

Good News from



October, 12, 2023

Apple Country Public Transit: Paratransit Services?

- ▶ What is paratransit and why does WNCSource Transportation provide that service?
- ▶ The Problem? In the past we have had annual loses in Paratransit services of \$30,000 to \$40,000 annually.
- ▶ Why? Because we were doing things the way they had always been done.



What has been done to fix the problem?

- ▶ WNCSource Transportation begin researching transportation consulting firms and hired JF Public Transit Consultants.
 - ▶ They worked with us remotely and on site.
 - ▶ They looked how we ran our Paratransit program including
 - ▶ Billing
 - ▶ Scheduling
 - ▶ Clients
 - ▶ Drivers
- ▶ The Scope of work lasted from October 2022 to January 2023.



Paratransit: What's changed?

In the past

- ▶ We were in the **RED**
- ▶ Why?
 - ▶ Under billing
 - ▶ Using Google to charge the time
 - ▶ Not true trip time
 - ▶ Drivers co-mingling trips



Now

- ▶ After working with Consultants; we have maximized and strategized the number of hours we can bill each month.
 - ▶ We now bill the maximum number of hours per our contract.
 - ▶ First pick up to last drop off.
 - ▶ *Excluding long breaks*
- ▶ We have one designated Paratransit driver who does the majority of the trips per day.
- ▶ We have trained our drivers to charge their time as only the true revenue time. Especially on contract work.

Paratransit: The Results

- ▶ Through the first seven months of calendar 2023 year we have a surplus of \$10,163 in our paratransit services operations!
- ▶ Projected surplus in paratransit operations for 2023 is expected to be \$18,000-\$20,000.



Paratranist Surplus/Loss 2023



The good results keep coming!

- ▶ When working with the Consultants they recommended that we renegotiate the total number of billable hours per year we bill the county.
 - ▶ We met with the Planning Department and at that time they said it was not in their power to increase the amount at that time. It had to go to the Board of Commissioners. But The planning Department kept supporting our case and....
- ▶ On September 20, 2023 we received wonderful news! The Board of Commissioners officially amended the ACPT contract to raise the maximum billable service hours for paratransit. This increase in billable hours is effective immediately!
- ▶ Increasing our Paratransit hours from 1,000 to 1,500 per year!!!!

