

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEETING DATE: June 6, 2011

SUBJECT: Public Hearing – Proposed Fare Increase and Service Hour Reduction for Apple Country Transit

PRESENTER: Anthony W. Starr, AICP, Planning Director

ATTACHMENTS: 1. PowerPoint Presentation

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Staff requests that the Board of Commissioners consider proposed changes to Apple Country Transit Services. The recommended actions offset increasing operational costs (associated with the recently approved five year operations and maintenance contract with WCCA) and meet the 7.5% budget reduction directed by the Board. A service reduction in combination with a fare increase will result in necessary local share cost savings.

Staff proposes a fare increase (\$1.25 from the current rate of \$0.75 cents) that will yield additional annual farebox revenue of approximately \$8,195. Staff recommends elimination of the last hour of service (between the hours of 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.) for all three scheduled routes. The proposed service reduction would result in a gross savings of \$40,545 from the original FY12 contract amount of \$553,435. Implementing both of the recommended actions would result in a net local cost savings of \$17,376.

Based on previous local experience and national estimating methods, the proposed changes could temporarily decrease the number of annual one-way trips from FY10 ridership of 93,510 to approximately 69,000. However, ridership normally returns to previous levels after a short time with some potential to increase within several months after implementing the change.

Federal law requires local governments to hold a public hearing prior to acting on fare increases or decreases in transit service. The proposed service adjustments comply with Federal Transit Administration Regulations.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

Planning Staff requests that the Board of Commissioners conduct the required hearing and approve the proposed fare increases and service reduction.

Suggested Motion:

I move the Board approve the transit fare increases and service reductions as presented by staff.

Alternate Motion:

I move the Board not approve the transit fare increases and service reductions as presented.

Public Hearing: Public Transit Fare Increase & Service Reduction



**Henderson County Board of Commissioners Meeting
June 6, 2011**

Presented by: County Planning Director Anthony W. Starr, AICP

Henderson County Planning Department

Historical Information about Apple Country Transit

- Fixed-route service began in 2004 under the operation of Western Carolina Community Action (WCCA)
- 2000 Census designated most of the service area as “urbanized”
- Federal regulations required County to operate the transit system as a result of the 2000 Census designation
- Henderson County assumed control of the urban transit system on July 1, 2006 with WCCA as the awarded contracted service provider
- Current five-year contract expires June 30, 2011
- Federal regulation requires new procurement process every five years
- Board approved WCCA as the service provider with new contract starting July 1, 2011 (3-year contract with two 1-year extensions possible)

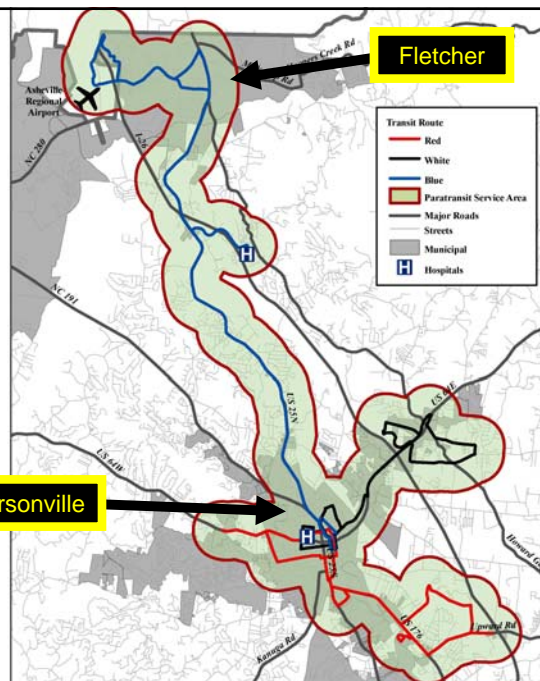
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Facts about Apple Country Transit

- Three (3) fixed routes operated under contract with WCCA
- Service runs Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- Routes serve most of Hendersonville area, Downtown Hendersonville, Upward Rd area, Four Seasons Blvd area (to Walmart), Mtn. Home (Industrial Park), Naples (Park Ridge Health), Fletcher, & Asheville Airport
- Blue Route connects with Asheville Transit System at Airport
- Each route runs once per hour
- More than 80% of the ridership is made up of working adults ages 40 to 55
- Most riders use the service as their sole means of travel to employment

