

COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

**Adopted
April 17, 2008**



French Broad River
Metropolitan Planning Organization

Regional Partnership for Transportation Planning

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I. Federal Regulatory Background

For more than twenty years, the federal government has been working to better coordinate human service transportation activities it funds.

In 1985, during an oversight hearing on Rural Transportation, Congress heard testimony prompted by concerns of the lack of federal coordination between programs, such as the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Aiming to better coordinate activities, the Secretaries of HHS and DOT signed an agreement establishing the Joint DOT/HHS Coordinating Council on Human Service Transportation (CCHST) in 1986. Since the CCHST's creation, the CCHST has concentrated efforts to identify barriers to coordinated transportation. At one time, the agencies identified sixty-four factors that transportation and human service representatives believed were barriers to transportation coordination. Barriers included uncertainty regarding federal responsibilities for transportation, fragmented accounting and reporting procedures, uncertainty in using resources for recipients other than program constituents, and prohibition against charging fares under the Older Americans Act.

To further support coordination, Congress included several provisions in its 1998 passage of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA –21), Public Law (PL) 105-178. Most notable was the provision to require Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), predecessor program to today's JARC program, projects to be part of a coordinated public transit–human services transportation planning process.

In February 2004, President George W. Bush released an Executive Order on Human Service Transportation Coordination to improve assistance to those who are transportation disadvantaged. The Executive Order aims to implement coordination of

transportation services to operate in the most cost effective and time efficient manner possible.

Within the February 2004 Executive Order, the President established the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM).

The functions of the CCAM are to:

- Promote interagency cooperation
- Establish appropriate mechanisms to minimize duplication and overlap of federal programs and services so that transportation-disadvantaged persons have access to more transportation services
- Facilitate access to the most appropriate, cost-effective transportation services within existing resources
- Encourage enhanced customer access to the variety of transportation and resources available
- Formulate and implement administrative, policy, and procedural mechanisms that enhance transportation services at all levels

CCAM includes leadership from eleven federal departments:

- DOT
- HHS
- Labor
- Education
- Housing and Urban Affairs
- Agriculture
- Justice
- Interior
- Veterans Administration
- Social Security Administration
- National Council on Disabilities

In May 2005, the CCAM issued a report to the President with recommendations for breaking down federal barriers to transportation for all transportation-disadvantaged populations. The report detailed action plans for each of the eleven federal agencies who comprise the CCAM. Additionally, in 2005 the CCAM launched the United We Ride website, www.unitedweride.gov.

While it has been a long process, the federal government is working to strengthen its coordination requirements for human service transportation activities. In August 2005, Congress included coordination provisions in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), PL 109-059. SAFETEA-LU specifically added a coordination requirement to the newly created Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program (5310), Job Access Reverse Commute Program (5316), and New Freedoms Program (5317). FTA requires projects funded through the Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 Programs be derived from a locally developed Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP).

A CPT-HSTP identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. It provides strategies for meeting local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. A CPT-HSTP uses all available resources to supply transportation services efficiently and without redundancy in trips. Development of the CPT-HSTP must have the input and cooperation of transit agencies, social service agencies, community agencies, and the public.

In 2006, the CCAM issued two policy statements that take important steps to bring federal programs together to help people with disabilities, older adults, and lower income families get the transportation they need for their day-to-day mobility.

The CCAM policy statements focus on two key areas: (1) coordinated human service transportation planning and (2) vehicle sharing. These policies support communities and organizations receiving federal funding to plan transportation services together and to share resources. The policies were included as part of the recommendations in a 2005 report to the White House on Human Service Transportation Coordination. Each department on the CCAM will be taking actions to implement these policies.

II. Plan Approach

Projects funded through the Job Access and Reverse Commute (Section 5316 - JARC) and New Freedom (Section 5317) programs require the development of a local, coordinated public transit-human services plan (CPT-HSTP), which should incorporate private and non-profit transportation and human services providers and the general public.

Completing this extensive planning process required the participation of many organizations and agencies and the creation of a planning team. The planning team is comprised of representatives of the following organizations:

- French Broad River Metropolitan Organization
- Land of Sky Regional Council
- Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization
- Asheville Transit, City of Asheville
- Mountain Mobility, Buncombe County
- Henderson County
- Haywood County
- North Carolina Department of Transportation

The planning team held three workshops to get input from the stakeholders. The stakeholders were invited to participate in a series of public workshops to identify needs and gaps in the current transportation service. The needs were prioritized collectively during the workshops. The results of the workshops are the foundation for the CP-HST and will guide the application process and project selection.

The organizations participating in the workshops represent a broad array of interests, including elected officials, city/town/county managers, appointed transportation advisory boards, local and regional public and human service transportation providers, county social service agencies, Hispanic advocacy organizations, private transportation

providers, hospitals, chambers of commerce, and advocates for persons with disabilities.

There were fourteen (13) participants in the first stakeholder workshop on March 28, 2008, forty (40) participants in the second stakeholder workshop on April 1, 2008 and thirteen (13) participants in the third stakeholder workshop on April 3, 2008.

Over the course of the three workshops, representatives from the following organizations participated in the identification or prioritization of coordinated transportation needs:

- Apple Country Transit, Henderson County
- Asheville Housing Authority
- Brain Injury Association
- Buncombe Co. Department of Social Services
- Buncombe County Child Care Services
- Buncombe County Planning
- Buncombe County Resident
- Buncombe County United Way's 2-1-1
- Care Partners
- Cesar's Family Services, Buncombe County
- City of Asheville
- The Free Clinics, Henderson County
- Council on Aging of Buncombe County
- Customer Inspired Services, Buncombe County
- David's Transportation, Buncombe County
- Davidson Homes, Inc., Buncombe County
- Diamond Brand Outdoors, Henderson County
- Goodwill Industries of WNC
- Green Transit, Madison County
- Greenplan, Buncombe County
- Haywood Community Connections

- Haywood County AARP
- Haywood County Commissioner
- Haywood County Department of Social Services
- Haywood County Planning
- Haywood County Transit
- Haywood Vocational Opportunities, Inc.
- Haywood/Jackson Volunteer Center
- Henderson County Council on Aging
- Henderson County Planning Department
- Henderson County resident
- Hendersonville City Council
- Industries for the Blind
- Jewish Family Services of WNC at the Jewish Community Center, Asheville
- Land of Sky Regional Council
- Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization
- Local Business, Henderson County
- Maple Leaf Adult Respite, Haywood County
- Mayor's Committee for Citizens with Disabilities
- Mission Hospitals, Buncombe County
- Mountain Mobility, Buncombe County
- Hendersonville Resident
- Senior Citizens of Parkside Commons, East Flat Rock
- Town of Waynesville
- Transylvania County Transportation
- UNCA
- UNC-Chapel Hill Department of Nursing
- Vocational Rehabilitation, Buncombe County
- Vocational Solutions, Henderson County
- Volunteers of America Carolinas
- Western Alliance Center for Independent Living
- Western Carolina Rescue Ministries

III. Demographics

The French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization is federally designated as a regional planning entity that represents local governments in urban areas. Its purpose is to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs are based on a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing (3-C) planning process.

The area in and around the City of Asheville that was classified as urbanized expanded with the 2000 Census to include 10 new governmental jurisdictions, including Henderson County, Hendersonville, Laurel Park, Mills River, and Flat Rock. These areas, once classified as rural, are now considered urbanized because of their population density and/or proximity to densely populated areas. All of these areas have been included in this CPT-HSTP. The population distribution in the area is as follows:

French Broad MPO Population	
Jurisdiction	Population
Buncombe (unincorporated)	104,202
Asheville	68,889
Henderson (unincorporated)	63,546
Haywood (unincorporated)	30,628
Hendersonville	10,420
Waynesville	9,232
Black Mountain	7,511
Mills River	6,622
Fletcher	4,185
Canton	4,029

Woodfin	3,162
Flat Rock	2,565
Weaverville	2,416
Laurel Park	1,835
Biltmore Forest	1,440
Clyde	1,324
Montreat	630
Maggie Valley	607
TOTAL	323,243
(Based on 2000 U.S. Census)	

The dependency on public transportation is attributed directly to factors such as low-income, disabilities, minorities, and age. These factors were analyzed based on Census 2000 data in the three counties.

Figure 1 shows individuals over age 16 with difficulty going outside their homes without help. Haywood County has the highest percentage within this category with 7.9%, followed by Henderson County 7.7%.

Haywood County also shows the highest percentage related to the poverty level – 11.5% (Figure 2) followed closely by Buncombe County – 11.4%.

Buncombe County shows the highest percentage regarding households without vehicles – 8.3% - (Figure 3) as well as minority population – 7.5% (Figure 5).

Persons age 65 or older (Figure 4) are predominant in Henderson County (21.7%), as well as linguistically isolated (Figure 6 – 1.9%).

