Asheville Rides Transit - Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA)

July 28, 2026

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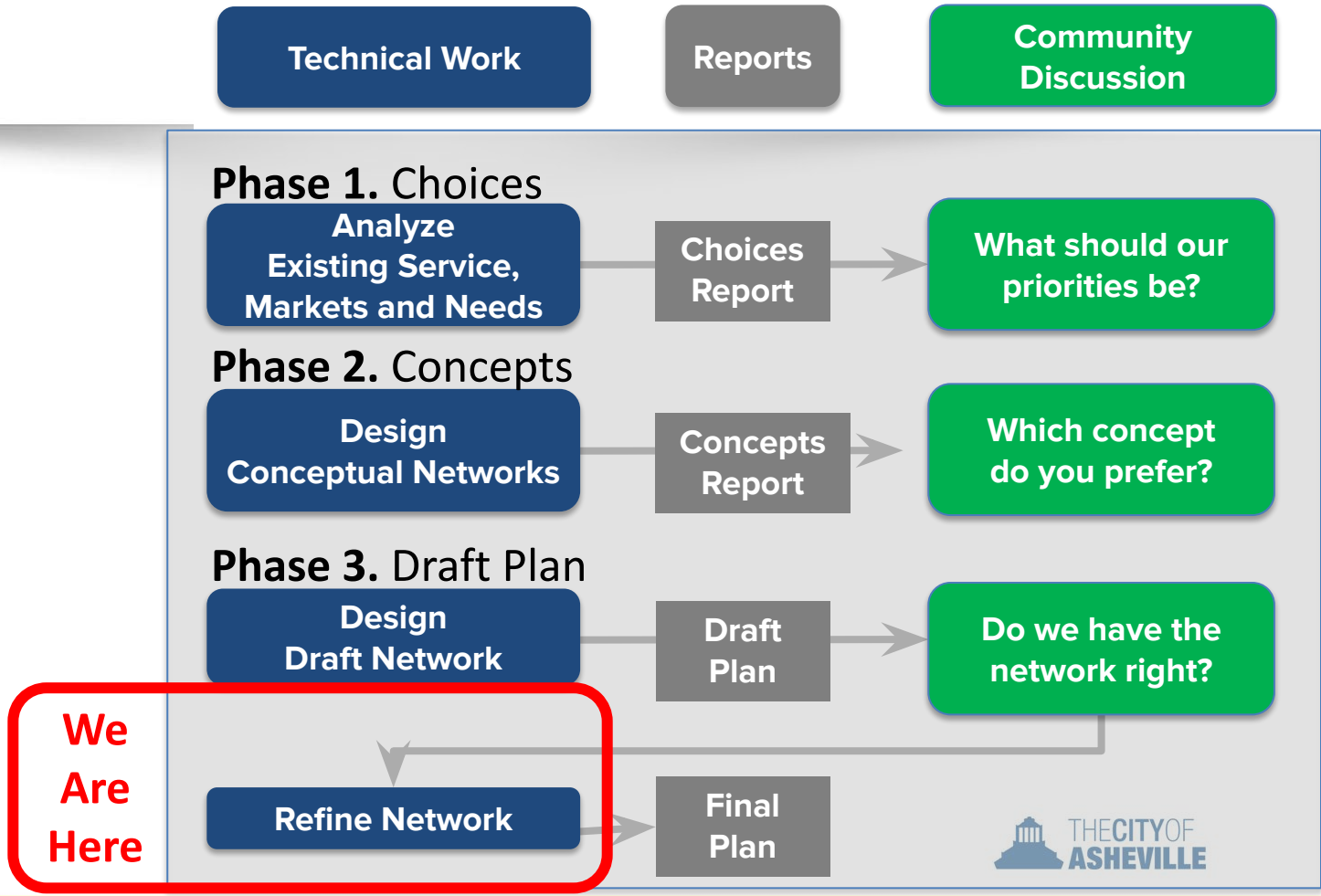
Ricky Angueira, Jarrett Walker + Assoc.

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE



COA

Comprehensive Operational Analysis



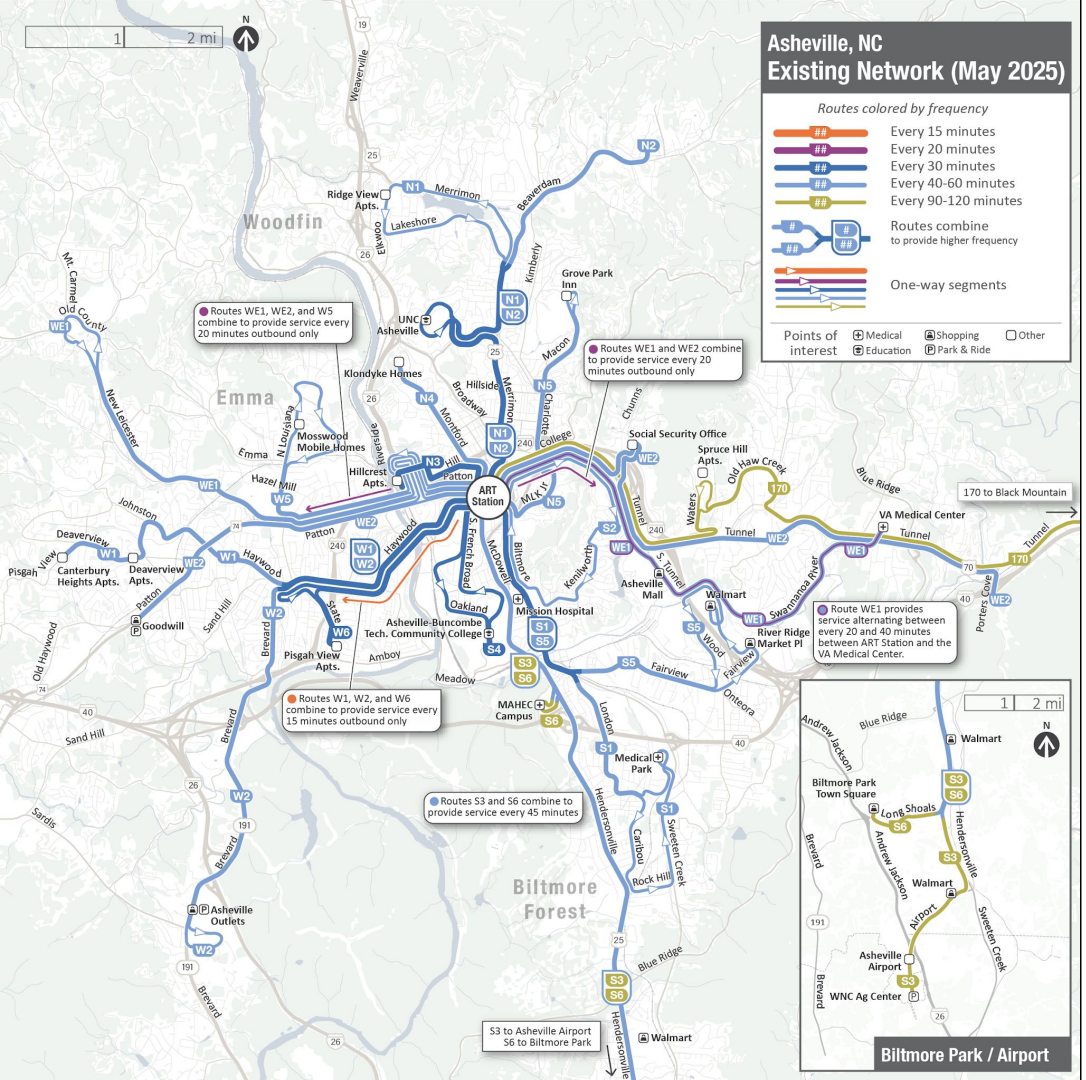
Direction for Draft Network

Direction from Council in November 2025:

- Design a Draft Network with a shift towards ridership
  - Current Network: 50% Coverage, 50% Ridership
  - Draft Network: 40% Coverage, 60% Ridership
- Prioritize coverage in areas with many low-income persons

Draft Network Review Timeline

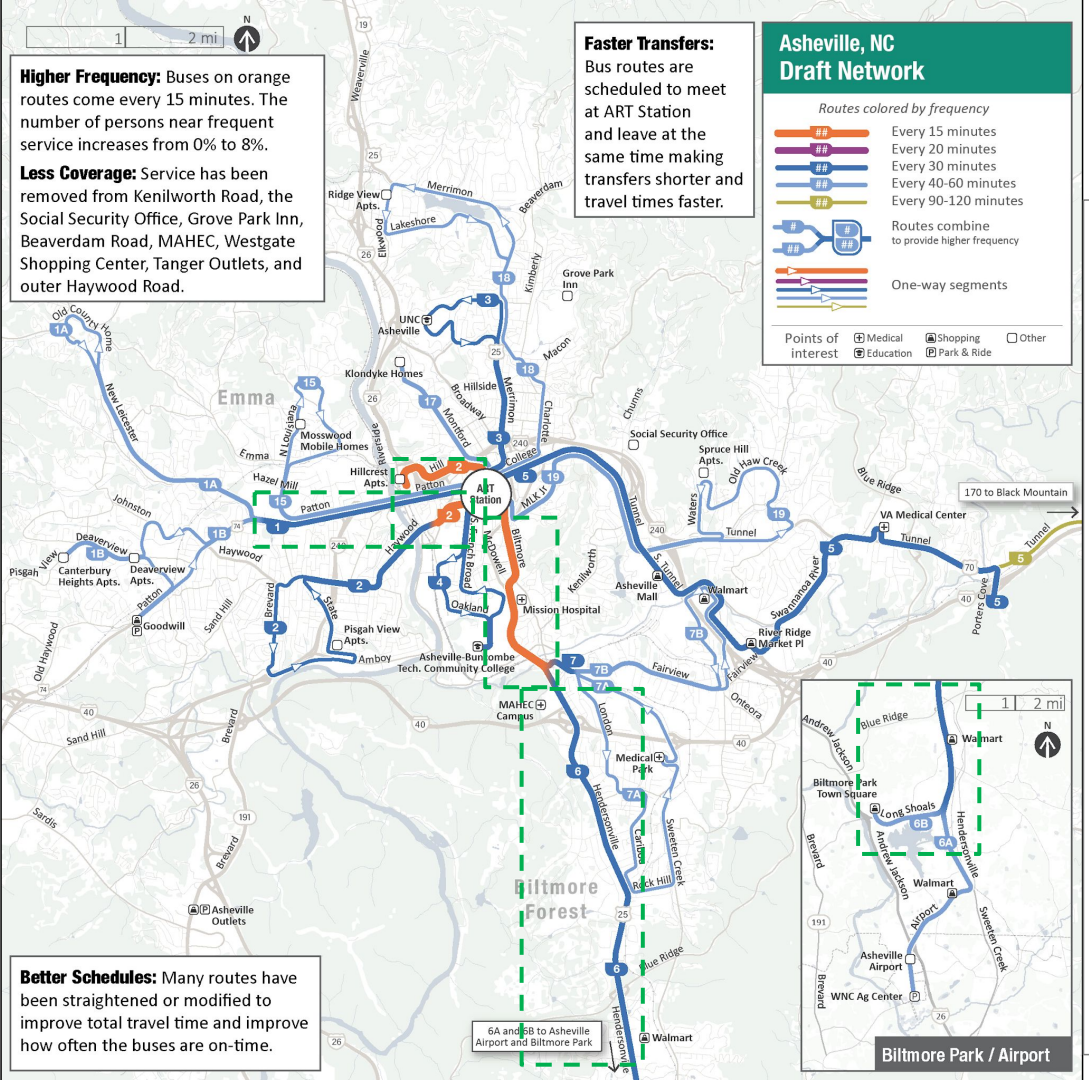
- May 21 - June 28: Public engagement for Draft Network
  - New survey, 1 external stakeholder workshop
  - 7 ART Transit Center tabling events, and 13+ community engagement meetings
  - MMTC, Planning & Zoning, Housing Authority
- July 21: PEDE presentation summarizing Draft Network public engagement feedback/survey results, Review options /seek committee feedback - recommendation to Council
- July 28: City Council presentation - discuss Network options to inform Final Plan
- August 25: City Council takes action on Final Network Plan
- At the earliest, implementation of the final revised network could occur some time in FY28 (July 2027 or later)



Existing Network

Routes colored by frequency

- Every 15 minutes
- Every 20 minutes
- Every 30 minutes
- Every 40-60 minutes
- Every 90-120 minutes