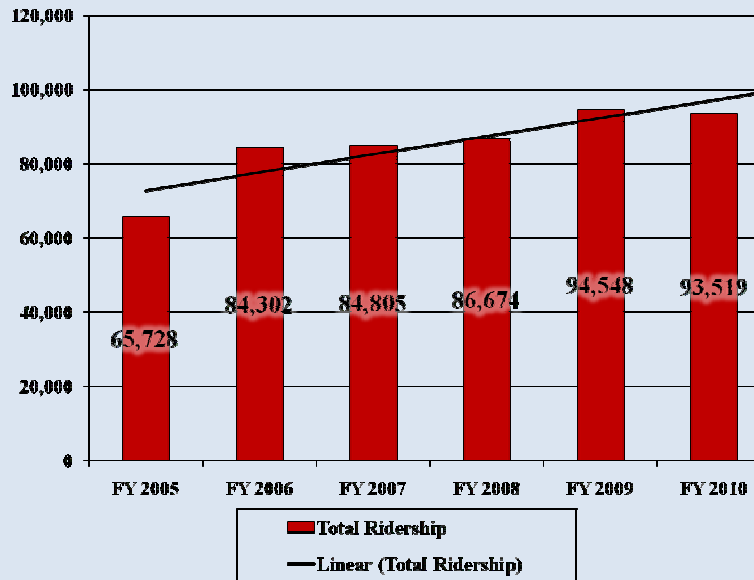
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Apple Country Transit Service Area



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Ridership History



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Why are a fare increase and service reduction needed?

- Operational costs continue to increase
- New WCCA contract (effective July 1, 2011) increases per hour costs for operation
- Fuel and vehicle maintenance are significant factors for cost increases
- Fare increase and service reduction accomplish a 7.5% reduction in transit costs to the General Fund as directed by the Board of Commissioners
- Fare rates have not changed since 2006 despite operational cost increases
- Service reduction, by eliminating the last hour of service, helps to control costs

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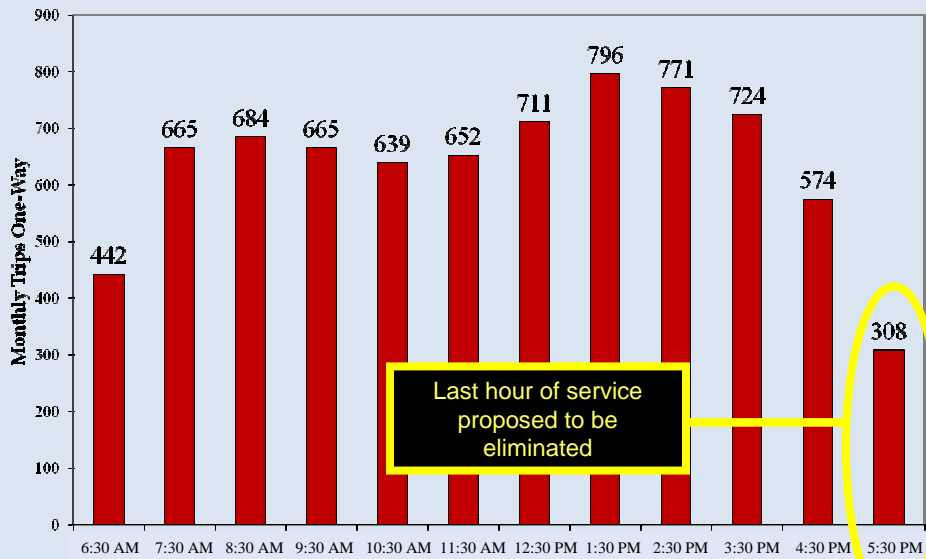
Proposed Fare Increase

Apple Country Existing and Proposed Fare Schedule		
FARE	Existing Fare Schedule Since April 2006	Proposed Fare Schedule effective July 1, 2011
Cash Fare	75 cents	\$1.25
Half Fare for Seniors and Medicare Card Carriers	30 cents	60 cents
Children under 5	Free	Free
Paratransit service (no more than twice Fixed Route Fare)	\$1.25	\$2.50
One Trip Pass Book (20 tickets)	\$10	\$20
Monthly Pass	\$15	\$30

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One-Way Trips Per Hour

For a Typical Month (February 2011)



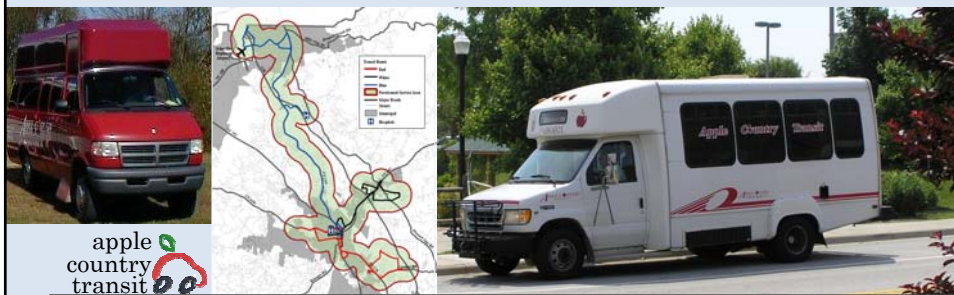
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Projected Effects for Transit

- Base fare increases 67% from \$0.75 to \$1.25, with other fare increases
- Service on all three routes ends one hour earlier
 - Current schedule is 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
 - New schedule would be 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- Using nationally recognized methodology, a 26% reduction in ridership is projected for the first year
- Ridership will recover after initial drop

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Board Questions?



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Public Hearing Comments



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- Speakers are limited to 3 minutes each
 - Please state your name clearly

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