316, and S.5317 funds to help pay for brochures and other advertising materials
    - Utilize faith-based organizations, medical facilities and providers, and human service agencies to distribute transportation information.
    - Utilize website links from local businesses to provide access to transportation information.
- **Need:** Subsidized vanpool seats for low income workers.
  - *Action Strategies*
    - Acquisition / provision of a van(s) for low income worker vanpool(s).

- 
- Apply for FTA Section 5316 funds to assist with subsidizing vanpool travel.
  - **Need:** Dedicated facilities for park and ride lots and feeder service to WE Shuttle from remote areas.
    - *Action Strategies*
      - Coordinate with area churches, schools, and community centers to use facilities for possible park and ride lots.
      - Identify other potential sites for park and ride lots.
      - Develop routes that will utilize park and ride lots to feed into the WE Shuttle.
      - Apply for FTA S.5310, S.5311, S.5316, and S.5317 funds.
      - Seek local funding options for improvements to the transportation system.
  - **Need:** Voucher Program to assist low income, disabled, and elderly with transportation to medical appointments or employment.
    - *Action Strategy*
      - Apply for FTA S.5310, S.5316, and S.5317 funds.
  - **Need:** Location of new dispatching centers to reduce response time and costs.
    - *Action Strategies*
      - Prepare a study to determine priorities and feasibility of additional dispatching centers.
      - Seek funding for the acquisition and maintenance of new sites.
  - **Need:** Expansion of deviated fixed route service to include stops at public housing locations.
    - *Action Strategies*
      - Coordinate with public housing management to identify potential stop locations.
      - Apply for FTA S.5310, S.5316, and S.5317 funds.
  - **Need:** Volunteer drivers for those agencies providing individualized transportation for the disabled, elderly, and low income populations (Model after the Wilkes Senior Citizen Council transportation program).
    - *Action Strategy*
      - Apply for FTA S.5310 and S.5317 funds to allow for expansion of the program.

- **Need:** Construction of ADA compliant enclosed shelters, sidewalks, and other infrastructure near destinations or facilities populated by disabled, elderly, and low income individuals.
  - *Action Strategies*
    - Identify potential sites for improvements.
    - Apply for FTA S.5310, S.5316, and S.5317 funds.
    - Partner with destinations or facilities to install facilities.
    - Seek local funding options.

### *Wilkes County Growth Management Plan, (Management Plan) December 2001*

The Management Plan provides a guide for development for use by the public and private sector. As noted in the plan, it incorporates the ideas of land use, infrastructure, and environmental protection into specific recommendations regarding development patterns and policies.

The Management Plan provided basic information on the WTA services as part of a review of existing infrastructure in the County. Recommended strategies included the development of a strategic plan for public transportation, and suggested that the CTSP process could serve as the strategic plan for public transportation in the County. The plan also noted that the CTSP process would need to include public input and coordination with Wilkes County and the Towns of Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro.

## **PASSENGER SURVEYS**

On-board rider surveys were developed and administered in June and July on board the demand-response vehicles and the WE Shuttle. The surveys were distributed and collected by the drivers.

### **Results- Demand Response Surveys**

Sixty-nine demand-response surveys were completed and returned for the survey effort. A copy of the survey instrument is provided in Appendix C. Table 3-9 provides a compilation of the results. As these data show, the majority of the trip activity takes place in Wilkesboro and N. Wilkesboro, with 56% of the origins and 66% of the destinations indicating one of these two towns. The remaining origins are scattered throughout the County. Out-of-County destinations included Elkin, Winston-Salem, Statesville, Asheville, Mooresville, and Boone.

**Table 3-9: WTA On-Board Rider Survey, Demand-Response Services**

<b>Q1: What was the location where you boarded the van?</b>		<b>54 responses</b>	
Wilkesboro	<u>27.8%</u>	Millers Creek	<u>3.7%</u>
N. Wilkesboro	<u>27.8%</u>	Boiling Springs	<u>1.9%</u>
Hays	<u>5.6%</u>	Boomer	<u>1.9%</u>
Mulberry	<u>5.6%</u>	Ferguson	<u>1.9%</u>
Roaring River	<u>5.6%</u>	Mountain Falls	<u>1.9%</u>
Ronda	<u>5.6%</u>	Puryear	<u>1.9%</u>
Elkin	<u>3.7%</u>	Stanton	<u>1.9%</u>
		West Jefferson	<u>1.9%</u>
<b>Q2: What is your destination?</b>		<b>53 responses</b>	
N. Wilkesboro	<u>43.4%</u>	Asheville	<u>1.9%</u>
Wilkesboro	<u>22.6%</u>	Boomer	<u>1.9%</u>
Elkin	<u>11.3%</u>	Boone	<u>1.9%</u>
Winston-Salem	<u>9.4%</u>	Mooresville	<u>1.9%</u>
Statesville	<u>3.8%</u>	Roaring River	<u>1.9%</u>
<b>Q3: What is the purpose of your van trip today? (You may check more than one)</b>		<b>69 responses</b>	
Work:	<u>8.70%</u>	Government Service Agency:	<u>1.45%</u>
Shopping:	<u>2.99%</u>	Errands/Personal Business:	<u>5.80%</u>
School:	<u>7.25%</u>	Attend Senior Center:	<u>0.00%</u>
Social/Recreation:	<u>5.80%</u>	Other:	<u>5.80%</u>
Medical:	<u>66.67%</u>		
<b>Q4: Do you also use the WE Shuttle?</b>		<b>69 responses</b>	
Yes	<u>14.49%</u>		
No, I only use the demand response van	<u>85.51%</u>		
<b>Q5: How often do you use the van service?</b>		<b>66 responses</b>	
4 times per week or more	<u>21.21%</u>	2-3 times per month	<u>33.33%</u>
2-3 times per week	<u>27.27%</u>	Once a month	<u>7.58%</u>
Once a week	<u>4.55%</u>	Less than once a month	<u>6.06%</u>
<b>Q6: How did you find out about the van service?</b>			
Already knew	<u>36.23%</u>		
Asked someone who uses the service	<u>11.59%</u>		
WTA Website	<u>0.00%</u>		
Senior center staff:	<u>0.00%</u>		
Other agency staff:	<u>27.54%</u>		
Brochure:	<u>1.45%</u>		
Asked driver:	<u>1.45%</u>		
Telephoned WTA:	<u>11.59%</u>		
Other:	<u>10.14%</u>		
<b>Q7: How long have you been using community transportation services in Wilkes County?</b>			
Six months or less:	<u>19.1%</u>		
Between six months and one year:	<u>7.4%</u>		
About one year:	<u>5.9%</u>		
Between one and two years:	<u>13.2%</u>		
More than two years:	<u>30.9%</u>		
More than five years:	<u>23.5%</u>		

**Table 3-9: WTA On-Board Rider Survey, Demand-Response Services**

**Q11: Please rate your satisfaction with WTA services in the following areas:**

	<b>VS</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>VU</b>
62 Trip scheduling process:	<u>56.45%</u>	<u>35.48%</u>	<u>4.84%</u>	<u>3.23%</u>
61 Telephone customer service:	<u>54.10%</u>	<u>37.70%</u>	<u>3.28%</u>	<u>4.92%</u>
63 On-time performance:	<u>58.73%</u>	<u>39.68%</u>	<u>0.00%</u>	<u>1.59%</u>
59 Days of service:	<u>55.93%</u>	<u>37.29%</u>	<u>5.08%</u>	<u>1.69%</u>
60 Hours of service:	<u>50.00%</u>	<u>38.33%</u>	<u>10.00%</u>	<u>1.67%</u>
55 Cost of van fare:	<u>50.91%</u>	<u>38.18%</u>	<u>3.64%</u>	<u>7.27%</u>
60 Cleanliness of the vans:	<u>68.33%</u>	<u>23.33%</u>	<u>1.67%</u>	<u>1.67%</u>
59 Driver courtesy:	<u>76.27%</u>	<u>22.03%</u>	<u>0.00%</u>	<u>1.69%</u>
58 Availability of information:	<u>58.62%</u>	<u>34.48%</u>	<u>5.17%</u>	<u>1.72%</u>
59 Safety and security:	<u>71.19%</u>	<u>27.12%</u>	<u>0.00%</u>	<u>1.69%</u>
41 Usefulness of website:	<u>48.78%</u>	<u>46.34%</u>	<u>2.44%</u>	<u>2.44%</u>

**Demographics**

**Q12: Do you have a driver's license?**

Yes	<u>39%</u>
No	<u>61%</u>

**Q13: Do you have access to a car, truck, or motorcycle?**

Yes	<u>26%</u>
No	<u>74%</u>

**Q14: Please indicate your age group.**

Under 12 years old:	<u>0%</u>	26-55 years old:	<u>56%</u>
12-17 years old:	<u>0%</u>	56-64 years old:	<u>18%</u>
18-25 years old:	<u>5%</u>	65 years old or older:	<u>21%</u>

**Q15: Are you:**

Male	<u>30%</u>
Female	<u>70%</u>

**Q16: How would you classify yourself:**

African American	<u>6%</u>	Hispanic/Latino	<u>0%</u>
Asian	<u>0%</u>	Native American	<u>13%</u>
Caucasian	<u>77%</u>	Other	<u>5%</u>

**Q17: Which best describes your employment status?**

Employed, full-time	<u>6%</u>	Student, part-time	<u>0%</u>
Employed, part-time	<u>5%</u>	Homemaker	<u>8%</u>
Retired	<u>22%</u>	Unemployed	<u>17%</u>
Student, full-time	<u>8%</u>	Other "disabled"	<u>33%</u>

**Q18: What is your annual household income level?**

\$14,999 or less	<u>89%</u>	\$45,000 - \$59,999	<u>4%</u>
\$15,000 - \$29,999	<u>6%</u>	\$60,000 - \$74,999	<u>0%</u>
\$30,000 - \$44,999	<u>2%</u>	\$75,000 or higher	<u>0%</u>

The primary trip purpose was medical (66.7%), followed by work (8.7%) and school (7.25%). Just fewer than 15% of the van riders indicated that they also use the WE Shuttle. The most commonly occurring response for frequency of use was 2-3 times per month (33%), followed by 2-3 times per week, and 4 or more times per week. The majority of the survey respondents were long-time users, with 54.4% indicating that they have been using community transportation services in Wilkes County for more than two years. There were more female survey respondents than male (70%/30%) and the majority of the respondents did not have access to a car, truck, or motorcycle (74%). The majority of the respondents indicated a household income of \$14,999 or less.

The demand-response riders were generally satisfied with the service provided, with only the hours of service and the cost of service generating more than 10% unsatisfactory responses. Riders were most pleased with the driver courtesy.

There were four open-ended questions on the survey, designed to solicit feedback concerning likes, dislikes, ideas for improvements, and general comments. When asked what they liked the best about WTA services, respondents indicated the drivers, the convenience, the dependability, and on-time performance. Dislikes included the vans, scheduling issues, the waiting, and the fact that there is not always a wheelchair-accessible vehicle assigned to the WE Shuttle.

Suggestions for service improvements and expansions included the following:

- Larger vehicles, more new vans, more lift vans;
- Scheduling improvements;
- More coverage for shuttle;
- Less wait time after appointments;
- Saturday service;
- Lift van on shuttle.

The general comments were largely positive, expressing appreciation for the service. Appendix C provides the full responses to the open-ended questions on the survey.

## **WILKES COUNTY PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY**

A public opinion survey was developed and administered to solicit information concerning transit needs in Wilkes County. The survey questions were developed by KFH Group, in consultation with the CTSP Steering Committee, and WTA staff. A copy of the survey instrument is provided in Appendix D.

There were two means of data collection for the survey effort: an Internet-based survey and paper survey. The Internet-based survey was constructed in Survey Monkey and linked to the WTA website and the Town of Wilkesboro's website. A press release was also sent out announcing the availability of the survey.

In recognition of the possibility that many potential and current transit riders may not have convenient Internet access, paper surveys were provided at key locations around the County. The survey was also administered for a day in front of the Walmart in Wilkesboro. The paper surveys were then manually entered into the Survey Monkey database for analysis. The survey was available between July and September, 2010.

## Results

The majority of the 69 surveys completed were done so on paper, with only five or so completed electronically. Although the study team was hoping for more surveys, the ones that were completed do provide helpful public input for the CTSP.

### Awareness of WTA

While 75% of the survey respondents indicated that they never use public transportation, 91% of the survey respondents indicated that they are aware of the services provided by the WTA. While talking with some of the survey respondents who were completing the surveys at Walmart, a common thought was that WTA is for people who can no longer drive due to age or disability. Many indicated that they don't use it because "I don't need it yet."

### Demographics

#### *Survey Respondents' Residential Zip Codes*

The most number of surveys were completed by people living in North Wilkesboro (20) and Wilkesboro (14), followed by Traphill and Millers Creek. A total of ten zip codes were represented by respondents, as shown in Table 3-10.

#### *Driver's License and Auto Availability*

Eighty-six percent of the survey respondents reported that they have a drivers' license and 89% reported that there was one or more working vehicles in their households.

**Table 3-10**  
**Survey Respondents' Residential Zip Codes**

<b>Zip Code</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Location</b>
28659	20	North Wilkesboro
28697	14	Wilkesboro
28685	9	Traphill
28651	7	Millers Creek
28624	3	Ferguson
28654	3	Moravian Falls
27020		Hamptonville
28621		Elkin
28635		Hays
28658		Newton

### *Age Groups of Survey Respondents*

The majority of the survey respondents indicated that they were between the ages of 26 and 55, followed by the 56-64 age group.

### *Employment Status and Income*

Forty-two percent of the survey respondents reported that they are employed full-time; 19% reported that they are employed part-time; 12.9% reported that they are retired; and 11.3% reported that they are unemployed. Several income levels were represented by survey respondents, with \$14,999 or less receiving the most responses (30.2%), followed by \$30,000 to \$44,999.

Table 3-11 provides the full survey responses to the demographic portion of the survey.

### *Modes of Transportation Used*

“Drive myself” was the most frequently reported mode of transportation for all of the trip purposes listed on the survey (80%). “Riding with family or friends,” was a distant second (12%), followed by “public transportation” (5%).

**Table 3-11: Demographics**

<b>Do you have a drivers' license?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	85.5%	53
No	14.5%	9
<i>answered question</i>		62
<i>skipped question</i>		7

<b>How many working cars/trucks/suvs/ motorcycles are there in your household?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
0	11.5%	7
1	29.5%	18
2	27.9%	17
3	19.7%	12
4 or more	11.5%	7
<i>answered question</i>		61
<i>skipped question</i>		8

**Ages of Survey Respondents**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Under 12 years old	0.0%	0
12-17 years old	1.6%	1
18-25 years old	12.9%	8
26-55 years old	54.8%	34
56-64 years old	19.4%	12
65 years old or older	11.3%	7
<i>answered question</i>		62
<i>skipped question</i>		7

Table 3-11 (continued)

<b>Employment Status</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Employed, full-time	41.9%	26
Employed, part-time	19.4%	12
Retired	12.9%	8
Student, full-time	6.5%	4
Student, part-time	4.8%	3
Homemaker	8.1%	5
Unemployed	11.3%	7
Other	9.7%	6
	<i>answered question</i>	62
	<i>skipped question</i>	7
<b>Income</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
\$14,999 or less	30.2%	16
\$15,000-\$29,999	17.0%	9
\$30,000-\$44,999	28.3%	15
\$45,000-\$59,999	9.4%	5
\$60,000-\$74,999	5.7%	3
\$75,000 or higher	9.4%	5
	<i>answered question</i>	53
	<i>skipped question</i>	16

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### ***Transit Use Among Respondents***

The survey asked participants to indicate if they use any of the available transit services in the region or if they carpooled, and if so, which service and how frequently. Seventeen of the 69 respondents reported that they do use some form of shared-ride transportation, with eight reporting use of the WE Shuttle, six reporting use of the Mountaineer Express, and five reporting use of the WTA demand-response. There were two respondents who reported using the Wilkes Senior Citizens' Council services.

As a follow-up to the transit use question, the survey asked participants to indicate why they do not use public transit. The most frequently cited reason was "need my car for work/school" (41.2%). This was followed by "need my car before/after work/school," (25.5%), followed by "no service is available near my home/work." The full responses are provided in Table 3-12.

A second follow-up question asked "Would you use public transportation services in Wilkes County if there was a service that met your needs?" Seventy-two percent of the survey participants indicated that they would.

### ***Public Transportation Needs***

When asked "is there a need for additional public transit services in Wilkes County," 74% of the survey respondents indicated yes. The next series of questions on the survey asked a number of specific questions concerning the nature of the need for improved public transportation services.

#### ***Where are Additional Public Transportation Services Needed?***

Survey respondents indicated that there is a need for additional services Countywide, followed by Wilkesboro, N. Wilkesboro, and various small communities in the County. These data are provided in Table 3-13.

Specific intra-regional needs indicated most frequently by survey respondents were as follows: service between Wilkes County and Boone (31 responses); Winston/Salem (31 responses); Statesville (20 responses); Lenoir (15 responses); and Hickory (14 responses). The full responses to this question are provided in Table 3-14.

#### ***Priorities for Additional Service within Existing Service Area***

When asked to indicate what additional services are needed within the existing service area, Saturday service was listed the most frequently, followed by more frequent service, and service later in the evenings. Table 3-15 provides these data.