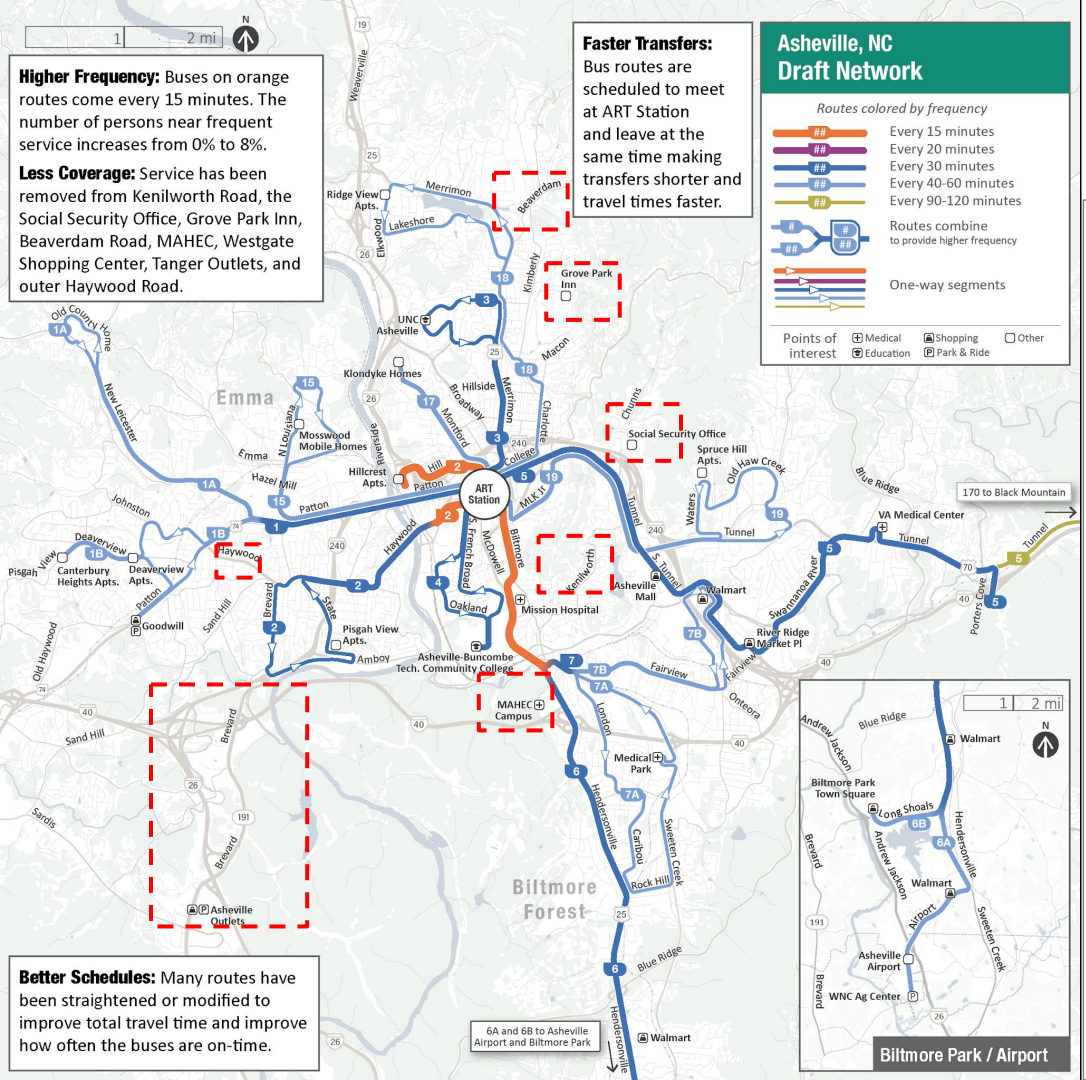
Draft Network

Benefits

1. Better Schedules
   Routes modified to improve on-time performance

2. Timed Transfers at ART Station
   Better synching of route arrivals and departures at transit center

3. Higher Frequency
   - Hillcrest
   - River Arts District
   - Patton Ave.
   - Biltmore/ McDowell
   - Hendersonville Rd.



Draft Network

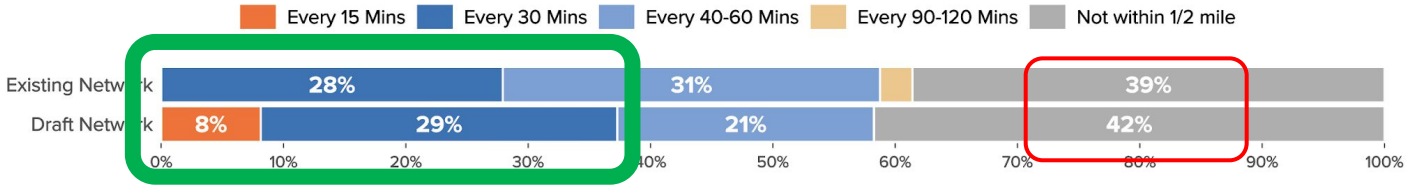
Trade Offs

1. Removal of Coverage

   - Beaverdam
   - Grove Park Inn
   - Social Security Office
   - Kenilworth
   - MAHEC
   - Outlets / Brevard Rd. south of Shelburne Rd. / Transformation Village
   - West Haywood, between Brevard and Patton

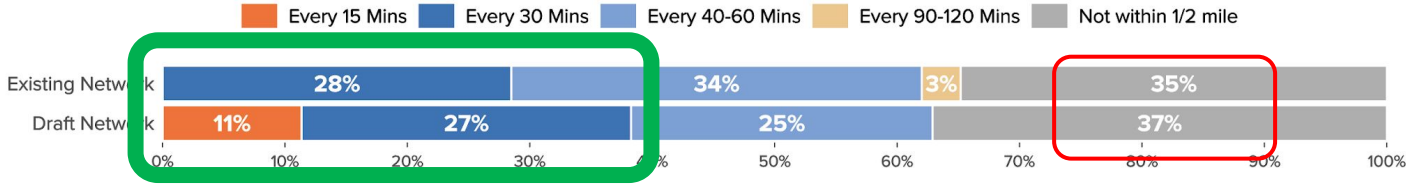
Proximity to Transit (within ½ mile)

Persons Near Transit



Incr. 28% to 37%

Low-Income Persons Near Transit



Incr. 28% to 38%

Benefits:

- Increases the number of people within ½ mile of frequent service (15-min and 30-min)
- Eliminates 90-min service

Tradeoff:

- Slight increase to the number of people not within ½ mile of transit

Draft Network: Change in Job Access

Within 45 Minutes using ART:

The average *resident* can reach:
+10% jobs

The average *low-income resident* can reach:
+ 15% jobs

The average *household without a car* can reach:
+11% jobs

This 45-minute period includes all travel time from front door to destination

Draft Network: HACA Communities

15-Minute Service (new)

Hillcrest, Maple Crest, and Aston Towers (via Hilliard):

30-minute Service (same)

Pisgah View, Bartlett Arms, Erskine, Livingston, Walton, Asheville Terrace

60-minute Service (same)

Deaverview, Klondyke

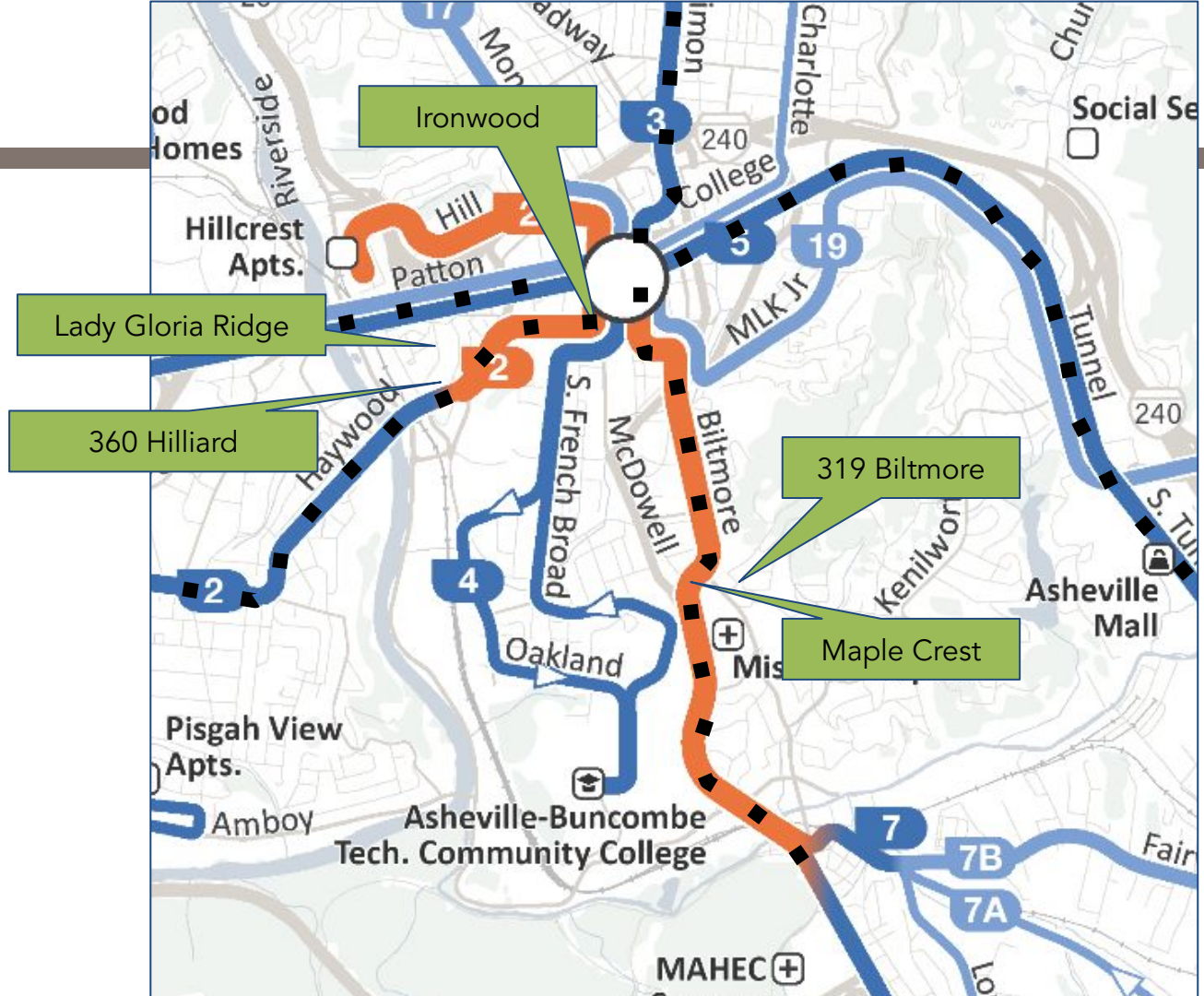
Draft Network: Alignment with other City Policies