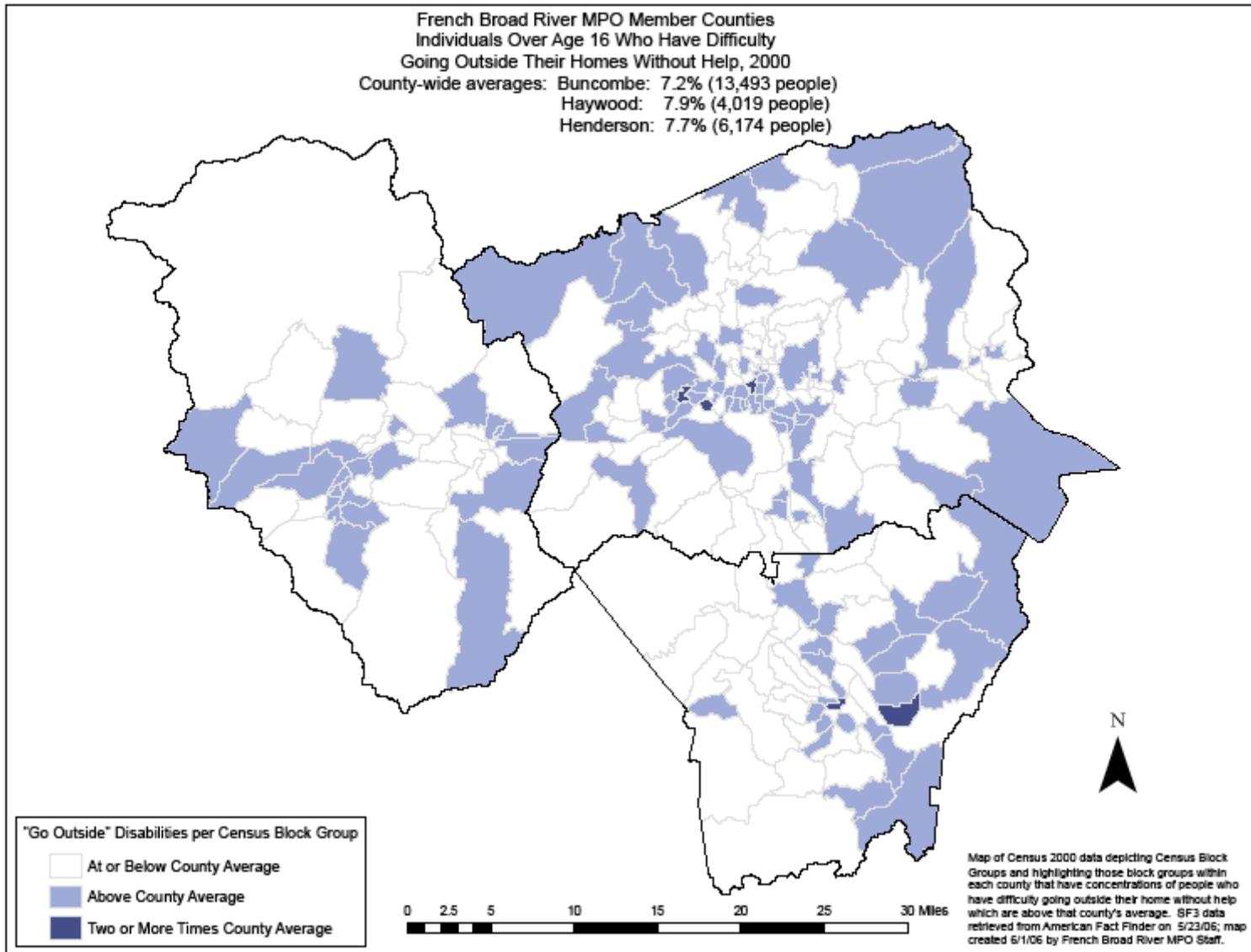


Figure 1- Individuals with difficulty going outside the home

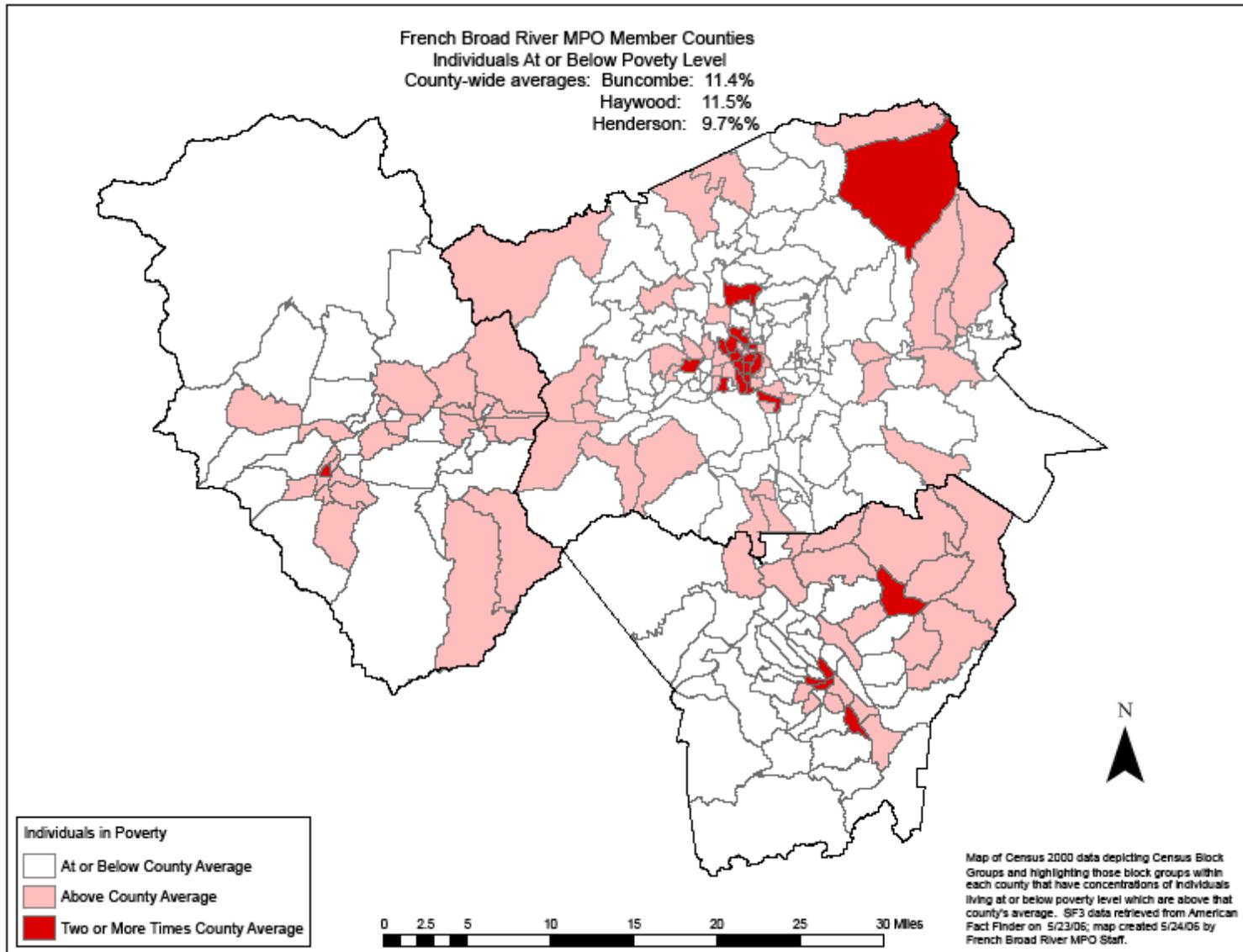


Figure 2 - Individuals at or below poverty level

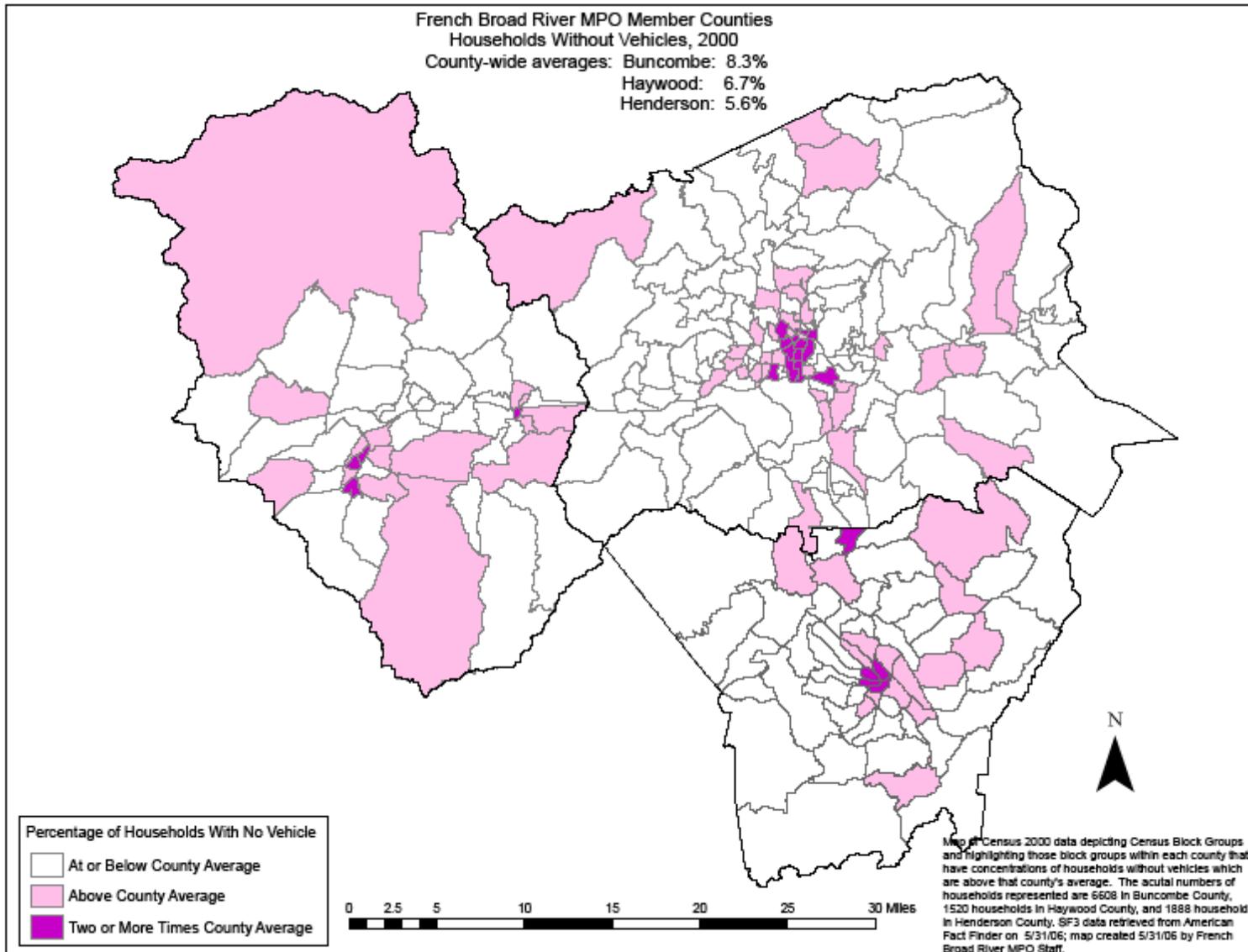


Figure 3 - Households with motor vehicles

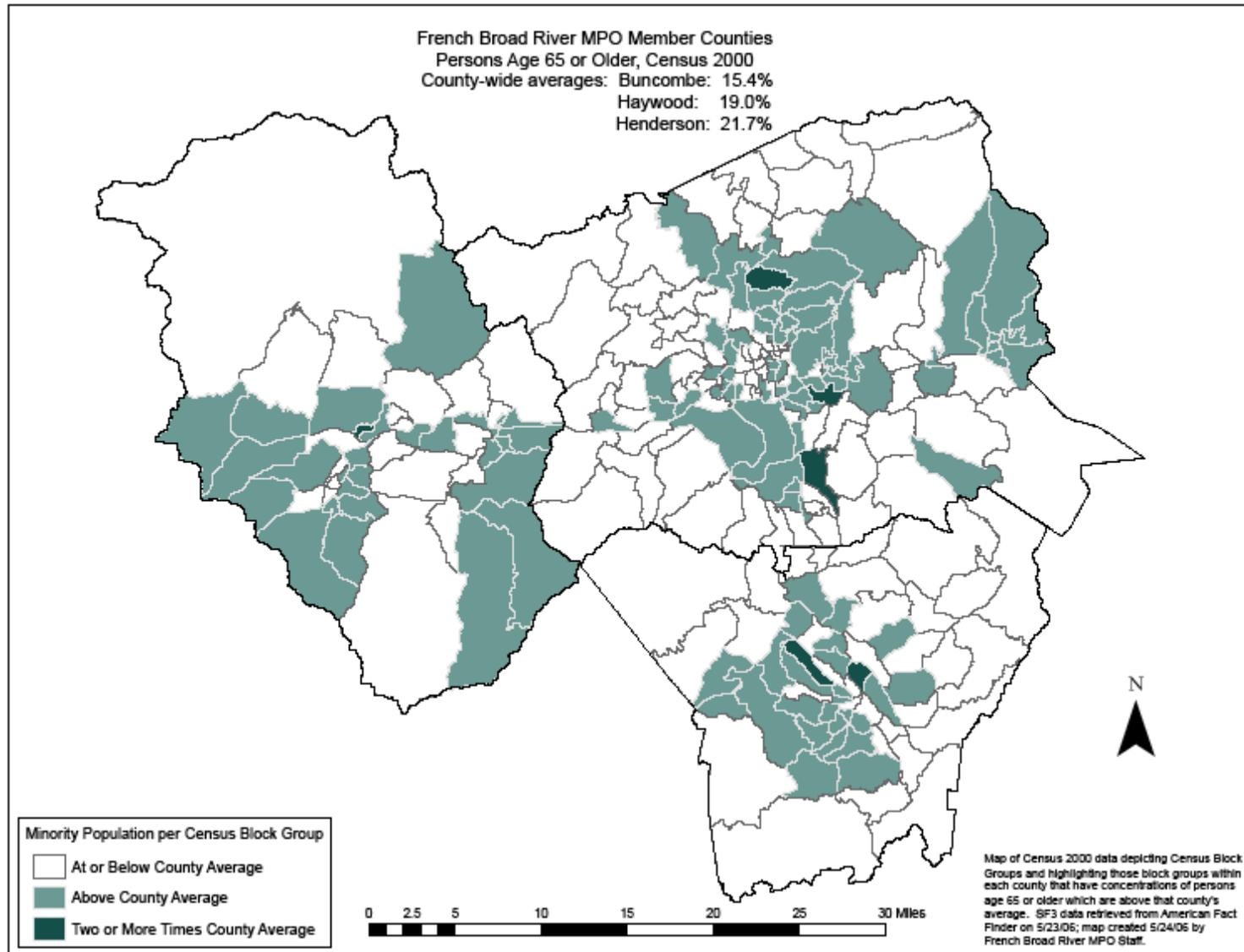


Figure 4 - Persons age 65 or older

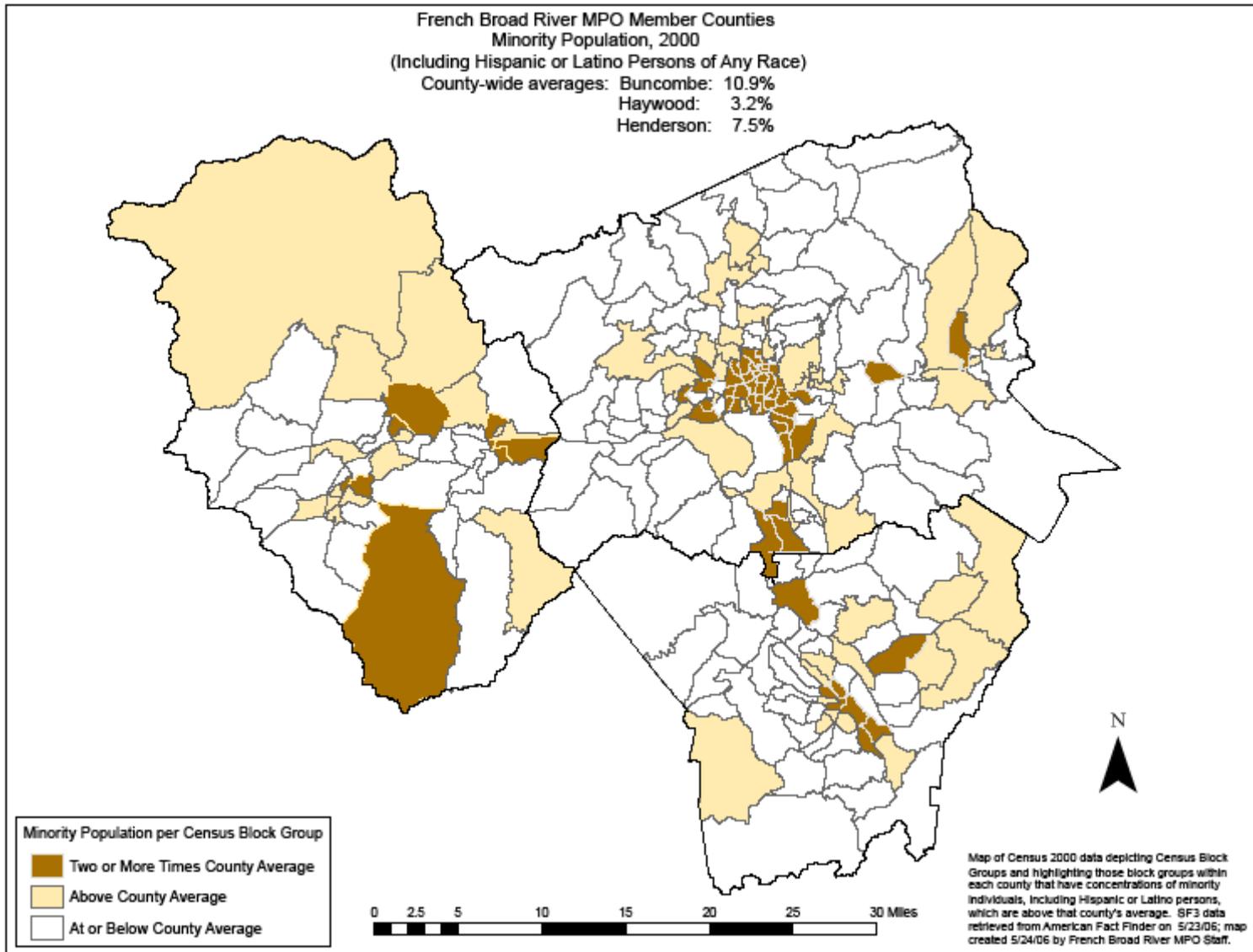


Figure 5 - Minority population

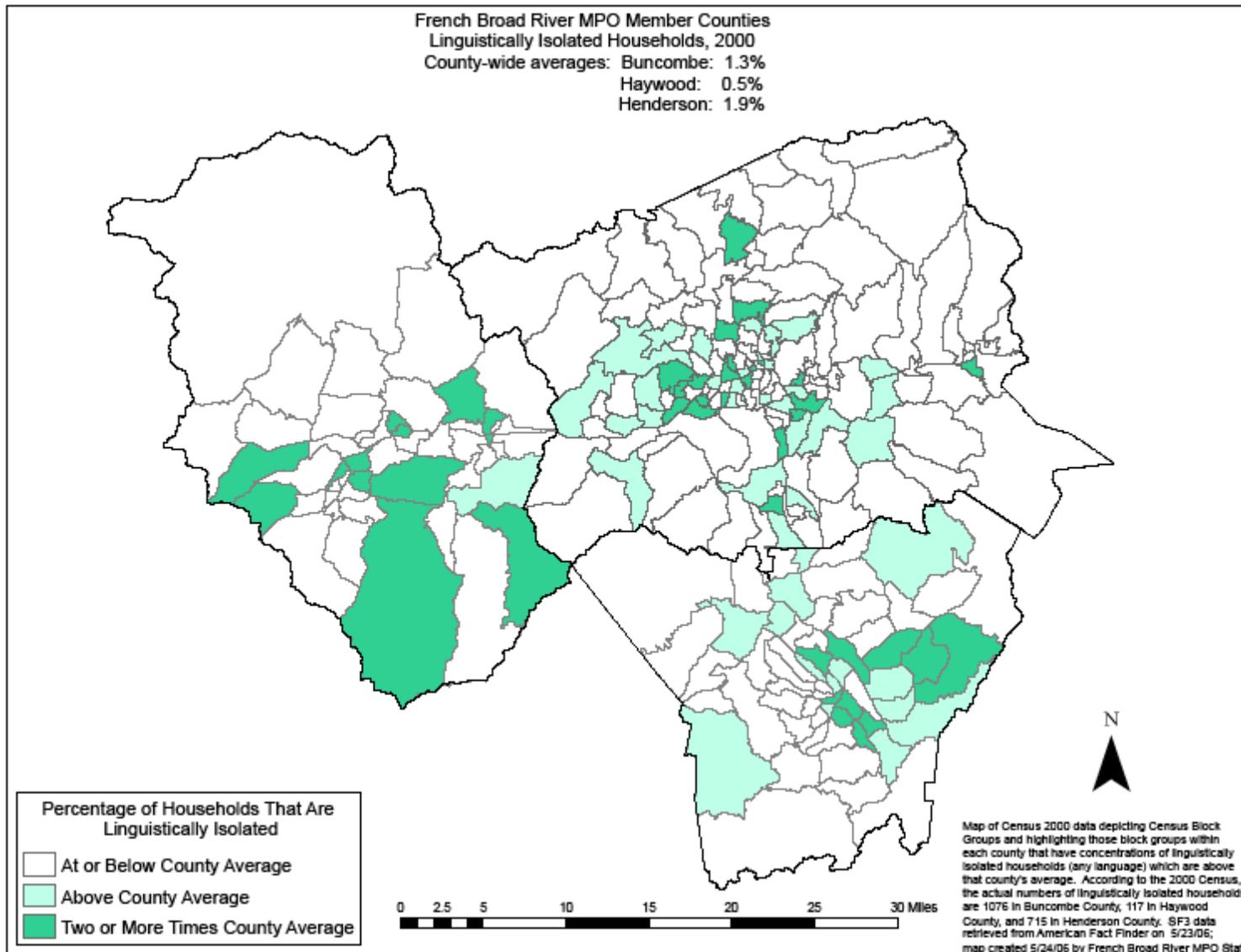


Figure 6 - Linguistically isolated households

IV. Inventory of Public Transportation Service and Community Service

a. Fixed Route Service

Asheville Transit Services

Operated by the City of Asheville through a third-party operator, provides transportation within the City of Asheville and the surrounding area, including downtown, the hospitals, schools, malls, universities and residential areas. Asheville Transit Services (ATS) contracts with Mountain Mobility to provide comparable paratransit transportation to all qualifying individuals who are unable to use the bus due to a disability.

ATS currently operates 24 fixed routes six days a week including evening services. The system is currently configured as a hub-and-spoke system, with service on each route originating and terminating at the downtown transit center.

ATS provided almost 1.5 million trips in the past year. ATS offers fixed-route service within a quarter mile of 90% of the households in areas of higher density, and about 75% of all households in the city. It also offers service between Asheville and the towns of Weaverville and Black Mountain.

The vast majority of ATS customers are those for whom transit is their main if not only means of transportation. About 30% of all passenger trips provided by ATS are transfers made at the downtown transit center. The other 70% of users either terminate their trip at the transit center or are moving along the routes they originally boarded.

ATS has a fleet of 20 buses; 16 buses operate on regular routes; and 4 buses are kept as spares, two of which are generally being maintained during their down time and two of which are available to replace buses that may breakdown in the field. Most of the routes are served once an hour.

Henderson County

Henderson County's local transit services (Apple Country Transit) changed categories from "community" or rural service to "metropolitan" or urban service, so that Henderson County and its contractor Western Carolina Community Action, Inc., operating as Apple Country Transit were technically no longer eligible for funding through NCDOT's Public Transportation Division Community Transportation Section for operation of its fixed route service in the newly designated urbanized area.

Henderson County sponsors three local fixed routes plus demand response service within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the fixed routes throughout the municipalities of Hendersonville and Fletcher. The service operates five days per week Monday through Friday with a fleet of five 25 passenger buses. The fare is 75 cents per one way trip. The service provides an average of 87,000 one way trips. The service has operated with average incremental increases of roughly 5% per year.

Haywood County

Haywood County does not have an urban-style fixed routes service.

b. Community Service

Buncombe County

Mountain Mobility, Buncombe County's Community Transportation System, was established in 1989 and currently provides transportation services to clients of human service agencies, departments of local governments, and general public transportation services for persons residing outside of the City of Asheville. Mountain Mobility is administered and operated through the Transportation Division of Buncombe County Planning and Development, a unit of local government.

The Buncombe County Community Transportation Advisory Board (CTAB) serves as an advisory board to Buncombe County staff and the Board of Commissioners and is

actively involved in the planning and operation of the system. Current service contracts include: Buncombe County Departments of Aging Services, Child Care Services, and Social Services; Asheville Transit Services; Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College; Community Care Partners/Mountain Care; Council on Aging; N.C. Division of Services for the Blind; and N.C. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; as well as other organizations including several nursing homes and adult care facilities.

Mountain Mobility provides transportation services utilizing a fleet of 35 vans and 4 light transit vehicles. About 500 passenger trips are provided throughout Buncombe County on a typical weekday (over 600 trips are usually scheduled on most weekdays). Service is available Monday-Saturday, 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ADA paratransit services are available during Asheville Transit service hours. The system primarily offers demand-response and subscription services. Shopping (grocery and retail) and multipurpose (e.g., banking, personal business) trips are offered during non-peak hours (10 a.m. – 2 p.m.) on specific days via community service routes established for each geographical area of the County.

Mountain Mobility currently operates two deviated fixed (Trailblazer) routes that serve the Black Mountain and Swannanoa communities in east Buncombe County and the Enka-Candler community in west Buncombe County. These routes are funded through the NCDOT Intercity Program, NCDOT Rural Operating Assistance Program, local County match funds, and fare revenues. The Black Mountain route also offers feeder services that connect with an urban/intercity fixed route provided by Asheville Transit Services, which is the only example of this type of service in North Carolina. Mountain Mobility has plans to work on an additional route serving the Town of Woodfin.

Mountain Mobility utilizes RouteMatch software for maintaining its passenger database, as well as reservations, scheduling, dispatching, and billing functions. Mobile radios are used for operations/communications. Mountain Mobility operates from a 4,800 square-foot leased office space with parking facilities located at 2000 Riverside Drive in Asheville, North Carolina.

From 1989-2005, services were provided through third-party contracts with private transportation companies. Buncombe County assumed responsibility for the overall administration and operation of the system in June 2005. The County currently employs over 50 drivers, dispatchers, and other system staff.