Table 3-12: Reasons for Not Using Public Transportation

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Need my car for work/school.	41.2%	21
Need my car before/after work/school.	25.5%	13
Other (see below):	23.5%	12
No service is available near my home/work/school.	21.6%	11
	15.7%	8
Need my car for emergencies or overtime.		
Don't know if service is available and/or location of stops.	13.7%	7
The hours of operation are too limited.	9.8%	5
Have to wait too long for the bus/van or between buses/vans.	9.8%	5
I have limited mobility and it is hard for me to use the bus.	7.8%	4
Trip is too long/takes too much time.	5.9%	3
It might not be safe/I don't feel safe.	2.0%	1
The bus/van is expensive.	2.0%	1
The bus/van is uncomfortable.	0.0%	0
Buses/vans are unreliable/late.	0.0%	0
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>51</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>18</b>

**Other (please specify):**

WTA is too expensive for the County to fund  
I do not presently have a need for public transportation.  
Prefer car  
Friends take me where I need to go.  
I don't need it yet  
I ride with my sister  
I am not aware of any public transportation  
I drive  
Choose not to have to wait.  
I prefer my car  
Have kids  
Have not needed to use it

Table 3-13

## Where are additional public transportation services needed?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Countywide	72.7%	32
Town of Wilkesboro	13.6%	6
Other	11.4%	5
Town of North Wilkesboro	9.1%	4
Fairplains	9.1%	4
Millers Creek	6.8%	3
Moravian Falls	6.8%	3
West Elkin	6.8%	3
Mulberry	4.5%	2
Ronda	4.5%	2
Hays	2.3%	1
Cricket	2.3%	1
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>44</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>25</b>

Table 3-14

## If you think there is a need to connect Wilkes County to the broader Western North Carolina region, please indicate the towns/cities you feel need to be connected - between Wilkes County and....

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Boone	79.5%	31
Winston/Salem	79.5%	31
Statesville	51.3%	20
Lenoir	38.5%	15
Hickory	35.9%	14
Charlotte	23.1%	9
Greensboro	17.9%	7
Asheville	12.8%	5
Morganton	10.3%	4
Other	7.7%	3
Salisbury	5.1%	2
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>39</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>30</b>

Other: Elkin (2)

Table 3-15

**If you see a need for additional days/hours/frequency of service for the current WTA services, please indicate which additional days/hours are needed.**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Saturday service	57.5%	23
More frequent service	52.5%	21
Service later in the evenings	35.0%	14
Sunday service	22.5%	9
Service earlier in the mornings	17.5%	7
Other (please specify):	5.0%	2
	<i>answered question</i>	40
	<i>skipped question</i>	29

**Other:**

Service is presently adequate as far as I know.  
Whatever will encourage more use.

### *Opinions Concerning Financial Support for Transit*

The survey also asked respondents to indicate if they would support either of the two financing mechanisms that could potentially be implemented to fund public transportation improvements. These results show that of the 55 people who answered the question, 34 indicated support for one or the other of the mechanisms (21 supported a ¼ cent sales tax and 13 supported a vehicle registration fee). Twenty-two respondents to this question indicated that they would not support either of the options, but they do feel that public transportation in the region is important, and five indicated that they do not support either of the options and public transportation in the county is not important. These results are provided in Table 3-16. While these results do not show a majority support for a particular funding mechanism, they do show a majority support for some type of funding mechanism, which is positive given the current economic climate.

### *General Comments*

Survey respondents were asked to indicate if they would use public transportation services in the region if there were to be a service that met their travel needs. Seventy-two percent of the people who answered this question indicated yes.

Table 3-16: Financial Support

<b>Would you support either of the following financing mechanisms that could potentially be used to help fund public transportation improvements in Wilkes County?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
A one-quarter cent sales tax.	38.2%	21
A vehicle registration fee of up to \$7.00 per vehicle.	23.6%	13
I would not support either of these options, but I do feel public transportation in the County is important.	40.0%	22
I would not support either of these options, and I do not feel that public transportation in the County is important.	9.1%	5
	<i>answered question</i>	55
	<i>skipped question</i>	14

The last question on the survey was open-ended, soliciting comments concerning the need for improved public transportation in Wilkes County. Respondents provided 21 comments in response to this open-ended question. These responses are provided in Table 3-17.

## STAKEHOLDER INPUT CONCERNING TRANSIT NEEDS

### CTSP Steering Committee

The public transportation needs analysis also included obtaining input from a variety of community stakeholders. This was gained from the various agencies and organizations represented on the CTSP Steering Committee.

During the initial meeting with the CTSP Steering Committee on May 19, 2010, Committee members and WTA staff provided comments on the issues they considered to be most important. These issues are summarized below, though are not presented in any particular priority order:

- There is a need to make the WTA vehicles more mother and child friendly by ensuring that car seats are available and properly installed in each vehicle. It was mentioned that some transit systems in North Carolina are able to get car seats donated by community businesses and/or organizations.

**Table 3-17: Comments**

It is not needed using WTA as a taxi for trips to Walmart etc. is not a service Wilkes County needs to provide.
With the average age of our population increasing in this area I see public transportation being more in demand in the future. I may at some time have a personal need for this service as I do not plan to relocate.
People are reluctant to use it due to being unfamiliar with it. Suggest having a temporary "free" period of about a month so people will get use to using it. Several people have asked me about it but, it does not come close to their homes. Expand the areas and have multiple routes that overlap.
I would use the shuttle if there was one going each direction so that the trips would be short to and from work. Also, bike racks on the van would help.
Every morning I get in my truck and ride alongside the same people going the same direction into town. I ride alongside the same people going to lunch, and again going back home in the evening. I checked into using the WTA shuttle, and would ride it except for the very long ride home. The 10-15 minute ride to work was fine. For me a more frequent shuttle during peak commute times and at lunch would be great (I live in the city limits). Also, countywide, there is a big need for transportation resources in general.
Affordable public transportation is needed for low-income persons to use to get to work, school, and medical appointments.
We need public transportation so please try and keep this service to our residents.
Needs to be less expensive. Needs to be more flexible- need to be able to schedule same day/day before. Was told that the shuttle was not accessible.
Need 5 day a week service to Boomer.
It is a good thing for the County and I think they do a good job.
I really don't use public transportation but I think it is really important for people that do not have a car.
Just need to expand out in our communities.
The need for people to have reliable transportation to work and from work is important. Especially at night to get home. Should run later, have more stops.
Larger lifts to accommodate XL wheelchairs and provide some assistance to persons with minimal ability.
Service to Boomer
I would definitely use public transportation if available. I don't think the need for transportation services in the broader WNC region is necessary, but county service would be wonderful!
Better way of improving the vehicles if needed, like a fundraiser.
I would like to see more on weekday later than 5 p.m. and weekend service.
I will use public transportation when I am not longer able to drive (present age is 71).
Family members give me rides.
Helps employees get to work.

- Occasionally there are scheduling issues that result in riders waiting long periods of time for a return trip from Elkin. There may be a need to look at posting some vehicles closer to Elkin to help alleviate this issue.
- WTA has seen an increasing number of calls to get veterans to Veteran's Administration (VA) hospitals in Salisbury, Asheville, and Winston-Salem. WTA can use Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP) funds for these trips, but would like to investigate other revenue sources as EDTAP funds are limited.
- The State's human service network has experienced significant funding cuts and these cuts have impacted the ability to pay for transportation for agency clients. Some of these clients are transported as EDTAP or Rural General Public (RGP) riders, which impacts the ability of WTA to grow service. It is also currently unclear how health reform initiatives will impact Medicaid transportation.
- Regional coordination opportunities may exist and should be explored. WTA's transit "neighbors" include AppalCART, Yadkin Valley Public Transportation, Iredell County Area Transit System, Greenway Public Transportation, Ashe County Transportation Authority, and Alleghany in Motion. PART also serves the region, providing service between Boone and Greensboro.
- Wilkes County is promoting tourism in the area. The concept of using public transportation to access recreational opportunities should be explored. The public opinion survey for the project should ask about using public transportation to access recreational opportunities.
- Additional bus stop amenities (i.e., shelters) are needed in Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro for users of the WE Shuttle.
- WTA is replacing some of its vans with light transit vehicles which will add more capacity for the WE Shuttle and other selected routes.
- Committee members would also like to explore what impact the WE Shuttle could/does have on downtown visitation (Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro).

### **Interview with Wilkes County Manager, Planning Director, and Finance Manager**

In early July, 2010, KFH Group staff met with the Wilkes County Manager, the Planning Director, and the Finance Manager to discuss public transportation services in the County, including history, awareness, finances, and unmet transportation need. Highlights from the discussion are listed below.

- The community is generally aware of WTA services.
- There is not a lot of concern for public transportation in Wilkes County.
- Wilkes County provided some funding assistance when the Authority was initially formed, but currently does not provide any County funds to WTA.
- The County does administer the EDTAP, RGP, and Work First funds, which WTA invoices for on a monthly basis.
- The unemployment rate in the County is 13.5%, similar to other counties in Western North Carolina that have seen significant declines in manufacturing and textile employment. Lowes and Tyson are the largest employers in the County.
- Tyson may have some need for employment transportation for its workforce.
- Fees or taxes to support public transportation improvements are not likely to be approved by the Commissioners or the voters in the current economic climate.

### **Interview with Wilkes Community College (WCC)**

WCC is an important stakeholder for transit in Wilkes County, both as a major trip generator, and as a host for the Mountaineer Express. KFH Group staff conducted a telephone interview with the Dean of Student Services and the Head of Security to gather input concerning transit needs from the perspective of WCC.

WCC staff indicated that for the most part the transit needs of the students, faculty, and staff of WCC are being met. On occasion staff hears that a student is not able to enroll or continue due to car problems/financial issues, but it is not a common occurrence. The County is very rural and auto-oriented and most mobility needs are met by family members when people cannot drive. WCC also has several satellite centers, which means that students can participate in WCC programs closer to home and not all have to travel to Wilkesboro.

WCC staff also indicated that WTA plays an important role for mobility for students with disabilities, bringing them back and forth to campus. The Mountaineer Express also provides important mobility services, as many specialty physicians are located in Winston-Salem.

## **SUMMARY**

The demographics, land use analysis, review of previous studies, passenger surveys, and stakeholder discussions have resulted in the following general conclusions:

- The County is growing slowly, so future public transportation demand is likely to be similar to existing demand, with some growth experienced as the population ages.
- There is not enough density for traditional fixed-route services in any areas of the County; deviated fixed-route service is appropriate for the Wilkesboro/N. Wilkesboro area.
- The WE Shuttle provides excellent geographic coverage in relation to major trip generators, though this has resulted in a very long route.
- Some of the more rural areas of the county are home to a relatively high percentage of people displaying transportation needs characteristics.
- For the 22% of Wilkes County residents who work outside the County, the primary direction of travel is east.
- The Towns of Wilkesboro and N. Wilkesboro specifically mention transit amenities in their pedestrian plans and the comprehensive plans for each town discuss multimodal transportation options.
- Unmet transit needs generally include the need to expand the hours of service, examine ways to make the services more affordable and accessible.
- The primary need currently being met by WTA is access to medical appointments and more than 50% of the trip activity takes place in Wilkesboro/N. Wilkesboro.
- Riders indicate a desire for larger vehicles, more accessible vehicles, scheduling improvements, Saturday service, and more geographic coverage for the WE Shuttle.

# Chapter 4

## Service and Organizational Alternatives

### INTRODUCTION

The first three chapters prepared for the Wilkes County Community Transportation Service Plan (CTSP) documented transit needs in Wilkes County and outlined the services currently available. The development of these data collection and analysis reports showed that there are some unmet transit needs in the study area, as well as some opportunities to achieve greater efficiencies. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a series of service and organizational alternatives that could be implemented to help improve efficiency and further meet transit needs in Wilkes County. For each alternative there is a description of the concept, a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages, and a cost estimate, where possible. Service alternatives are presented first, followed by the organizational alternatives.

### SERVICE ALTERNATIVES

Improvements outlined in this section of the chapter focus on ways to improve service for people who ride or would like to ride WTA and on ways in which WTA can provide service more efficiently.

#### **Service Alternative #1: Provide WE Shuttle Service on Saturdays**

The survey results indicated that people would like to have public transportation options on Saturdays, particularly for those areas that serve major shopping destinations. The WE Shuttle is a good candidate to test the demand for Saturday service, as operating it requires only one vehicle.

- **Purpose:** To provide basic mobility for people in the most populated areas of Wilkes County on Saturdays.

- **Advantages and Disadvantages:** Operating the WE Shuttle on Saturdays will address some of the unmet transit needs that are articulated in the Coordinated Plan and were listed by survey respondents. Saturday service will allow riders to shop and conduct errands during a time that is typically convenient for people to do so and will also provide additional access to the Mountaineer Express. The disadvantage of operating Saturday service is that it typically is not as productive as weekday service, which does not lead to increased overall productivity.
- **Cost:** The annual operating expenses for running the WE Shuttle on Saturdays are estimated to be about \$14,500 annually. This estimate is based on \$35 per revenue service hour operating cost, eight hours of revenue service, and 52 Saturdays. No capital expenses would be required for this service extension.

### **Service Alternative #2: Always Use an Accessible Vehicle on the Shuttle**

Survey comments indicated that the WE Shuttle is not always wheelchair-accessible. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as a deviated fixed-route, the WE Shuttle should be operated using an accessible vehicle, as complementary paratransit is not provided.

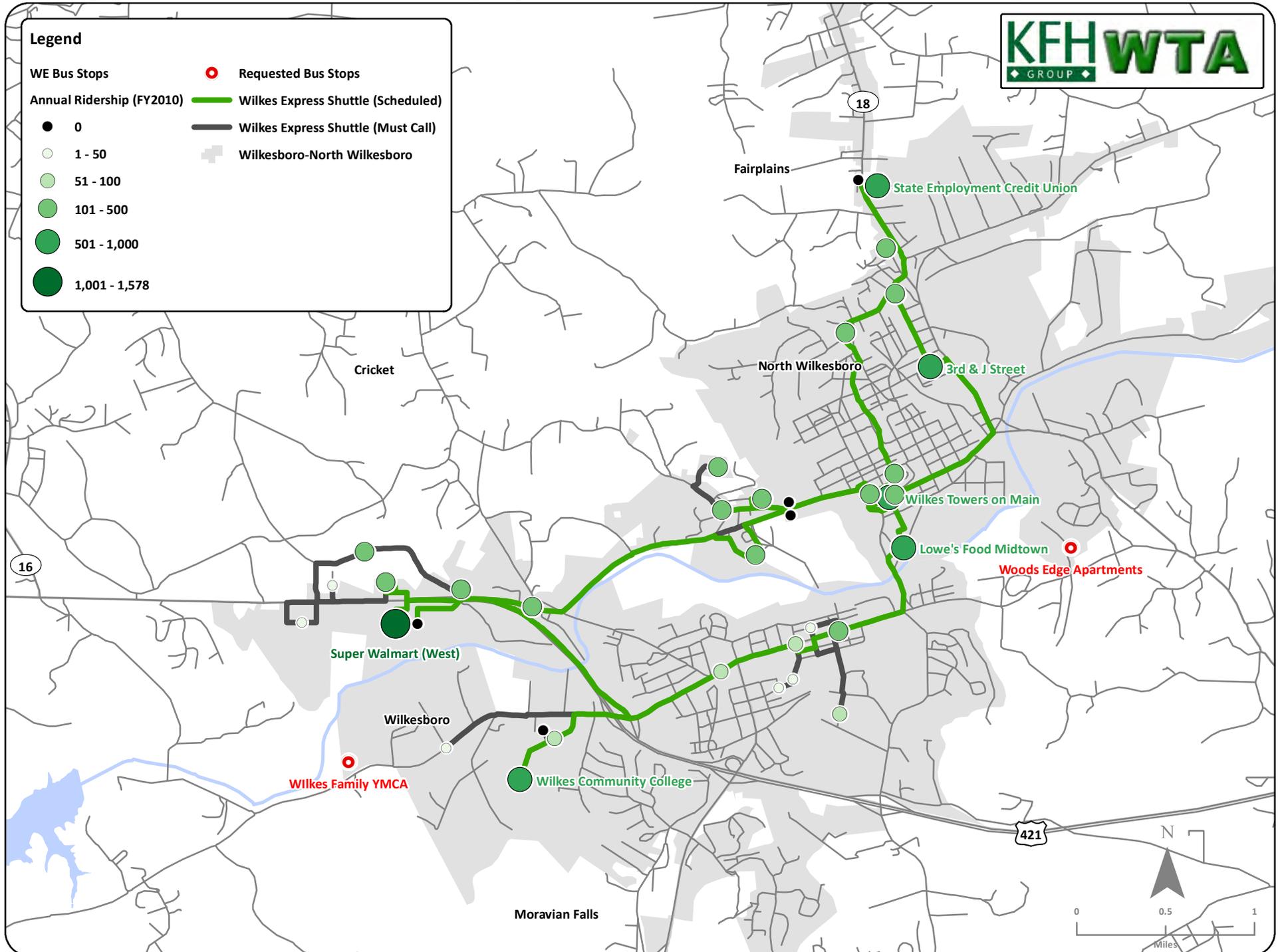
For this alternative we have not articulated the full range of advantages, disadvantages, and costs, as WTA needs to implement this one to be in full compliance with the ADA.

### **Service Alternative #3: WE Shuttle Routing and Scheduling**

Ridership on the WE Shuttle is growing and riders are pleased that it is available. Comments received via the surveys indicated that there are a few places that riders would like the shuttle to go that it does not currently, and some of the “must-call” stops should probably be regular stops. Field observation also suggested that the route is already quite long for one vehicle to accomplish in one hour.

Figure 4-1 provides a map that shows the FY 2010 ridership by stop for the WE Shuttle. As these data show, the primary stops are the Walmart, Wilkes Community College, Lowe’s Food Midtown, Wilkes Towers, and 3<sup>rd</sup> and J Street in North Wilkesboro. The map also indicates that some of the “must-call” stops generate as much ridership as some of the regular stops, including the West Park Medical complex, the Grandview Apartments, the Walden Ridge Apartments, and the Holiday Inn Express.

Figure 4-1: Fiscal Year 2010 Ridership Figures for the Wilkes Express Shuttle and Requested Bus Stops



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A couple of the surveys requested service to Peace Street (Woods Edge Apartments). Synergy Recovery at the Bundy Center is also located on Peace Street. There was also a request to serve the YMCA and some general requests for “more shuttle coverage.” The two locations that were specifically requested are also highlighted on Figure 4-1.

The current WE Shuttle route length is 16.5 miles (without the must-calls), requiring an average operating speed of at least 16.5 miles per hour. This is on the high side for deviated fixed route, particularly with the number of stops that are included.