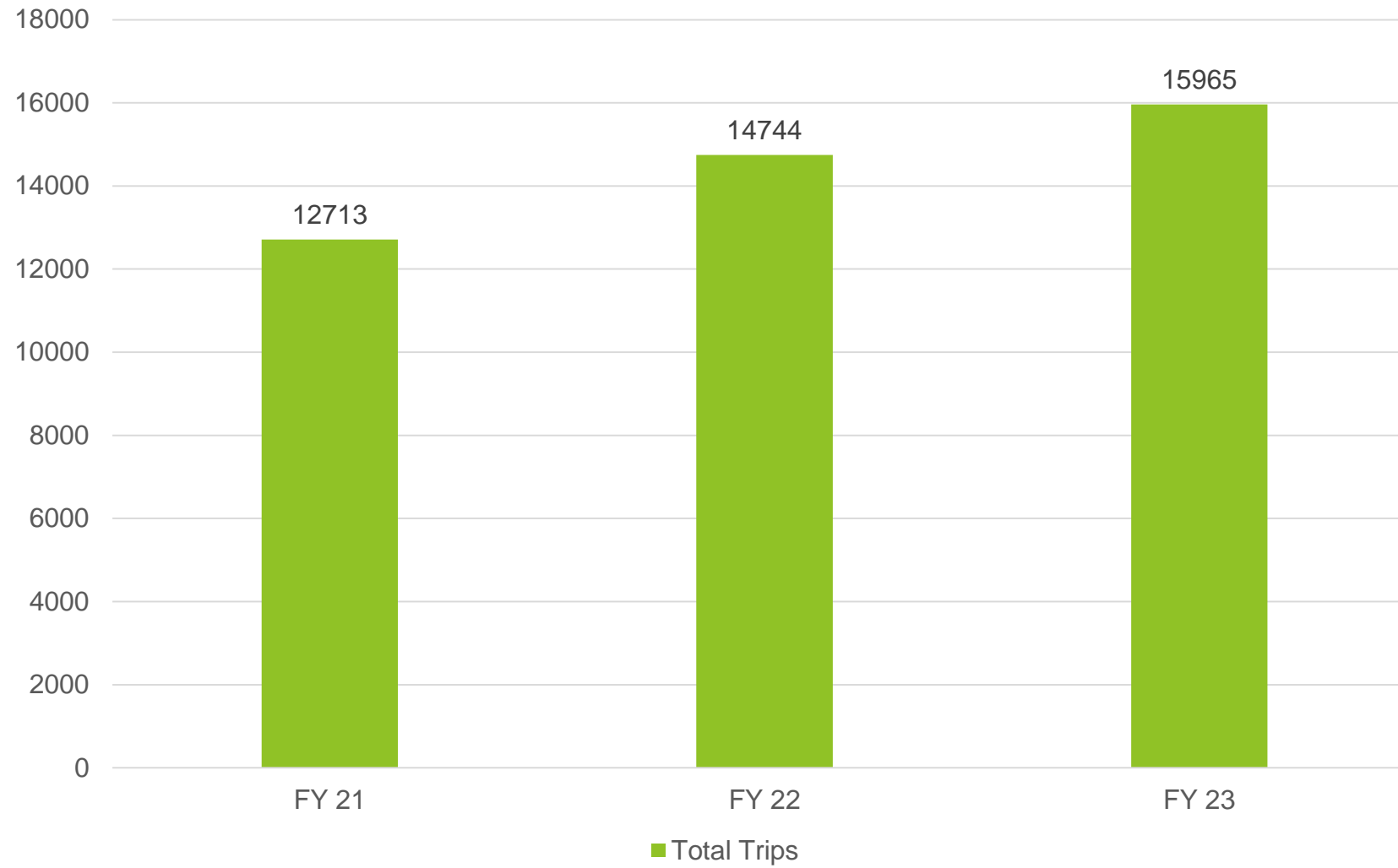


What's new? SafeRide

- ▶ SafeRide is a non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) broker for Medicare.
- ▶ WNCSource signed and started trips in January 2023:
 - ▶ Has made 267 trips as of August 2023.
 - ▶ With a surplus of \$8,516.
 - ▶ We project a surplus of \$12,800-\$13,000 for 2023
- ▶ We have built a relationship with the clients sent to us. Many, after they have used up their trips, become clients of ours under one of our grant programs.
- ▶ The only obstacle we face is having enough drivers to do all the trips we are sent. More drivers means more trips
 - ▶ The more trips we do the better trips we get.



Community Transportation over the past three fiscal years



Covid and its lasting effects: Building Back

- ▶ Sadly some of our transportation programs suffered due to Covid.
- ▶ As we begin to come out of the pandemic we realized many of our programs, were not bouncing back.
 - ▶ Individuals were afraid to come out of their homes and did not know about us.
- ▶ How did we respond?
 - ▶ We sent staff out in the community to spread the word about our services.
- ▶ Here are some of the places we Reached out to:
 - ▶ Interfaith Assistance Ministry
 - ▶ Hendersonville Housing Authority
 - ▶ Sugar Hill Apartments
 - ▶ The Hope Center of Hendersonville
 - ▶ Summer Path Village
 - ▶ Half-Way Mobile Home Park
 - ▶ Springhaven Estates
 - ▶ Covenant Presbyterian Church
 - ▶ First Baptist Church
 - ▶ Council on Aging/Congregate Dining
 - ▶ Thrive
 - ▶ Hendersonville Rescue Mission
 - ▶ The Free Clinic(s)
 - ▶ Bargain Hendo Thrift Store

Building back stronger than ever!

- ▶ Hope Center (formally Hope Academy)- a day program for special needs adults
 - ▶ We had to suspend transportation from November 2021 until May 2023.
 - ▶ Due to lack of drivers
 - ▶ Now we have two vehicles transporting riders to the center.
 - ▶ Including a lift equipped vehicle
- ▶ HCCBG Title III (Gen & Med)
 - ▶ Our numbers vastly dropped due to riders not coming out of their homes.
 - ▶ Now we have two vehicles going to Congregate Mealsite and a vehicle for Shopping five days a week.
 - ▶ Including a lift equipped vehicle for mealsite five days a week and once a week for Shopping.
 - ▶ Demand is growing and there is a wait list with the idea of making additional routes.
 - ▶ We also transport more individual riders for shopping trips who need lift equipped vehicles as well.
- ▶ MountainCare Adult Day Service (ADC)
 - ▶ Due to increased requests for transportation, we have reached out and are working with staff to hopefully create new route(s) for transporting riders to and from.



Key to Success and Personnel



- ▶ Making a decision to work with consultants
 - ▶ Making and implementing the changes they recommended
- ▶ Deeper training and understanding of ADA Paratranist
 - ▶ Making and implementing the changes they recommended
- ▶ Drivers
 - ▶ Being able to hire more drivers and have low turn over
 - ▶ Driver/staff pay, benefits, retention bonuses, positive supportive work environment, and training.
 - ▶ Attempts to hire more part time and intermittent.
 - ▶ Having flexible work schedules for all employees
 - ▶ Expanding what we do
 - ▶ Thanks to the more drivers we are able to have more routes (that offer more accessibility) and are able to help more people in Henderson County.

Staff Achievements

- ▶ Bonnie Wilson, Transportation Support Specialist
 - ▶ Just completed the Drug & Alcohol Program Management & Compliance and Reasonable Suspicion Determination by RLS and Associates, LLC
 - ▶ She is now WNCSource Transportation's Drug & Alcohol Program Manager
- ▶ Marvin Holbert, Operations Manager
 - ▶ is currently enrolled in North Carolina's Transportation Leadership Development Program by North Carolina State University Institute for Transportation Research and Education
 - ▶ He is also about to under go Passenger Assistance Safety and Sensitivity (PASS) Trainer Certification



Challenges we still face.

- ▶ As our trip volume increases so does the workload in our office.
 - ▶ We currently have three people working in the office answering the phones
 - ▶ Two are full time
 - ▶ One is part time
- ▶ Also as our trip volume increases; there is a need to bring on more new drivers to meet the demand
 - ▶ Many are part time or even intermittent
 - ▶ Reducing cost to WNCSource



Thank you
for your
time!