Haywood County

Haywood Public Transit is the coordinated public transportation service in Haywood County. It was established in 1990 through the consolidation of several county agencies' client transportation systems. The system is operated and administered by Mountain Projects, Inc.; a community based non-profit organization founded in 1965 as a Community Action Agency. Mountain Projects has a Board of Directors with 18 members representing three distinct groups: representatives of low income target area communities, representatives from other organizations that provide services to the community, and elected officials representing Haywood and Jackson Counties and the towns and municipalities in both counties.

Haywood Public Transit provides transportation for human service agencies, the elderly, people with disabilities, and the general public of Haywood County. It offers deviated fixed route, paratransit service, and a limited demand response service between 6:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except holidays. Requests for service must be made at least one business day in advance. Limited demand response service within the Haywood County area is available between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. with at least two hours notice. Limited service is available to Asheville and Sylva.

Haywood Public Transit has 17 vehicles, and forty-one percent of the fleet is dedicated to the deviated fixed routes, and ten vehicles - fifty-eight percent of the fleet – is dedicated to demand response service. The fleet consists of:

- One 22' LTV with lift and two wheelchair stations
- Two 25' LTV with lift and two wheelchair stations each
- One alternative bus for Head Start students with one wheelchair station

- Eight lift vans, each with two wheelchair stations
- Three 12-passenger conversion vans without lifts
- One 12-passenger standard van
- One 7-passenger mini van

Henderson County

The service operates five days per week Monday through Friday with two demand response transit vans. The fare is \$1.5 cents per one way trip. The service provides approximately 1,200 demand response trips.

c. Adjunct services

The City of Asheville, through its partially state-funded transportation demand management program, offers an emergency ride home program for people who live or work in Buncombe County.

V. General Program Information

FTA Sections 5316, and 5317 Programs require that projects be derived from a locally-developed CPT-HSTP. This chapter discusses the specific goals, who can apply, examples of eligible projects, potential funding, and the Designated Recipient (DR) for the three programs.

For each program, FTA will publish the annual apportionment in the Federal Register following the enactment of the annual DOT appropriations act. Funds are available during the FY of apportionment plus two additional years. For example, funds apportioned in FY 2006 are available until the end of FY 2008 (September 30, 2008).

FTA will add any unobligated funds remaining at the end of the period of availability to the next year's program apportionment and will reapportion the funds among all the states.

a. Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program (5316)

Goal

The goal of the 5316 Program is to improve access to transportation services to employment and employment-related activities for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals and to transport residents of urbanized areas and non-urbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities. Toward this goal, the FTA provides financial assistance for transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the transportation needs of eligible low-income individuals, and of reverse commuters regardless of income. The program requires coordination of federally-assisted programs and services in order to make the most efficient use of federal resources.

Examples of Projects

Funds from the 5316 program are available for capital, planning, and operating expenses that support the development and maintenance of transportation services designed to transport low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment and to support reverse commute projects.

Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to capital, planning, and operating assistance to support activities such as:

- Late-night and weekend service
- Guaranteed ride home service
- Shuttle service
- Expanding fixed-route public transit routes
- Demand-responsive van service
- Ridesharing and carpooling activities
- Transit-related aspects of bicycling (such as adding bicycle racks to vehicles to support individuals who bicycle a portion of their commute or providing bicycle storage at transit stations)
- Local car loan programs that assist individuals in purchasing and maintaining vehicles for shared rides
- Promotion, through marketing efforts, of the:
 - Use of transit by workers with non-traditional work schedules
 - Use of transit voucher programs by appropriate agencies for welfare recipients and other low-income individuals
 - Development of employer-provided transportation such as shuttles, ridesharing, carpooling
 - Use of transit pass programs and benefits under Section 132 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986
- Supporting the administration and expenses related to voucher programs
- Acquiring GIS tools
- Implementing ITS, including customer trip information technology

- Integrating automated regional public transit and human service transportation information, scheduling, and dispatch functions
- Deploying vehicle position-monitoring systems
- Subsidizing the costs associated with adding reverse commute bus, train, carpool van routes or service from urbanized areas and nonurbanized areas to suburban work places
- Subsidizing the purchase or lease by a non-profit organization or public agency of a van or bus dedicated to shuttling employees from their residences to a suburban workplace
- Facilitating the provision of public transportation services to suburban employment opportunities
- Supporting new mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation. Mobility management activities may include:
 - Promotion, enhancement, and facilitation of access to transportation services, including the integration and coordination of services for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and low-income individuals
 - Support for short-term management activities to plan and implement coordinated services
 - Support of state and local coordination policy bodies and councils
 - Operation of transportation brokerages to coordinate providers, funding agencies and customers
 - Provision of coordination services, including employer-oriented Transportation Management Organizations and Human Service Organizations customer-oriented travel navigator systems and neighborhood travel coordination activities such as coordinating individualized travel training and trip planning activities for customers
 - Development and operation of one-stop transportation traveler call centers to coordinate transportation information on all travel modes and to manage eligibility requirements and arrangements for customers among supporting programs; and

- Operational planning for the acquisition of intelligent transportation technologies to help plan and operate coordinated systems inclusive of GIS mapping, GPS, coordinated vehicle scheduling, dispatching and monitoring technologies as well as technologies to track costs and billing in a coordinated system and single smart customer payment systems (acquisition of technology is also eligible as a standalone capital expense)

Funding

SAFETEA-LU authorized \$602 Million (FY 05 to FY 09) for the 5316 Program. FTA will apportion funds as follows:

- Sixty percent of the funds shall be distributed among designated recipients in urbanized areas with a population of 200,000 or more, in the ratio that the number of eligible low-income individuals and welfare recipients in each such urbanized area bears to the number of eligible low-income individuals and welfare recipients in all such urbanized areas
- Twenty percent of the funds shall be distributed among the states, in the ratio that the number of eligible low-income individuals and welfare recipients in urbanized areas with a population of less than 200,000 in each state bear to the number of eligible low-income individuals and welfare recipients in urbanized areas with a population of less than 200,000 in all states
- Twenty percent of the funds shall be distributed among the states, in the ratio that the number of eligible low-income individuals and welfare recipients in other than urbanized areas in each state bears to the number of eligible low-income individuals and welfare recipients in other than urbanized areas in all states

Designated Recipient

City of Asheville is the Designated Recipient for the 5316 Program in the urban area.

Who Can Apply

There are three categories of eligible sub recipients:

- Private non-profit organizations
- State or local governmental authority
- Operators of public transportation services, including private operators of public transportation services

How to Apply

Eligible applicants will have the opportunity to apply for funding through a competitive selection process held by the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization. The projects selected must be derived from a CPT-HSTP.

b. New Freedom Program (5317)

Goal

The goal of the New Freedom Formula Grant Program is to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the workforce and full participation in society. Lack of adequate transportation is a primary barrier to work for individuals with disabilities. Only 60% of persons with disabilities (between the ages of 16 and 64) are employed, according to the 2000 Census. Section 5317 seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the ADA. The ADA includes access to certain transportation services as a right. The New Freedom program is not intended to fund such services.

Examples of Projects

Section 5317 Program funds are available for capital and operating expenses that support new public transportation services beyond those required by the ADA and new public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the ADA designed to assist

individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services.

For the purpose of the New Freedom Program, “new” service is any service or activity that was not operational on August 10, 2005, and did not have an identified funding source as of August 10, 2005, as evidenced by inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) or the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). In other words, if not for the New Freedom Program, these projects would not have consideration for funding and proposed service enhancements would not be available for individuals with disabilities.

New Public Transportation Services Beyond the ADA

The following activities are examples of eligible projects meeting the definition of new public transportation.

- Enhancing paratransit beyond minimum requirements of the ADA. ADA complementary paratransit services can be eligible under New Freedom in several ways as long as the services provided meet the definition of “new:”
 - Expansion of paratransit service parameters beyond the three-fourths mile required by the ADA
 - Expansion of current hours of operation for ADA paratransit services that are beyond those provided on the fixed-route services
 - Incremental cost of providing same-day service
 - Incremental cost of making door-to-door service available to all eligible ADA paratransit riders, but not as a reasonable modification for individual riders in an otherwise curb-to-curb system
 - Enhancement of the level of service by providing escorts or assisting riders through the door of their destination
 - Acquisition of vehicles and equipment designed to accommodate mobility aids that exceed the dimensions and weight ratings established for common

- wheelchairs under the ADA and labor costs of aides to help drivers assist passengers with over-sized wheelchairs
- Installation of additional securement locations in public buses beyond what is required by the ADA
- New “feeder” service (transit service that provides access) to commuter rail, commuter bus, intercity rail, and intercity bus stations, for which complementary paratransit service is not required under the ADA
- Making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations. This may include:
 - Building an accessible path to a bus stop that is currently inaccessible, including curbcuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals or other accessible features
 - Adding an elevator or ramps, detectable warnings, or other accessibility improvements to a non-key station that are not otherwise required under the ADA
 - Improving signage, or wayfinding technology
 - Implementation of other technology improvements that enhance accessibility for people with disabilities including ITS
- Travel training

New Public Transportation Alternatives Beyond the ADA.

The following activities are examples of projects that are eligible as new public transportation alternatives beyond the ADA under the New Freedom Program:

- Purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ridesharing, and/or vanpooling programs
- Supporting the administration and expenses related to new voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers
- Supporting new volunteer driver and aide programs

- Supporting new mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation. Mobility management activities may include:
 - Promotion, enhancement, and facilitation of access to transportation services, including the integration and coordination of services for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and low-income individuals
 - Support for short-term management activities to plan and implement coordinated services
 - Support of state and local coordination policy bodies and councils
 - Operation of transportation brokerages to coordinate providers, funding agencies and customers
 - Provision of coordination services, including employer-oriented Transportation Management Organizations and Human Service Organizations, customer-oriented travel navigator systems and neighborhood travel coordination activities such as coordinating individualized travel training and trip planning activities for customers
 - Development and operation of one-stop transportation traveler call centers to coordinate transportation information on all travel modes and to manage eligibility requirements and arrangements for customers among supporting programs
 - Operational planning for the acquisition of intelligent transportation technologies to help plan and operate coordinated systems inclusive of GIS mapping, GPS Technology, coordinated vehicle scheduling, dispatching and monitoring technologies as well as technologies to track costs and billing in a coordinated system and single smart customer payment systems

Funding

SAFETEA-LU authorized \$339 Million (FY 05 to FY 09) for the 5317 Program. FTA will apportion funds among the recipients by formula, based on the ratio that the number of

individuals with disabilities in each such area bears to the number of individuals with disabilities in all such areas.

FTA will apportion funds as follows:

- Sixty percent among designated recipients in large urbanized areas
- Twenty percent to the states for small urbanized areas
- Twenty percent to the states for rural and small urban areas under 50,000 in population

Designated Recipient

City of Asheville is the Designated Recipient for the 5317 Program in the urban area.

Who Can Apply

There are three eligible subrecipients:

- Private non-profit organizations
- State or local governmental authority
- Operators of public transportation services including private operators of public transportation services

How to Apply

Eligible applicants will have the opportunity to apply for funding through a competitive selection process held by the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization. The projects selected must be derived from a CPT-HSTP.

VI. Needs Assessment

A facilitated workshop method was used to identify perceived needs, gaps, and barriers in the existing systems. A workshop was held in each of the three counties in the MPO. The workshops involved participants working in teams to identify the needs, gaps, and barriers and writing them on large Post-it[®] notes. Then the identified issues were presented to the group and posted. Duplicate input was accepted, and indeed, encouraged. As each issue was posted, an opportunity was provided to ask questions or receive clarification on the individual posting. Participants who had difficulties using this method were paired with team members who could assist them. The raw data from the workshops is in Appendix A.

It is important to note that some of the perceived needs, gaps, or barriers that were identified may not be consistent across the entire MPO area. Some other issues identified may have workable solutions in place, and their identification may more correctly reflect a lack of knowledge about services available through public and community transportation systems or privately owned transportation companies.

For example, there were several private operators present who stated that their companies offer a wide range of services, including out-of-county, medical, social, and even "green" transit. Another example is that in Buncombe County Mountain Mobility does offer paratransit for riders within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of an Asheville Transit evening service route. Again, this reinforces the identified need for better communication between existing transportation providers and potential passengers. Part of the workshop agenda did include an information exchange in regard to the perceived needs, gaps, or barriers and possible solutions already in existence.

The following is a summary of needs, gaps, and barriers identified through workshops and public comment.

- **Infrastructure Issues**
 - Difficulties getting to and from transit stops, waiting, and getting on and off transit vehicles, including shelters, sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian crossing signals, and other walkability issues like notifying people of construction detours in the pedestrian way to the stops
 - Bus stop placement, including locations of stops in relation to destinations, and distance between stops
 - In order to facilitate faster demand-response service, base one Haywood Transit van in each city in Haywood County
 - Park and Ride locations and promotion for carpoolers and for transit users
 - Passenger rail from Haywood County into Asheville
- **Information and Communication Issues**
 - Information and coordination services, including communication of available services and service eligibility
 - Travel training
 - Information about schedules, stops, and transit vehicle location for all, including passengers with no or limited vision
 - Better communication with blind and low vision passengers
 - Combined or regional dispatch services
 - Notification to caregivers when a passenger will be late
 - Coordination among agencies and providers
- **Other than Transit-based Services**
 - Subsidized taxi services for low-income, elderly and disabled people to fill gaps in existing service
 - Assist volunteer transportation systems with vehicle or fuel funding
 - Direct door-to-door service for when Mountain Mobility is too difficult for frail or sick passengers
 - Low-cost rental vans available to agencies
 - Subsidize purchase of agency-owned vehicles for transporting clients
 - Coordination among agencies and providers

▪ **Fixed Route & Demand Response Service Issues**

- Extended service hours for both fixed route and demand response services, including service on weekends and holidays
- More frequent service
- Make paratransit available during all the hours that fixed routes run
- Expand allowed trip purposes for elderly and disabled users, including non-medical trips, daily trips to therapy, trips to social, cultural, educational, or recreational activities, shopping trips
- Immediate transportation available for illness not requiring an ambulance
- More community routes, including South Asheville and Buncombe County
- More assistance on transportation vehicles and between transportation vehicle and home, and both door-to-door and through-the-door service
- Same day scheduling of demand-response trips
- Additional rural routes; better service in remote areas
- Extend Edneyville route in Henderson County
- Requests for paratransit availability when people with disabilities feel unsafe on fixed route service
- Provide fixed route service in Waynesville
- Provide service between counties
- Ability to transfer at points other than the transit center (Asheville Transit)
- Interim services while eligibility is being determined or for short term crisis or temporary needs
- Provide scheduled service in Haywood County
- Too much time spent waiting for transportation, time on board, and transfer time
- Demand-response feeder route service
- Transportation to rural areas
- Ability to transport a person's wheelchair when he or she is released from the hospital and transported by ambulance
- Transportation for children with special needs to child care

- Regular trips by handicapped accessible vehicles from Haywood County to the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Buncombe County
- Door-to-door service between counties
- Vans for transporting elderly and handicapped
- Ability to schedule several appointments in a day
- Transportation from door to bus stop in rural areas
- **Services primarily for workers**
 - Inter-county travel, between Henderson and Buncombe counties, between Haywood and Buncombe counties, and between Haywood and Cherokee counties. The predominant directions of travel were into Buncombe County and into Cherokee County, but there was also a request for service to accommodate the seasonal workers coming into Haywood County from Buncombe County during the summer
 - Mismatch between transit arrival and departure times and employer's schedules
 - Good emergency plan or program if someone is left stranded
 - Feeder routes for employment/manufacturing concentrations
 - Expand reach of transportation demand management program
 - Extended service hours, including early morning
 - After hours service options for employees required to work beyond normal hours
 - Development patterns and relocation of jobs and housing outside of existing service areas
 - Express service between cities and between counties
 - Interim transportation for new employees
- **Cost of Service Issues**
 - Fare subsidy to passengers
 - Provide user-side subsidies that work for taxis, demand-response, and fixed route transportation
 - High cost to agencies
 - Fuel cost subsidies

- **Other Issues**
 - **General**
 - Get buy-in from citizens
 - Use of existing vehicles during their off-hours, e.g., school buses
 - Lower age limit to qualify for all elder programs and discounted passes from age 65 to age 60
 - Establish a dedicated funding source
 - Towns growing without extension of service
 - **Ecological Issues**
 - Air quality effects of using petroleum-based fuels
 - No incentive to share the ride
 - Smaller, more fuel-efficient vehicles for rural routes
 - **Compliments**
 - Apple Country is a great service – keep it funded
 - Most Asheville Transit drivers are very cordial

VII. Prioritization of Needs

Needs were prioritized using a dot vote scheme in which each workshop attendee was given five dots with which to express what issues were most important to them. One attendee referred to this as “dotmocracy.” Attendees could allocate the dots as they chose – all to one issue, one per issue, or somewhere in between. The listing in the section above is arranged by expressed priority within each category. Since only the issues identified at a specific workshop were available for voting at that workshop, not all identified issues were considered by all voters, and since each voter could only choose up to five issues as “most important,” there were many ties within categories.

The list below identifies the ten issues that were identified by participants as most important.

1. Extend service hours to include early mornings, nights, weekends and holidays.
2. Information about available services and eligibility
3. Improve the infrastructure around and pathways to and from bus stops, including pedestrian street crossing facilities
4. Travel between counties
5. (tie) Travel training and coordination
 - (tie) Make paratransit available during all the times fixed route service is available
 - (tie) Inability to afford fares
8. Bus stop placement, including location of stops in relation to destinations, and distance between stops
9. (tie) Immediate transportation for illness that does not require an ambulance
 - (tie) Frequency of service

- (tie) Expand allowed trip purposes for disabled and elderly users, including non-medical trips, daily trips to therapy, trips to social, cultural, or educational activities, and shopping trips.