Potential improvements for the shuttle route include:

1. Incorporating the higher ridership “must-call” stops into the regular schedule;
2. Adding more time into the schedule;
3. Adding a second vehicle (if a second vehicle is added, then there may also be discussion about the possibility of splitting the route to reduce travel time); or

As discussed, additional stops cannot feasibility be added without either adding more time into the schedule or adding a second vehicle.

At the October 14 meeting a fourth option was discussed, which may prove feasible. The fourth option is to re-route the shuttle from Curtis Bridge Road to US421. WTA has been operating this way due to construction on Curtis Bridge Road and the WE Shuttle can operate about five minutes faster per hour using this routing.

- **Advantages and Disadvantages:** Adding more time to the schedule would be a cost-neutral solution to improving coverage and addressing the tight schedule; however, it would result in an awkward schedule (i.e, service every 1 hour and 15 minutes, for example). Adding a second vehicle would provide more frequent service and would expand coverage; however, it would also double the operating expenses and would require an additional vehicle. Altering the route to eliminate Curtis Bridge Road would be cost neutral, but would likely allow only the West Park stop to be added.
- **Cost:** The annual operating expenses for a second vehicle would be about \$105,000 (based on 2,966 annual service hours and a fully allocated operating cost of \$35.33 per hour). A lift-equipped light transit vehicle is about \$73,000.

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### Service Alternative #4: Develop Targeted Fare Assistance Program

WTA does not currently receive any funds from Wilkes County. As such, the general public fares for the demand-response component of WTA are relatively high. WTA needs to charge these fares to recover its costs so it can continue to operate; however, riders and their advocates have indicated that the fares are not affordable for some people. The concept of this alternative is to apply for a Federal S.5310 grant that would be used to subsidize the cost of service for elderly people and people with disabilities. This type of program would address one of the unmet needs articulated in the locally-developed coordinated plan (LCP), as such, it would be eligible for funding assistance through the program. WTA may also need to apply for a vehicle to support the additional demand that would be generated through this program.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidance allows elderly and disabled voucher programs to have a federal matching ratio of 80% federal; 10% state; and 10% local. Three voucher/subsidy programs were funded in FY10 in North Carolina under the S.5310 program, including projects in Pitt County, New Hanover County, and Chatham County.

- **Advantages and Disadvantages:** This program could significantly expand the availability of service for elderly people and people with disabilities, as currently Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP) funds are used for this purpose and they typically are not sufficient to fund all of the demand. WTA could provide significantly more trips for this population group with only a 10% local investment, which could come from EDTAP funds. The disadvantage of pursuing this alternative is that there is no guarantee of funding -- the program is competitive and there is a discrete amount of funds available.
- **Cost:** If WTA were to develop a \$100,000 program (\$80,000 federal, \$10,000 state, \$10,000 local), then an additional 5,650 annual passenger trips could be provided for elderly people and people with disabilities (assuming an average per trip cost of \$17.68/trip – the FY10 demand-response average trip cost). A vehicle may also be needed (\$73,000), and this would be eligible for 80% federal, 10% state, and 10% local funding split.

### Service Alternative #5: Section 5310 Purchase of Service Program

Another potential option for WTA to pursue under the S.5310 grant program is a purchase of service program, whereby a local human service agency, such as the Wilkes Senior Citizen's Council (WSCC), could apply for a grant to expand service for area

seniors and people with disabilities. WSCC would then use the funds to purchase service from WTA. WTA could submit a grant application at the same time for the vehicle(s) needed to support the service. The LCP did not specifically identify this kind of project, but did articulate the need for more service for seniors through the existing volunteer driver program as well as shuttle service to the more remote areas of the County.

FTA guidance allows purchase of service programs funded with S.5310 funds to have a federal matching ratio of 80% federal; 10% state; and 10% local. The capital match rate is also 80% federal; 10% state; and 10% local. In FY10, Granville and Cumberland Counties were funded for similar projects.

- **Advantages and Disadvantages:** The advantages and disadvantages of this alternative are similar to the previous alternative. This program could significantly expand the availability of service for elderly people and people with disabilities, as currently EDTAP funds are used for this purpose and they typically are not sufficient to fund all of the demand. WTA could provide significantly more trips for this population group with only a 10% local investment. The disadvantage of pursuing this alternative is that there is no guarantee of funding -- the program is competitive and there is a discrete amount of funds available.
- **Cost:** If WTA were to develop a \$100,000 program (\$80,000 federal, \$10,000 state, \$10,000 local), then an additional 5,650 annual passenger trips could be provided for elderly people and people with disabilities (assuming an average per trip cost of \$17.68 – the FY10 demand-response average trip cost). An additional vehicle to support this service is estimated to be \$73,000 (80% federal, 10% state, 10% local).

#### **Service Alternative #6: Coordinate Services with YVEDDI in the Elkin Area**

Residents of Wilkes County who live in the eastern portion of the County typically conduct daily business in Elkin (Surry County), rather than in Wilkesboro or N. Wilkesboro. There are also some specialty medical facilities in Elkin that are destinations for people who live in other parts of Wilkes County. In FY 2010, 6.6% of WTA's demand-response trips were to Elkin. WTA sends several vehicles to Elkin to provide these trips, and typically has about eight vehicles daily with trip ends in either East Wilkes or Elkin. Table 4-1 provides a two-week snapshot of WTA vehicles and trips serving Elkin and Eastern Wilkes County.

**Table 4-1  
Analysis of WTA Vehicle and Passenger Trips - East Wilkes and Elkin**

Date (2009)	Daily No. of Vehicles	No. of Vehicles with trips to E. Wilkes and Elkin	Total Passenger Trips	Elkin Passenger Trips		E. Wilkes Passenger Trips	
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent
14-Sep	12	8	102	11	10.8%	8	7.8%
15-Sep	13	5	98	9	9.2%	0	0.0%
16-Sep	14	11	120	16	13.3%	5	4.2%
17-Sep	12	7	140	4	2.9%	8	5.7%
18-Sep	13	6	103	13	12.6%	6	5.8%
21-Sep	12	9	104	12	11.5%	8	7.7%
22-Sep	11	7	92	7	7.6%	0	0.0%
23-Sep	17	9	141	18	12.8%	5	3.5%
24-Sep	13	8	130	9	6.9%	5	3.8%
25-Sep	14	11	119	17	14.3%	5	4.2%
<b>Averages</b>	13.1	8.1	114.9	11.6	10.1%	5	4.4%

Note : Annual totals for FY 2010 indicate that 6.6% of WTA's total demand-response trips were to Elkin.

YVEDDI, the public transportation provider for Surry County, has 3-4 vehicles providing service in the Elkin area on a typical day. The focus of this alternative is to have WTA and YVEDDI coordinate their transit services in the Elkin area, so that fewer total vehicles would be required, thus improving efficiencies for both systems. Either YVEDDI could serve portions of Eastern Wilkes County that are oriented to Elkin, or WTA could provide additional Elkin service while bringing Wilkes County residents into town.

The first step in determining the feasibility of a coordinated effort would be to hold a meeting between WTA and YVEDDI, followed by some detailed analysis of trip patterns and vehicle assignments by both systems in and around Elkin.

- **Advantages and Disadvantages:** The advantage to coordinating services in the Elkin area is the potential improvements in efficiency that could be gained

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by reducing the number of vehicles devoted to the Elkin area. Alternatively, additional services could be provided in the Elkin area if the same number of vehicles were used, but were open to either Wilkes or Surry riders. The disadvantage to this approach is the planning work that will be required to implement such an effort.

- **Cost:** The detailed analysis of trip patterns and vehicle assignments is needed prior to developing an estimate of the cost savings that could be achieved. As mentioned above, an alternative to saving costs would be to provide additional services using the resources that are currently devoted to the Elkin area.

If WTA and YVEDDI are interested in pursuing a coordinated approach, the planning activities for the effort should take place prior to WTA pursuing an Eastern Wilkes facility, as a coordination effort may impact the number of vehicles potentially posted in Eastern Wilkes County by WTA.

### **Service Alternative #7: Coordinate Long-Distance Medical Trips**

While out-of-county trips represent only 7.6% of the total passenger trips for WTA, they consume 27% of the total revenue miles, making them very expensive to provide. Other local transit programs in the region likely have similar statistics regarding long-distance medical trip costs.

For a number of years there have been discussions concerning the coordination of medical trips from Western North Carolina to Winston-Salem and other medical destinations to the east. One of the original purposes of the Mountaineer Express was to provide this service, but the hours are such that it not particularly convenient for people to use to access medical appointments in the Piedmont Triad area.

The WTA director has advocated that if local transit programs in the region have the same trip-scheduling software, they could allow access to one another's out-of-county manifests and coordinate the scheduling of these expensive trips throughout the region. Likely participants would be those systems that have a need to bring people from Western North Carolina through Wilkes County, and on to destinations in the Piedmont Triad via the US421 Corridor. AppalCART, Alleghany County, Ashe County, WTA, and YVEDDI are potential candidates for such a program.

As with the previous alternative, this one will require a coordinated effort to implement. The first step in determining the feasibility of this concept would be to have a meeting among the directors of these five programs to discuss interest in participating. The second steps would be to further investigate what technology

upgrades would be required to implement such a service, how much the infrastructure investment would cost, and what funding sources would be available. It is possible that such a project could be eligible for some type of demonstration or pilot project funding. The WTA director is looking into the possibility of purchasing an additional license from Route Match and setting up a scheduling work station for these shared trips.

- **Advantages and Disadvantages:** The major advantages to implementing a coordinated long-distance medical program are cost savings and productivity improvements for each of the participating transit programs. The disadvantages of such a program are the logistics involved with start-up and the potential effects on the riders. This type of a program would only be appropriate for riders who were not frail, as coordinating trips among counties will increase the ride time and the wait time for the riders.
- **Cost:** Additional detailed planning work will be required to calculate the infrastructure costs and the potential savings that could be achieved.

### **Service Alternative #8: Bus Stop Amenities and Pedestrian Improvements**

Survey respondents indicated that additional shelters are needed so that passengers are more comfortable and shielded from the weather while waiting for the WE Shuttle. There is also a need to improve the pedestrian connections to and from WE Shuttle stops, though this improvement will need to be in partnership with the Towns of Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro.

Providing a more comfortable place for passengers to wait is a courtesy to riders and is also a way to increase the visibility of the transit system in the community and provide fixed locations to display transit information to the public (either electronically or more traditionally). The only disadvantage to providing additional shelters is cost.

- **Cost:** Shelters cost about \$10,000, installed. If five additional shelters were placed at high activity stops along the WE Shuttle, the total cost would be \$50,000, requiring \$5,000 in local funds.

### **Other Issues**

#### ***Scheduling***

Several survey respondents indicated that there is a need to improve the scheduling function for WTA. In looking into this issue, the basic problem is that WTA experiences dramatic peaking of demand, with three general peaks each day: about 8:00 a.m.; 10:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. One way to improve the scheduling function would

be to educate the riders concerning these peaks and try to get them to change their travel times/appointment times to avoid these three peak times. It is recognized that this will be difficult, as 66% of WTA's trips are medical-oriented and it may not be possible to manipulate travel times.

### *Website*

WTA's website does contain a substantial amount of information and people can understand how to use the service if they visit the site; however, the home page should be updated more frequently so that users are confident that the information is up to date and correct. For example, the home page currently highlights ridership and mileage statistics from 2005, which may give people pause to trust the information provided on the site.

## ORGANIZATIONAL ALTERNATIVES

This section of the chapter outlines a number of organizational alternatives. These alternatives do not focus on specific services, but rather on how WTA can make changes and improvements to better serve the community. The organizational alternatives address revenue generation and facilities.

### **Organizational Alternative #1: Develop Dedicated Local Transit Revenue**

In North Carolina, there are currently two mechanisms that can be pursued to gain access to locally-generated, dedicated revenue. These mechanisms are a ¼ cent sales tax and/or a vehicle registration fee of up to \$8.00 per vehicle.

#### *One-Quarter Cent Sales Tax*

For the ¼ cent sales tax, the *counties* are authorized to levy a sales tax with a referendum called by the county Board of Commissioners, meaning that the sales tax must pass both the commissioners and the voters.

Table 4-2 provides the FY 2009 data concerning sales taxes in Wilkes County.

**Table 4-2: Potential Revenue from 1/4 Cent Sales Tax for Transit**

County	Taxable Sales, FY 2009	¼ cent
Wilkes	\$ 378,916,187	\$ 881,476

### *Vehicle Registration Fee*

For the vehicle registration fee option, the *counties* are authorized to levy a vehicle registration fee of up to \$7.00 per vehicle. This mechanism requires commissioner approval, but not direct voter approval.

Table 4-3 shows the revenues that could be generated in Wilkes County, based on an annual vehicle registration fee of between \$1.00 and \$7.00. As these data show, with 75,000 registered vehicles in the County, this fee could generate between \$75,000 and \$525,000 annually.

**Table 4-3: Revenues for an Annual Vehicle Registration Fee**

County: Wilkes

Number of Registered Vehicles: 75,000

Current Estimate:

Total Collected Annually if Vehicle Registration Fee Set at:

\$1	\$2	\$3	\$4	\$5	\$6	\$7
\$75,000	\$150,000	\$225,000	\$300,000	\$375,000	\$450,000	\$525,000

### *Discussion of the Options*

Discussions with the County Manager and Finance Director indicated that it is unlikely that either of these options would be currently acceptable, as the unemployment rate in the County is high (13.5%) and additional taxes and fees would be difficult to implement during the current economic climate.

The survey data showed some support for the implementation of a revenue stream to support public transportation, but it was not a statistically valid sample of County residents.

One of these options may be feasible when the economy improves and if the fee is directly tied to new or expanded services that help County residents, particularly the elderly and people with disabilities.

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## Organizational Alternative #2: Eastern Wilkes Satellite Facility

As discussed under Service Alternative #6, WTA has a significant number of vehicles that travel to Eastern Wilkes County each day. Currently these vehicles are housed in N. Wilkesboro and must dead-head to pick-ups in Eastern Wilkes. The number of vehicles used in Eastern Wilkes County also seems out of proportion with the number of trips provided for Eastern Wilkes County. For the two-week snapshot period, an average of eight vehicles served Eastern Wilkes/Elkin (out of an average vehicle count of 13), but only 14.4% of the trips were focused in Eastern Wilkes/Elkin. The goal of an Eastern Wilkes facility would be to dedicate a few vehicles to Eastern Wilkes, focusing on the trips that originate there. The concept would be to lease a small space with adequate parking for the vehicles. A lead driver would be assigned to the facility.

### *Cost-Benefit*

Ronda, in Eastern Wilkes County, is about 15 miles one-way from N. Wilkesboro. Assuming that five vehicles are assigned to Eastern Wilkes County at a site in Ronda each weekday, the total annual weekday deadhead mileage savings would be 38,250 miles. If one vehicle were used on Saturdays, the additional annual deadhead mileage savings would be 1,560, for a total annual mileage savings of 39,810. Assuming an average fuel usage of 10.7 miles per gallon, the fuel savings would be 3,720 gallons per year, translating to about \$9,300 annually (at \$2.50 per gallon). There would also be some savings in payroll hours. Assuming that five drivers would report to Eastern Wilkes, an estimated five payroll hours would be saved each weekday, for a total annual savings of 1,302 weekday payroll hours, and an additional 52 Saturday hours, for a total annual payroll savings of 1,387 hours. Assuming an average pay rate of \$9 per hour, the payroll savings would translate to about \$12,500 annually. Taken together, the fuel and pay savings of an Eastern Wilkes location would be about \$21,800 annually.

The cost of leasing a facility in Eastern Wilkes County is variable, depending upon a number of factors, including size, location, conditions, amenities, etc. If a site can be leased for \$800 per month, then the total annual lease costs would be \$9,600 annually, resulting in a benefit of \$12,200 annually. This benefit would likely be slightly reduced by the need to assign a lead driver, who would presumably earn a bit more for this added responsibility.

These calculations are based on a number of assumptions and should be examined closely during the alternatives analysis phase. As these calculations show, there are savings that can be achieved, but several variables will affect the bottom line for this alternative.

### ***Status Update***

WTA has entered into an agreement to lease a satellite location in Eastern Wilkes County. WTA will be assigning one vehicle to this location. The monthly rent is \$200, for a total annual expenditure of \$2,400.

### **Organizational Alternative #3: Operating Facility**

WTA currently leases a facility in North Wilkesboro. There is inadequate parking for the fleet and the parking is not secure. While the interior space is adequate for current operations, there is no space for growth and the conference room/training room is constrained. There also is not a driver break room, nor space for vehicle cleaning or any type of vehicle maintenance.

A full facility needs analysis is provided in Chapter 5.

## **SUMMARY**

The alternatives presented for the WTA CTSP are a mix of modest service expansions geared to meeting the transit needs identified through the transit needs analysis, potential coordination opportunities to achieve service efficiencies, and infrastructure improvements. These alternatives were refined by the Steering Committee after the initial meeting concerning alternatives.