City Plan/Policy	Strategy	ART Draft Plan Implementation/Alignment Action
Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan	Establishes Transit-Supportive Corridors • **Calls for 15-min frequency on key corridors**, including Biltmore to Biltmore Village, Clingman/E. Haywood, Patton, Tunnel, Merrimon • **Calls for 30-min frequency on other corridors** • Recommends **increased density** on transit corridors	• **15-min frequency** on Biltmore between Downtown and Biltmore Village, and Downtown to RAD • **30-min frequency** on Hendersonville Rd. between Biltmore Village and Long Shoals (and 60-min service to Airport/Biltmore Park)
2024 Affordable Housing Plan	• Align housing development priority areas with infrastructure investments • Incentivize transit-oriented/accessible development	• **15-min frequency serves several City-supported affordable housing projects:** 360 Hilliard, 319 Biltmore, Ironwood (172 Asheland), Maple Crest, Lady Gloria Ridge (343 Haywood)
2023 Missing Middle Housing Study and UDO updates (2025)	In Comp Plan Transit-Supportive Corridors and Mixed-Use Zones: • Increase housing supply by allowing more housing types/flexibility in commercial corridors and residential districts • Eliminate parking minimums (just passed by State Leg.)	• Improved frequencies in Draft network align with Transit-supportive corridors in Missing Middle Housing Study and will support additional residential density resulting from UDO revisions • Increased frequency may help mitigate impacts from elimination of parking minimums

Draft Network
15-min
Corridors

Comp Plan
15-min
Corridors

City Affordable Housing Investments



Draft Network Survey

6-question survey

- Compared to Existing Network the Draft Network is:
  - better for me?
  - better for my friends, neighbors, coworkers or others I know?
  - better for the region overall?
- What features of the Draft Network do you like?
- What changes, if any, do you think are needed to the Draft Network?
- 1,350 participants = 1.44% Asheville population
  - Frequent riders: 429 (31%)
  - Non-frequent riders: 192 (14%)
  - Non-riders: 323 (24%)
  - Did not provide an answer: 418 (31%)

What have we heard?

Positive comments about the Draft Network

System Performance:

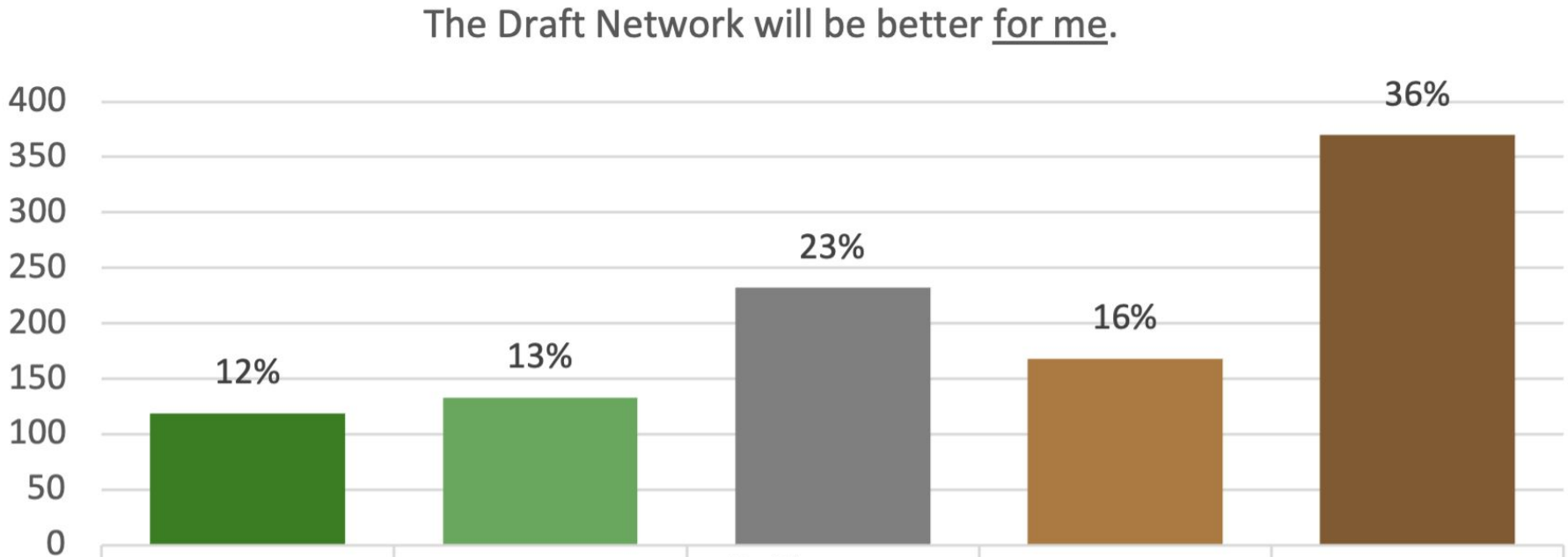
- Increased frequency & reduced wait times
- Increase in access
- Improved on-time performance and reliability
- Timed transfers at the ART Transit Center

Concerns about the Draft Network

Loss of access to:

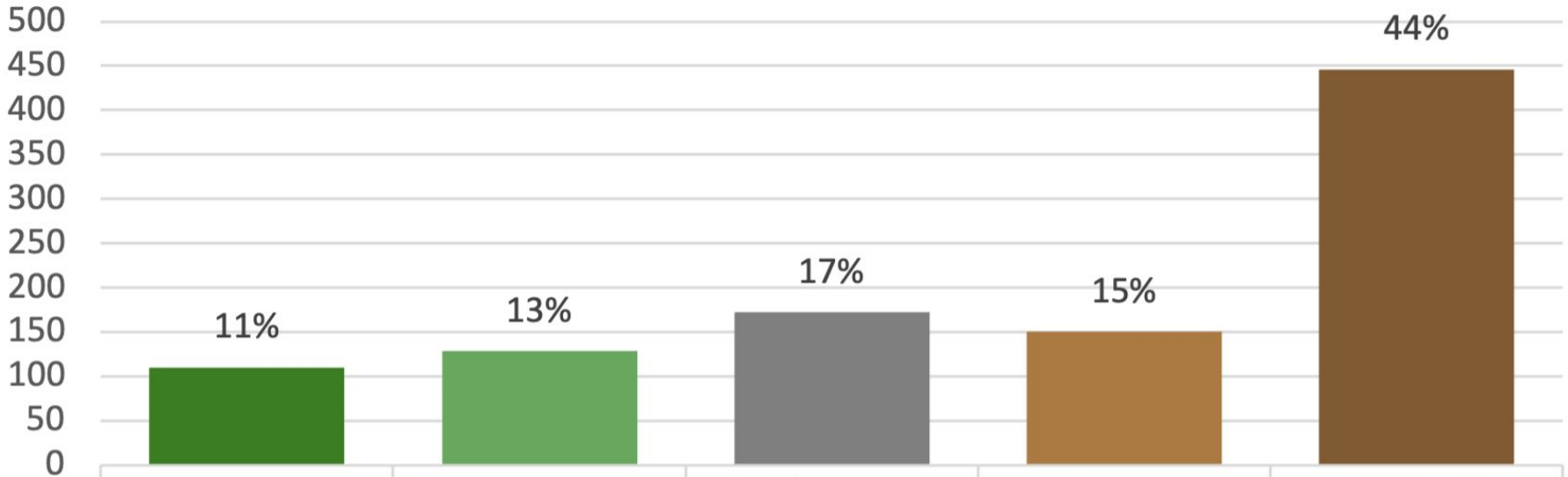
- Outlet Mall / Brevard Road / Transformation Village
- MAHEC
- Social Security Office
- West Haywood
- Omni Grove Park Inn