VIII. Needs assessment in the long range horizon

Transportation in the French Broad River Metropolitan Area has been regulated and planned in consonance with two comprehensive plans: the Long Range Transportation Plan, developed by the French Broad River MPO in 2005, and the Comprehensive Transportation Plan developed by NC DOT in 2007. These two plans reinforce the needs, gaps and barriers identified above and have provisions about low income, elderly and disabled population. In addition, the Buncombe County Aging Plan has fed the CPT-HSTP mainly in issues related to elderly population.

a. Long Range Transportation Plan

The goals set for the Transportation 2030 Plan LRTP includes considerations toward low-income, elderly and disabled as shown below:

- Increase Safety for all modes of transportation
- Ensure that the transportation plan benefits, and is equitable towards, elderly, disabled, low-income, and minority populations
- Preserve or improve environmental and community conditions
- Implement policies that improve system quality and capacity
- Improve public involvement in MPO processes
- Develop a regional travel demand model for current and future planning
- Develop strategies to mitigate congestion
- Create a multi-modal transportation improvement program and set of priorities that is fiscally constrained

Primary Policy Objectives

The Long Range Planning Process is an opportunity to assess the best available transportation data for our region, and to identify policy direction for local transportation decision-making. The plan itself will not be able reverse the course of longstanding

political, societal and behavioral forces that shape the transportation system and the urban environment. This plan does, however, attempt to guide shifts in policy direction that will result in a more sustainable and effective transportation system for the long-term. The major policy issues and recommendations for 2005-2030 are detailed below.

Address Funding Gaps for Public Transportation

Travel demand modeling analysis shows that our highways and arterial streets will become increasingly congested over the next 25 years. The modeling analysis also shows that investments in public transportation can have an impact on reducing congestion in certain parts of the region. The potential for increases in the use of public transportation and carpooling, in comparison with levels of today, are encouraging.

Based on the scale of analysis, the benefits of public transportation use seem small in comparison with overall levels of vehicle travel. While the model is not able to project that public transportation investments will achieve significant region-wide reductions in vehicle miles traveled at this time, the analysis presents a number of opportunities for significant benefits along corridors in the more urbanized areas. These corridors and sub-areas should be studied and considered for increased levels of investment in public transportation service. One major issue facing these corridors is the fact that buses must use the same roadways as vehicles, and so must face the same congestion. Therefore, through, ongoing planning the MPO should look for ways to improve the movement of transit vehicles through these corridors through methods such as traffic signal priority for buses or dedicated bus lanes.

In order for transit to be a competitive choice as a mode of travel, investments in public transportation service should be increased. Currently, our public transportation providers are facing potential **shortfalls in operating funds** because of the federal rules that now classify our area among the larger urban areas in the country. This rule treats the Asheville urbanized area the same as urban areas such as New York City and Atlanta. Not being able to use federal funds for operations has the potential to

threaten the good progress that has been made in building effective urban public transportation systems in Asheville and Hendersonville. The French Broad River MPO should work with State and Federal Transportation Partners to address this gap.

Federal and State formulas that allocate transportation funds play a major role in determining the level of public transportation service that local governments are able to offer. The long-term fiscal future for public transportation contains many unknowns. In addition, the dynamics of service areas and local needs are always changing. And so, by its nature, planning for public transportation often focuses on short- and mid-range objectives for improvements. This creates a difficulty in meeting the requirements of the long-range planning process to analyze highway planning and transit planning on equal footing.

This is especially true in an urban area of our size, because the nature of our public transportation improvements will not be in the form of major subway lines or light rail lines within the time-frame of the LRTP plan. Most of the needed funding for public transportation is in the area of expanding operations. This is the one type of funding that is the most difficult to predict, and at the present time, seems the most in jeopardy.

In this plan it is not possible to identify specific funding sources that will address the need for increased operating funds for public transportation service. This plan does outline some of the primary strategies for public transportation service, as listed below.

Likewise, community transportation systems in Buncombe and Haywood Counties currently do not receive any federal operating funds to provide general public transportation services, and receive only limited state funds to provide public transportation services throughout each county. In an effort to promote the provision of safe, affordable and reliable transportation choices statewide to those who have travel options and to those whose options are limited, the state is encouraging each community transit system in the state to begin efforts to form regional transit organizations. A regional system must be comprised of two or more contiguous counties. The state's goals of the regionalization initiative include:

- Providing rider benefits such as better and increased services that cross county lines;
- More effective mechanism to address regional problems such as traffic congestion and air quality;
- Greater opportunities for creation of local dedicated funding sources for transit;
- Capital, operating, and administrative economies;
- Development of specialized staff, i.e. training, Drug and Alcohol testing compliance, DBE, procurement, etc.; and
- Improved effectiveness of state public transportation staff as a result of a smaller number of transit systems across the state.

To help promote regionalization, the state is offering regional systems the opportunity to apply for federal operating funds to offset a portion of the cost of providing rural general public transportation services. Other incentives are under consideration as well, such as priority consideration for facilities and advanced technologies.

The state believes that regional approaches can result in better planning and coordination for the service area based upon travel patterns rather than jurisdictional boundaries. Because there are two urban transit systems and two community transportation systems within the French Broad River MPO, the MPO should participate in local studies to determine the feasibility of regionalizing community transportation services as a means of increasing funding opportunities available to local transit systems and to promote the expansion of public transportation as a mobility option.

MPO fixed objectives to improve the public transportation service in the metropolitan area are as follows:

- Increase service frequency of fixed-route services
- Expand service hours of fixed-route services
- Invest in Park and Ride facilities at strategic locations
- Expand express and inter-city services to the most promising markets

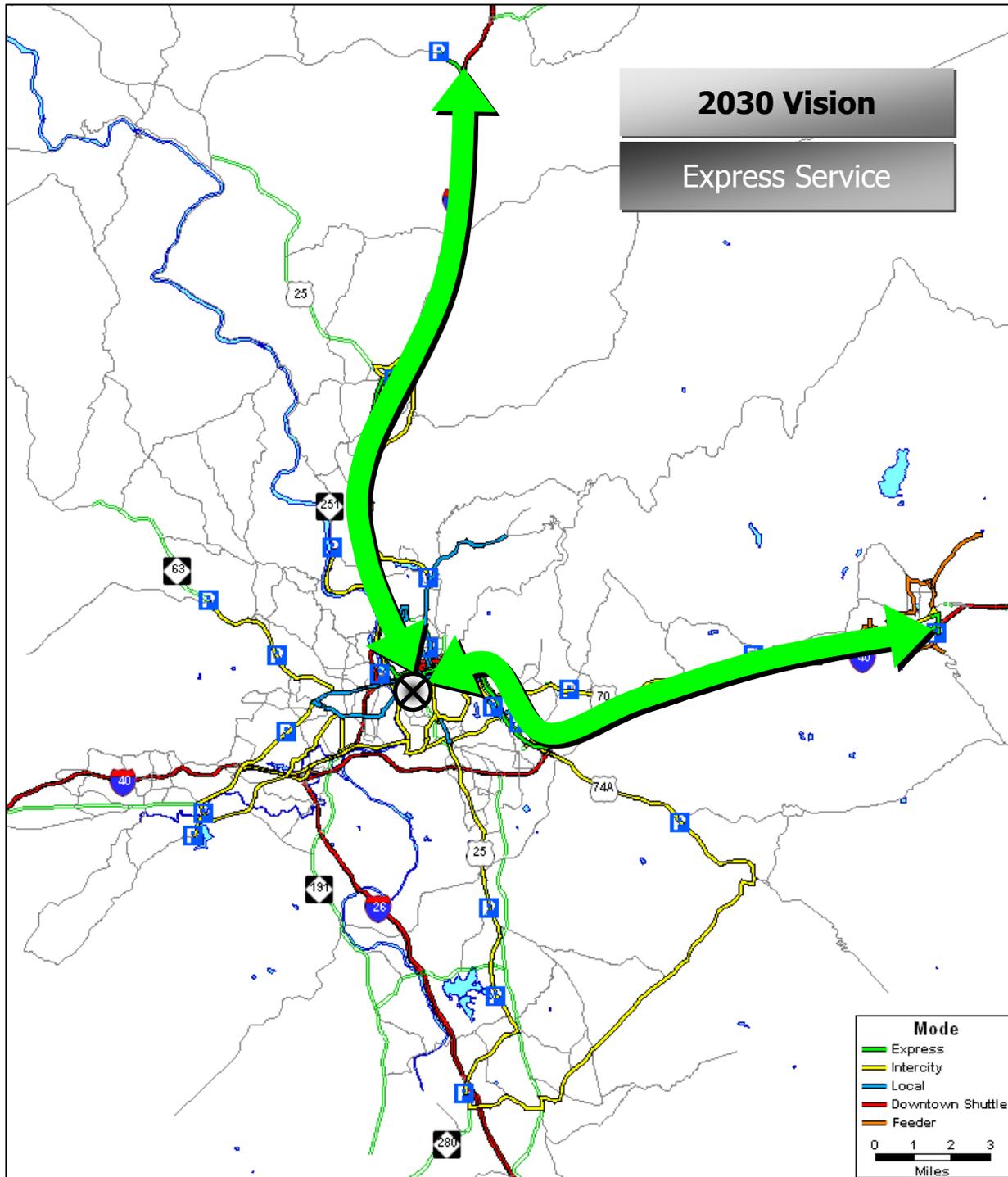
- Expand local and neighborhood routes in areas with sufficient density
- Study specific corridors for operational improvements such as traffic signal priority for buses or explore dedicated bus lanes or busways

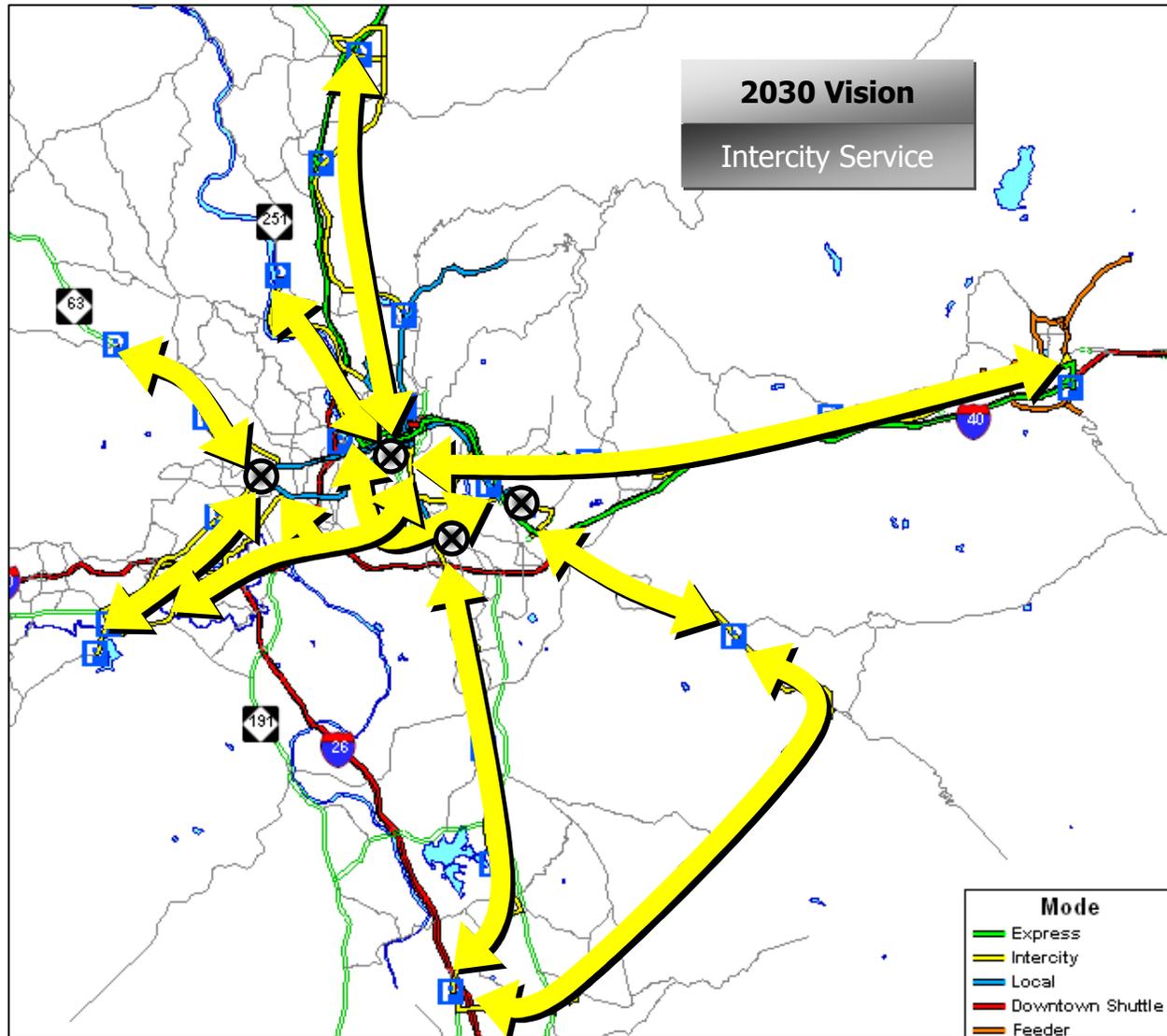
Testing of “Vision” Transit Network

As part of the LRTP update, the City of Asheville identified an expanded and improved transit system for analysis. The network was integrated into the updated Asheville Area travel demand model and run simultaneously with the highway analysis. As part of the integration, the proposed network was modified to meet the geographic and structural constraints of the existing model. The resulting “vision” network included the following:

- Four transfer centers: Downtown, East, West and South. The downtown and east centers are at their existing locations: Aston St. & Coxe Ave.; and the WalMart SuperCenter off of Swannanoa River Rd. The West center would be at the intersection of Haywood Rd. and Patton Ave. and the South center would be at the Amtrak Station, on Thompson St just east of Biltmore Ave.
- Express Bus service from the downtown to Mars Hill, via Weaverville and to Black Mountain. Two intercity services are already in service, connecting the Asheville downtown transit center with Weaverville and Black Mountain.
- Hourly intercity bus service: Twelve routes connecting either the downtown or transit center to neighboring communities, including: Weaverville; Black Mountain; Airport; Leicester; Fairview & Fletcher; Woodfin; and Enka. This basic service also includes two river routes serving the proposed Wilma Dykeman Riverway, a UNCA – AB Tech intercampus shuttle, and an AB Tech intercampus shuttle.
- Hi-Frequency local service: These six routes would operate up to eight times an hour, originating at the downtown transit center and provide backbone service, primarily between transit centers and along major corridors: to West via Patton Ave.; to West via Haywood Rd.; to East via Tunnel Rd; to South via Biltmore Ave; to UNCA; and to Beaverdam Rd via Merrimon Ave.

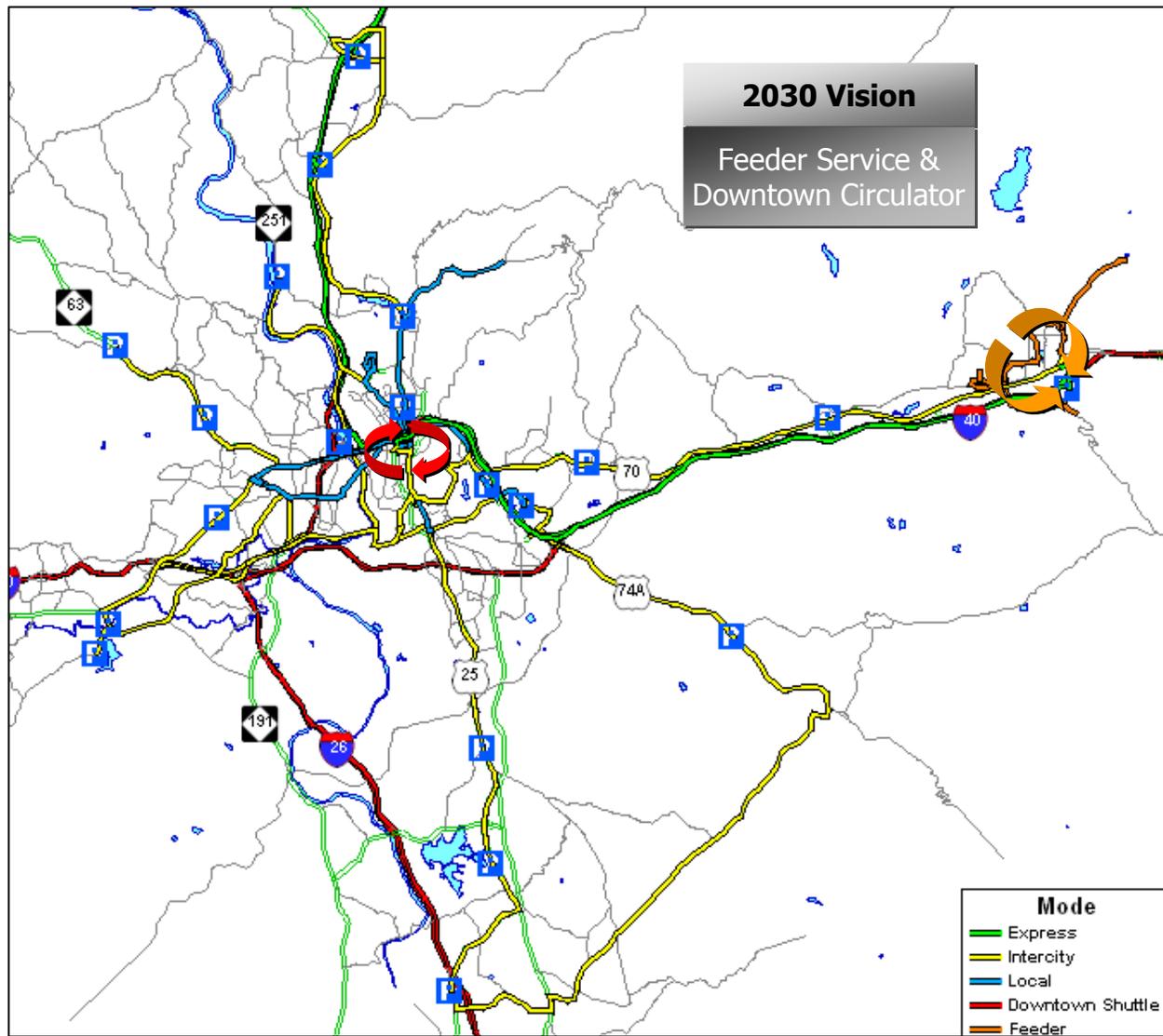
- Downtown circulator: this free service would operate eight times an hour and circulate only through the downtown.
- Feeder route: The existing Black Mountain feeder route was included in the network.