# Chapter 5

## Facility Needs Assessment

### BACKGROUND

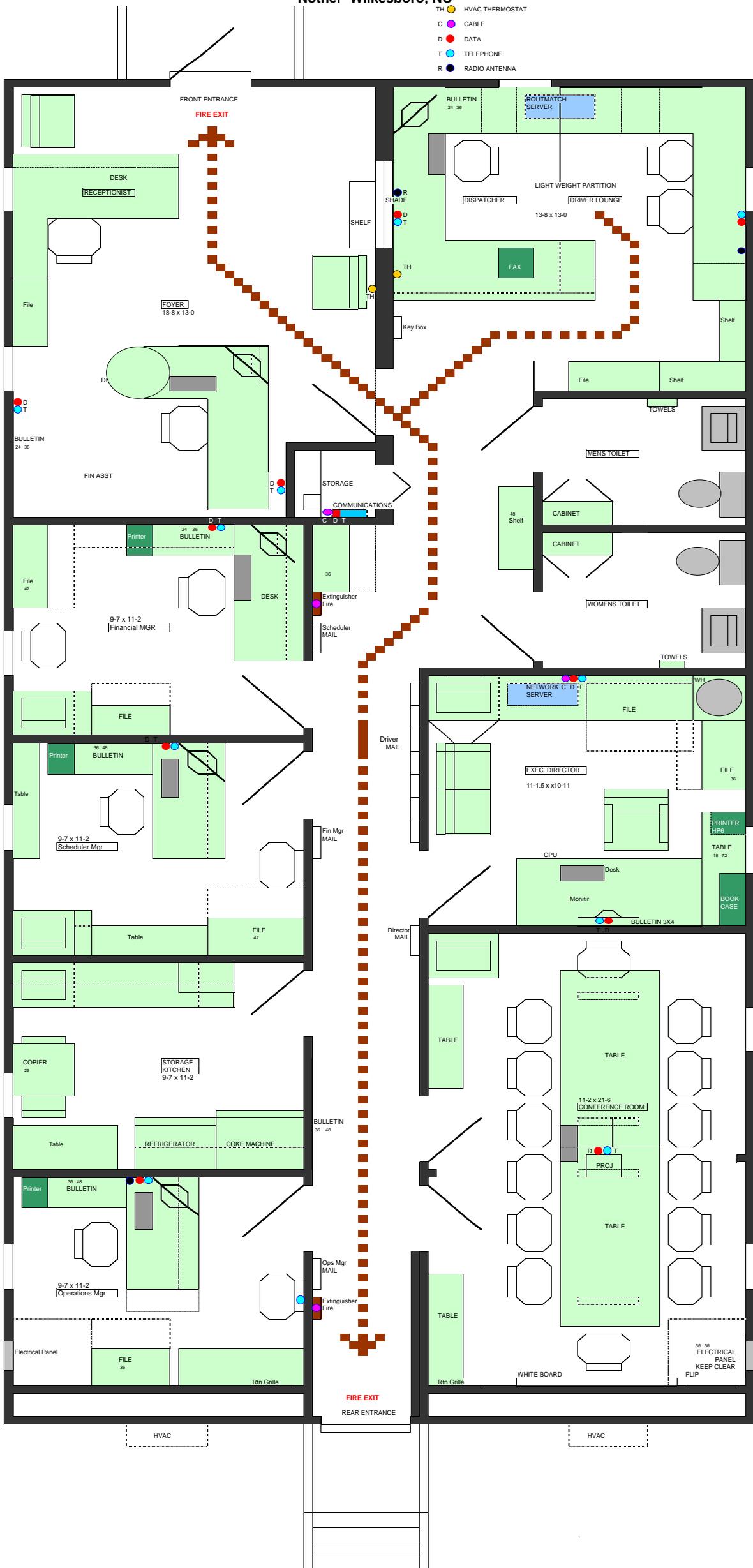
One of the recommendations included in this CTSP is the development of a facility – either moving to a larger facility while still leasing, or beginning the process of planning, designing, and building a facility. The purpose of this facility needs assessment is to document the current conditions and determine the need for an administrative, operations, and maintenance facility for WTA’s operations.

### CURRENT FACILITIES

The administrative facility for WTA is located at 235 Jefferson Street in North Wilkesboro. The office is located behind a medical office building adjacent to the Wilkes Regional Medical Center. WTA is leasing the facility on a month-to-month basis. The facility is about 1,500 square feet. Exhibit 5-1 provides a floor plan of the WTA office space. Table 5-1 provides an overview of the square footage by room. Exhibit 5-2 provides a picture of the exterior of the building.

There is an unsecured parking lot adjacent to the building, and this lot serves the parking needs for the employees and transit vehicles. Because there are not enough spaces for employees and transit vehicles, drivers typically move their assigned WTA vehicles, and then park their personal vehicles in the spaces for the day. There are 42 car-sized spaces in this lot. The lot is approximately 12,600 square feet.

Exhibit 5-1: WTA Facility - 235 Jefferson  
 Nother Wilkesboro, NC



**Table 5-1: WTA Facility: Current Conditions**

<b>Room</b>	<b>Approximate Square Ft.</b>
Foyer/Receptionist/Financial Assistant	244
Dispatch/Driver Lounge	179
Kitchen/Storage	105
Conference Room	237
Executive Director	121
Financial Manager	105
Scheduling Manager	105
Operations Manager	105
Bathrooms	168
Hallway	175
<b>Total Office Space</b>	<b>1,544</b>
<b>Outside Space</b>	
Parking- 42 car-sized spots	12,600



## Maintenance

WTA maintenance is currently provided by local vendors, with WTA's Operations Manager in charge of managing the maintenance function. WTA maintains a computer database file on each vehicle. The database includes a record of each repair, including the invoice number, date of work, and amount charged for the services. While WTA's maintenance expenses are relatively low, as shown in Table 5-2, they have risen significantly in the last two fiscal years, as compared to the previous three fiscal years. The FY 2009 maintenance cost increases were largely due to an aging fleet that was experiencing significant maintenance needs. In this past calendar year, WTA has received six new vehicles. The condition of the new vehicles brought down the FY 2010 maintenance expenses significantly.

**Table 5-2**  
**WTA Vehicle Maintenance Cost Analysis**

Year	Vehicle Service Miles	Maintenance Expenses	Cost Per Mile	Percent Change
FY 2006	606,670	\$37,896	\$0.06	
FY 2007	572,180	\$39,361	\$0.07	4%
FY 2008	543,214	\$33,905	\$0.06	-14%
FY 2009	575,470	\$62,853	\$0.11	85%
FY 2010	593,988	\$52,385	\$0.09	-17%

## FACILITY NEEDS ANALYSIS

In order to help determine the level of need for a facility, KFH Group staff conducted a basic facility needs analysis. This analysis includes documentation of the need for a facility, as well as a conceptual site plan based on current and future needs. The conceptual plans includes the building needs for the administrative, operations, and maintenance functions, as well as the parking and maneuvering needs for the yard. The decision whether or not to perform maintenance in-house will have a major impact on the final decision regarding facility size.

### The Need for a New Facility

There are several functional areas within WTA that could be improved if the system's space and function needs were fully met. These are discussed below.

### ***Driver and Support Staff Office Space and Amenities***

Drivers and staff do not have a dedicated room where they can fill out their paperwork, eat lunch, pick up their manifests, or prepare for their shifts, etc. The current designated driver area is a shared space with the dispatch area. These functions are not particularly compatible, as the dispatch area requires a quiet background and there is typically conversation in a driver's room. A driver room would be helpful for morale, and would also allow drivers to come back to WTA during breaks (if close by), rather than sitting at various other locations within the community. There are also no unused offices, should there be a need for additional staff in the future.

### ***Storage Space***

WTA currently has very little storage space for training materials, vehicle supplies, office supplies, public information, files, etc. Various items are currently stored in the kitchen area and are crowding the conference room. A dedicated storage room would free up space in both the kitchen and the conference room.

### ***Secure Vehicle Storage***

The current vehicle storage arrangement is less than satisfactory for a number of reasons, including the following:

- There is no fence around the vehicles and the lot cannot be locked. The vehicles have been vandalized in the past.
- There is not enough space at the current lot for the driver's vehicles and the WTA vehicles.
- Visitors and fleet vehicles share parking.

### ***Vehicle Maintenance and Washing***

WTA does not currently have any facilities that are suitable to perform basic vehicle washing or maintenance. WTA drivers currently bring their assigned vehicles to commercial vehicle washing facilities when they have time in between passengers.

## **Recommendations Concerning a WTA Facility**

There are several reference handbooks that have been published concerning how much space a transit system needs, and these references were used to develop a set of

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recommendations for WTA.<sup>1</sup> The recommendations are presented below, organized by functional category.

### *Administrative and Operations Space Needs*

Table 5-3 provides a list of each area needed for the administrative and operations office support functions. The estimates used for this table indicate that a total of about 2,900 square feet are needed for WTA administrative and operations office staff functions (including the dispatch room, individual offices, public areas, a conference room, a driver break room, restrooms, and wall space). These suggested rooms and room sizes are based on transit industry norms. Currently WTA uses just over 1,500 square feet for these functions. From this comparison, one can see that WTA needs more office space.

### *Maintenance Space Needs*

Table 5-3 also provides an itemized list of suggested maintenance space needs, should WTA decide to bring maintenance in-house. Using these guidelines, the total space requirements for the maintenance function are about 6,300 square feet. For further guidance in developing a size estimate for the maintenance facility, Table 5-4 provides a comparative examination of the various methods that can be used to calculate the recommended size for a maintenance facility. From this table, one can see that the maintenance function for a system the size of WTA, will need between 6,300 and 9,100 square feet.

### *Vehicle Lot and Parking Space Needs*

Table 5-5 presents the itemized list of vehicle lot and parking space requirements. While it is not possible to determine the exact space requirements without developing a site configuration, it is possible to calculate generally how much space is needed for transit vehicle parking, vehicular circulation, and employee/visitor parking. The results of this exercise show that WTA should have about 50,800 square feet of lot space for parking and circulation. WTA currently has less than 20,000 square feet of lot space.

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<sup>1</sup> **Reference Books:** CGA Consulting Services, "Planning Intermodal & Operations Facilities for Rural and Small Urban Transit Systems: Workshop Manual," USDOT, 1995.

George Smerk, *et al.*, "Mass Transit Management, a Handbook for Small Cities," USDOT, 1988.

SG Associates, "Transit Garage Planning Guidelines," USDOT, 1987.

LSA Design and Nelson Nygaard, "Greater Minnesota Public Transit Facility Guidebook," Minnesota DOT, Office of Transit, 2008.

**Table 5-3: WTA Administrative and Maintenance Facility  
Indoor Space Needs**

Component	Net Sq. Feet	Remarks
<b>Administration/Operations</b>		
Executive Director	180	Private, enclosed office
Finance Manager	150	Private, enclosed office
Operations Manager	150	Private, enclosed office
Scheduling Manager	150	Private, enclosed office
Dispatch Area	180	Enclosed glass wall work area
Reception Area/Clerical	250	
Restrooms	300	
Work Room/Files/Supplies	180	
Conference/Training Room	300	
Driver Break Room	200	
Kitchen	120	
Janitor's Closet	30	
Future Growth	200	
Subtotal	<u>2,390</u>	
Subtotal * 1.20 - Space allotted for walls, hallways, etc.	<b>2,868</b>	<b>Administrative/Operations Subtotal</b>
<b>Maintenance Space</b>		
Shop Manager	150	Private, enclosed office
Service Bay	1,100	
Service Bay	1,100	
Wash Bay	1,100	
Parts Storage	1,000	Secure area that can be locked
Air comp/Battery/Oil Rooms	150	
Tire Storage	250	
Work Room	200	Maintenance bench/utility area
Maintenance Staff Lav./Lockers	200	
Subtotal	<u>5,250</u>	
Subtotal * 1.20 - Space allotted for walls, hallways, etc.	<b>6,300</b>	<b>Maintenance Subtotal</b>

**Table 5-4**  
**WTA Maintenance Space Needs**

<b>Formula 1</b>	<b>As applied to WTA</b>
Total Square Feet = (1,400 * M) + 564 Where M= Annual Vehicle Miles in 100,000s	Total Sq. Ft. = (1400*6.1) + 564 Total Sq. Ft. = 9,104
<b>Formula 2</b>	
Total Square Feet = 5,600 + 250 per 100,000 miles	Total Sq. Ft. = 5,600 + 1,500 Total Sq. Ft. = 7,100
<b>Formula 3</b>	
Total Square Feet = 1,400 per 100,000 miles	Total Sq. Ft. = 8,400
<b>Formula 4</b>	
As Calculated in Table 2	Total Sq. Ft. = 6,360

**Formula 1:** George Smerk, et. al., "Mass Transit Management, a Handbook for Small Cities," for the USDOT, 1988.

**Formula 2 and 3:** SG Associates, "Transit Garage Planning Guidelines, " for the USDOT, 1987.

**Formula 4:** CGA Consulting Services, "Planning Intermodal and Operations Facilities for Rural and Small Urban Transit Systems: Workshop Manual," for the USDOT, 1995.

**Table 5-5  
WTA Administrative and Maintenance Facility  
Parking and Circulation Needs**

Vehicle Parking	Number of Spaces	Sq. Ft./ (1) Space	Total Sq. Ft.
Employee and Visitor Parking	50	300	15,000
Transit Vehicle Parking			
Vans	25	600	15,000
Light Duty Transit Vehicles	10	1,080	10,800
Circulation			10,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>50,800</b>

(1) Includes Aisle Space.

The suggested space for the lot and the building together (based on a one-level building), if WTA chooses to bring maintenance in-house, is just over 1.4 acres. It is important to remember that this size recommendation does not take into account site-specific factors that may affect the need for space (i.e., the shape of the lot, the topography, and the location of the building on the lot), nor does it consider the possibility of a fueling facility. Without the maintenance portion of the building, the land requirement would be 1.25 acres. If WTA chooses not to pursue in-house maintenance in the short-term, it may want to secure a site that is large enough to include the maintenance function in the future.

### ***Location***

The Wilkesboro/North Wilkesboro area is the most logical place for the central WTA facility, as there is a concentration of transit origins and destinations in the “Wilkesboros,” and the majority of WTA’s trips are performed in the Wilkesboro/North Wilkesboro area.

## COST

If WTA were to lease an administrative/operating facility that met their space needs (2,900 square feet), and did not include the maintenance function, the estimated annual lease expenses would be between \$18,850 and \$24,650 annually, based on a per square foot lease rate of between \$6.50 and \$8.50. To construct/renovate such a facility, the cost would likely be about \$200 per square foot (estimate from [saylor.com/lacosts](http://saylor.com/lacosts), with adjustment factor of .74 for North Carolina), or about \$580,000 plus the cost of the land. If federal funds (either through the annual CTP or through the S.5309 facilities program) are available to help purchase and construct such a facility, the local funds required to construct this type of facility would likely be about 10% of the total, or \$58,000 (plus 10% of the cost of the land). A quick internet search of available land in the Wilkesboro area showed two potential properties, one at \$295,000 for 1.7 acres and a second at \$125,000 for 2.5 acres.

If WTA were to pursue a facility that accommodated the maintenance function, then the space needs increase from 2,900 square feet to 9,200 square feet. Assuming the per-square foot lease rate would be a bit lower for the additional square feet, the annual lease rate for a building that could accommodate maintenance is likely to be about \$46,000 annually (@\$5.00 per square foot), or about \$3,800 monthly. The cost to construct such a facility is likely to be the \$580,000 discussed above plus another \$837,000 for the garage portion of the facility (6,300 square feet @ \$133 per square foot), for a total cost of \$1.42 million plus the cost of the land. If federal funds (either through the annual CTP or through the S.5309 facilities program) are available to help purchase and construct such a facility, the local funds required to construct this type of facility would likely be about 10% of the total, or \$142,000 (plus 10% of the cost of the land).

## DECISION-MAKING

There are two major decision points for WTA to consider in moving to a larger facility:

- 1) In-house maintenance versus continued vendor maintenance, and
- 2) Lease versus purchase.

This section provides some data and analysis for WTA to consider when making these decisions.

### *In-House vs. Vendor Maintenance*

Table 5-6 provides a cost comparison for in-house maintenance versus vendor maintenance, taking into account only the annual expenses for the function, not including the facility implications. This analysis indicates that in-house maintenance would be slightly less expensive (3.2%) with the current fleet size. The cost savings will increase as the fleet size increases, as there will be more contracted expenses and more time spent shuttling vehicles as the fleet grows.

**Table 5-6: WTA In-House Versus Vendor Maintenance Expense Estimate**

<b>In-House Maintenance Expenses</b>		<b>Vendor Maintenance Expenses</b>	
<i>Ongoing Operating Expenses</i>		<i>Ongoing Operating Expenses</i>	
Labor:			
Portion of Operations' Manager's Time	\$ 10,000	Time spent transporting vehicles	\$ 23,200
Mechanic	\$ 25,000	Contracted Expenses	\$ 52,400
Part-Time Technician	\$ 15,000		
	<i>Subtotal</i> \$ 50,000		<i>Subtotal</i> \$ 75,600
Fringe Benefits	\$ 6,150		
	<i>Subtotal</i> \$ 56,150		
<i>Ongoing Capital Expenses</i>		<i>Ongoing Capital Expenses</i>	
Parts	\$ 10,800	None	
Shop Equipment	\$ 1,200		
	<i>Subtotal</i> \$ 68,150		<i>Subtotal</i> \$ 75,600
One-time start-up costs:			
Tools and Equipment	\$ 25,000		
Annual cost of the tools and equipment, assuming a five-year life span:			
	\$ 5,000		
	<b>TOTAL \$ 73,150</b>		<b>TOTAL \$ 75,600</b>

This basic cost comparison does not address the facility implications, which are more complicated. The size of the facility needed for WTA to perform maintenance will be significantly larger than the size of the facility needed if maintenance continues to be performed by vendors. While this represents additional costs, if the facility is owned it also represents a significant asset for WTA.

In addition to the cost considerations of in-house versus contracted maintenance, there are also the issues of the quality of the maintenance work performed, the availability of vehicles (particularly with a fleet that does not have excess spares), and the managerial control over the function. It should be noted that there were not any maintenance findings in WTA's recent federal compliance review.

### *Lease vs. Purchase*

WTA should consider both lease and purchase options when considering a new facility. A buy/lease comparison using a worksheet found in the Minnesota DOT's Transit Facility Guidebook was used to determine the Net Present Value (NPV) of each of the possible alternatives. The NPV is a standard method for the financial appraisal of long-term projects. It is the present value of net cash flows and it measures the excess or shortfall of cash flows. Table 5-7 presents these results. The lower the NPV, the better the investment generally is, as less money has been spent for the same purpose. Leasing appears more cost effective when considering only the NPV.

There are two important considerations that the NPV does not address. The first is that purchasing a facility will result in WTA owning an asset (with NCDOT/FTA) that will likely appreciate in value (the land, not the facility itself). The NPV considers only the useful life of the facility and calculates that at 25 years. The second consideration, which is an important local consideration and also not addressed using the NPV method, is the potential to access federal and state funding assistance for a substantial portion of the facility (up to 90%).