All Survey Respondents



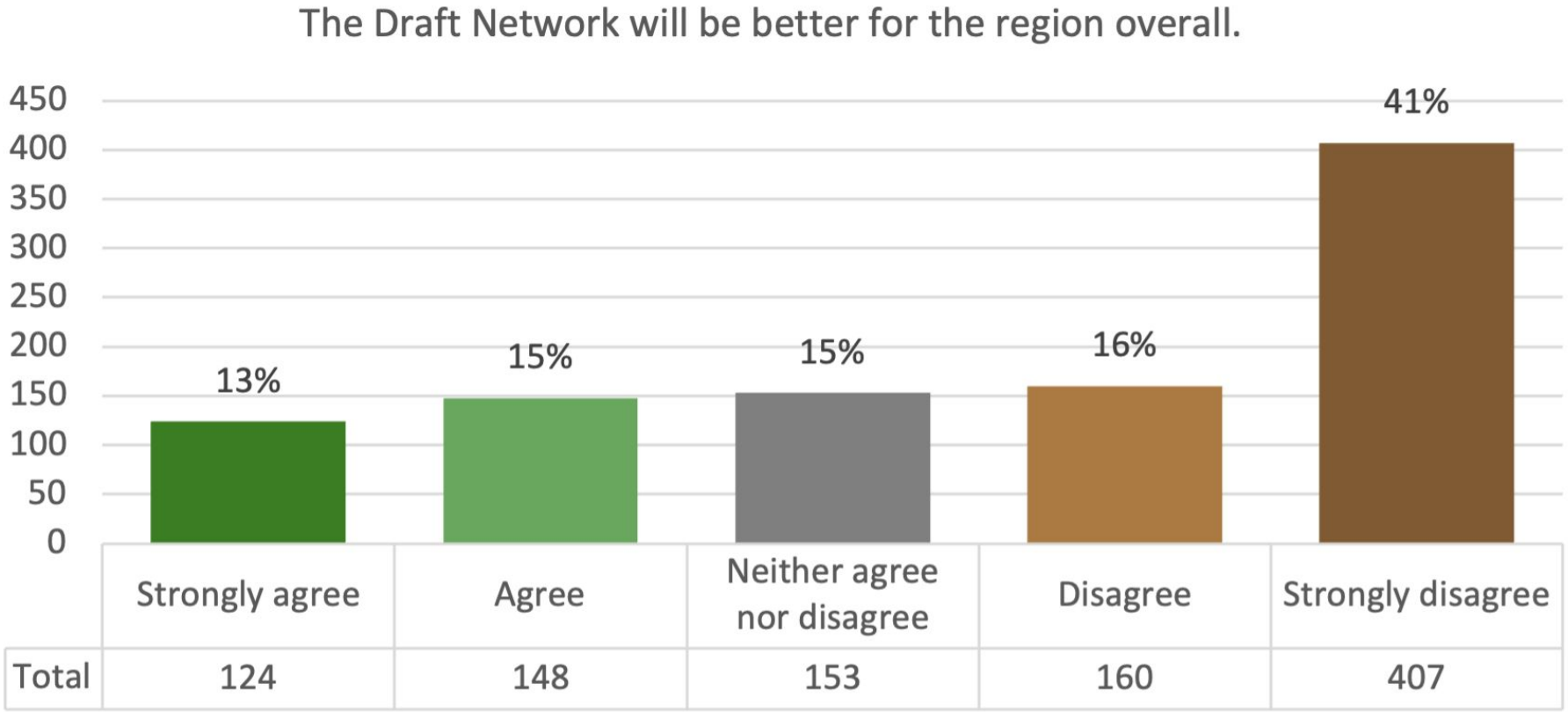
All Survey Respondents

The Draft Network will be better for people I know.