Overall, the “vision” system covers 354 route-miles. During the peak hour, the system provides 26.7 revenue-hours and 671 revenue-miles of service. Approximately 35 buses would be required to operate during the peak hour to provide this coverage.

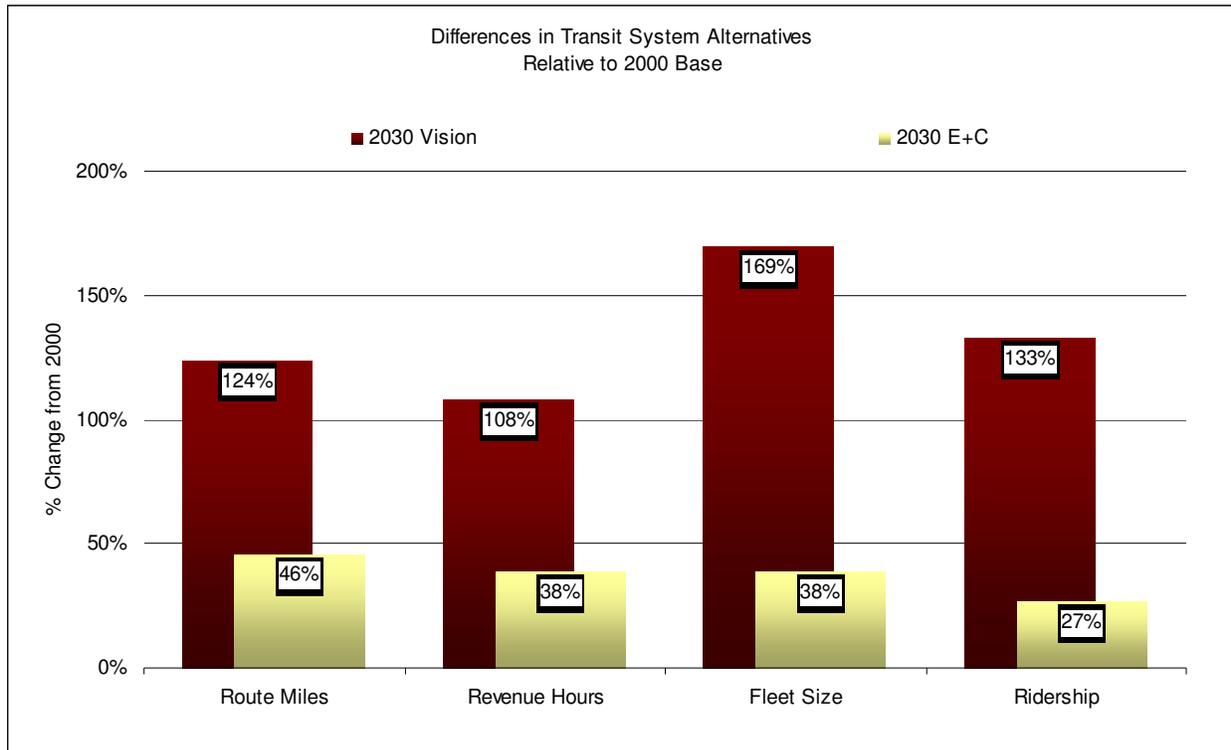
In addition to the expansion of the route coverage and service hours, the future year transit network incorporates 21 park and ride stations throughout the region. These were sited based on expected need and location of existing compatible land use. Note that proposed connections to Hendersonville and Waynesville were not modeled because they are outside the current model area.



Analysis

The results of the analysis indicate this network is a significant improvement over the existing service. Estimated ridership would increase by 130 percent between 2000 and 2030. This is 40 percent higher than the overall growth in daily trips in the region, which are expected to increase 65 percent over the same period. (This is the equivalent of a 2.8 percent average annual growth rate for transit trips, compared with 1.7 percent for all trips). Ridership on the “do nothing” scenario, on the other hand, would not quite keep pace with background growth – an expected outcome as nearly all of the region’s

growth is expected to occur outside areas currently served by transit. The introduction of convenient, prolific park and ride is expected to have a significant affect on usage patterns: as many as 75 percent of all trips will access the bus via car.



Trends and Areas for Further Study

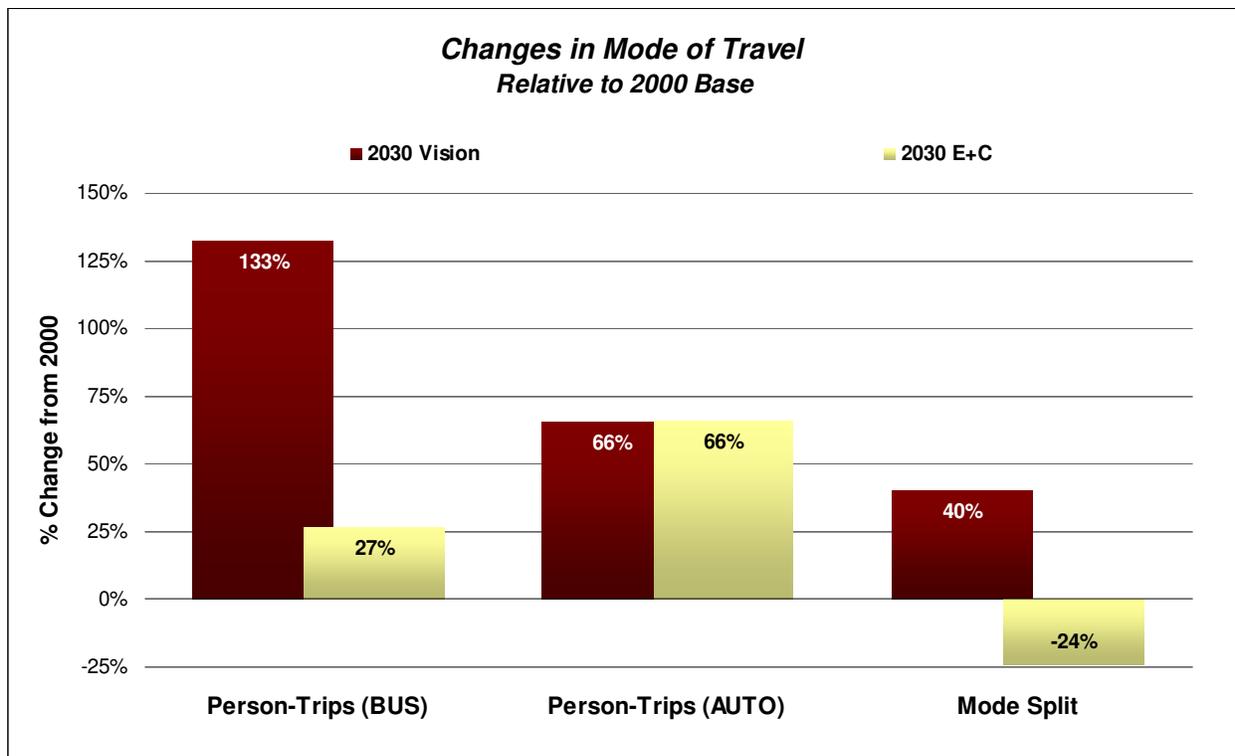
While the model is not been intended for fine-grained analysis, several general trends were identified which should be useful in directing future transit planning efforts.

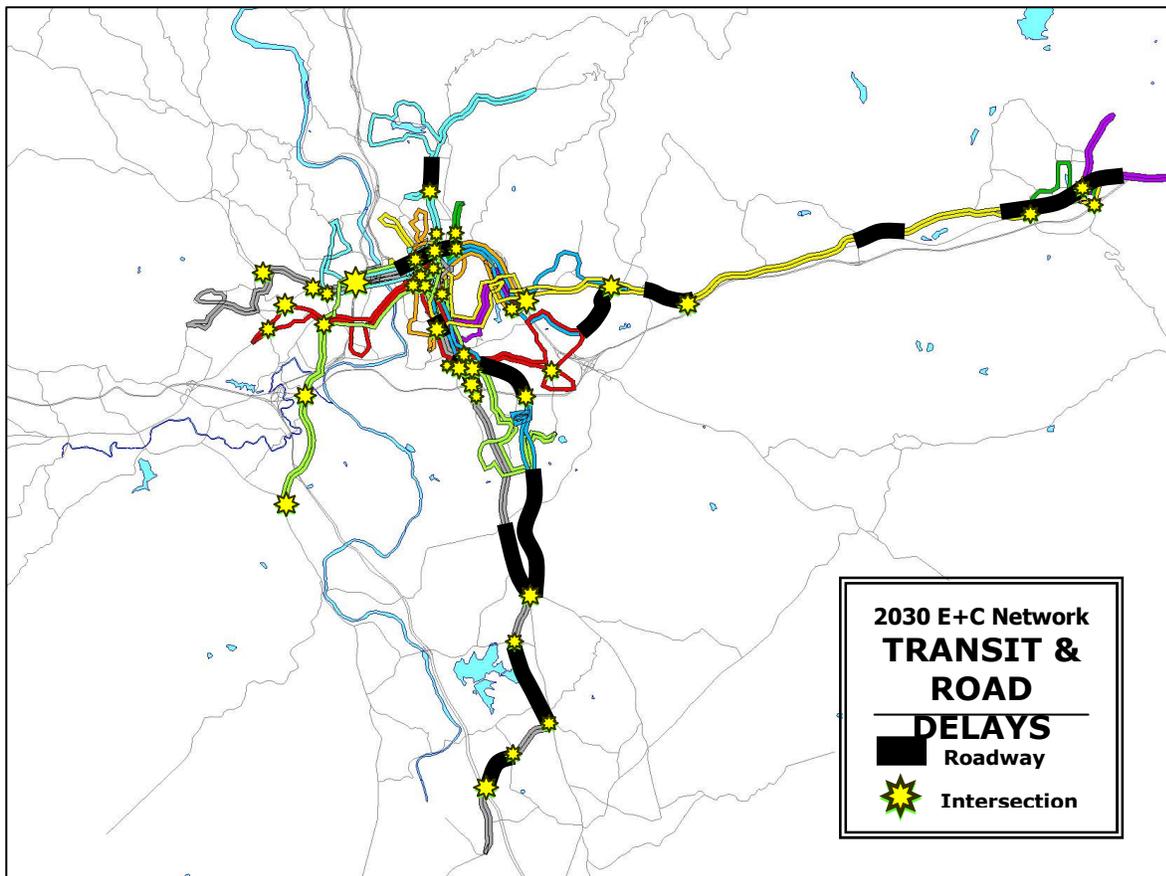
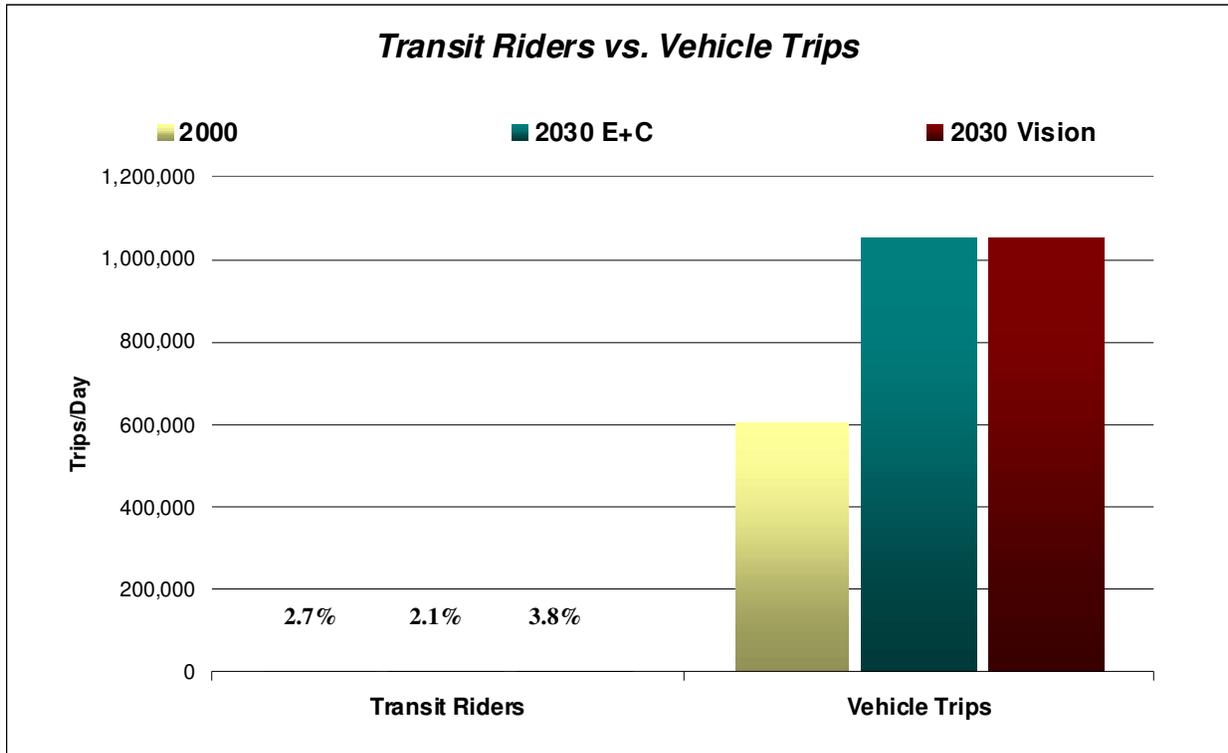
- Overall demand for transit service west along Smokey Park Highway is low. This seems to be, in part, due to the low frequency of service coupled with the relatively low levels of roadway congestion anticipated in the future year.
- Although the model does not indicate much demand for services between UNC-A and AB Tech and between the AB Tech campuses, this is normal in a travel demand model. Planning for these services should be driven by surveys of students and policy decisions of the respective institutions.

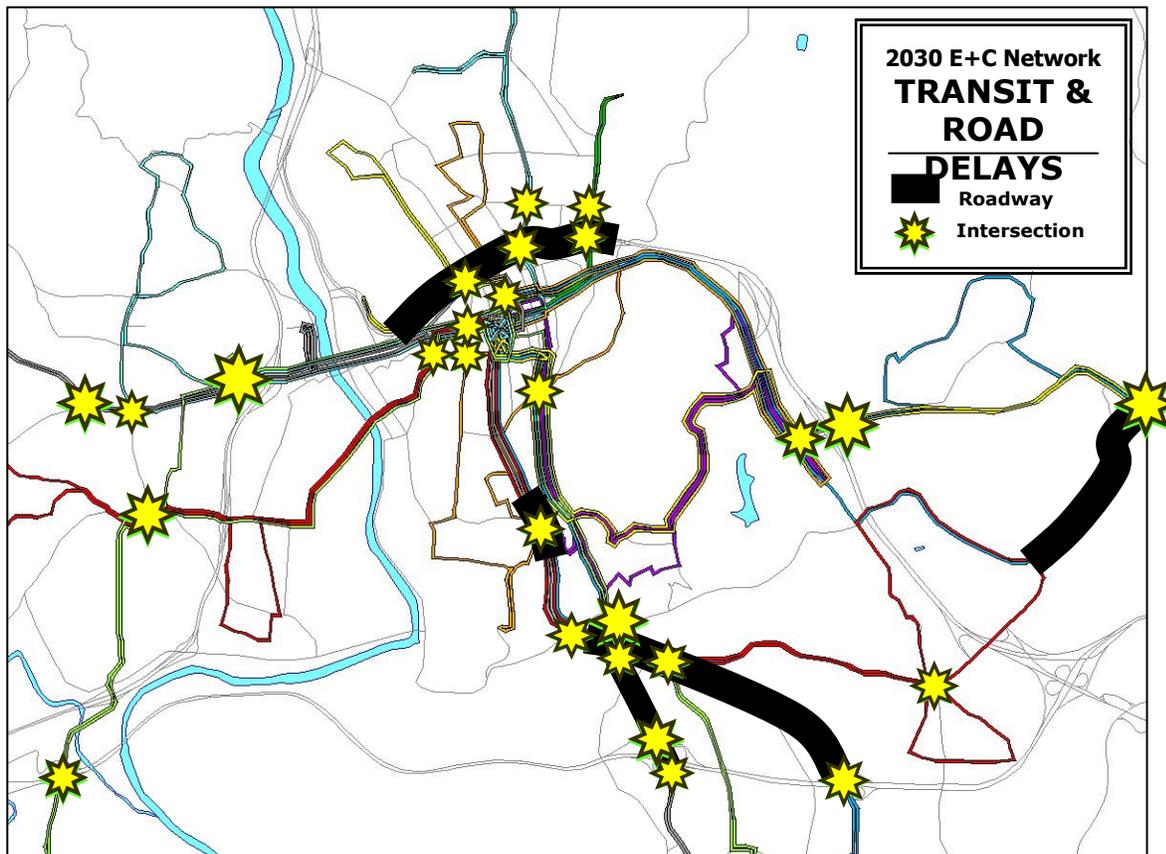
- **Tourism generated trips** are not captured well in a travel demand model. As such, routes for which a high percentage of the riders can be expected to be tourists have lower than expected riderships in the model. These include both the Riverway routes and the downtown circulator. Anticipated ridership can be better estimated with fine-grained adjustments to the model or off-model studies.
- Just as with tourist trips, the model is limited in its ability to capture the effects of **land use planning and urban design**. In the suburban and rural areas, the zones are often quite large, resulting in long access times to the road network. While this has little impact in trips by car, it makes a big impact on trips by transit. By working to provide denser nodes of transit-friendly development, ridership levels can be increased substantially beyond those predicted.
- I-40 east of I-240 is predicted to be congested in the future year. As travel times along US 70 are comparable to those along the interstate, many trips between Black Mountain and Downtown elect to take the Black Mountain local rather than the express bus. This points to a need for careful coordination when planning these services. The express bus service ridership might also be increased with the addition of a stop in Swannanoa, for example.
- Across the region, bus travel times were calculated using congested roadway travel times. Many roadways across the region, including I-40, are expected to experience moderate to severe congestion in the coming years. By taking measures to improve bus travel times over typical traffic, ridership can be noticeably increased beyond the model predictions. Such steps can include technological improvements, such as signal priority for buses and other ITS measures. They can also include physical improvements such as bus-only or High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes along highly congested corridors.
- The usefulness of the model as a tool for transit planning is currently limited by the lack of local data and surveys to calibrate against. Such studies would allow for the refinement of the transit model and introduce the ability for more detailed studies with increased ability for scenario testing.
- The two most critical corridors for focused planning are the US 70/I-40 corridor and US 25 south. Both show the potential for large transit ridership. These are subject, of

course, to the caveats discussed above, such as the need for transit-friendly development, and the preservation of bus travel times.