### *Status Update*

WTA has decided to lease a new administration facility beginning in March 2011. The new facility is located in a light industrial park at 1010 Spring Street in Wilkesboro. The leased space includes 3,100 square feet with 65 secure parking spaces. The monthly rent will be \$2,054. The property is fenced and a security system is included. Maintenance will continue to be provided by outside vendors.

**Table 5-7: Net Present Value Calculations for Facility Options**

**Scenario One: In-House Maintenance**

Buy	
Build/Purchase	\$ 1,400,000
Rate of Funds	3%
Down Payment Percentage	10%
Total Down Payment	\$ 140,000.00
Annual Loan Payment	\$ (64,284.27)
<b>Results:</b>	<b>NPV= \$1,210,609</b>

Lease	
Lease Amount (annual)	\$ 47,000
Annual Increase	3%
<b>Results:</b>	<b>NPV= \$ 456,311</b>

**Scenario Two: Vendor Maintenance**

Buy	
Build/Purchase	\$ 580,000
Rate of Funds	3%
Down Payment Percentage	10%
Total Down Payment	\$ 58,000.00
Annual Loan Payment	\$ (26,632.05)
<b>Results:</b>	<b>NPV= \$675,235</b>

Lease	
Lease Amount (annual)	\$ 18,560
Annual Increase	3%
<b>Results:</b>	<b>NPV= \$ 180,194</b>

**Assumptions:**

1. Lease Term is a ten year period.
2. Purchase Term is amortized over 30 years assuming a 10-year balloon.

Source: Greater Minnesota Public Transit Facility Guidebook.



# Chapter 6

## Five-Year Plan

### INTRODUCTION

This five-year plan is the product of the WTA CTSP, which has been developed over the course of a nine-month planning process. The recommended projects were derived through detailed analysis of existing community transportation services, a transit needs analysis, alternatives analysis, and Committee discussion.

The five-year plan includes a series of service improvements and expansions, though it should be noted that these projects are dependent upon available federal, state, and local funding. Future funding levels are somewhat unknown, with the federal transit funding legislation expired and yet to be re-authorized, though federal transit funding has historically risen over the years.

The plan is organized in the following eight sections:

- **Service Plan** - Describes the service projects that are included in the plan.
- **Organizational Plan** - Describes the organizational projects that are included in the plan.
- **Implementation Schedule** - Outlines the activities that are to be implemented in each of the five years of the planning period.
- **Capital Plan** - Describes the capital that will be required to implement the five-year plan.
- **Financial Plan** - Provides a five year budget for implementing the projects included in the plan.

- **Summary of Recommendations** - Ties the recommended projects to NCDOT's mobility goals.
- **Performance Measurement Plan** - Sets performance goals for WTA.
- **Public Involvement Description** - Documents the public input received during the development of the plan.

An interactive financial tool has also been provided to WTA, based on the final recommendations. This tool can be used to modify the financial plan as needed to reflect actual future funding sources.

## SERVICE PLAN

The service plan includes all of the public transit service projects planned for inclusion over the five-year planning horizon. Project descriptions and estimated costs are included in this section. It is organized into five categories:

- WE Shuttle Recommendations
- Demand-Response Service Recommendations
- Targeted Transportation Assistance Program
- Coordination Projects
- Quality of Service Improvements

### WE Shuttle Recommendations

There are five recommended improvements that pertain to the WE Shuttle, the deviated fixed route service that operates in Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro. These are described below.

#### *Provide WE Shuttle Service on Saturdays*

The survey results indicated that people would like to have public transportation options on Saturdays, particularly for those areas that serve major shopping destinations. The WE Shuttle is a good candidate to test the demand for Saturday service, as operating it requires only one vehicle. The purpose of this improvement is to provide basic mobility for people in the most populated areas of Wilkes County on Saturdays.

At the November 2010, meeting of the Steering Committee, it was discussed that perhaps the route would be operated differently on Saturdays, as governmental

buildings and medical offices are typically closed. In looking closely at the route, one can see that these destinations are integrated with retail destinations that are open on Saturdays, which means that devising a separate Saturday route is probably not feasible or necessary. There will be fewer hours of service on Saturdays to reflect fewer work trips, with a recommended schedule of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

### ***Ridership***

Saturday ridership on the WE Shuttle is estimated to be a bit lower than on weekdays, given that there will likely be fewer work trips and the hours of service will be shorter. For the first eight months of Calendar Year 2010 (January-August), the WE Shuttle was averaging 3.4 passenger trips per hour. Assuming weekend service will be slightly less productive (3 passengers per hour), Saturday ridership is estimated to be about 1,250 annually.

**Cost.** The annual operating expenses for running the WE Shuttle on Saturdays are estimated to be about \$17,472 annually. This estimate is based on \$42 per vehicle service hour operating cost, eight hours of service, and 52 Saturdays. No capital expenses would be required for this service extension.

Given that the WE Shuttle operates exclusively in Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro, it may be appropriate to ask the two towns to help defray the expenses of operating service on Saturdays.

### ***Ensure an Accessible Vehicle on the Shuttle***

Survey comments indicated that the WE Shuttle is not always wheelchair-accessible. WTA currently has two vehicles that are used for the WE Shuttle. One is accessible and the other is not. In accordance with the ADA, as a deviated fixed-route, the WE Shuttle should be operated using an accessible vehicle. WTA has ordered a second accessible vehicle to be used for the WE Shuttle and it will be delivered in the spring, 2011.

### ***WE Shuttle Routing and Scheduling***

Ridership on the WE Shuttle is growing and riders are pleased that it is available. Comments received via the surveys indicated that there are a few places that riders would like the shuttle to go that it does not currently, and some of the “must-call” stops should probably be regular stops. Field observation also suggested that the route is already quite long for one vehicle to accomplish in one hour.

Ideas to solve these issues were fully articulated in Chapter 4, and included changing the route, adding more time to the cycle, and adding a second vehicle. WTA staff felt that adding time to the cycle would negatively impact ridership. The ridership on the route does not currently justify the expenses associated with adding a second vehicle, so that alternative was also discarded. The Committee's recommendation was to alter the route by diverting it away from Curtis Bridge Road in favor of using the U.S. Route 421 Bypass. This route change saves about five minutes per run. Figure 6-1 provides a map of the route revision.

While it was not feasible to extend the route to the YMCA or the Woods Edge Apartments in the near-term, it may be possible in the future if ridership grows enough on the route to justify the addition of a second vehicle. It should be noted that people wanting to access either of those locations currently can take advantage of WTA's demand response service.

The route change to the WE Shuttle is cost and ridership neutral and is intended to make the route run more efficiently.

### ***WE Shuttle Branding***

The WE Shuttle does have a logo that is different from the regular demand response service (an orange square) and riders do recognize this and watch for it. The focus of this branding project is to further differentiate the WE Shuttle from the demand-response fleet so it is even more recognizable, interesting, and attractive to new riders. For example, rather than a plain white vehicle with the sign and the WTA logo, perhaps the WE Shuttle vehicle could have a vehicle wrap that further distinguishes it from the other WTA fleet vehicles.

**Cost.** Vehicle wraps vary in cost, depending upon the size. The expense to wrap a small transit vehicle is about \$5,000.

### ***Second WE Shuttle Vehicle***

While the demand does not currently call for a second vehicle to be added for the WE Shuttle, there are areas of Wilkesboro/North Wilkesboro that should be considered for inclusion on a shuttle route when ridership justifies a second vehicle. One of these areas is the NC268 west (River Street) corridor, past Wilkes Community College. The YMCA is located along that corridor, along with some employment locations, the Social

Figure 6-1: Revised WE Shuttle Route



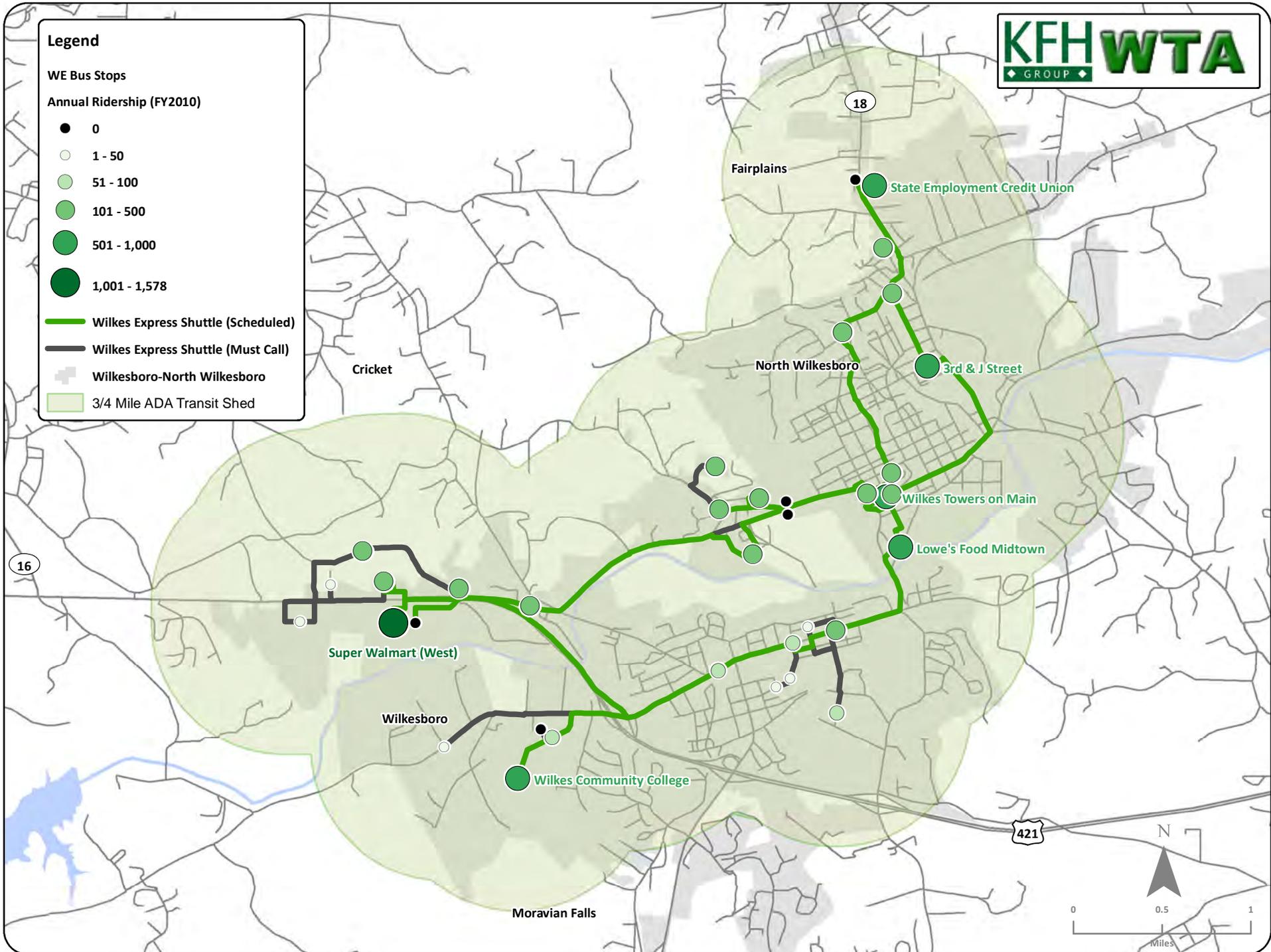
**Legend**

**WE Bus Stops**

**Annual Ridership (FY2010)**

- 0
- 1 - 50
- 51 - 100
- 101 - 500
- 501 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 1,578

- Wilkes Express Shuttle (Scheduled)
- Wilkes Express Shuttle (Must Call)
- ⊕ Wilkesboro-North Wilkesboro
- 3/4 Mile ADA Transit Shed



6-9

Security Administration, and an apartment complex. When a second vehicle is implemented, it would likely make sense to split the route into two routes and have them meet for transfer opportunities at a major trip generator, such as Walmart.

**Cost.** Adding a second vehicle for the WE Shuttle, assuming the same number of vehicle service hours as is currently operated on the route, will add about 3,000 vehicle service hours at a cost of about \$126,000 annually. An additional vehicle is about \$73,500.

### **Demand-Response Service Recommendations - Add Capacity**

After experiencing declining ridership from FY2007 to FY2009, ridership has begun to rebound, with an overall growth in ridership of 9% between FY09 and FY10. This growth was fueled in part by ridership growth on the WE Shuttle (26%). The demand-response/ subscription ridership was up 6%. In order to keep up with this growing demand, WTA will need to add capacity. Overall trip denials were still relatively low (1.2%) for FY 2010, but are significantly higher during peak periods. For example, in June 2010, there were 104 trip denials (1.7%), most of which occurred because a driver was not available to take the trip or there was not time in the schedule.

WTA has replaced a number of aging vehicles in the past year, which will help it meet the growing demand and has helped reduce maintenance expenses. The appropriate WTA fleet size has been an ongoing source of disagreement between WTA and NCDOT, primarily because the data used to estimate fleet needs is typically a year old and WTA did have a significant decrease in ridership from 2007 to 2009, which meant that the FY 2008 and FY 2009 operating data did not support an increase in the fleet.

The current fleet includes 30 vehicles, though seven should be retired as they have been officially replaced this calendar year through CTP and ARRA-funded replacements. If WTA does retire these seven vehicles, the fleet size will be 23. A fleet of 23 is adequate for two or three of WTA's five typical operating days, but is not adequate for its peak days that require 22 or 23 vehicles. If the peak requirement of 23 is used as a base for estimating fleet size, then WTA should have a fleet of 27 vehicles (23 in use and four spares, following FTA's recommended spare ratio of 20%).

The recommendation to add capacity is designed to be flexible to respond to anticipated demand, based on recent ridership trends. This recommendation includes incremental increases in revenue service hours over the life of this CTSP, along with incremental fleet expansion.

**Cost.** WTA's current fully allocated operating cost in FY 2011 is \$42 per hour. The cost of adding 1,530 service hours (six hours per weekday) would be about \$64,260 annually. The cost of a lift-equipped van is \$41,150. These expansions have been included for FY 2013 and FY 2014.

**Ridership.** Assuming WTA's current average productivity of 1.98 (blended, including the shuttle), just over 3,000 new trips could be accommodated for each of the service increases.

### **Targeted Transportation Assistance Program**

Another way to add capacity for particular user groups would be to take advantage of targeted transportation assistance program funding. There are three federal grant programs, administered by NCDOT, that provide funding assistance to particular user groups. These are the Sections 5310, 5316, and 5317 programs. Section 5310 targets elderly people and people with disabilities. Section 5316- Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) targets low-income individuals accessing job opportunities; and Section 5317 - New Freedom is geared to providing mobility "above and beyond" what is required under the ADA. NCDOT-PTD solicits grant applications for these programs each December for the following one or two fiscal years. These programs are competitive programs, though last year there was quite a bit of grant money that was not awarded. Projects funded through these programs must also meet a need identified through a region's Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan, or Local Coordinated Plan (LCP).

The Wilkes County Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan (HSTP) identified several unmet transportation needs that could be addressed through one or more of these funding programs. Two projects that could potentially be funded in part through these programs are recommended in this plan. These are described below.

#### ***Fare Assistance Program***

One of the needs that was mentioned in the Wilkes County HSTP was for more affordable transportation. The current fares, particularly for longer trips, are rather high as WTA needs to cover its costs to remain viable. The focus of this project is to apply for funding assistance under the S. 5310 program to fund a fare subsidy program for elderly people and people with disabilities who cannot afford the fares. It is recommended that the applicant for the funds be the Wilkes County Department of Social Services (DSS), who can then use the grant funds to subsidize trips on WTA and perhaps local taxis for people who need them. The DSS is the recommended applicant for two primary reasons: 1) they are already familiar with the client base; 2) the grant guidance is not clear as to whether or not a transit program can in essence buy its own

services; and 3) the DSS could also use the funds to buy taxi fares for clients during off hours.

Fare subsidy programs are classified as capital projects under the S.5310 grant guidance. As such, the matching ratio is 80% federal; 10% state; and 10% local. Depending upon the size of the program, WTA may also need to apply for a vehicle under the S.5310 program to expand capacity to meet the demand generated by people using the subsidy program.

### ***Cost and Ridership***

If the DSS were to develop a \$50,000 program (\$40,000 federal, \$5,000 state, and \$5,000 local), then an additional 2,800 or so annual passenger trips could be provided for elderly people and people with disabilities (assuming an average per trip cost of \$17.68, the FY10 average trip cost). Additional clarification from NCDOT (since the presentation of the alternatives) has indicated that the 10% local portion cannot be comprised of Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP) funds. An expansion vehicle (lift-equipped van) for WTA is currently priced at \$41,150.

### ***Purchase of Service Program***

The second targeted transportation assistance program recommended for Wilkes County, also an S. 5310 project, is a purchase of service program, whereby a local human service agency, such as the Wilkes Senior Citizen's Council (WSCC) or the Wilkes County DSS, could apply for a grant to expand service for area seniors and people with disabilities. WSCC or the DSS would then use the funds to purchase service from WTA. WTA could submit a grant application at the same time to purchase a vehicle to support the expanded service. The HSTP did specifically identify a need for shuttle services from remote areas as well as an expansion of services to public housing locations.

FTA guidance allows purchase of service programs funded with S.5310 funds to have a federal matching ratio of 80% federal; 10% state; and 10% local. Additional clarification from NCDOT (since the presentation of the alternatives) has indicated that the 10% local portion cannot be comprised of EDTAP funds.

**Cost and Ridership.** If WSCC/DSS were to develop a \$50,000 program (\$40,000 federal, \$5,000 state, and \$5,000 local), then an additional 2,800 or so annual passenger trips for elderly people and people with disabilities could be provided (assuming an average per trip cost of \$17.68 - the FY10 average trip cost). A vehicle to support this service currently costs \$41,150.

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## Coordination Projects

There are two potential opportunities to further coordinate public transportation services with neighboring transit programs in the region. While the implementation of these projects is only partially under the control of WTA, they are included in the plan as WTA is interested in pursuing these opportunities. The concepts are discussed below.