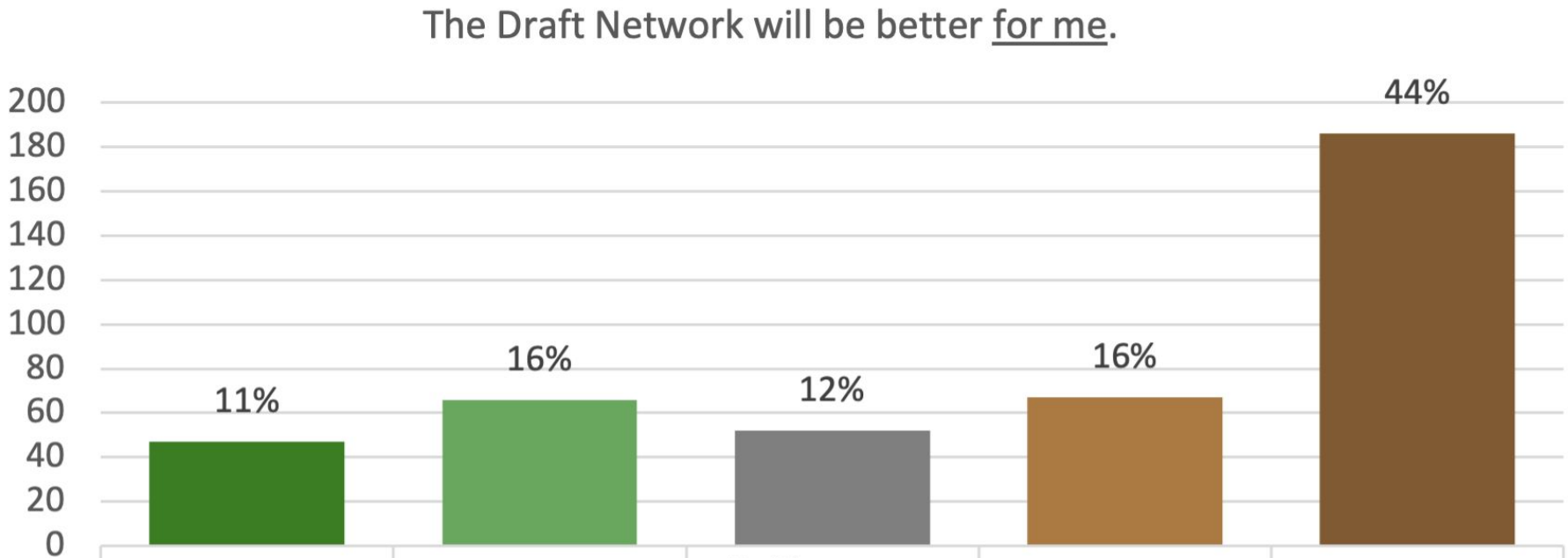


	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Total	110	128	172	150	446

All Survey Respondents

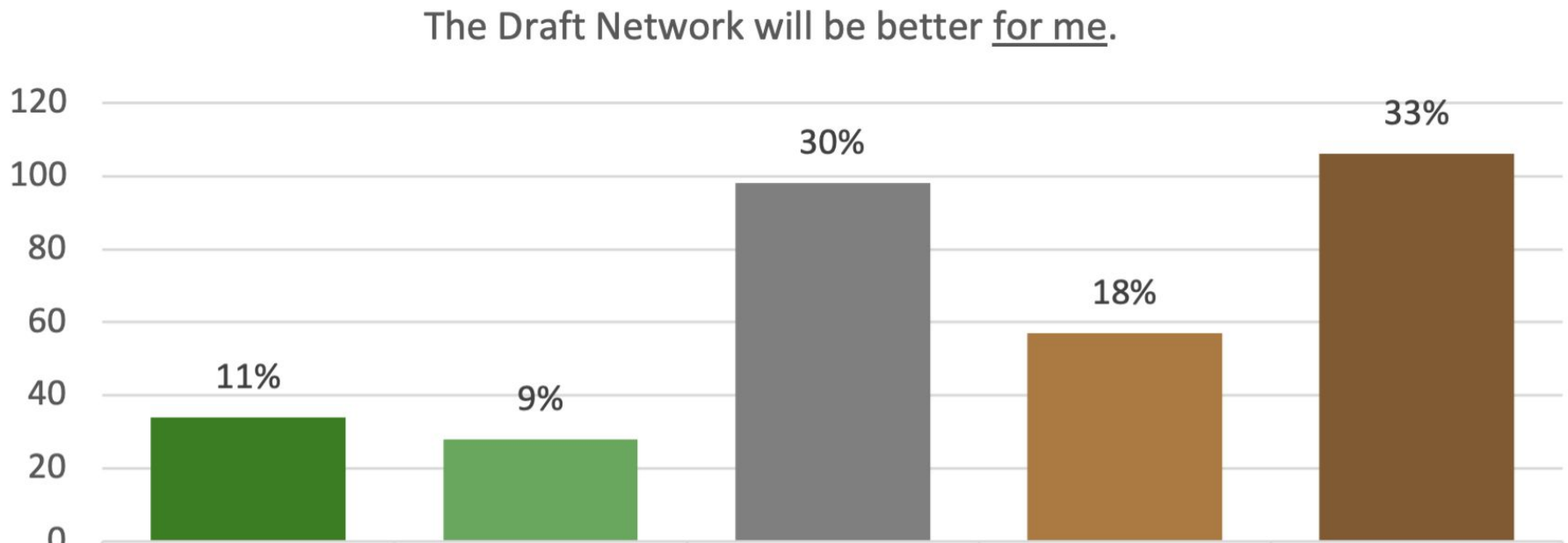


Frequent ART Riders - Survey Responses



	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Total	47	66	52	67	186

Non-ART Riders - Survey Responses



No Action Today, but Options for Consideration

Option 1: Approve the Draft Network as proposed (staff recommendation)

Option 2: Approve Draft Network with modifications to preserve access to any/all of:

- Outlet Mall / Brevard Road / Transformation Village (40 avg. daily riders)
- MAHEC (11 avg. daily riders)
- Social Security Office (8 avg. daily riders)
- West Haywood (34 avg. daily riders)



Can discuss these today based on interest

Total average daily ART riders: 4,300 passengers/day

Option 3: Maintain the current ART Transit Network

Staff's Recommendation

Option 1: Approve the Draft Network as proposed

Based on the following:

- Overall improvements to system reliability, on-time performance, and transfers - enhancing customer experience
- Expanded job access and overall access for lower income communities
- Maintains and/or improves service to HACA communities
- No more 90-minute routes and improved frequencies in higher-growth areas
- Supports Comprehensive Plan, Affordable Housing Plan, Missing Middle Study, Sustainability, and Economic Development goals

PEDE ACTION

- PEDE did not make any specific recommendations or suggest any modifications regarding the proposed Draft Network.
- PEDE requested staff bring the presentation to Council July 28 for further discussion.
- PEDE recommended that any Council decision on the Draft Network at the August meeting also include consideration of a resolution directing the City Manager to secure additional sustainable source(s) of funding for transit.

What's Next?

- Staff, in collaboration with Jarrett Walker, will prepare the Final Draft Network Plan based on City Council consensus feedback this evening

- Continued discussion with impacted groups/ stakeholders

- August 25: Council Action on Final Network Plan and recommended resolution directing the City Manager to investigate additional sustainable source (s) of funding for transit.

Questions & Discussion

Options for Preserving Service

Modification options

Draft Network Proposed Service Cuts (in order of most comments received)

These are not cumulative. Each can be added back individually to the Draft Network, with specific consequences

a) Outlets / Brevard Rd. / Transformation Village (*40*) → Lose 15-minute frequency to Hillcrest and RAD

b) MAHEC (*11*) → Lose consistent 30-min frequency south of MAHEC. Buses 25-45 min.

c) Social Security Office (*8*) → Lose connection between MLK and Tunnel.

d) West Haywood, between Brevard and Patton (*34*) → Lose 30-min frequency on Patton. Gap in service on Patton between NLH and Haywood.

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e) Grove Park Inn (*30*)

f) Kenilworth (*7*)

g) Beaverdam (*2*)

Adding back anything below this line removes final 15-minute service and all timed transfer benefits

Avg. daily rider counts in (#)

4,300 avg. daily riders on ART system

Outlet Mall / Brevard Rd.

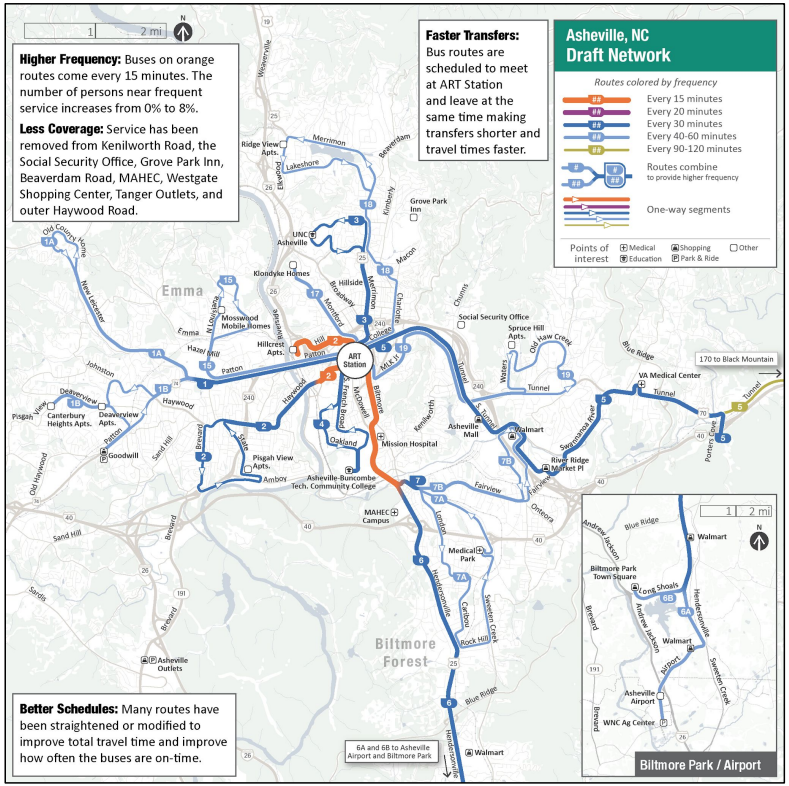
Average daily riders: 40

Approve Draft Network - ART no longer serves Outlet Mall and Brevard Rd. south of Shelburne.

Continue to Serve Outlet Mall (add back in)

Consequence:

- Proposed 15-min service between Hillcrest and Downtown Asheville and the River Arts District increases to 30-min frequency (same as today).
- Carrier Park will not be served.