- Aside from the Black Mountain feeder bus, no such routes were coded into the network. Such routes can dramatically improve the accessibility of an area to regular or express transit service. They can be either fixed-route or demand responsive.







Observations

- Urban design & land use planning will increase potential for riders.
- Park-&-ride impact is significant; expand feeder systems.
- Collect survey data to learn more:
 - Why do/don't people ride?
 - Tourists & UNC-A/AB Tech are special markets
- Critical corridors are US 25 south & I-40/US 70.
- Buses will face the same congestion as autos in major corridors

Operational and Planning Objectives

- Expand service frequency
- Extend service hours;

- Institute both formal and informal Park & Ride facilities
- Institute more flexible service delivery;
- Expand express and inter-city services to the most promising markets
- Expand local and neighborhood routes in areas with sufficient density
- Study specific corridors for traffic operations improvements such as traffic signal priority for buses or explore dedicated bus lanes or busways
- Study specific corridors for service improvements – especially US25 (Hendersonville Road) and US70/I-40 East
- Upgrade and expand amenities at bus stops, including system maps, information systems, benches, shelters, and pedestrian and bicycle accommodations and facilities
- Serve the train station when passenger rail operations begin in Asheville

Policy Objectives

- Increase funding from state and federal sources
- Address deficiency in transit operating funds
- Provide services to the greatest possible number of households within the service area, with emphasis on providing service to those not possessing automobiles, blind and other partially impaired people, the elderly, and others who are transit dependent.
- Use transit service provision to reinforce growth policies and support smart growth development
- Expand access to outlying recreational facilities in the Asheville area
- Involve other local transportation resources in expanding access to transportation services
- Support Asheville's Travel Demand Management Program
- Continue to upgrade and expand pedestrian and bicycle facilities related to the use of the transit system
- Stagger equipment purchases to spread out the financial impact of new buses
- Expand marketing program

b. Comprehensive Transportation Plan

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) identifies new services and routes and includes the fundamentals of the LRTP. These include new regional bus service and the development of a comprehensive park and ride system to support these routes and provide improved access for those living in low density or rural portions of the county not well-served by fixed-route transit.

In addition to the specific projects identified below, all existing transit routes are considered as “needing improvement.” Such improvements include expansion of service hours, increased service frequency and improved coverage area. In many cases this may involve route realignment or similar changes which are beyond the scope of the CTP. In addition to modifications to the routes, the providers have proposed additional transfer facilities to accommodate revised or expanded bus service.

Buncombe County

- A5 Express bus service between downtown Asheville and Black Mountain

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant development in the coming years. Express bus service would provide a connection between the two growing urban centers with travel times competitive with those of private autos. It is envisioned that the service would operate directly between the two ends, with a possible stop in Swannanoa to better serve riders along the middle of the corridor. Such a service would most likely be branded specially, using high comfort buses. Successful service with high ridership would help to alleviate congestion along this corridor.

- A6 Express bus service between downtown Asheville and Mars Hill

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant development in the coming years. Express bus service would provide a connection between the many nodes along the corridor with travel times competitive

with those of private autos. It is envisioned that the service would have few stops between the two ends, with likely stops being at Elk Mountain Rd and Weaverville. Such a service would most likely be branded specially, using high comfort buses.

Successful service with high ridership would help to alleviate congestion along this corridor.

- A7 Express bus service between downtown Asheville and Waynesville

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant increases in the coming years. Express bus service would provide a connection between the many nodes along the corridor with travel times competitive with those of private autos. It is envisioned that the service would have few stops between the two ends, with a stop in Canton, and possibly Candler, the only such stops. Such a service would most likely be branded specially, using high comfort buses.

Successful service with high ridership would help to alleviate congestion along this corridor. Although not noted below, a possible additional location for a park and ride to be served by this route would be at the proposed interchange of I-40 and Liberty Rd.

- A8 Express bus service along I-26 to Hendersonville and points south

Travel along this corridor is very high and expected to increase in the coming years. Express bus service would provide a connection between the many nodes along the corridor with travel times competitive with those of private autos. It is envisioned that the service would have few stops along the corridor, with likely stops being at US 64 in Hendersonville and Saluda in Polk County. Such a service would most likely be branded specially, using high comfort buses. Successful service with high ridership would help to alleviate congestion along this corridor. (Same as project C1.)

- A9 Local bus service along US 25A (Sweeten Creek Rd) and US 25 (Hendersonville Rd) to Fletcher

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant development in the coming years. Bus service would enhance residents' transportation options and could help to alleviate congestion along the roadway. (Same as project C4.)

- A10 Local bus service along NC 191 to Mills River and Hendersonville

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant development in the coming years. Bus service would enhance residents' transportation options and could help to alleviate congestion along the roadway. (Same as project C5.)

- A11 Local bus service along NC 146 (Long Shoals Rd) and Overlook Rd (SR 3503)

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant development in the coming years. Bus service would enhance residents' transportation options and could help to alleviate congestion along the roadways.

- A12 Local bus service along Mills Gap Rd (SR 3116/SR 1551) to Fletcher

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant development in the coming years. Bus service would enhance residents' transportation options and could help to alleviate congestion along the roadway. (Same as project C6.)

- A13 Local bus service along Leicester Hwy (NC 63) to Leicester

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant development in the coming years. Bus service would enhance residents' transportation options and could help to alleviate congestion along the roadway.

- A14 Local bus service along to Fairview via Charlotte Hwy (US 74A) and Cane Creek Rd, through Fletcher to the Ag Center

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant development in the coming years. Bus service would enhance residents' transportation options and could help to alleviate congestion along the roadway. (Same as project C7.)

- A15 Local bus service along Wilma Dykeman Riverway

As envisioned, this will become a central corridor for commerce, arts and recreation within Asheville and will be a high demand corridor for travel. Bus service will provide enhanced connectivity to the area and will help to minimize and parking and traffic problems.

In addition to new fixed-route bus service, the CTP process identified many potential locations for park and ride lots. Many of these were originally identified as part of the LRTP process and others were identified by staff and members of the public during the CTP development. The following locations are recommended from a systems perspective, but final locations would be subject to agreements with property owners, etc.

- A16 Proposed park and ride lot at Weaver Blvd @ US 19/23
- A17 Proposed park and ride lot at New Stock Rd @ US 19/23
- A18 Proposed park and ride lot in Woodfin
- A19 Proposed park and ride lot in Leicester along NC 63
- A20 Proposed park and ride lot at interchange of I-40 and Smokey Park Hwy (US 19/23)
- A21 Proposed park and ride lot at Biltmore Square Mall (intersection of NC 191 @ NC 112)
- A22 Proposed park and ride lot at Old National Guard Armory (NC 191 @ I-40)
- A23 Proposed park and ride lot at Ag Center, adjacent to bus transfer center
- A24 Proposed park and ride lot at Gerber Village Shopping Center (US 25 @ Gerber Rd)

- A25 Proposed park and ride lot along US 74A (Charlotte Hwy) near intersection with Old Fort
- Rd (SR 2776)
- A26 Proposed park and ride lot in Black Mountain along NC 9, adjacent to I-40 interchange
- A27 Proposed park and ride lot in Swannanoa, near intersection of Patton Cove Rd @ US 70
- A28 Proposed park and ride lot at or near VA Hospital (US 70 @ Riceville Rd (SR 2002))
- A29 Proposed park and ride lot at Wal-Mart shopping center on NC 81 (Swannanoa River Rd)
- A30 Proposed park and ride lot at Asheville Mall on S Tunnel Rd
- A31 Proposed park and ride lot at Merrimon Ave (US 25) @ Beaverdam Rd (SR 2053)

Haywood County

- B1 Express bus service between downtown Asheville and Waynesville

See description above under A7.

In addition to new fixed-route bus service, the CTP process identified many potential locations for park and ride lots. Many of these were originally identified as part of the LRTP process and others were identified by staff and members of the public during the CTP development. The following locations are recommended from a systems perspective, but final locations would be subject to agreements with property owners, etc.

- B2 Proposed park and ride lot at interchange of I-40 and NC 215 in Canton
- B3 Proposed park and ride lot at interchange US 23/74 and US 276 in Waynesville

Henderson County

- C1 Express bus service along I-26 to Hendersonville and points south

Travel along this corridor is very high and expected to increase in the coming years. Express bus service would provide a connection between the many nodes along the corridor with travel times competitive with those of private autos. It is envisioned that the service would have few stops along the corridor, with likely stops being at US 64 in Hendersonville and Saluda in Polk County. Such a service would most likely be branded specially, using high comfort buses. Successful service with high ridership would help to alleviate congestion along this corridor. (Same as project A8.)

- C2 Express bus service along NC 280 to Transylvania County

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant development in the coming years. Express bus service would provide a connection between the communities along the corridor with travel times competitive with those of private autos. It is envisioned that the service would have few stops between the two ends, with the only likely stop in Henderson County being in Mills River. Such a service would most likely be branded specially, using high comfort buses. Successful service with high ridership would help to alleviate congestion along this corridor.

- C3 Express and/or local bus service along US 64 to Etowah and Transylvania County

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant development in the coming years. Bus service would enhance residents' transportation options and could help to alleviate congestion along the roadway. This service could be express service connecting Hendersonville and Brevard with stops in Etowah and Horseshoe, or local service, or a combination of the two. Express service would most likely be branded specially, using high comfort buses.

- C4 Local bus service along US 25A (Sweeten Creek Rd) and US 25 (Hendersonville Rd) to Fletcher

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant development in the coming years. Bus service would enhance residents' transportation options and could help to alleviate congestion along the roadway. (Same as project A9.)

- C5 Local bus service along NC 191 from Hendersonville to Asheville, via Mills River

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant development in the coming years. Bus service would enhance residents' transportation options and could help to alleviate congestion along the roadway. (Same as project A10.)

- C6 Local bus service along Mills Gap Rd (SR 3116/SR 1551) to Fletcher

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant development in the coming years. Bus service would enhance residents' transportation options and could help to alleviate congestion along the roadway. (Same as project A12.)

- C7 Bus route from Asheville to Fairview along 74A, Cane Creek Rd, through Fletcher to Ag Center

Travel along this corridor continues to increase and it is expected to experience significant development in the coming years. Bus service would enhance residents' transportation options and could help to alleviate congestion along the roadway. (Same as project A14.)

- C8 Local bus service along US 64 and Sugarloaf Rd (SR 1734)

The area east of Hendersonville continues to grow and is expected to experience substantial growth in the coming years. Bus service to these areas would enhance residents' transportation options and could help to alleviate congestion along US 64.

- C9 Local bus service along Upward Rd (SR 1783) and Surgarloaf Rd (SR 1734)

The area east of Hendersonville continues to grow and is expected to experience substantial growth in the coming years. Bus service to these areas would enhance residents' transportation options and could help to alleviate congestion along Upward Rd.

In addition to new fixed-route bus service, the CTP process identified many potential locations for park and ride lots. Many of these were originally identified as part of the LRTP process and others were identified by staff and members of the public during the CTP development. The following location is recommended from a systems perspective, but final locations would be subject to agreements with property owners, etc.

- C10 Proposed park and ride lot at I-26 and US 64

c. Buncombe County Aging Plan: Strategic Needs Assessment for Older Adults

Adults age 60+ are the fastest growing segment of North Carolina's population due to decreasing birth rates, in-migration of retirees, the Boomers, and improved life expectancies. The projected growth of the total population of adults age 60+ in North Carolina is expected to grow from 16% in 2005 to 23% by 2030. The changes will be even more dramatic in Buncombe County. The total population in Buncombe County is expected to grow from 217,000 to 285,000, and the number of individuals age 60+ is expected to nearly double. Because of this growth, Buncombe County is one of six counties in North Carolina named in NC Senate Bill 448 (enacted in 2007). This bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Aging and Adult

Services to “assess program and service levels and needs for older adults” in, among others, Buncombe County. The intent of this legislation is to understand how communities can best prepare for the changing aging demographic.

The Buncombe County Aging Plan (2008-2012) is the product of the Livable, Aging-Friendly Community Planning Task Force of the Buncombe County Aging Coordinating Consortium (ACC). Among the ACC's key tasks are the assessment of needs and, subsequently, the development of a plan for coordinated aging services. This specifically has taken the form of a five-year strategic Aging Plan. This timely, comprehensive, and long-range plan is situated within a larger context of planning efforts at the state, federal, and even global levels. This plan was developed over a one-year period from April 2007 through March 2008, and was adopted by the Board of Commissioners on April 8, 2008. It reflects the combined efforts of over 500 individuals, including professionals, aging-services providers, volunteer older adults, and other community members.

The Task Force embraced the North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services planning framework of “Livable, Senior-Friendly Communities” and identified six components that frame its vision for Buncombe County:

- Safety and Security...home and community environments are safe and support self-sufficiency for older adults and caregivers.
- Health and Wellness...the health care system maximizes wellness and health potential and meets the diverse and unique needs of older adults.
- Financial Well-being ...resources, services and opportunities support and enhance the financial well-being of older adults and caregivers.
- Social Engagement...life enrichment opportunities engage older adults with people, places and programs.
- Living Environments...the living environments (built and natural) support and enhance the functioning of older adults.

- Service and Support Coordination...a collaborative network of formal and informal services and supports is coordinated to meet the needs of older adults and caregivers.

Goals and recommendations in the Aging Plan include transportation needs and priorities for older adults in Buncombe. Buncombe County has requested those needs to be included in the MPO's plan in order to identify and increase awareness about older adult transportation needs, as well as leverage funding for transportation providers, agencies, and other entities to begin addressing these needs in the future.

The following is an extract of the specific goals, objectives, and recommendations from the 2008-2012 Buncombe County Aging Plan that are associated with transportation needs of older adults:

- Goal: SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT - Life enrichment opportunities engage older adults with people, places and programs.
 - Objective 1: Engagement - Promote participation and leadership in civic and volunteer roles that draw upon the diverse skills, wisdom, and life experiences of older adults.
 - Priority Recommendation(s):
 1. Expand community transportation to include service for older adults to participate in volunteer and civic opportunities.
- Goal: LIVING ENVIRONMENTS - Living environments (built and natural) support and enhance the functioning of older adults.
 - Objective 2: Transportation - Improve safe travel options for older adults to and from their destinations.
 - Priority Recommendation(s):
 1. Conduct walk-ability audits to identify and remedy pedestrian safety concerns, particularly near bus stops (including lack of or broken

sidewalks, barriers presented by roundabouts, crosswalk areas and the timing of signal changes).

2. Include transportation services for older adults in updated services directory (include cost and personal assistance provided, if any).
3. Develop a system to identify the transportation provider of those older adults who are “dropped off” and “picked up” at appointments and who require assistance in arranging their return transportation.
4. Provide shelters and sitting areas at all bus stops.

Additional Recommendation(s):

5. Select appropriate residential and commercial street lighting and focus it more effectively on walking and driving surfaces to improve pedestrian and driver safety.
6. Consider best practices for road sign placement and size, as well as street numbers, for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.
7. Provide incentives for older adults to participate in driver safety programs and refresher courses, such as providing programs at locations serving older adults and advocating for NC insurance companies to recognize and reward participation in such programs.
8. Encourage Department of Motor Vehicles to adhere to policy for license renewal (license restrictions or physician-certified eye exams where indicated).
9. Explore ride-share and volunteer driver programs as models to implement in Buncombe County.
10. Expand community transportation to include service for social engagement and other non-medical needs of older adults.
11. Lower age limit to 60 for free city of Asheville bus pass.
12. Provide transportation vouchers that allow low-income older adults to afford and utilize taxi services.
13. Provide ongoing training for all transportation providers on the special needs of older and disabled adults.

14. Minimize risk of transfer of viruses or diseases in public transportation.

- Goal: Service and Support Coordination - A collaborative network of formal and informal services and supports is coordinated to meet the needs of older adults and caregivers.
 - Objective 2: Accessibility - Ensure that all services for older adults and caregivers are accessible to those who need them.
 - Priority Recommendation(s):
 1. Expand community transportation to allow greater access to services and resources.

VIII. Major Findings and Recommendations

The needs identification step of this planning process made clear that there are many people and organizations willing and able and eager to be involved in creating a better coordinated public transportation-human service transportation system in the counties of the MPO. It is also clear that many parts of the system are already in place, and that improved coordination and information exchange will fill in many of the other gaps.

The prioritized listing of identified needs, gaps and barriers in section VII includes the top ten items, but by far, the top issue at the workshops was expanding the days, hours and reach of the existing systems as development and employment move beyond the traditional borders of the systems of the MPO. The desire for Sunday service, both for work and for socialization was frequently expressed as a part of the desire for expanded service.

The next most important need to the participants in the workshops as well as to people who commented outside of the workshops was for information about public transportation services. Other needs, gaps or barriers identified by people who were unaware of existing services that filled those needs further reinforced the need for information. Several who took the time to participate in this process made clear that there are gaps in the current systems of communication with people who have low vision.