### *Coordinate Services with Yadkin Valley Economic Development District, Inc. (YVEDDI) in the Elkin Area*

Residents of Wilkes County who live in the eastern portion of the County typically conduct daily business in Elkin (Surry County), rather than in Wilkesboro or N. Wilkesboro. There are also some specialty medical facilities in Elkin that are destinations for people who live in other parts of Wilkes County. In FY 2010, 6.6% of WTA's demand response trips were to Elkin. WTA sends several vehicles to Elkin daily to provide these trips, and typically has about eight vehicles daily with trip ends in either East Wilkes or Elkin.

YVEDDI, the public transportation provider for Surry County, has 3-4 vehicles providing service in the Elkin area on a typical day. The focus of this alternative is to have WTA and YVEDDI coordinate their transit services in the Elkin area, so that fewer total vehicles would be required, thus improving efficiencies for both systems. Either YVEDDI could serve portions of Eastern Wilkes County that are oriented to Elkin, or WTA could provide additional Elkin service while bringing Wilkes County residents into town.

The first step in determining the feasibility of a coordinated effort would be to hold a meeting between WTA and YVEDDI, followed by some detailed analysis of trip patterns and vehicle assignments by both systems in and around Elkin. It is anticipated that this meeting and analysis can take place concurrent with YVEDDI's CTSP, which is scheduled to begin in the second half of FY 2011.

### *Coordinate Long-Distance Medical Trips*

While out-of-county trips represent only 7.6% of the total passenger trips for WTA, they consume 27% of the total revenue miles, making them very expensive to provide. Other local transit programs in the region have similar statistics regarding long-distance medical trip costs.

For a number of years there have been discussions concerning the coordination of medical trips from Western North Carolina to Winston-Salem and other medical destinations to the east. One of the original purposes of the Mountaineer Express was

to provide this service, but the hours are such that it not particularly convenient for people to access medical appointments in the Piedmont Triad area.

The WTA director has advocated that if local transit programs in the region have the same trip-scheduling software, they could allow access to one another's out-of-county manifests and coordinate the scheduling of these expensive trips throughout the region. Likely participants would be those systems that have a need to bring people from Western North Carolina through Wilkes County, and on to destinations in the Piedmont Triad via the US421 Corridor. AppalCART, Allegheny County, Ashe County, WTA, and YVEDDI are potential candidates for such a program.

This project focuses on developing a pilot program whereby an additional WTA license for Route Match would be purchased and installed on a computer located at the Ashe County Transportation Authority (ACTA). ACTA would then use this computer to enter its east bound out-of-county trips into WTA's Route Match database. The WTA scheduler could then confer with the ACTA scheduler to consolidate vehicle trips if there were potential trip matches. If the pilot program were to be successful, it could be expanded to other counties as well.

**Cost.** The cost to implement this project includes the cost of a computer (\$1,500) and the monthly fee to use the license, which is about \$150 per month, or \$1,800 annually (based on a similar arrangement that WTA currently has with the Wilkes County DSS). There will likely be some savings associated with this project, assuming some trips are able to be coordinated between the two providers.

## Quality of Service Improvements

### *Bus Stop Amenities and Pedestrian Improvements*

Survey respondents indicated that additional shelters are needed so that passengers are more comfortable and shielded from the weather while waiting for the WE Shuttle. There is also a need to improve the pedestrian connections to and from WE Shuttle stops, though this improvement will need to be in partnership with the Towns of Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro.

Providing a more comfortable place for passengers to wait is a courtesy to riders and is also a way to increase the visibility of the transit system in the community and provide fixed locations to display transit information to the public (either electronically or more traditionally).

**Cost.** Shelters cost about \$10,000, installed. If five additional shelters were placed at high activity stops along the WE Shuttle, the total cost would be \$50,000, requiring \$5,000 in local funds. It may also be possible to ask developers to pay for

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passenger waiting shelters as a component of the development review process (for new or re-development projects along the WE Shuttle route).

### ***Mobile Data Computer (MDC) and Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL)***

WTA has desired MDC and AVL technology for some time, but has not met the minimum trip threshold for funding consideration by NCDOT-PTD (300 trips per day). WTA's ridership grew about 9% between FY09 and FY10. If this trend continues, WTA will be eligible for this technology in FY 2015 or FY 2016.

This technology will assist WTA by improving scheduling efficiency; reducing driver time spent on paperwork, reduce the time spent on verification, and reduce WTA's considerable use of paper.

**Cost.** A previous cost estimate for the MDC/AVL (not including the Route Match, which WTA already operates) was \$150,000.

Table 6-1 provides a summary of the service improvements recommended for implementation during the five-year planning horizon.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN**

The focus of the organizational plan is on how the Authority can make organizational changes and improvements to better serve the community, achieve long-term financial stability, and/or save money. This organizational plan focuses primarily on WTA's facility needs.

### **Eastern Wilkes Satellite Facility**

As discussed in Chapter 4, WTA has a significant number of vehicles that travel to Eastern Wilkes County each day. Currently these vehicles are housed in N. Wilkesboro and must dead-head to pick-ups in Eastern Wilkes. The goal of an Eastern Wilkes facility would be to dedicate a few vehicles to Eastern Wilkes, focusing on the trips that originate there. The concept would be to lease a small space with adequate parking for the vehicles. A lead driver would be assigned to the facility.

WTA has been exploring this option for the past year and has recently entered into an agreement to lease a satellite location in Eastern Wilkes County (in the Town of Ronda). WTA will be assigning one vehicle to this location. The monthly rent is \$200, for a total annual expenditure of \$2,400. With one vehicle assigned to the Ronda location, the estimated annual savings will be \$ 4,500 per year (assuming a savings of 30 miles per day, 255 days per year and \$ 3.00 per gallon fuel cost). The annual fuel savings

**Table 6-1: WTA CTSP Summary of Service Improvements**

<b>Service Improvement</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Annual Revenue Hours</b>	<b>Annual Operating Cost</b>	<b>Capital Cost</b>	<b>Proposed Year</b>	<b>Proposed Funding Sources</b>
Saturday service on the WE Shuttle	To provide mobility options on Saturdays for people in the Wilkesboro and N. Wilkesboro area.	416	\$ 17,472	\$ -	2012	RGP, Town of Wilkesboro, Town of North Wilkesboro
Re-brand WE Shuttle	To further differentiate the shuttle from other WTA services and attract new riders.			\$ 10,000	2012	CTP capital program, WTA local match
Add a second vehicle to the WE Shuttle	To accommodate additional geographic areas in the Wilkesboro/N. Wilkesboro area.	3,000	\$ 126,000	\$ 73,500	2015	RGP, Town of Wilkesboro, Town of North Wilkesboro
Fare Assistance Program	To subsidize the fares for elderly people and people with disabilities so they can afford to ride WTA.	1,100	\$ 50,000	\$ 41,150	2013	S.5310 program, State match, DSS-WSCC match
Purchase of Service Program	To provide additional capacity for elderly people and people with disabilities.	1,100	\$ 50,000	\$ 41,150	2013	S. 5310 program, State match, DSS-WSCC match
Add Demand-Response Capacity	To meet additional demand for community transportation in Wilkes County.	1,530	\$ 64,260	\$ 41,150	2013	RGP, EDTAP, EMPL, contracts, fares
Add Demand-Response Capacity	To meet additional demand for community transportation in Wilkes County.	1,530	\$ 64,260	\$ 41,150	2014	RGP, EDTAP, EMPL, contracts, fares
Additional Shelters	To provide shelter for people waiting for the WE Shuttle			\$ 50,000	2012	CTP Capital, WTA local match, developer contributions

**Table 6-1: WTA CTSP Summary of Service Improvements**

<b>Service Improvement</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Annual Revenue Hours</b>	<b>Annual Operating Cost</b>	<b>Capital Cost</b>	<b>Proposed Year</b>	<b>Proposed Funding Sources</b>
MDC/AVL	To improve the efficiency of WTA demand-response operations			\$ 150,000	2015	NCDOT Technology Program, WTA local match
Coordinate services with YVEDDI in the Elkin area	To reduce duplication of service	Modest savings in service hours	\$ -	\$ -	2012	
Coordinated long distance medical trips with ACTA	To maximize the use of regional vehicles travel toward the Triad for medical appointments	Modest savings in service hours	\$ 1,800	\$ 1,500	2012	CTP and WTA local match
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>8,676</b>	<b>\$ 373,792</b>	<b>\$ 449,600</b>		

Note: These improvements are in FY 2011 dollars and are based on a fully-allocated operating cost of \$42 per hour.

is estimated to be about \$2,000 and the annual payroll savings is estimated to be about \$2,500 annually (1 hour per day, 255 days per year, \$10 per hour). If a second or third vehicle were to be assigned to the Ronda location, the savings would increase.

### **Operating Facility**

WTA currently leases a facility in North Wilkesboro. Chapter 5 of this CTSP documented the current facility as well as documenting the space needs for WTA. The facility analysis indicated that WTA needs additional space for its current operations and for future growth.

WTA had expressed interest in a lease to purchase option, but the FTA requirements for such an arrangement are such that it is more advantageous to either keep leasing or go ahead with a plan to purchase/construct a facility.

Given that WTA had an immediate need for additional administrative/operating space, WTA recently entered into an agreement to lease a larger facility. WTA will also continue to use outside maintenance vendors for the near-term.

### **Revenue Generation**

While revenue generation is an important issue for WTA, it was recognized by the Steering Committee and area stakeholders that there would not be enough political support in the current economic climate to institute either a ¼ cent sales tax or a vehicle registration fee to support public transportation improvements. In the short-term, WTA will continue to seek available federal and state grant funding programs, as well as continuing to seek contractual opportunities to help support the provision of community transportation in the County.

## **IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE**

This section of the plan provides an implementation schedule for the activities that have been described in this draft plan. It should be noted the implementation of some of the initiatives listed on this schedule and described in the plan are dependent upon available funding, which may necessitate future revisions to this schedule. This schedule does not include the vehicle replacement and expansion activities, as these are presented with the Capital Plan section (page 6-16).

### **Remainder of FY 2011**

- Begin discussions with ACTA concerning the potential for coordinated long distance medical trip scheduling.
- Begin discussions with YVEDDI concerning service in the Elkin area.
- Implement full accessibility on WE Shuttle.
- Implement Eastern Wilkes Satellite facility.

### **Year One: Fiscal Year 2011-12**

- Work with DSS/WSCC to apply for the two S.5310 grant projects - the fare assistance project and the purchase of service project.
- Change the WE Shuttle route to incorporate the US421 Bypass rather than Curtis Bridge Road.
- Re-brand the WE Shuttle to attract additional riders.
- Implement Saturday service on the WE Shuttle.
- Secure additional Route Match license and install at ACTA.
- Work with YVEDDI to conduct detailed analysis of vehicle trips in the Elkin area.
- Install additional shelters along WE Shuttle route.
- Evaluate Eastern Wilkes Satellite facility and add vehicles if warranted.

### **Year Two: Fiscal Year 2012-13**

- Add demand-response capacity.
- Implement S.5310 projects, if successful in securing grant.
- Monitor performance of Saturday WE Shuttle service.
- Monitor effectiveness of ACTA/WTA long distance medical coordination project.

- Begin coordinated trip activities with YVEDDI in the Elkin area, if deemed feasible.

#### **Year Three: Fiscal Year 2013-14**

- Apply for funding assistance to implement MDC/AVL.
- Add demand-response capacity.
- Continue with S.5310 projects, if successful in securing grants. Evaluate performance of projects and apply for continued grant funding if programs have proven to be successful.
- Continue to monitor the performance and effectiveness of the new services and coordination projects.

#### **Year Four: Fiscal Year 2014-15**

- Add a second vehicle on the WE Shuttle.
- Continue to monitor the performance and effectiveness of the new services and coordination projects.
- Implement MDC/AVL if awarded funding

#### **Year Five: Fiscal Year 2015-16**

- Continue to monitor the performance and effectiveness of the new services and coordination projects.

## **CAPITAL PLAN**

There are a number of important capital projects planned for WTA during the five-year planning horizon. While each of these projects has been referenced in other portions of the plan, they are highlighted together below.

## **Passenger Amenities**

A high priority for riders and for CTSP committee members was to continue to improve passenger amenities, particularly passenger waiting shelters and pedestrian connections. Five additional wait shelters to be placed at WE Shuttle stops have been included in the plan and have been previously detailed.

## **Advanced Technologies**

MDC and AVL technologies have been included as part of the plan, assuming WTA's ridership continues its upward trend and WTA will meet the passenger count threshold for funding assistance for MDC/AVL technology.

## **Vehicles**

This capital plan includes a vehicle replacement and expansion plan that corresponds with the implementation plan presented above. Table 6-2 presents the vehicle expansion and replacement plan and Table 6-3 provides the vehicle inventory updated with the known and recommended replacement years.

## **FINANCIAL PLAN**

The CTSP financial plan is comprised of three primary components: the financial plan for operations, the financial plan for vehicle replacement and expansion, and the financial plan for facilities, equipment, and other capital. These components are presented in Tables 6-4, 6-5, and 6-6.

For each of the three components, approved budget numbers were used for the base year (FY 2011). For the four subsequent years, estimates have been made using currently available data and assumptions concerning service expansion. At this time the current federal and state funding sources for operations are shown at the FY 2011 levels for the five-year plan, with inflation absorbed by contractual revenue and local funds. The only new federal and state funds shown are associated with the proposed S.5310 grant opportunities. If the federal and state funding scenarios were to improve, WTA can make adjustments to the plan using the electronic tool that has been included in the plan.

**Table 6-2  
WTA Transit Vehicle Replacement and Expansion Program**

Vehicle Type	Useful Life	No. in Current Fleet	# Vehicle Procurements								No. in FY 2016 Fleet				
			FY 2011		FY 2012		FY 2013		FY 2014			FY 2015		FY 2016	
			Repl.	Exp.	Repl.	Exp.	Repl.	Exp.	Repl.	Exp.		Repl.	Exp.	Repl.	Exp.
Minivans	5 yrs./100k	1	2		1									3	
Lift and Conversion Vans	5 yrs./100k	21 (17)		3	3	3	1	1						21	
Light Transit Vehicles	7 yrs./130k	1	2						1	1				4	
Number of Vehicles Procured			4	0	3	0	4	3	3	1	1	1	0		
Fleet Size		23												28	

Note: In FY 2011 WTA is replacing four conversion vans with two mini-vans and two light transit vehicles.

**Table 6-3: WTA Vehicle Inventory and Replacement Schedule**

	Vehicle ID	Vehicle Model Yr	Make	Type Vehicle	# Seats	W/C	Mileage October 2010	Ops Status	Status	Recommended Replacement Year	Notes
1	0549M	2006	Chrysler	Mini Van	7	0	68,345	Good	Active	2013	
2	0875LR	2009	Ford	Conv Van Lift-R	8	2	41,421	Good	Active	2015	
3	3924LS	2007	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	8	2	94,344	Fair	Active	2012	
4	3944LS	2008	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	8	2	63,272	Good	Active	2013	
5	3945LS	2008	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	8	2	73,977	Good	Active	2013	
6	3946LS	2008	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	8	2	79,691	Good	Active	2013	
7	5110BS	2007	Ford	LTV- Lift-S	20	2	9,512	Good	Active	2016	
8	5551LS	2006	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	122,931	Fair	Active	2012	
9	5552LS	2006	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	118,032	Fair	Active	2012	
10	5553LS	2006	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	157,440	Fair	Active	2011	
11	6679C	2002	Dodge	CONV VAN No Lift	13	0	151,109	Fair	Active	2011	
12	6739C	2002	Dodge	CONV VAN No Lift	13	0	128,700	Fair	Active	2011	
13	6832LS	2003	Dodge	Conv Van Lift-S	12	2	173,729	Fair	Active	Retire	Replaced in 2010
14	6834C	2003	Dodge	CONV VAN No Lift	12	2	148,468	Fair	InActive	Retire	Replaced in 2010
15	9936LR	2009	Ford	Conv Van Lift-R	8	2	49,191	Good	Active	2014	
16	9949LR	2009	Ford	Conv Van Lift-R	8	2	22,915	Good	Active	2014	
17	9951LR	2009	Ford	Conv Van Lift-R	8	2	29,711	Good	Active	2014	
18	6937LS	2003	Dodge	Conv Van Lift-S	12	2	164,402	Good	Active	Retire	Replaced w/ARRA
19	4745LS	2002	Dodge	Conv Van Lift-R	12	2	179,302	Fair	Active	Retire	Replaced w/ARRA
20	6828LS	2003	Dodge	Conv Van Lift-S	12	2	176,755	Fair	Active	Retire	Replaced w/ARRA
21	6755LS	2002	Dodge	Conv Van Lift-S	12	2	165,215	Fair	InActive	Retire	Replaced in 2010
22	9532LS	2006	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	104,397	Poor	InActive	2011	
23	5101C	2001	Dodge	CONV VAN No Lift	13	0	101,434	Poor	InActive	Retire	Replaced in 2010
24	2558IS	2010	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	7,829	New	Active	2017	
25	2559LS	2010	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	9,230	New	Active	2017	
26	2561LS	2010	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	7,668	New	Active	2017	
27	5436LS	2010	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	8,535	New	Active	2017	
28	8092LR	2010	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	4,079	New	Active	2017	ARRA
29	8093LR	2010	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	4,665	New	Active	2017	ARRA
30	8094LR	2010	Ford	Conv Van Lift-S	10	2	3,665	New	Active	2017	ARRA

**Table 6-4: WTA Financial Plan for Operations**

<b>Projects</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>
<i>Annual Service Hours</i>						
WTA Services- FY2010 Level of Service	27,090	27,090	27,090	27,090	27,090	27,090
CTSP Proposals:						
Saturday Service on the WE Shuttle	-	416	416	416	416	416
S. 5310 Fare Assistance Program (1)	-	-	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
S. 5310 Purchase of Service Program (1)	-	-	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
Add Demand Response Capacity	-	-	1,530	3,060	3,060	3,060
Second Vehicle on WE Shuttle	-	-	-	-	3,000	3,000
Proposed Additional Hours of Service	-	416	4,146	5,676	8,676	8,676
<b>TOTAL CURRENT HOURS AND NEW PROPOSED SERVICES</b>	<b>27,090</b>	<b>27,506</b>	<b>31,236</b>	<b>32,766</b>	<b>35,766</b>	<b>35,766</b>
<b>Percent Increase in Community Transit Service Hours from Previous Year</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Increase in Service Hours</b>	<b>32%</b>					

(1) Both of these programs will flow through other agencies.

**Table 6-4: WTA Financial Plan for Operations- Projected Operating Expenses**

<b>Projects</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>
<i>Projected Operating Expenses</i>						
WTA FY2011 operating budget for existing services, with inflationary increases and rent increase	\$ 1,133,411	\$ 1,190,747	\$ 1,238,377	\$ 1,287,912	\$ 1,339,429	\$ 1,393,006
CTSP Proposals:						
Saturday Service on the WE Shuttle	\$ -	\$ 18,171	\$ 18,898	\$ 19,654	\$ 20,440	\$ 21,258
S. 5310 Fare Assistance Program (1)	\$ -		\$ 49,970	\$ 51,970	\$ 54,049	\$ 56,212
S. 5310 Purchase of Service Program (1)	\$ -		\$ 49,970	\$ 51,970	\$ 54,049	\$ 56,212
Add Demand Response Capacity	\$ -		\$ 69,504	\$ 144,572	\$ 150,356	\$ 156,370
Coordinated trips with ACTA		\$ 1,872	\$ 1,947	\$ 2,025	\$ 2,106	\$ 2,190
Second Vehicle on WE Shuttle					\$ 147,407	\$ 153,303
<b>Total New Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 20,043</b>	<b>\$ 190,289</b>	<b>\$ 270,191</b>	<b>\$ 428,406</b>	<b>\$ 445,545</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 1,133,411</b>	<b>\$ 1,210,790</b>	<b>\$ 1,428,666</b>	<b>\$ 1,558,103</b>	<b>\$ 1,767,835</b>	<b>\$ 1,838,552</b>
<b>Percent Increase in Expenses from Previous Year</b>		<b>7%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Total Increase in Expenses</b>		<b>62%</b>				

(1) Both of these programs will flow through other agencies.

**Table 6-4: WTA Financial Year for Operations - Projected Operating Revenues**

<b>Anticipated Funding Sources for Operating</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>
<i>Federal</i>						
FTA S.5311 Administrative	\$ 182,625	\$ 182,625	\$ 182,625	\$ 182,625	\$ 182,625	\$ 182,625
S. 5310 (fare assistance) through the DSS			39,976	41,576	43,240	44,969
S.5310 (purchase of service), through the DSS or WSCC			39,976	41,576	43,240	44,969
<b>Subtotal, Federal</b>	<b>\$ 182,625</b>	<b>\$ 182,625</b>	<b>\$ 262,577</b>	<b>\$ 265,777</b>	<b>\$ 269,105</b>	<b>\$ 272,563</b>
<i>State</i>						
State Funds in Support of Administrative Expenses	\$ 11,414	\$ 11,414	\$ 11,414	\$ 11,414	\$ 11,414	\$ 11,414
Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program	\$ 90,725	\$ 90,725	\$ 90,725	\$ 90,725	\$ 90,725	\$ 90,725
Rural General Public	\$ 100,405	\$ 100,405	\$ 100,405	\$ 100,405	\$ 100,405	\$ 100,405
Employment	\$ 69,092	\$ 69,092	\$ 69,092	\$ 69,092	\$ 69,092	\$ 69,092
State Funds in Support of S.5310 Projects			\$ 9,994	\$ 10,394	\$ 10,809	\$ 11,242
<b>Subtotal, State</b>	<b>\$ 271,636</b>	<b>\$ 271,636</b>	<b>\$ 281,630</b>	<b>\$ 282,030</b>	<b>\$ 282,445</b>	<b>\$ 282,878</b>
<i>Local</i>						
Local Cash Match	\$ 34,243	\$ 53,784	\$ 65,929	\$ 68,566	\$ 218,716	\$ 227,468
Contract Revenue	\$ 559,340	\$ 581,714	\$ 674,486	\$ 785,855	\$ 830,121	\$ 876,912
Passenger Fares	\$ 124,675	\$ 133,187	\$ 169,474	\$ 159,958	\$ 182,571	\$ 189,874
<b>Subtotal, Local</b>	<b>\$ 718,258</b>	<b>\$ 768,684</b>	<b>\$ 909,889</b>	<b>\$ 1,014,379</b>	<b>\$ 1,231,408</b>	<b>\$ 1,294,254</b>
<b>Total Projected/Proposed Operating Funds</b>	<b>\$ 1,172,519</b>	<b>\$ 1,222,945</b>	<b>\$ 1,454,096</b>	<b>\$ 1,562,186</b>	<b>\$ 1,782,958</b>	<b>\$ 1,849,695</b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>\$ 39,108</b>	<b>\$ 12,155</b>	<b>\$ 25,430</b>	<b>\$ 4,083</b>	<b>\$ 15,123</b>	<b>\$ 11,143</b>

Note: Contract revenue is inflated by 6% for FY2014, FY2015, and FY2016 to compensate for level state and federal funding.

**Table 6-5: WTA CTSP Financial Plan for Vehicle Replacement and Expansion**

<b>Number of Vehicles</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>
Replacement	4	3	4	3	1	1
Expansion			3	1	1	
<b>Total Vehicles</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Vehicle Types:</b>	2 mini vans with ramps	3 conversion vans with lifts	1 mini van with ramp 6 conversion vans with lifts	4 conversion vans with lifts	1 conversion van with lift	1 LTV
	2 LTVs				1 LTV	
<b>Vehicle Costs</b>						
Replacement	\$ 196,000	\$ 128,388	\$ 177,869	\$ 138,869	\$ 48,141	\$ 89,427
Expansion	\$ -		\$ 133,524	\$ 46,290	\$ 63,175	\$ -
Bus Wraps		\$ 10,400				
<b>Total Projected Vehicle Costs</b>	<b>\$ 196,000</b>	<b>\$ 138,788</b>	<b>\$ 311,393</b>	<b>\$ 185,159</b>	<b>\$ 111,316</b>	<b>\$ 89,427</b>
<b>Anticipated Funding Sources</b>						
Federal S. 5311	\$ 156,800	\$ 111,030	\$ 249,114	\$ 148,127	\$ 89,053	\$ 71,542
State	\$ 19,600	\$ 13,879	\$ 31,139	\$ 18,516	\$ 11,132	\$ 8,943
Local	\$ 19,600	\$ 13,879	\$ 31,139	\$ 18,516	\$ 11,132	\$ 8,943
<b>Total Vehicle Funding</b>	<b>\$ 196,000</b>	<b>\$ 138,788</b>	<b>\$ 311,393</b>	<b>\$ 185,159</b>	<b>\$ 111,316</b>	<b>\$ 89,427</b>

**Table 6-6: WTA CTSP Financial Plan for Facilities, Equipment, and Other Capital**

<b>Projects</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>
<i>Technology</i>						
MDC/AVL	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 175,485	\$ -	\$ -
Computer Upgrades	\$ -	\$ 1,560	\$ 1,622	\$ 1,687	\$ 1,755	\$ 1,825
Computer Software	\$ -	\$ 1,040	\$ 1,082	\$ 1,125	\$ 1,170	\$ 1,217
<i>Passenger Amenities</i>						
Shelters	\$ -	\$ 52,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Projected Non-Vehicle Capital Expenses</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 54,600</b>	<b>\$ 2,704</b>	<b>\$ 2,812</b>	<b>\$ 178,410</b>	<b>\$ 3,042</b>
<i>Anticipated Funding Sources</i>						
NCDOT Advanced Technology	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 157,937	\$ -
Federal S. 5311	\$ -	\$ 43,680	\$ 2,163	\$ 2,250	\$ 2,340	\$ 2,433
State	\$ -	\$ 5,460	\$ 270	\$ 281	\$ 292	\$ 304
Local	\$ -	\$ 5,460	\$ 270	\$ 281	\$ 17,841	\$ 304
<b>Total Projected Non-Vehicle Capital Funds</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 54,600</b>	<b>\$ 2,704</b>	<b>\$ 2,812</b>	<b>\$ 178,410</b>	<b>\$ 3,042</b>

### **Financial Plan for Operations**

The Financial Plan for Operations was constructed by taking the current service hours (FY 2010), and then adding the services as they are scheduled for implementation. The fully-allocated hourly costs (\$42/hour) were then applied to arrive at the total annual operating expenses for each year. A per year escalation of 4% (using the escalation rates published by NCDOT) was added for subsequent years after implementation. As Table 6-4 indicates, the total annual operating expenses are planned to rise from about \$ 1.1 million in FY 2011 to about \$1.8 million in FY 2016.

### **Financial Plan for Vehicle Replacement and Expansion**

Table 6-5 provides the Financial Plan for Vehicle Replacement and Expansion. This plan is based on the current year's approved vehicle purchases, with future replacements and expansions based on vehicle age and new services.

### **Financial Plan for Facilities, Equipment, and Other Capital**

Table 6-6 provides the Financial Plan for Facilities, Equipment, and Other Capital. Other capital items listed are in support of new services and ongoing capital needs.

## **PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT PLAN**

Table 6-7 provides the FY 2011 Key Indicators. These performance measures will serve as a baseline for WTA to gauge future performance.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT DESCRIPTION**

Several of the services planned for implementation over the five-year planning horizon for this CTSP came from suggestions made by riders, stakeholders, and the public. The following mechanisms were used to solicit public input for the development of the plan:

- The planning process was guided by a Steering Committee, which is comprised of community stakeholders from a number of key transit constituency groups.
- A public opinion survey was conducted with 69 surveys completed for the effort.

Table 6-7: WTA Performance Indicators

Indicator	Target
Total Customer Complaints per Passenger Trip	WTA should research this measure
Reportable Accidents per 100,000 Vehicle Service Miles	Less than 1
Miles between Mechanical Failure	200,000
Trip Denials	Less than 1.2%
Cost per Vehicle Revenue Hour	\$29.00
Cost per Passenger Trip- Overall System	\$13.09
Passengers per Revenue Hour - Deviated Fixed-Route	3.41
Passengers per Revenue Hour - Demand-Response	1.95
On-time Performance	90%

- Rider surveys were conducted, with 69 surveys completed.
- Stakeholder interviews were held including interviews with the County Manager, the County Finance Director, and the Director of Student Services at Wilkes Community College.
- The draft plan was discussed before the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners prior to WTA Board approval.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The PTD has established objectives for CTSPs and they are listed in the left column of Table 6-8. The WTA CTSP projects that support these objectives are shown in the right column of Table 6-8.

Table 6-8: Summary of Recommendations

NCDOT-PTD CTSP Objectives	Supporting Recommendations
<p><b>PLAN OBJECTIVE #1</b> - Promote the development and availability of transportation services throughout the state, in partnership with local officials, public and private non-profit agencies, and operators of transportation services, and members of the public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S.5310 Fare Assistance Program</li> <li>• S.5310 Purchase of Service Program</li> <li>• Additional demand-response capacity</li> <li>• Second vehicle on WE Shuttle</li> <li>• Coordinated services with YVEDDI</li> <li>• Coordinated trips with ACTA</li> <li>• Saturday WE Shuttle Service</li> <li>• Larger operating facility</li> </ul>
<p><b>PLAN OBJECTIVE # 2</b> - Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of federal/state funded transportation programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eastern Wilkes satellite office</li> <li>• Larger operating facility</li> <li>• Coordinated services with YVEDDI</li> <li>• Coordinated trips with ACTA</li> </ul>
<p><b>PLAN OBJECTIVE # 3</b> – Support and promote the coordination of public transportation services across geographies, jurisdictions, and program areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S.5310 Fare Assistance Program</li> <li>• S.5310 Purchase of Service Program</li> <li>• Coordinated services with YVEDDI</li> <li>• Coordinated trips with ACTA</li> </ul>
<p><b>PLAN OBJECTIVE # 4</b> - Provide dependable transportation to the general public, low income individuals, elderly persons, and/or persons with disabilities within the guidelines and funding levels provided by NCDOT and FTA.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S.5310 Fare Assistance Program</li> <li>• S.5310 Purchase of Service Program</li> <li>• Additional demand-response capacity Saturday WE Shuttle service</li> </ul>
<p><b>PLAN OBJECTIVE # 5</b> - Enhance the coordination of existing services for the development of a seamless transportation network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinated services with YVEDDI</li> <li>• Coordinated trips with ACTA</li> <li>• Saturday WE Shuttle service</li> </ul>
<p><b>PLAN OBJECTIVE # 6</b> - Build upon the coordination efforts that exist within North Carolina’s public transportation system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S. 5310 Fare Assistance Program</li> <li>• S.5310 Purchase of Service Program</li> <li>• Coordinated services with YVEDDI</li> <li>• Coordinated trips with ACTA</li> </ul>
<p><b>PLAN OBJECTIVE # 7</b> - Serve as a basis for funding requests from NCDOT.</p>	<p>The entire CTSP documents the need for the projects that have been recommended for implementation. The financial plan provides estimates of expenses and potential revenue sources and will serve as basis for funding requests from NCDOT.</p>



## **APPENDIX A**

### **Steering Committee Members**



## Appendix A

### CTSP Steering Committee Meeting Members

Andrew Carlton  
Wilkesboro Director of Planning

Stella Couplin  
Transit System Rider

Eddie Barnes  
Wilkes County Planning

Carol Jenkins  
Wilkes Department of Social Services

Joyce Johnson  
Wilkes Senior Citizen Council

Pam Hawley  
NC DOT Mobility Specialist

Craig Hughes  
Reg. D. Counsel of Governments

Lynn Lyman  
Wilkes Reg. Dialysis Center

Rose Marian  
Wilkes County Health Department

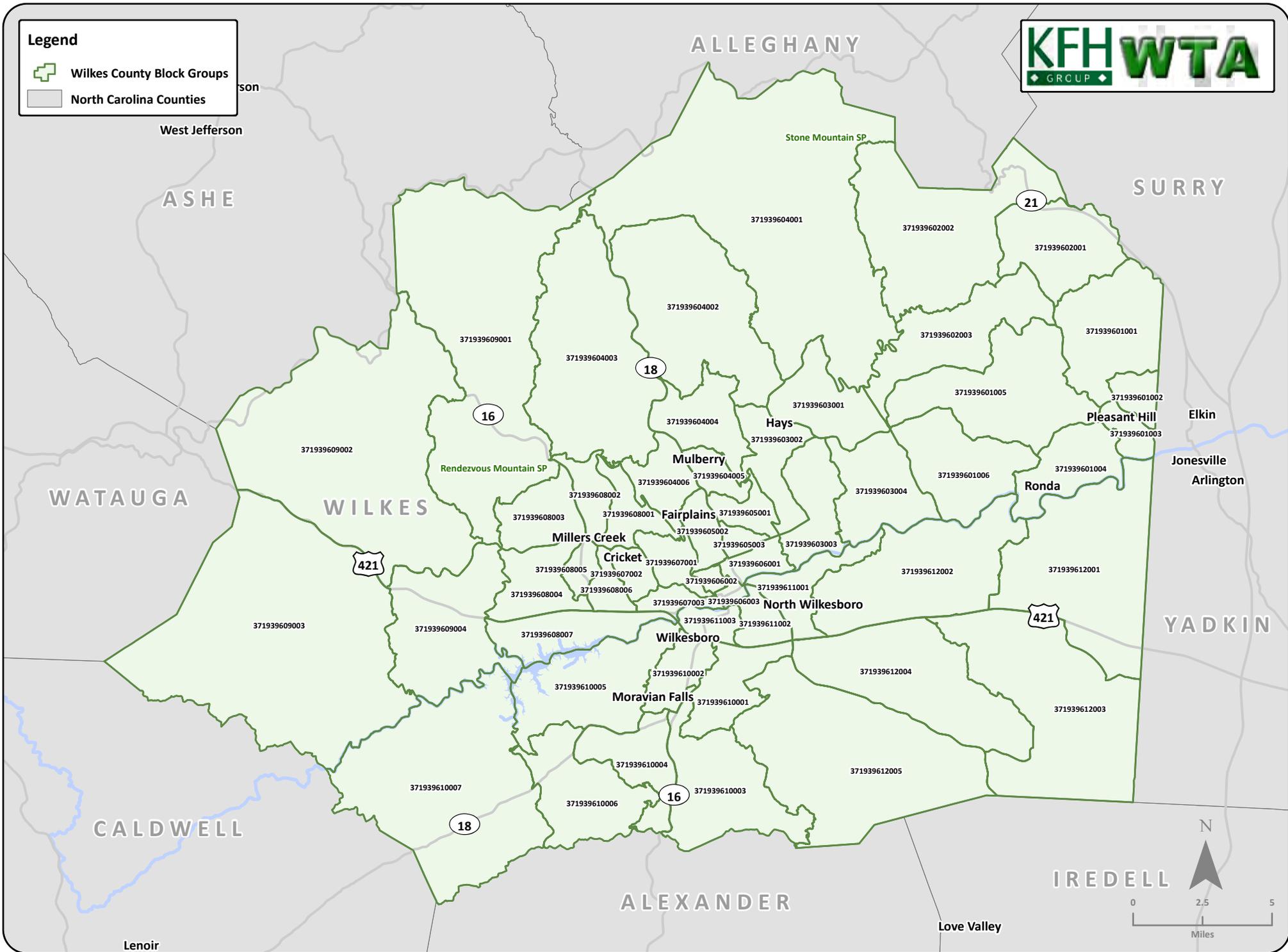


## **APPENDIX B**

### **Wilkes County Demographics**



Figure B-1: United States Census 2000 Block Groups for Wilkes County





**Table B-1: Demographic Summary by Block Group for Wilkes County**

<b>Block Group Identification</b>	<b>Median Age</b>	<b>Square Miles</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Total Households</b>	<b>Population Density</b>	<b>Elderly Population</b>	<b>Youth Population</b>	<b>Mobility Limited</b>	<b>Below Poverty</b>	<b>Autoless Households</b>
371939601001	40	14.03	1,763	777	125.40	409	124	117	135	6
371939601002	43	2.52	805	387	319.13	208	48	71	103	30
371939601003	39	2.57	640	286	252.93	148	50	63	49	16
371939601004	38	7.91	1,024	448	131.84	198	83	105	72	22
371939601005	37	19.12	1,417	615	74.32	235	115	102	240	54
371939601006	38	12.13	1,024	460	85.04	185	92	76	115	41
371939602001	40	11.59	1,010	462	87.20	219	74	110	95	38
371939602002	38	26.66	1,074	529	40.22	212	85	58	138	21
371939602003	37	13.67	942	418	68.80	154	74	145	163	26
371939603001	38	8.38	1,351	574	160.74	246	100	103	140	19
371939603002	37	6.27	1,684	719	268.65	285	127	203	300	120
371939603003	37	7.20	1,089	478	152.00	173	82	58	203	24
371939603004	36	10.16	1,918	831	189.00	316	144	207	319	51
371939604001	36	66.52	1,645	723	24.74	302	130	213	235	61
371939604002	34	25.90	1,337	557	51.61	191	118	181	175	40
371939604003	38	29.61	924	385	31.18	168	70	102	44	42
371939604004	38	7.56	1,296	540	170.96	245	132	104	192	40
371939604005	39	2.61	1,390	603	534.17	286	101	153	60	14
371939604006	41	5.10	1,007	430	197.01	165	91	106	16	23
371939605001	41	2.92	1,089	491	372.76	266	85	103	122	48
371939605002	37	2.98	1,331	626	440.48	272	95	131	280	55
371939605003	43	1.29	671	317	525.14	169	50	113	66	34
371939606001	35	2.47	1,145	525	463.03	228	83	143	272	157
371939606002	41	0.77	758	346	986.65	178	55	23	106	5
371939606003	39	0.76	755	442	1,030.26	167	53	56	122	149
371939607001	37	3.39	1,391	595	415.11	252	87	171	141	33
371939607002	40	2.24	996	483	442.49	226	56	159	128	28
371939607003	42	2.02	975	423	479.90	302	52	80	197	71
371939608001	39	4.09	1,111	489	272.53	171	95	118	63	8
371939608002	36	3.40	1,165	501	343.38	192	102	88	158	66
371939608003	36	6.29	1,962	860	310.40	296	154	141	102	33

**Table B-1: Demographic Summary by Block Group for Wilkes County**

<b>Block Group Identification</b>	<b>Median Age</b>	<b>Square Miles</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Total Households</b>	<b>Population Density</b>	<b>Elderly Population</b>	<b>Youth Population</b>	<b>Mobility Limited</b>	<b>Below Poverty</b>	<b>Autoless Households</b>
371939608004	38	6.76	1,213	547	179.35	232	77	249	154	20
371939608005	41	1.88	832	365	442.28	129	66	90	80	22
371939608006	38	2.27	1,352	573	595.12	214	96	93	56	55
371939608007	41	7.59	771	320	109.73	147	54	122	58	0
371939609001	39	50.18	1,250	655	24.90	235	101	132	111	21
371939609002	41	53.13	785	414	14.80	146	58	119	71	23
371939609003	43	60.62	1,090	615	17.97	226	68	165	171	75
371939609004	42	17.54	1,315	562	76.35	283	87	180	208	21
371939610001	39	6.82	2,049	893	300.13	317	182	137	330	64
371939610002	44	4.55	1,964	829	433.39	546	133	141	140	47
371939610003	41	14.80	585	289	39.55	123	42	34	6	15
371939610004	37	7.71	902	386	117.32	159	66	72	80	27
371939610005	34	15.26	1,719	748	120.40	245	135	178	244	72
371939610006	37	12.20	925	407	75.84	149	76	80	182	40
371939610007	39	37.97	1,253	540	33.33	237	104	167	95	24
371939611001	35	5.59	1,521	662	273.17	247	91	130	269	24
371939611002	38	2.97	1,149	467	386.02	182	62	130	136	71
371939611003	45	2.47	1,438	665	580.73	459	101	144	67	53
371939612001	39	27.94	1,548	679	55.60	287	110	201	191	25
371939612002	35	21.44	1,902	816	89.18	292	153	225	266	38
371939612003	39	31.18	1,112	493	35.64	196	90	127	107	35
371939612004	42	21.90	1,185	520	53.95	252	89	202	49	26
371939612005	41	34.99	1,083	496	30.98	210	77	91	40	26
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,095</b>	<b>759.89</b>	<b>65,632</b>	<b>29,261</b>	<b>86.37</b>	<b>12,577</b>	<b>4,925</b>	<b>6,812</b>	<b>7,662</b>	<b>2,199</b>

# **APPENDIX C**

## **Surveys**



# ON-BOARD RIDER SURVEY

# Demand Response Service

The Wilkes Transportation Authority (WTA) is conducting a Community Transportation Service Plan (CTSP). The purpose of this study is to develop a five-year plan for public transportation services in Wilkes County. It is important for us to understand the travel patterns and needs of our passengers and to ask for your opinions about services. Please complete this survey for your current trip **WTA's Demand Service**. When you are finished with this survey, please give it to the Driver (The survey is anonymous). If you have already completed a survey this week you do not need to complete a second one. *Thank you!*

1. What was the location where you boarded the van? Please indicate the street address, intersection, building, or landmark. *For example, Wilkes Department of Social Services.* Please do not use vague terms, such as "home" or "work."

---

2. What is your destination? Please indicate the street address, intersection, building, or landmark. *For example, Hickory Circle Apartments.* Please do not use vague terms such as "home" or "work."

---

3. What is the purpose of your van trip today? You may check more than one.

- |                                       |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Work     | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Social/ Recreation        | <input type="checkbox"/> (7) Errands/Personal Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> (5) Medical                   | <input type="checkbox"/> (8) Attend Senior Center      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (3) School   | <input type="checkbox"/> (6) Government Service Agency | <input type="checkbox"/> (9) Other: _____              |
- 

4. Do you also use the WE Shuttle?

- (1) Yes, I use the WE Shuttle  
 (2) No, I only use the demand response van.
- 

5. How often do you use the van service?

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) 4 times per week or more | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Once a week         | <input type="checkbox"/> (5) Once a month           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) 2-3 times per week       | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) 2-3 times per month | <input type="checkbox"/> (6) Less than once a month |
- 

6. How did you find out about the van service?

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Already knew                       | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Senior Center Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> (8) Telephoned WTA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Asked someone who uses the service | <input type="checkbox"/> (5) Other Agency Staff  | <input type="checkbox"/> (9) Other: _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (3) WTA Website                        | <input type="checkbox"/> (6) Brochure            |   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> (7) Asked Driver        |   |
- 

7. How long have you been using community transportation services in Wilkes County?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Six months or less              | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Between 1 and 2 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Between six months and one year | <input type="checkbox"/> (5) More than 2 years     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (3) About one year                  | <input type="checkbox"/> (6) More than 5 years     |
- 

8. What do you like the best about WTA services?

---

9. What do you like least about WTA services?

---

10. If WTA were to make service improvements or expansions what would be the top three choices?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

OVER, PLEASE ☞

11. Please rate your satisfaction with WTA services in the following areas:

	Very Satisfied (1)	Satisfied (2)	Unsatisfied (3)	Very Unsatisfied (4)
The trip scheduling process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telephone customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-time performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Days of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hours of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost of van fare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cleanliness of the vans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Driver courtesy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety and security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Usefulness of WTA website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

---

12. Do you have a driver's license?  (1)Yes  (2) No

---

13. Do you have access to a car, truck, or motorcycle?  (1)Yes  (2) No

---

14. Please indicate your age group.

- (1) Under 12 years old     (3) 18-25 years old     (5) 56-64 years old  
 (2) 12-17 years old     (4) 26-55 years old     (6) 65 years old or older

---

15. Are you:  (1) Male  (2) Female

---

16. How would you classify yourself?

- (1) African American     (3) Caucasian     (5) Native American  
 (2) Asian     (4) Hispanic/Latino     (6) Other

---

17. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

(You may check more than one.)

- (1) Employed, full-time     (4) Student, full-time     (7) Unemployed  
 (2) Employed, part-time     (5) Student, part-time     (8) Other  
 (3) Retired     (6) Homemaker

---

18. What is your annual household income level? Please check only one.

- (1) \$14,999 or less     (3) \$30,000-\$44,999     (5) \$60,000- \$74,999  
 (2) \$15,000- \$29,999     (4) \$45,000-\$59,999     (6) \$75,000 or higher

---

19. Please provide any comments you may have concerning public transportation in Wilkes County, or the broader North Carolina region.

---

---

## Wilkes County Community Transportation Service Plan Public Opinion Survey

The Wilkes Transportation Authority (WTA) is conducting a Community Transportation Service Plan (CTSP). The purpose of this study is to develop strategies to improve public transportation services in the County. An important task for this planning effort is to solicit input from residents concerning transit needs. This survey is one method that is being used to obtain this important public input.

1. Please use the table below to indicate your current **primary** mode of transportation for the following trip purposes. Check the boxes that correspond with how you **usually** travel for these typical daily trips.

<i><b>Trip Purposes:</b></i>	<i><b>Modes:</b></i>						
	Drive Myself	Ride w/ Family/Friends	Public Transportation	Bicycle	Walk	Taxi	Other
Work							
Medical							
Social/Recreational							
School							
Shopping/Errands							

2. Are you aware of the public transportation services that are provided by the Wilkes Transportation Authority?  Yes  No

3. Do you currently use any of the following forms of public transportation on a regular basis? Please check all that apply and indicate how often you typically ride:

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> WTA demand response                           | How frequently? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WE Shuttle                                    | How frequently? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PART Mountaineer Express                      | How frequently? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taxis   | How frequently? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vanpools                                      | How frequently? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpools                                      | How frequently? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                  | How frequently? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I do not currently use public transportation. |                       |

4. If not, why not? (please check all that apply):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No service is available near my home/work/school.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know if service is available and/or location of stops.<br><input type="checkbox"/> I have limited mobility and it is hard for me to use the bus.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Need my car for work/school.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Need my car before/after work/school.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Have to wait too long for the van/bus or between vans/buses.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Need my car for emergencies/overtime.<br><input type="checkbox"/> It might not be safe/ I don't feel safe.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Trip is too long/takes too much time. | <input type="checkbox"/> The van/bus is uncomfortable.<br><input type="checkbox"/> The van/bus is expensive.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Vans/buses are unreliable/late.<br><input type="checkbox"/> The hours of operation are too limited.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____<br><div style="text-align: right;"><b>Over, Please</b> ⇨</div> |
|--|--|

5. Do you think there is a need for additional or improved public transportation in the County?  Yes  No  
***If you checked "No," please skip to Question #9.***

6. If you checked "Yes" for Question #5 above, please indicate **where within Wilkes County** there is a need for additional or improved public transit services?

- |   |  |   |                                       |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Countywide               | <input type="checkbox"/> Hays          | <input type="checkbox"/> Cricket        | <input type="checkbox"/> Fairplains   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Wilkesboro       | <input type="checkbox"/> Millers Creek | <input type="checkbox"/> Moravian Falls | <input type="checkbox"/> Ronda        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of North Wilkesboro | <input type="checkbox"/> Mulberry      | <input type="checkbox"/> West Elkin     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

7. If you think there is a need for intercity bus services to connect Wilkes County to the broader Western North Carolina region, please indicate the towns/cities you feel need to be connected:

- Between Wilkes County and.....
- Asheville
  - Boone
  - Charlotte
  - Greensboro
  - Hickory
  - Lenoir
  - Morganton
  - Salisbury
  - Statesville
  - Winston/Salem
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. If you checked "yes" to Question #5 above, please indicate what other improvements you think are needed:

Additional days/ hours/frequency of service for the current WTA services. Please indicate which additional days/hours are needed (*check all that apply*):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday service                | <input type="checkbox"/> Service later in the evenings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service earlier in the mornings | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday service                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More frequent service           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                  |

Quality of service improvements for WTA services (*check all that apply*):

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improved on-time performance        | <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaner vans/shuttles                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safer buses                         | <input type="checkbox"/> More helpful staff                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional bus shelters and benches | <input type="checkbox"/> Improved access to transit information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More informative website            | <input type="checkbox"/> Improved trip scheduling               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other : _____                       |   |

9. Would you use public transportation services in Wilkes County if there was a service that met your travel needs?  Yes  No



10. Would you support either of the following financing mechanisms that could potentially be used to help fund public transportation improvements in Wilkes County? Please check all that apply.

- A vehicle registration tax of up to \$7.00 per vehicle.
- A ¼ cent sales tax.
- I would not support either of these options, *but I do feel public transportation in the County is important.*
- I would not support either of these options, *and I do not feel that public transportation in the County is important.*

11. Please indicate your zip code of residence: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you have a valid driver's license?  Yes  No

13. How many working cars/trucks/suvs/motorcycles are there in your household?  
 0  1  2  3  4 or more

14. Please indicate your age group.

- Under 12 years old  18-25 years old  56-64 years old
- 12-17 years old  26-55 years old  65 years old or older

15. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? You may check more than one.

- Employed, full-time  Student, full-time  Unemployed
- Employed, part-time  Student, part-time  Other
- Retired  Homemaker

16. What is your annual household income level? Please check only one.

- \$14,999 or less  \$30,000-\$44,999  \$60,000- \$74,999
- \$15,000- \$29,999  \$45,000-\$59,999  \$75,000 or higher

17. How would you classify yourself?

- African American  Caucasian  Native American
- Asian  Hispanic/Latino  Other

18. Please provide your comments regarding the need for improved public transportation in Wilkes County or the broader region of Western North Carolina.

Please return this survey to the survey box, or mail to:

KFH Group, Inc.  
4920 Elm Street, Suite 350  
Bethesda, Maryland 20814  
Questions? (301)951-8660



## **APPENDIX D**

### **Open Ended Survey Responses**



*Open Ended Survey Responses*

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**What I Like Best About WTA**

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Always helpful  
Always on time  
Apprapiates full service  
Comes right to your door.  
Comfort of wheelchair  
Convenience  
convenience  
convenience  
convenience, friendly drivers  
Courteous  
dependable  
Dependable  
Don't have to find someone to take us for appointments  
drivers  
Drivers  
Drivers are always friendly and helpful  
Drivers are friendly and helpful  
Drivers are friendly and the route is very punctual/functional  
drivers are nice  
drivers/gets you to the doctor's office on time/WTA staff  
Friendliness  
friendly drivers  
Friendly drivers  
Get taken where you need to go  
get you there on time  
Good drivers  
Handy  
having stable transportation  
I have no car and they are dependable  
I have transportartion to and from works  
I like the drivers. They are elegant  
It gets me to my appointments and I like the drivers  
it is really cool  
It's great  
Kindness of the driver s and on time  
nice drivers  
Nice to me  
on time  
On time, convenient  
on time, friendly staff  
Retaining my independence and the friendly drivers  
Robert is always on the same time in the morning

*Open Ended Survey Responses*

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**What I Like Best About WTA**

---

save gas

Since I don't drive I am able to get to my appointment

The convenience, short wait time

The driver s are good people

The drivers

The drivers are nice and they help me on and off the van.

the drivers; Kay, Arthur, David, Ronnie

The people are nice

the people are nice to you???

The people who drive them.

the price of the trip

They are always on time to pick me up

they are nice people and they are caring

they come and get me every day

They get you to your appointments on time and they get you home safe

they make you feel comfortable

they're dependable

to get from point a to point b

Very professional service.

when you show up

Would not have a way to doctor if not for WTA. I can't walk.

---

## *Open Ended Survey Responses*

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### **What I Like Least About WTA**

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Calling C. Jenkins  
Can't go to primary doctor in Winston  
Can't think of anything  
Dealing with DSS  
Difficulty in scheduling  
ever thing  
Everyone is nice and on time  
have to wait  
I cannot smoke a cigarette when on van  
limit 3 appts, recent cancellations short notice, drivers arriving late  
maybe service the air conditioners better  
None  
not much room on the vans  
Nothing  
Nothing  
Nothing at all.  
OK price  
Riding packed up sometimes  
Scheduling  
scheduling issues  
shuttle does not have wheelchair lift!!!  
sometimes talking with Carol Jenkins  
Sometimes the driver will not get out of his seat to help you.  
That I have to get off work earlier than 5:30  
the (rules)  
The drivers never have any change  
The lift vans  
The lift vans.  
the wait after appointment  
The waiting and not knowing the exact time of pickup  
they are good  
waiting  
what I like least is this about DSS

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## *Open Ended Survey Responses*

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### **Suggested Improvements**

---

A van available for emergencies  
all big buses  
allocate correct time to arrive and get to appt  
Better suspension: not bumpy or bouncy  
bigger vans  
Combinr Riders so as not having just one rider on a van at a time when possible  
cut down wait list  
driver that will talk to you  
easy pickups  
everyone always says have a nice day  
Everyone has sense when I am on the van  
fix seat belts  
further distance like Baptist  
Give driver better directions to out of town trip. Don't depend on the passenger if th edriver has not been there before.  
Give driver more time for out of town trip- at least 15 extra minutes.  
Go out of Wilkes to any appointments  
If you are just running in to pick up pres. I think you already wait 5 mins  
improve routes  
kid friendly  
knowing which van is yours  
less wait after appointment  
longer hours  
maybe a Saturday trip  
more availability  
More comfortable seating  
more drivers  
more hours  
More lift vans  
More new vans like the one I rode last trip  
more routes  
more vans  
new seat belt  
nicer scheduler (Sandra)  
Nothing  
personal  
Reduce prices  
ride smoother  
riding with the same people  
Run on Saturday  
Same driver for same area (no more missed appts. cause couldn't find location)  
scheduling

## *Open Ended Survey Responses*

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### **Suggested Improvements**

---

school

shorten waiting time for pick up

shorter rides

Shuttle everywhere

Shuttle to come to Peace St

smaller amount of fees on short return trips

someone could ride with me. Sign other

stopping at more places

The ability to schedule mornings

they help me to my door

they need more people

use small van when wheelchair lift not needed

Wheelchair lift on WE Shuttle

work, shopping

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