MAHEC

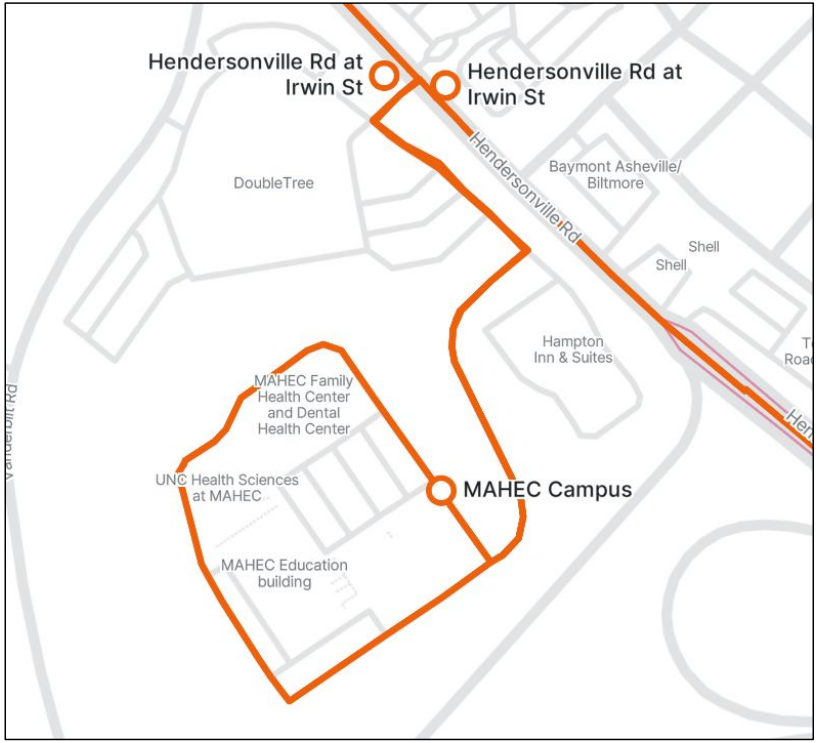
Average Daily Riders: 11

Approve Draft Network - ART no longer serves MAHEC directly.

Continue to Serve MAHEC (add back in)

Consequence:

- Removes 30-min frequency south of MAHEC. Buses would run every 25- 45 minutes.



Social Security

Average daily riders: 8

Approve Draft Network - ART no longer serves Social Security.

Continue to serve Social Security (add back in) with Route 19 and use 240 instead of Tunnel Rd

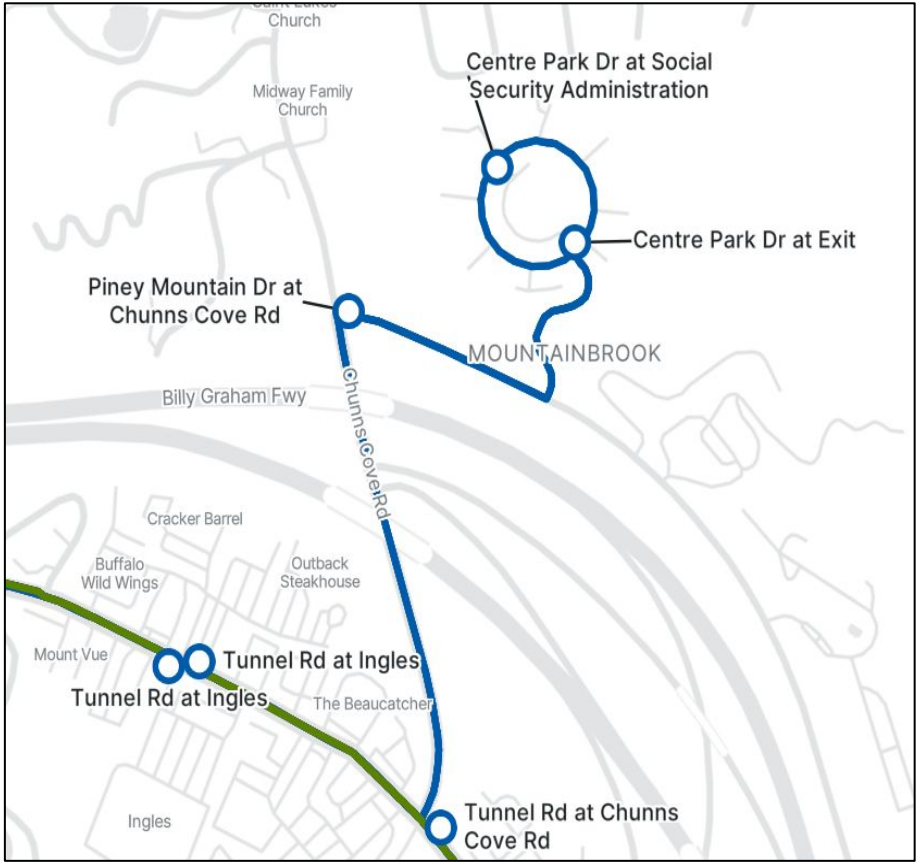
Consequence:

- Riders off of MLK would have to take a different route for Tunnel Rd trips (inconvenience)

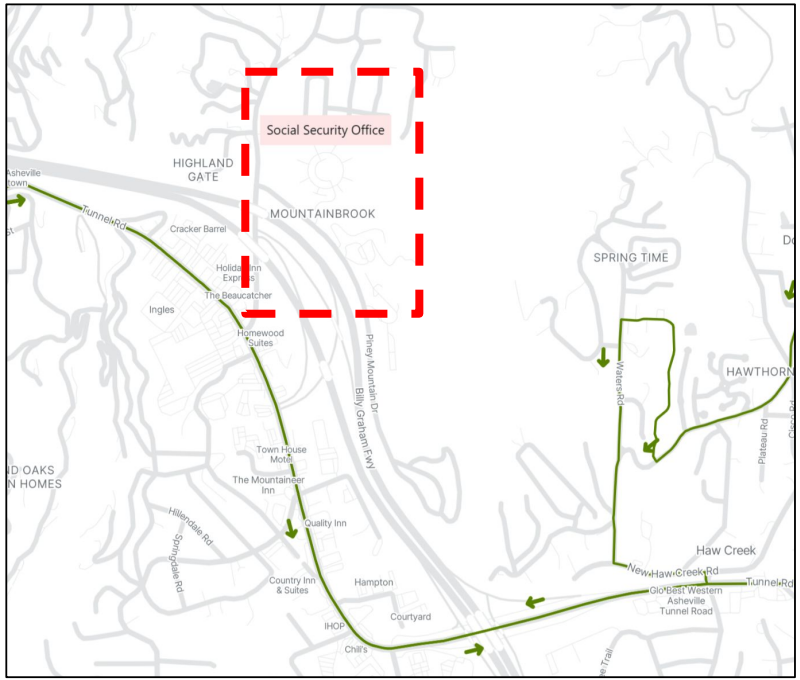
Continue to serve Social Security (add back in) with no further route changes

Consequence:

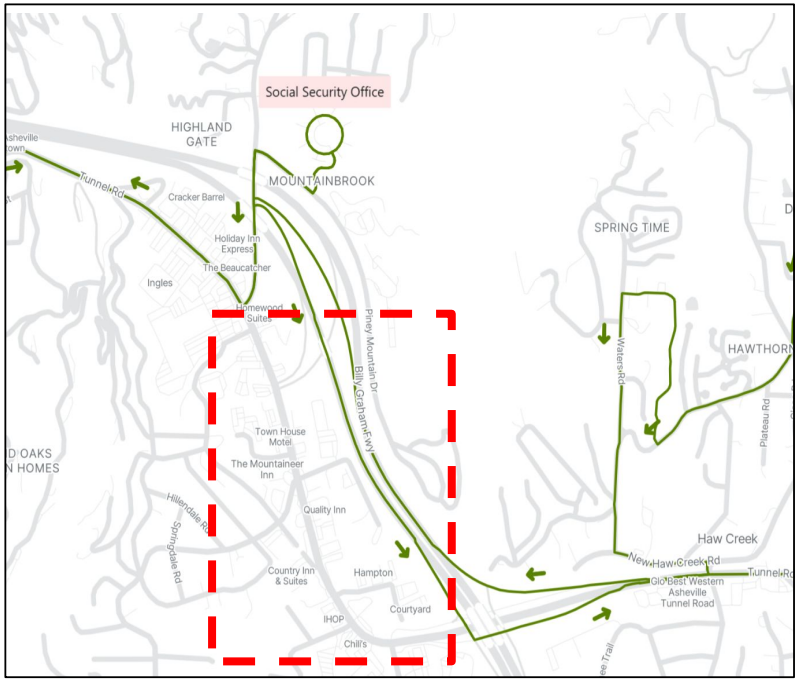
- Adjust route frequency from every 60 min to every 70 min
- Missed transfers and increased wait times for passengers transferring to other routes (inconvenience)



Social Security



Current Draft Network (no service to Social Security Office)



Modified Draft Network (service preserved to Social Security Office)

Tunnel Road service is provided by the secondary route

West Haywood

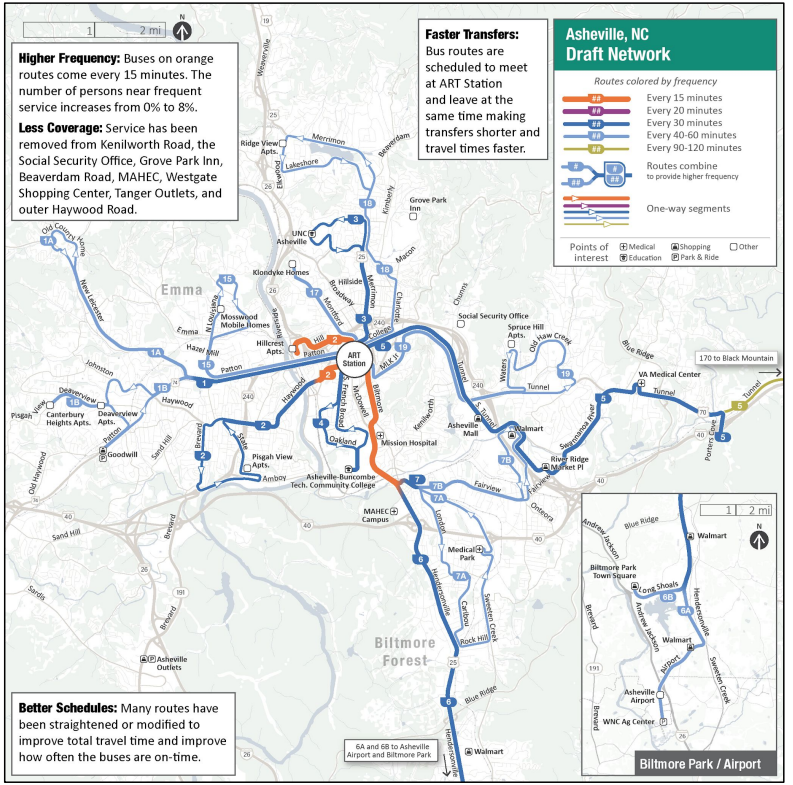
Average daily riders: 34

Approve Draft Network - ART no longer serves West Haywood

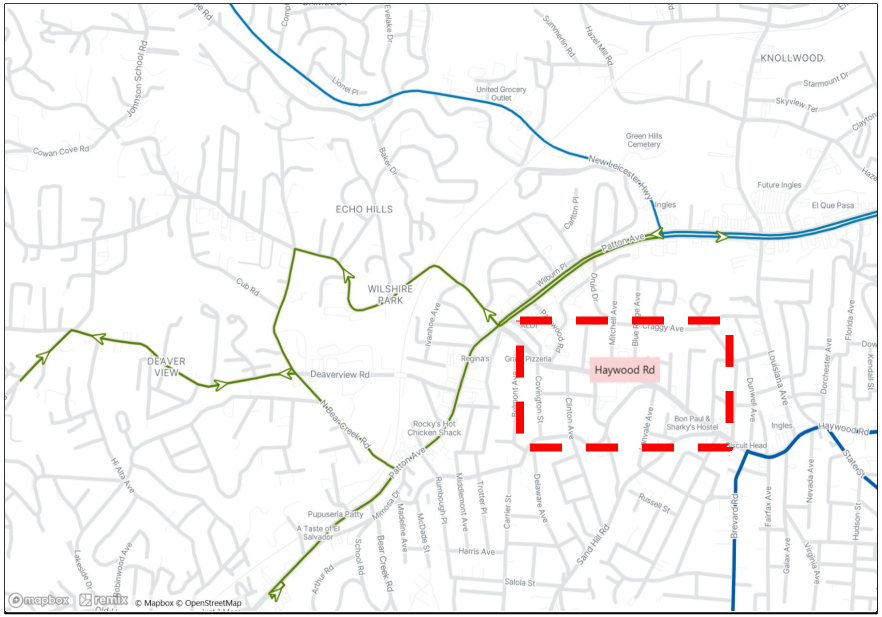
Continue to Serve West Haywood (add back in)

Consequences:

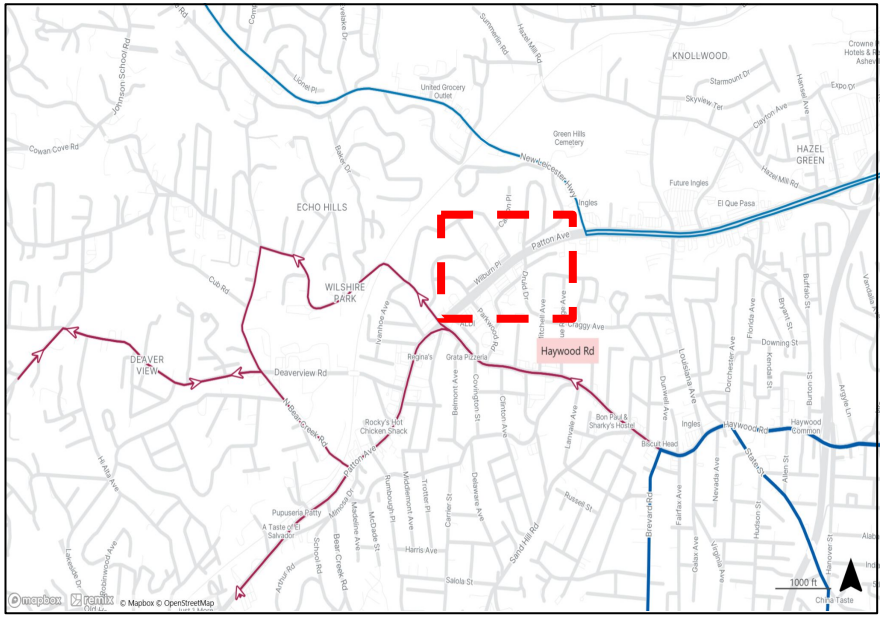
- Loss of 30-minute frequency on Patton Avenue
- Short section of Patton Avenue between New Leicester and Haywood Rd. will no longer be served



West Haywood



Draft Network (no service to West Haywood)



Modification to Draft Network (service removed from Patton Ave and added back to West Haywood)

Creates short gap in coverage on Patton Avenue between New Leicester and Haywood Road