The path to a truly coordinated system that fits the needs of most residents will be long, and possibly difficult, but it is an important goal. The diversity of the development patterns and the character of the communities included in the MPO area are great. It is recommended that the MPO committees favor projects that fulfill the most often expressed needs, but do consider the needs identified in each county (Appendix A) when considering projects for that area.

Finally, it is recommended that the MPO learn from this planning process, and review the priorities and processes in this plan regularly.

IX. Project Selection Process

Federal legislation requires a competitive project selection process for JARC and New Freedom funds. Project selection for those funds will therefore be through a competitive process application process to the French Broad River MPO or its designee. Final project selections will be made by the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Advisory Committee.

A call for projects will be publically announced and will include application procedures and a deadline for applications. Initial screening of applications may be performed by MPO or other staff, and selection recommendations will be made by the MPO Technical Coordinating Committee or a subcommittee thereof. A sample request for proposals and rating system is at Appendix B. Prior to any call for proposals, changes may be made to the request for proposals or rating system at the discretion of the Transportation Advisory Committee.

In any year, all available grant funding may not be awarded, or an additional call for projects may be made at the discretion of the Transportation Advisory Committee if there are not enough projects, or not enough projects that the Transportation Advisory Committee chooses to fund. Proposals selected for funding will be announced by the French Broad River MPO. Each grant cycle, anyone may request to be notified of project selections by contacting the offices of the French Broad River MPO.

The first year process is envisioned to award available funding from 2006 through 2009, though the MPO committees may decide to consider only a part of that funding for award. The project selection process should continue to occur annually for any or all funds available.

All applications must meet the following:

1. The proposed project must be a nonduplicative service or program.

2. Eligible matching funds must be identified and available.
3. The proposed project must be a new or expanded service or program.
4. The primary focus of the proposed service or program must serve the target populations (i.e., persons with low-income for the JARC funds, or persons with disabilities or elders for the New Freedom funds).
5. The project must benefit the area represented by the French Broad River MPO.

Appendix A: Raw data from workshops

Appendix A: Raw data from workshops

A facilitated workshop method was used to obtain community input regarding the needs, gaps, and barriers in the current transportation systems. A workshop was held in each of the three counties in the MPO. The method used in the workshops involved working in teams to identify the issues and writing them on large Post-it® notes. Then the issues were presented to the group and posted to a wall. Duplicate input was accepted, and indeed, encouraged. As each issue was posted, an opportunity was provided to ask questions or get clarification on the individual posting. Workshop participants were then given five sticky dots to use in identifying what issues were most important to them. Participants who had difficulties using this method were provided with accommodations to allow them to participate. No one voiced difficulties that were not accommodated in the process.

The raw data obtained at each workshop is listed below. It is organized according to workshop location and from the posting that received the most votes to the one that received the least. Within vote categories, there is no particular order of issues.

Issues Identified at Buncombe County Meeting, 4/1/08	Number of Dots
Sidewalks to bus stops	11
Additional bus stops (@240 Sardis Rd)	10
Immediate transportation for illnesses and non-emergency transportation	9
Lack of transportation for special needs persons after 3 p.m.	9
Extended services hours/more frequent intervals	8
Gaps: Transportation for elderly/handicapped to social/culture/religious programs & services, esp. evenings	7
High user areas offer express routes to/from work (Black Mtn., Asheville, S. Asheville)	7
Existing transit vehicles use petroleum which will not improve air quality for elderly and children	6

Expanded service - Sundays late evening recreational activities	5
Non-medical transportation for seniors	5
Way for homebound elderly to get to cultural, education, recreational venues for free or nearly free	5
Extend services at night & weekends so people with disabilities and seniors can attend educational & social functions	4
Feeder lines for employment areas/manufacturing sites	4
Good emergency plan if someone is left stranded	4
Sunday service	4
There is no incentive to share the ride	4
Better information services to identify where routes are going; visual; audio; posted schedule at stops	3
Demand response services same day scheduling of trips	3
Paratransit as an option even when city bus service is available due to safety concerns of persons w/disabilities	3
Provide vouchers that make taxi services affordable to seniors and disabled	3
Service on Sundays as this is a day people may have many opportunities for events/socialization	3
Bus stop shelters	2
Conduct walkability audits to ID & remedy pedestrian & public transit riders safety concerns, especially near bus stops	2
Daily transportation to therapeutic venues, i.e., chemo, radiation, physical therapy	2
Direct door to door service for elderly & disabled for whom Mt. Mobility too difficult to use	2
Existing transit system does not have regional dispatch	2
Frequency of transit service & further into County & other counties	2
Short term crisis transportation for individuals & families	2
Transfer between routes at points other than downtown transit center	2
Use of other public transport vehicles (school bus) during off hours	2
Way to get to medical services from remote areas	2
Demand response services, esp. on feeder routes	1

Expand routes, days & hours to include large employers such as Sonopress (Arvato) - can't get there at right time; Borg Warner (191); Thermo Fisher, Weaverville Hwy	1
Funds for low-income individuals to use transportation	1
More funding for thru the door service for elderly & disabled	1
Mountain Mobility & Asheville Transit operate different hours	1
Paratransit hours vs. bus time	1
Same-day scheduling for Mountain Mobility	1
Subsidized cab program (filling in demand response schedule)	1
Subsidized taxi-van services - to fill gaps in public transit	1
Time commitment for users	1
Transportation available if EE's need to work late	1
Van/bus purchasing &/or sharing between agencies or county-owned vehicle available at low-cost to rent short term	1
Automated system with audible bus schedule	0
Coordination among agencies & providers	0
County to county transit	0
Demand response services same day scheduling of trips	0
Distance between bus stops	0
Eligibility for Medicaid transportation	0
Expanded services - Sundays and late evenings	0
Expanded services to recreational activities-More direct routes home from work to cut down on afternoon ride times	0
Express vans in afternoon - from work to directly home	0
Find a way to decrease wait time as this is a big barrier to wanting to use service	0
Funding assistance for agencies to purchase vans/buses for children, elderly, disabled transport	0
Funding for transportation elderly from Henderson & Asheville (door to door)	0
Gap-Need City bus services to IFB direct;	0
Group housing locating outside service area	0

Help with cost of fuel	0
Interim services thru application process when need is temporary	0
Intimidation	0
Lack of knowledge about resources	0
Lack of resources for several appointments	0
Lack of shelters at most bus stops	0
Lower age limit to 60 (from 65) for discounted bus passes for seniors	0
Most buses come once a hr & if a transfer takes > 1 hour vs. 15-20 min. in car: not freq. svc; fixed routes	0
Mountain Mobility - arrive on time/drop off on time	0
Mountain Mobility - contact caregiver when you are going to be late	0
Mountain Mobility - more routes	0
Mountain Mobility: do not take 3 hrs for a 1/2 hr trip	0
Need city bus services to IFB directly	0
Need paratransit even when city bus accessibility for safety reasons	0
No centralized combined dispatch	0
No Medicaid transport to work	0
Para transit need more direct routes home from work (IFB) to reduce afternoon ride times	0
Public transit hours	0
Recreational transportation	0
Schedules/Maps @ bus stops; large print (BOLD); available at libraries	0
Small vehicles for more route accommodations (fuel efficient) (Rural areas) Rural access	0
South Asheville/Buncombe routes - more availability for elderly & disabled	0
Transportation for children w/special needs to child care	0
Transportation to rural areas	0
Van for transporting elderly & handicapped	0
Walkable streets and cross walks - visible & audible street signs	0
Wheelchair transport for medical release	0



Issues Identified at Haywood County Meeting, 4/3/08	Number of Dots
Travel trainer and coordinator	11
Buy in from citizens	6
Subsidized fares	6
After hour services - past 5:00 pm	5
Door to door assistance to and from vehicles	4
Public transit route for Haywood towns to Asheville	4
Fixed route transit system for Waynesville	3
Vehicle for Haywood-Buncombe commute	3
Commuters to and from Cherokee	2
Door to door rural transportation appropriate to needs	2
Expand Transportation Demand Management Program to entire MPO area	2
Income based ticket packages which can be used to purchase transportation services from various carriers-choice of services that meets their needs	2
Linkage from Haywood into Asheville/Buncombe	2
Volunteers with fleet vehicles for rural areas	2
Affordable non-medical transportation	1
Education of transportation services available	1
Emergency ride home service for transit users	1
Information on availability	1
"Park & Ride" location, signs, promotional money	0
At least one van per City	0
Connecting services from homes to reverse commute - bus after 6 p.m. and weekends	0
Door to bus stop	0
Evening and weekend hours	0
Expand hours	0

Expanded hours for bus/system mass transit	0
Extended hours	0
Help with cost for volunteer transportation	0
More assistance on the vans or taxis	0
More frequent trips = more buses	0
Passenger rail service Haywood to Asheville	0
Regular van or bus runs from Haywood to VA - Handicapped accessible	0
Safe bus services for non-driving teens to school or recreation events- basketball courts, swimming, pools, etc	0
Scheduled stops	0
Seasonal transportation from Asheville to augment Haywood work force	0
Service to rural areas Ex.: Cruso, Ghost Town, Crabtree	0
Staff support evening-weekend services	0
Transportation available on holidays	0
Transportation to social events for elderly & disabled individuals	0
Under-served remote areas	0
Van available for non-designated routes for new employee transportation	0



Issues Identified at Henderson County Meeting, 3/28/08	Number of Dots
Expanded hours of service (morning, evening & weekend)	6
More flyers and advertisement	5
No money for fares	5
Extend Edneyville route	4
Funding for new Edneyville route	4
Hendersonville to Asheville express	3
Time restraint not in sync with employers	3
Apple County is great service. Keep it funded!	2
Flyers and ads - people need to know about resources	2

Identification of services available, particularly for newcomers	2
Programs should be available for various age groups, 62. Limited access Limited time schedule	2
Ability to coordinate with individual employers	1
Cost of transportation is a large burden on a small non-profit budget (example: Vocational Solutions)	1
Dedicated source of funding	1
Ecological consideration - people would use transit if available	1
Evening services	1
No service to rural manufacturing plants - need for employees	1
Rural area seniors need door-to-door service for shopping and socialization	1
Town growing without extension of service	1
Transportation support for part time employees	1
Can't access evening activities	0
Land use	0
Service to Morningside Condominiums, especially for disabled & elderly residents	0



Issues Identified by Individual Comment	County of Residence
Blind passenger doesn't know where bus is in route (inconsistent street announcements)	Buncombe
Communication pathways could be better for blind residents	Buncombe
Construction on pathways to buses	Buncombe
Most drivers are very cordial	Buncombe
Punctuality of fixed route service - both early and late	Buncombe
Some bus stops don't have connection to sidewalks	Buncombe
Some bus stops are amidst plantings	Buncombe
Bus/paratransit does not run on Sundays or late evenings, hindering ability to work	Buncombe

If someone with developmental disabilities lives in an area where the buses don't operate, they may be forced into private transportation, thereby negating the benefits of working	Buncombe
The bus system is fairly reliable for work needs, but the paratransit system is not	Buncombe
There are many places that neither the bus system or Mountain Mobility travel to, and are too far away to use private transportation due to costs, so people with developmental disabilities can't get to their jobs	Buncombe
There is a certain culture associated with the bus system in the city which is less than desirable for some people with significant mental health concerns (e.g., paranoia) that make riding the bus uncomfortable, but they may not qualify for paratransit	Buncombe
Inability for hearing impaired passengers to know what drivers or transit center personnel are announcing – recommend scrolling electronic sign on board and in transit center for communicating immediate information, such as “We will be arriving late to the transit center, please let me know if you are transferring so I can alert the bus you are planning to board to wait for you.”	Buncombe
City buses are far larger than their passenger numbers require; use smaller, more fuel-efficient vehicles on less-used routes	Buncombe
Need bus stop shelters, especially for disabled people, some of whom already have compromised immune systems	Buncombe

**Appendix B: Request for Proposals for Job Access and
Reverse Commute and New Freedom programs.**



FUNDING APPLICATION

Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Programs

Introduction

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU) reauthorized federal transportation funding programs through Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009. SAFETEA-LU promotes more efficient and effective Federal surface transportation programs by focusing on transportation issues of national significance, while giving State and local transportation decision makers more flexibility for solving transportation problems in their communities. SAFETEA-LU continues a strong fundamental core formula program emphasis coupled with targeted investment, featuring Safety, Equity, Innovative Finance, Congestion Relief, Mobility and Productivity, Efficiency, and the Environment.

With the passage of SAFETEA-LU, transportation projects receiving funding under the Job Access/Reverse Commute program or the New Freedom program must be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit - human services transportation plan.” Further, the law requires that this plan be “developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public.”

This funding application addresses two Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs funded by SAFETEA-LU: Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC, Section 5316) and New Freedom (Section 5317).

Background on JARC and New Freedom Funds

The Job Access Reverse Commute grant program is intended to fund “the development and maintenance of transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment.”

According to FTA, the purpose of the New Freedom Program is to provide improved public transportation services, and alternatives to public transportation, for people with disabilities, beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

FTA Funding Allocations Available to the French Broad River MPO

Fiscal Year	Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) (Section 5316)	New Freedom Program (Section 5317)	Total
2006	\$114,045	\$67,545	\$181,590
2007	\$120,215	\$77,517	\$197,732
2008	\$130,233	\$83,737	\$213,970
Total	\$364,493	\$228,799	\$593,292

Eligibility Overview: JARC and New Freedom Funds

Eligible Applicants

JARC and New Freedom is a formula grant program for member jurisdictions in the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization. Applicants may include state or local government authorities; private non-profit organizations; and operators of public transportation services including private operators of public transportation services.

Eligible Use of Program Funds:

JARC and New Freedom program funds are intended to fund innovative and flexible programs that identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited incomes. Therefore, it is expected that JARC and New Freedom funds be directed to meet these needs by funding new programs or services, or to continue existing programs.

Eligible Projects:

JARC and New Freedom funds may be used for planning, capital or operating costs of providing access to jobs; or services and facilities that improve mobility for persons with disabilities but not limited to persons who are ADA-certified. Specific project eligibility is detailed later in this document under each program’s description. As well, FTA circulars providing guidance on applying for JARC and New Freedom funds can be found at:

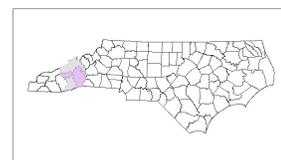
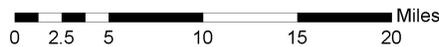
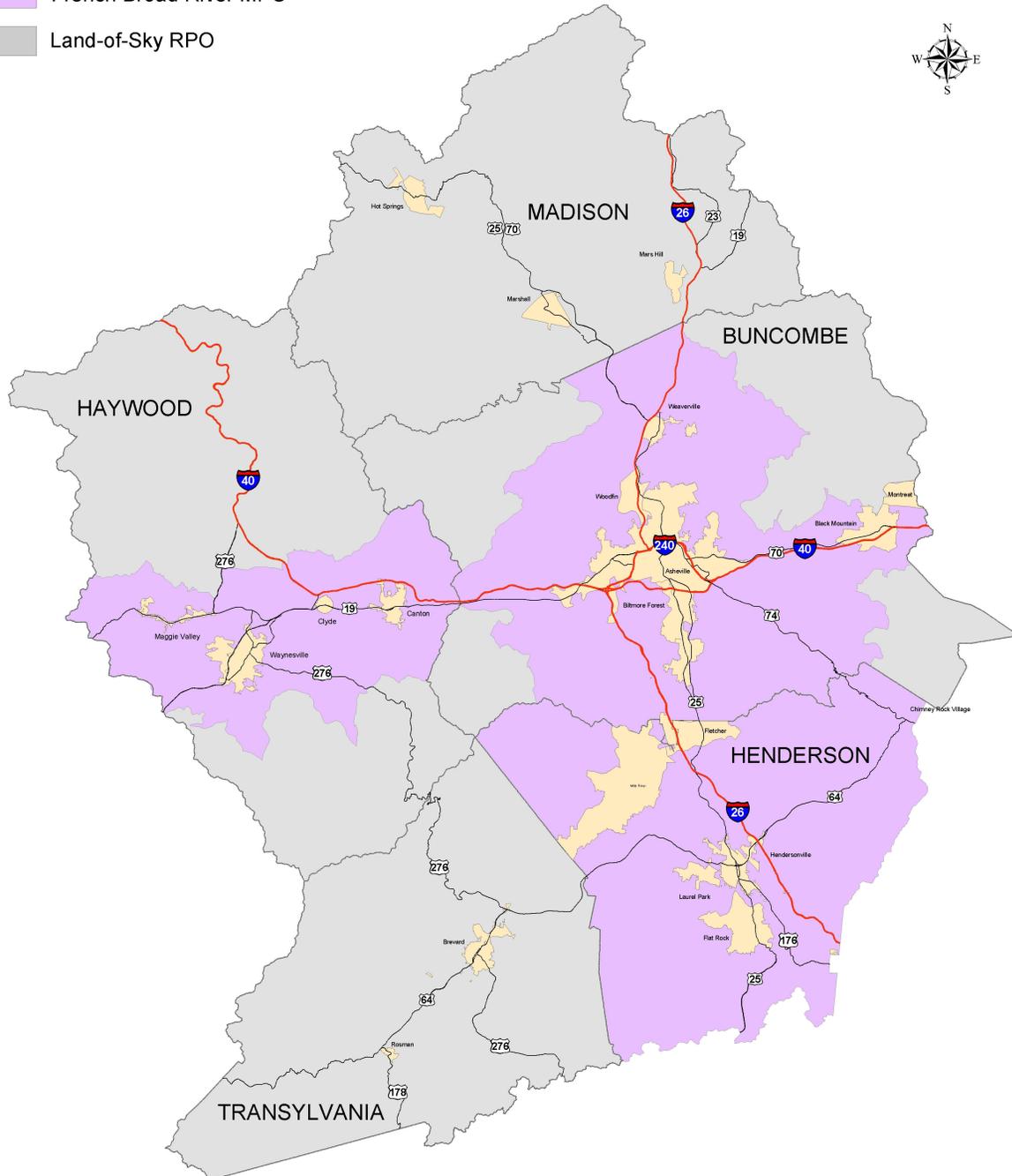
JARC: [http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_C_9050.1_JARC\(1\).pdf](http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_C_9050.1_JARC(1).pdf);

New Freedom: [http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_C_9045.1_New_Freedom\(1\).pdf](http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_C_9045.1_New_Freedom(1).pdf)

Further, the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) is soliciting projects that have been derived from the FBRMPO’s adopted Coordinated Public Transportation - Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP). The plan outlines a vision for improving mobility options for the disabled, aging, and low-income population subgroups living in the region. SAFETEA-LU requires that beginning in FFY 2007, projects selected for funding under the JARC and New Freedom programs must be derived from the locally developed CPT-HSTP and address service needs and gaps/barriers. Federal funding of projects through these two programs will be utilized to meet plan goals. Selection criteria will be used to prioritize potential programs and develop a listing of projects. To view the entire CPT- HST Plan, please visit www.fbrmpo.org.

French Broad River MPO

-  French Broad River MPO
-  Land-of-Sky RPO



DEADLINES FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION

If your organization has a project that it would like considered for funding under JARC and/or New Freedom please complete the following application and submit it to the address below no later than **Friday, May 16, 2008 by 12:00 noon**. Applications received after that date and time will not be considered. Printed applications are preferred, but electronic applications will also be accepted. Applicants are encouraged to use recycled paper and double-sided copies to minimize waste. Faxed applications will not be accepted. Please clearly mark applications "**JARC/NF Application Submission**". FBR MPO will review and score the applications, and through a process established in its adopted Coordinated Public Transportation – Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP), will select projects for funding. Applications should be submitted to:

Caroline Runser-Turner
Land-of-Sky Regional Council
339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140
Asheville, NC 28806
carrie@landofsky.org

The information in this application is a public record. Applicants should not include information that may be regarded as confidential. The applicant must comply with all necessary Certifications and Assurances if funding is awarded.

Note: For both the JARC and New Freedom programs, requests for funding may be made for all three years of appropriated funding (FY06, FY07, and FY08) in one application. Allocations/awards are subject to satisfactory performance reviews throughout the duration of the project. All available grant funding may not be awarded, or an additional call for projects may be made if there are not enough projects, or not enough projects that the Transportation Advisory Committee deems worth funding.

APPLICATION DUE: May 16, 2008 by 12:00 noon
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Applicants should use this checklist to ensure that all applicable parts of the application and attachments are completed and submitted.

PART I. FUNDING REQUEST – GRANTS TITLE PAGE

PART II. PROJECT NARRATIVE

Please include the following documents:

- (1) Map of Applicant Service Area
- (2) Existing and Proposed Transportation Services
- (3) Project Needs/Goals and Objectives
- (4) Implementation Plan
- (5) Coordination and Program Outreach
- (6) Program Effectiveness
- (7) Minority Business Participation
- (8) Certification regarding lobbying
- (9) Certification regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion Lower Tier Covered Transactions

PART III. PROPOSED PROJECT BUDGET/ FINANCIAL STATEMENT

To the best of your ability, please include the following documents:

- (1) Applicants should include audited Financial statement for the past three year's including tax returns (if applicable)
- (2) Applicable pro-forma balance sheets, income statements, and cash flow statements for the duration of the project (or public sector budget equivalents)
- (3) Applicable current Insurance coverages including assets and liability and/or quotes for new or expanded projects
- (4) Provide evidence of the stability of the local share
- (5) Describe how the project relates to any federal or other programs that the agency operates and, if applicable, how these resources can be leveraged for the project.
- (6) Describe any potential long-term efforts or funding sources that will sustain the project should the JARC and/or New Freedom funding no longer be available in future years.

PROJECT APPLICATION PROCEDURES

This JARC and New Freedom program application is for funds to be used within the FBRMPO service area. The initial project application consists of the program-specific requirements detailed in this package of forms and instructions. After a project application has been selected for funding, the applicant will be required to submit appropriate background Certifications and Assurances, and other documentation necessary to meet the requirements of the FTA's Urbanized Area Formula Grant Program (Section 5307 program under Title 1, United States Code). Additional FFY 2006 FTA Certifications and Assurances information can be found at:

http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/apply/grants_financing_6018.html

Eligibility Overview: Job Access/Reverse Commuter (JARC)

Eligible agencies:

Private, non-profit organizations; state or local government authorities; and operators of public transportation services, including private operators of public transportation services

Program description:

Section 5316 (Job Access/Reverse Commute or JARC) is a formula program of funding to develop transportation services to transport welfare recipients and low-income persons to and from jobs (Job Access); and to transport residents of urban centers, rural and suburban areas to suburban employment opportunities (Reverse Commute). Job Access grants can be used for capital and operating costs of equipment, facilities, and capital maintenance related to providing access to jobs. Costs to promote transit for workers with nontraditional work schedules, the use of transit vouchers, and the use of employer-provided transportation are also covered. Reverse Commute grants can be used for operating, capital and other costs associated with providing reverse commute service by bus, carpool, vans or other transportation services.

Eligible activities:

Eligible activities for JARC funding include late-night and weekend service, guaranteed ride home service, shuttle service; expanded fixed-route public transit routes; demand-response service; ridesharing and carpooling activities; transit related aspects of bicycling; local car loan programs that assist individuals in purchasing and maintaining vehicles for shared rides; marketing promotions for JARC activities; supporting the administration and expenses related to voucher programs; using Geographic Information System (GIS) tools and/or implementing Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS); integrating automated regional public transit and human service transportation information, scheduling and dispatch functions; deploying vehicle position-monitoring systems; and establishing regional mobility managers or transportation brokerage activities. Further information on eligible activities can be found at:

[http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_C_9050.1_JARC\(1\).pdf](http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_C_9050.1_JARC(1).pdf)

Cost Sharing/Match Requirement:

Funds can be used to support up to 80 percent (80/20 match) for capital projects, and not more than 50 percent (50/50 match) of projects for operating assistance. Fare revenue generated on the service to be supported may not be used as matching funds for operating grants. Non-DOT Federal funds and local and private funds can be used as a match. Matching share requirements are flexible to encourage coordination with other federal programs that may provide transportation, such as Health and Human Services or Medicaid. **Grant recipients will be reimbursed upon receipt of evidence that they are working towards or have met agreed-upon program goals.**

Eligibility Overview: New Freedom Funds**Eligible agencies:**

Private, non-profit organizations; state or local government authorities; and operators of public transportation services, including private operators of public transportation services

Program description:

Section 5317 is a new formula grant program for public or alternative transportation services and facility improvements to address the needs of persons with disabilities that go beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Funds will cover capital and operating costs to these programs to provide that new service. New service is defined as any service that was not operational or did not have an identified funding source on August 10, 2005.

Eligible activities:

Eligible activities for New Freedom funding include: enhancing public transportation beyond the minimum requirements of the ADA; providing "feeder" services; making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations; providing travel training; purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ridesharing, and/or vanpooling programs; covering the administration and expenses of new voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service agencies; supporting new volunteer driver and aide programs; and supporting new mobility management and coordination programs among public and/or human service transportation providers. Further information on eligible activities can be found at:

[http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_C_9045.1_New_Freedom\(1\).pdf](http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_C_9045.1_New_Freedom(1).pdf)

Cost Sharing/Match Requirement:

Funds can be used to support up to 80 percent (80/20 match) for capital projects, and not more than 50 percent (50/50 match) of projects for operating assistance. Fare revenue generated on the service to be supported may not be used as matching funds for operating grants. Non-DOT Federal funds and local and private funds can be used as a match. Matching share requirements are flexible to encourage coordination with other federal programs that may provide transportation, such as Health and Human Services or Medicaid. **Grant**

recipients will be reimbursed upon receipt of evidence that they are working towards or have met agreed-upon program goals.

Award Requirements for Both Programs

Award requirements:

Applicant selected for funding under the JARC and New Freedom programs will enter into a grant agreement with the Asheville Transit System (ATS) – City of Asheville.

Applicants will be required to provide quarterly reports to ATC with detailed information on usage and performance of the project as outlined in the narrative or any other work plans that may be required. These quarterly reports will include financial and program measures updates.

Project Selection for JARC and New Freedom:

Projects will be awarded through a competitive selection process. Applications will be received by Land-of-Sky Regional Council staff and passed along to a review committee made up of representatives of the FBRMPO TCC. The review committee will review and score the applications. Representatives of this committee will be familiar with local human service agencies, the target population documented in the CPT-HSTP, and the transportation issues affecting this target population. After scoring the proposals, the review committee will recommend projects for funding to the FBRMPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC will vote on funding of the recommended projects. The list of approved projects will be published and submitted to the FTA for funding.

Note: All proposals should reflect public transportation and human service transportation priorities documented in the French Broad River MPO CPT-HST Plan. The recommended top tier priority needs are listed below:

1. Extend service hours to include early mornings, nights, weekends and holidays.
2. Information about available services and eligibility
3. Improve the infrastructure around and pathways to and from bus stops, including pedestrian street crossing facilities
4. Travel between counties
5. Travel training and coordination
6. Make paratransit available during all the times fixed route service is available
7. Inability to afford fares
8. Bus stop placement, including location of stops in relation to destinations, and distance between stops
9. Immediate transportation for illness that does not require an ambulance
10. Frequency of service
11. Expand allowed trip purposes for disabled and elderly users, including non-medical trips, daily trips to therapy, trips to social, cultural, or educational activities, and shopping trips.

Application and Project Selection Schedule:

- 4/10/08 Draft Coordinated Public Transportation and Human Services Transportation Plan (CTP-HSTP) released for public comment
- 4/17/08 FBRMPO TAC approves final CTP-HSTP and application package
- 4/18/08 Request for Proposals released by Land-of-Sky Regional Council
- 4/28/08 Application Conference Call
9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
*Call in to hear a brief presentation on the JARC/NF application process, discuss your application with staff, and get your questions answered. Call 1-866-921-2204. You will be asked to enter a room number – enter *8810113* (note that the star has to proceed and follow the numeric code).*

5/16/08 Applications due to Land-of-Sky Regional Council by 12 Noon

- 5/16 – 5/30 Review Committee reviews and scores proposals
- 5/30/08 Review Committee selects CPT-HSTP projects for recommendation to the TAC
- 6/5/08 Recommendations provided to FBRMPO staff
- 6/19/08 TAC action on Review Committee recommendations
- 8/2008 Funding recipients receive notification

SCORING CRITERIA

The following information and scoring criteria will be used to score and rate project applications for JARC and New Freedom (NF) funding.

- a. Project Needs/Goals and Objectives (30 points):* The project should directly address priority transportation needs identified through the French Broad River MPO's locally developed Coordinated Public Transportation - Human Services Transportation Plan available at www.fbrmpo.org or call 828 259-5457. Project application should clearly state the overall program goals and objectives, and demonstrate how the project is consistent with the objectives of the JARC and NF grant programs. The project application should indicate the number of persons expected to be served, and the number of trips (or other units of service) expected to be provided.
- b. Implementation Plan and Evaluation (20 points):* For all projects, applicants must provide a well-defined service operations plan and/or capital procurement plan, and describe implementation steps and timelines for carrying out the plan. The implementation plan should identify key personnel assigned to this project and their qualifications. Project sponsors should demonstrate their institutional capability to carry out the service delivery aspect of the project as described.
- c. Project Budget (15 points):* Applicants must submit a clearly defined project budget, indicating anticipated project expenditures and revenues, including documentation of matching funds. Proposals should address long-term efforts and identify potential funding sources for sustaining the service beyond the grant period. Please refer to required documentation on Page 6.
- d. Partnerships and Program Outreach (20 points):* Proposed projects will be evaluated based on their ability to coordinate with other public transportation, community transportation and/or social service resources. Project sponsors should clearly identify project stakeholders, and how they will keep stakeholders involved and informed throughout the project. Project sponsors should also describe how they would promote public awareness of the project. Letters of support from key stakeholders and/or customers should be attached to the grant application.
- e. Program Effectiveness and Performance Indicators (10 points):* The project will be scored based on the project sponsor's ability to demonstrate that the proposed project is the most appropriate match of service delivery to the need, and is a cost-effective approach. Project sponsors must also identify clear, measurable outcome-based performance measures to track the effectiveness of the service in meeting the identified goals. A plan should be provided for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the service, and steps to be taken if original goals are not achieved. Sponsor should describe their steps to measure the effectiveness and magnitude of the impact that the project will have on target markets (i.e., persons with low-income for the JARC funds, or persons with disabilities or the elderly for the New Freedom funds).
- f. Innovation (5 points):* The project will be examined to see if it contains new or innovative service concepts or facilities that have the potential for improving access and mobility for the target populations and may have future application elsewhere in the region.
- g. Alternative Fuels/Fuel Efficiency (Bonus 5 points):* Projects that demonstrate the use of high-efficiency or alternative fueled vehicles/transportation methods will receive 5 bonus points.

Project Requirements

The Selection Committee must find that the answer to each of the five following questions is affirmative for a project to be considered

Is the proposed project a non-duplicative service or program?	
Are eligible matching funds identified and available?	
Is the proposed project a new or expanded service or program?	
Is the primary focus of the proposed service or program serving target populations (i.e., persons with low-income for the JARC funds, or persons with disabilities or elders for the New Freedom funds)?	
Does the project provide benefits to the Asheville urbanized area (see enclosed map)?	

eligible for grant funding.

Project Evaluation Score sheet

Each proposal will receive a score from the Project Selection Committee according to following criteria.

Project Evaluation Criteria	Possible Points	Project Score
Project Need/Goals & Objectives	30	
How well does this project address high-priority needs identified in the Coordinated Plan?		
How effectively will this project increase the numbers of target market customers served?		
Implementation Plan	20	
What is the quality of the implementation plan?		
Project Budget	15	
How efficiently will the projects provide benefits to the customers (e.g., cost per customer served)		
How financially sustainable is the program/service beyond the grant period?		
Partnerships and Outreach	20	
How effectively are partnerships used in provision of the program/service?		
How strong is the demonstration of stakeholder support (e.g., survey data, letters from end users)?		
What is the quality of marketing/outreach plan?		
How widely will the benefits of this project be felt? (more points for region-wide benefits)		
Program Effectiveness and Performance Indicators	10	
What is the quality of the evaluation plan (including customer satisfaction, cost per unit of service, and customers per unit of service)?		
Innovation	5	
Does the project contain innovative ideas that could be applied elsewhere in the region?		
Alternative Fuels/Fuel Efficiency	5 (bonus)	

JOB ACCESS/REVERSE COMMUTE (JARC)
AND NEW FREEDOM PROGRAMS

APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

PART I - TRANSMITTAL

Applicant Data

Legal Name:

Contact Person:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Telephone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Project Description	
TITLE _____	
BRIEF DESCRIPTION _____	

FUNDING PROGRAM: JARC _____ New Freedom _____	
PROJECT TYPE	Capital Only _____ _____ Capital and Operating
	Operating Only _____ _____ Mobility Management/Coordinated Planning
SERVICE	DAYS/HOURS

ESTIMATED COST PER ONE WAY TRIP _____ (operating cost)	
ESTIMATED DAILY RIDERS _____ (weekday/weekend)	

PART II - NARRATIVE

Project Need/Goals and Objectives

1. Describe the unmet transportation need that the proposed project seeks to address and the relevant planning effort that documents the need. Does it cover an area targeted by the CPT-HSTP? Describe how the project will mitigate the transportation need. Estimate the number of people served and/or the number of service units that will be provided. Describe the specific community this project will serve, and provide pertinent demographic data and/or maps.

2. What are the project's goals and objectives?

Implementation Plan

1. Describe key personnel assigned to this project, the person-hour commitment of key personnel, and your agency's ability to manage the project.

2. Provide an operational plan for delivering service. Include route or service area map, if applicable. OR provide an implementation plan for completing a capital project, including key milestones and estimated completion date.

3. Explain how this project relates to other services or facilities provided by your agency or firm and demonstrate how it can be achieved within your technical capacity.

Project Budget

1. Project sponsor should provide a complete budget indicating project revenues and expenditures in the format provided in Part III and describe efforts to ensure its cost-effectiveness.

Coordination and Program Outreach

1. Describe how the project will be coordinated with public and/or private transportation and social service agencies serving low-income populations and individuals with disabilities.

2. Describe efforts to market the project, and ways to promote public awareness of the program. Letters of support should be obtained from key stakeholders and attached to the grant application.

Program Effectiveness and Performance Indicators

1. Project application should demonstrate that the proposed project is the most appropriate match of service delivery to the need. Identify performance measures to track the effectiveness of the service in meeting the identified goals. For capital-related projects, project sponsor is responsible to establish milestones and report on the status of project delivery.

2. Describe a plan for monitoring and evaluation of the service, and steps to be taken if original goals are not achieved.

Innovation

1. Describe any proposed use of innovative approaches that will be employed for this project. Discuss what is innovative about the approach and how the innovations could be applied to other services in the region.

PART III - PROJECT BUDGET

Project Funding

Local matching funds will be required for all application submittals. For projects requiring operating funds, the required match is 50%+ from non-federal transportation funds. For capital projects the required match is 20%+ from non-federal transportation funds. **Grant recipients will be reimbursed upon receipt of evidence that they are working towards or have met agreed-upon program goals.**

Please include a certified financial statement from an accountant or bank.

Total Annual Project Budget \$_____ (operating and capital only)

Capital Federal Share \$_____ %

Capital Local Match \$_____ %

Operating Federal Share \$_____ %

Operating Local Match \$_____ %Total

Local Match Funding

Source_____

Note: The applicant is required to demonstrate a commitment to providing local match funds. This can be in the form of a letter and/or a copy of an existing grant agreement or supporting documentation where funds will be drawn from. Financial information must be certified by an accountant or financial institution.

Will there be a commitment of funds beyond the grant period? ___Yes ___No

Describe:
