



**ASHEVILLE TRANSIT COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**HR Training Room - 6th Floor City Hall**  
**June 5, 2012**  
**3:30 PM - 5:30 PM**

**RIDE.RELAX.CONNECT**

**Attending:**

**Commission Members:** Julie Mayfield, Dave Erb, Tom Tomlin, Kevin Jenkins, Ken O'Connor, Georgia Shannon,

**Staff:** Mariate Echeverry, Norman Schenck, Martha McGlohon, Janet GeorgeMurr, Nathan Gower

**Community members:** Susan Davis, Shirley Hines, Ron Martin-Adkins, Jeanie Rosenthal, Anna Dolson, Michelle LaRocque, Tim Sadler

12:05 p.m.: Julie Mayfield, Chairman, opened the meeting; read the Announcement to the Public; and welcomed everyone. Transit Commission, staff and public introductions

- **June 5, 2012 Agenda review and approval:** Add to agenda: New Business: Discuss July Transit Commission Meeting; Delete the Transit Commission Goals Update to hold for July meeting.
  
- **May 2, 2011 Transit Commission Minutes Approval:** The minutes were approved with the following corrections:  
Under ATS Reports: change wording as follows: Ken O. stated that the decision is up to the Administration, Chief Financial Officer and the President."  
After the above correction was made, Dave moved to approve the minutes, Tom seconded and carried unanimously.
  
- **Public Comment I:**
  - Anna Dolson has an issued that the buses no longer enter into the Care Partners Rehab Hospital property. People, like herself, who have a disability and have difficulty of walking up and down the hill to catch the bus.
  - Michelle LaRocque distributed to TC members and staff documents showing that routes C and S4 with respect to McDowell Inbound the possible wait time from 6 minutes to 81 minutes from Biltmore Village to McDowell which is a main corridor.
  - Susan Davis, Out-Patient Operations Director of Care Partners Rehab Hospital stated:
    - Before the Transit Master Plan Implementation launch the transit buses would drive up to the Care Partners property, which allowed the clients to have easy access to needed medical and therapy services, as well as having a shelter from the elements of the weather and easy access for medical assistance in the event of an emergency.
    - Clients/patients for who have balance disorders, dizziness, strokes, spinal cord injuries, Parkinson, Multiple Sclerosis, to walk the more than a tenth of the a mile up the hill from London Road to Care Partners creates a greater risk for falls.
    - The alternative of Mountain Mobility is not as convenient due to a delay of several weeks when applying for services and also limiting the clients who are trying to get to work or school as well as therapy. Depending on the situation it could be more costly for the clients to use the services of Mountain Mobility.
    - Ms. Davis understands budget cuts but Care Partners would like to find a safe way to best serve the clients and to promote independence of the clients.
  - Jeannie Rosenthal stated a number of issues with the new transit schedule:
    - That the transit staff's lack of communication to the public that the buses are no longer stopping at Pritchard Park.
    - The Westgate bus stop is stationed on the side of the highway in bee infested weeds. Jeanne suggests moving the bus stop to a safer area between the Westgate area and the existing bus stop;
    - That the one hour round trips are up to two hours due to delays.

- Julie stated that TC invites and appreciates the public comments and announced a new comment box at the ART Station. Julie continued to say that change is hard and TC and staff are working to identify problems.
- **Transit Commission Members' Experience on ATS this past month:**
  - Julie -stated that she had her own bus commute to work and also was a bus ambassador. W1 was on time in the morning. On the first mornings of the launch, there were a couple of missed connections, but the drivers were able to communicate and figured out how to help to connect to route C While riding the bus, Julie noticed cooperation from drivers and passengers in trying to make the system work for everyone, although there were some passengers who were unhappy with the new routes. W4 to Leicester Hwy was great, quick and easy.
  - Ken O. - has spoken with students regarding their experiences: some students are having difficulties, but once they learned the system, they will be better off. One concern was getting to class on time. Ken suggested catching an earlier bus for the students to be in class on time and students stated they were good with that suggestion.
  - Kevin - on S4 it was 5 to 15 minutes late and Kevin was unable to make his connections and ended up walking to the ART Station and missed E1 and E2. Trimming the routes down has not proven to improve on time performance as well cutting evening routes by 4 hours. Kevin is having problems with his certification with Mountain Mobility who is not returning his calls.
  - Dave - N1 and N2 was fine; but it seemed that a couple of times it was running "hot" (ahead of schedule.) Today, he spoke with a rider who appreciated Yuri and the bus ambassadors' help, but will need continued help in the new transit orientation.
  - Tom - Tom gave a brief scenario while he was volunteering at the ART Station for the two weeks from the launch date of 5/21/12. The main complaint was that the N does not go directly to the ART Station. Tom also rode the S4 which appears to be a very tight schedule and may need adjusting.
  - Georgia - received unfavorable comments regarding the new scheduling and waiting periods.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- **Choosing a date for the Transit Commission Retreat in September 2012** - after a group discussion it was decided that Wednesday 9/26 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. October TC meeting will be cancelled.
- **July TC Meeting:** Tom is asking if the July 3, 2012 TC meeting could be moved to the middle of the month in order to receive final reports for June. Norman stated that due to the setup of the GFI system, more accurate reports are completed by the 15th of each month. Mariate stated that since 7/3 is the official meeting that the TC should try to maintain the official meeting date. Tom stated that it would be August before TC receives the ridership stats from the TMP Implementation. Norman stated that it is approximately 3% to 5% differentiation of the ridership stats received at the beginning of the month compared to the middle of the month. Julie suggested leaving the July TC meeting on 7/3 to respect the process and the schedule that was established and receive the preliminary monthly reports. Julie suggested in the middle of July we would ask Norman to send the final stats.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **MAHEC Update:** Julie stated that a second meeting will be in a couple of weeks with MAHEC, Mission, City, County to discuss the health express in having a bus specifically serving the MAHEC and Mission campuses and possibly other medical offices. Dave suggested that perhaps adding Care Partners due to the public comments from Care Partners. Michelle LaRocque asked if a public announcement regarding the health express could be done to ease everyone's minds. Julie stated that this issue is too early in the process to make any announcements. Julie stated that the hope is to have the health express issue resolved by the time MAHEC Family Practice building opens next July, but funding is an issue.
- **Regional Transit Operators Meeting:** Julie stated the State Legislature had created a study committee to look at regionalization of transit systems. The State is recommending:
  - Requiring transit systems to look at increased cooperation/coordination/consolidation with other transit systems in their area.
  - The DOT goal is in three years to come up with the criteria/analysis for those transit systems that agree and there are funding preferences for systems that have regionalized their respective transit system.
  - This recommendation of the State Legislature which has not been adopted, at this time.
  - Mariate stated that there will be funding penalties if the transit systems do not consolidate.

- Julie stated that the City is ahead of the game with the completion of the City's regionalization study completed in August, 2010. .
  - Mariate stated that ART is already coordinating with other systems in the area, but there is still room for improvement.
  - Julie will keep TC updated as more information develops.
- **STRIVE NOT TO DRIVE Update:**
    - Julie stated that there were more work places participating than last year. The Mayor's leadership ride and the big ribbon cutting on the bus system were very successful. Julie asked Norman for stats during the SNTD week.
    - Julie stated that at the same time of SNTD week it was also the first week of the TMP Implementation launch. Norman will work on getting the ridership numbers during SNTD week compared to the week before and also SNTD last year. Norman will compare the totals for five days. Julie suggested comparing SNTD stats to the week before or another comparable week.
    - Norman stated that a number of passengers were taught how to load bicycles on the bus.
    - Tim Sadler stated that this year was a great success and he enjoyed seeing 50 to 100 bicyclists riding to the River Arts District. Mike Sule was leading the group and that SNTD seems to be more ingrained in the community.
    - Julie stated that the Mayor's Leadership bus ride was approximately 1 1/2 hours long then to Pack Square where the Mayor and others spoke. It was a great event to launch SNTD and celebrate the roll out of the new route system.
    - Kevin mentioned that he was planning a trip on GoogleMaps.com and there seems to be a problem in getting to the ART Station in which the trip planner says to walk rather than to ride a particular route.
    - Michelle LaRocque stated that as person who does not Strive Not To Drive, but she is a person who has ridden the bus for 7 years and was not aware of the leadership ride and ceremony which was due to the lack of announcements at the ART Station. Michelle stated that the SNTD should have rolled out at the ART Station for the celebration for the passengers that ride everyday.
    - Julie stated that the SNTD ceremony was a challenge due to having a place to have the leadership ride of 100 bicyclists gathering.

- **ART Fees and Charges for Special Events:** Mariate stated that Tom Tomlin requested this information at the last TC meeting of the current fees and charges, which was attached. Julie recalled from the last meeting that Mariate suggested to wait until further in the new fiscal year to propose free fare for SNTD, due to state and federal unstable funding to wait until later in the year . There were no objections when Julie asked TC if anyone has objected in waiting later in the year.

#### **STAFF UPDATES:**

- **Fuel Grant:** Mariate announced that she will be going to Council with the request for approval of a fuel grant. The funds will allow leveraging some of the operating costs because transit is allowed to use \$500,000 only for operating costs every year. With the \$500,000 and \$130,000 for fuel we will have a more funding from the federal government

- **Status of RFPs:**

- Transit Operations Roof - Mariate announced that the contract was signed and work is to begin soon.
- AVL - Automated Vehicle Location System funding request is coming to the Board of Transportation on Friday and proposing that the whole allocation of the request. If awarded the City will receive \$450,000 to purchase the equipment. The time frame is very tight therefore the project will be ready by the end of the next fiscal year.

- **Review of ATS Monthly Reports:**

- Julie noticed that the ridership in April was down from last year. Mariate believes that the fuel costs were down. It is difficult to say if it is fuel or not, but every time the fuel increases/decreases it effects ridership. There was nothing happening in April to cause the ridership to decrease.
- Norman stated that there is not a safety report for last month in the attachments due to the concentration on the launch of the new system; therefore, the staff did not work on the safety report issues during April.

- **Transit Master Plan Implementation - Phase I Update:**

- Mariate updated TC on the implementation:

- The drivers and riders were getting accustomed to the process but did not encounter large problems during the first week. Assigned were 20 to 25 volunteers for two weeks, before and after the implementation from 7a-9a and 4pm-7pm at the ART Station.
- An increase phone capacity by 4 people 10 days before the launch and worked until June 1st. The adjustment of phone coverage schedule according to the volume of phone calls. The extra phone coverage with good customer service skills and was helpful to the dispatchers in order to handle the drivers and focus on operations.
- Julie asked TC or the public who were bus ambassadors to share their experiences:
- Norman stated that he and his staff worked from 5:30am-7pm. Norman acknowledged the volunteers to include Council members, TC and Mariate and her team of volunteers from City Hall.
- Tom stated that he would like to recognize Norman who worked 14 hours/day and put in long hours that whole week. Julie also wanted to recognize Norman and his staff; Mariate and Yuri for their work.
- Julie wanted to recognize was Michelle LaRocque who worked incredible hours early in the morning and during the day and she was "fabulous." Julie also wanted to recognize the City Council people that came to volunteer, Marc Hunt, Chris Pelly and Gordon Smith.
- Mariate stated that the volunteers were tremendously helpful which eased a lot of anxiety among the riders.
- Julie stated the public meetings reached 200 to 250 people and hundreds of others the week before the launch. Julie stated that by Wednesday of the launch week, riders were settling in and were transitioning into the new language of the route names, etc.
- Norman stated that over 32,000 maps were distributed.
- Tom stated that he was at the ART Station from 7am-3pm. Riders commented that certain routes, i.e. W3, W4, and S1 were helpful. Tom outlined some of the routes that the passengers complained of:
  - Route C; the wait time on Fairview Rd; River Ridge questions; S1 to Biltmore; N on Montford; S4, E1; E2 on the wait time; no buses to Mission Hospital 's entrance.
  - The biggest problem was the bus stop being removed from Pritchard Park which was a focal point of downtown.
  - The bus stop at Rankin Ave is in the right turn lane and then trying to negotiate to the middle lane is very dangerous. Tom is proposing to return the bus stop to Prichard Park. Tom would like to make a motion to reinstate the stop immediately.
- Mariate stated that until all of the comments and issues are analyzed; continue to monitor the ridership; on-time-performance, etc; and to find the weaknesses, Mariate is reluctant to react to make the changes at this time because it is unfair for the riders that have already made the big change and made commitments to be able to make their trips.
- Dave asked Mariate the rationale for the Pritchard Park change. Mariate stated that this could be investigated. Mariate stated that Pritchard Park is a congestion area and a nice bus shelter was installed in front of the Rankin Street garage precisely to make it a focal point.
- Dave stated he shares Tom's concern about the Rankin Street bus shelter and he has noticed how it has caused some traffic problems which is an accident waiting to happen.
- Tom recommends immediate action is needed on the Rankin Street issue. Mariate stated that there are some things that can be changed like bus stops which do not affect the overall schedule; but the routing concerns will need further analysis.
- Julie asked Mariate the timeframe of the analysis of this particular issue could be completed. Mariate stated to make the final analysis of the bus routes, scheduling and bus stops after the fare free which is normal operations. Mariate anticipated a period of time of 90 or 120 days. Julie stated that with the data that is available to Mariate and staff to triage the problem areas. Mariate stated to be caution because the decisions are based on numbers of the same concern. For instance, 20 people with this problem versus one person every day.
- Mariate stated that the bus drivers Union has to be involved and that is a period of time.
- Julie asked if it is fair by July 3 that transit staff have logged and reviewed the comments by then. By July the possibility of having a list of the triage list by the easier problems, to the most difficult problems; and the problems that have been resolved. Mariate would like to organize them in a logical way and then TC will know more about the process.
- Mariate suggested to TC to intercede with Council to keep their minds open in keeping the master plan moving. There are many other things that need to happen in order for the master plan to be meaningful. Additional buses are needed in some of the routes which require more funding to make this happen. Mariate stated "that Council needs to be aware that we have done what we could with what we have and if more things are needed we need more funding."

- Tom suggests that an extra bus is needed for E1 and E2 earlier than the 90 days study.
- Michelle LaRocque stated that E1 is her main topic and supports Tom's concern regarding Pritchard Park. Michelle brought TC up to date regarding her observation in riding E1 which is running 45 minutes late. Michelle suggests to canceling the 5pm run on E1 or sending out a bus at 1pm or 3pm, which will be back on schedule for the rest of the day.
- Tim Sadler stated that he urges accountability of the transit system. Dave stated the ART staff are already held accountable to the citizens through many mechanisms, including the Transit Commission, and that the staff deserve a pat on the back for the managing the major changes involved in the TMP Implementation so competently and professionally.
- Jeanie Rosenthal stated that there is an easy answer to all of this. If she understands what Mariate was stating that if the City could come up with an extra \$125,000 could hire someone who has experience in traffic planning in meeting customers needs would be a good use of the money.
- Tom stated that he was at the ART Station on Saturday afternoon when E1 was very late and had to be held over in order to get it back on time for the 4pm run. By that time at least 50 people were waiting for E1 and people were getting hostile. E1 and E2 needs to be looked at very carefully.
- Kevin stated running 40 minutes late on one route really means 20 minutes early on the next route.
- Julie stated that there will be more information next month. Julie stated that everyone agrees that we need to be thoughtful and smart about making new changes but also need to make them as quickly as we possibly with as much information as that is available.

● **PUBLIC COMMENT II:**

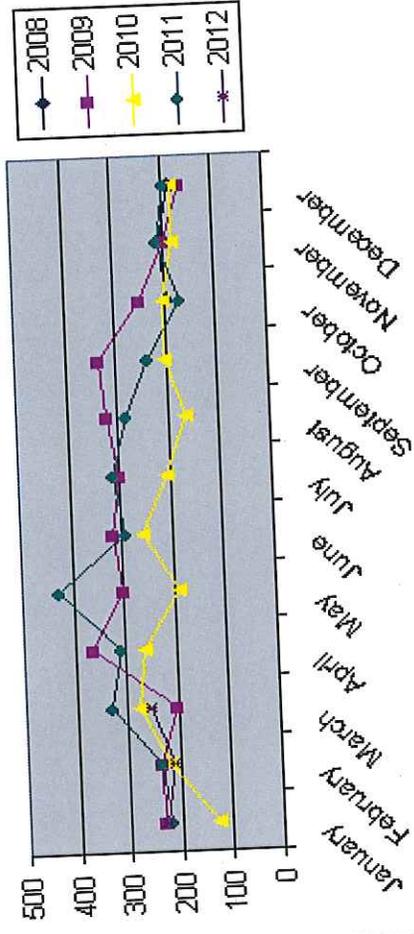
- Michelle stated that she has something positive to say. As a bus ambassador, the riders really appreciated the help. In riding new routes there is a learning curve and maybe after the new data if there could be bus ambassadors at the transfer points in teaching riders in other ways to get around to town more effectively. Mariate stated that was something that was observed during the implementation week that riders do not know how to transfer between routes. Julie would like to revive having ambassadors on the bus and at the ART Station to help riders figure out the most efficient ways.
  - Mariate brought to the TC's attention that there is a bulletin board at the ART Station that was TC's idea and duty to post the agenda and other information. Mariate recommended that the staff would resume the responsibility if TC does not. Tom stated he would continue to post. Janet will have available by Thursday before each TC meetings.
  - Jeanie Rosenthal commented that her experience with GoogleMaps.com was not good. It was saying that there was not a bus stop at Earth Fare on S Hendersonville Rd., which we know that there is. Another issue is E1 on 6/1 regarding the times of arrival to the VA, Also, there would not be a black out hour during the 7pm hour but it seems that if the 7pm is added that then the hours after were subtracted so that is not a net gain.
  - Tim Sadler stated that he urges accountability of the transit system. Dave stated the ART staff are already held accountable to the citizens through many mechanisms, including the Transit Commission, and that the staff deserve a pat on the back for the managing the major changes involved in the TMP Implementation so competently and professionally.
  - Julie stated that the best way to make people in the system accountable is to call the phone number on the back of the brochure and file a report or an email to IRide.com. After a group discussion, Julie stated she is happy to see the public attending, but if there are particular people or incidents the only way that these issues can be dealt with is by calling or emailing IRide or the comment box at the ART Station.
- **Announcements:** Dave announced the movie entitled: "Revenge of the Electric Car" on 6/15/12 at Asheville Pizza downtown location which is sponsored by Land of Sky Regional Council after dusk.

● **Agenda Items for next meeting:**

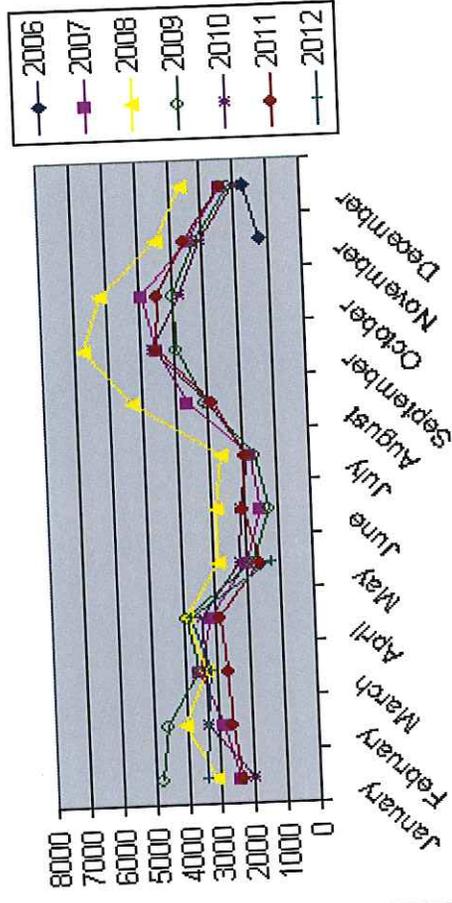
- MAHEC Update
- SNTD Data
- Regional Transit Operators Report of 5/1/12 on Consolidation
- Transit Commission Goals

Meeting Adjourned at 5:25pm.

### Buncombe County



### UNCA

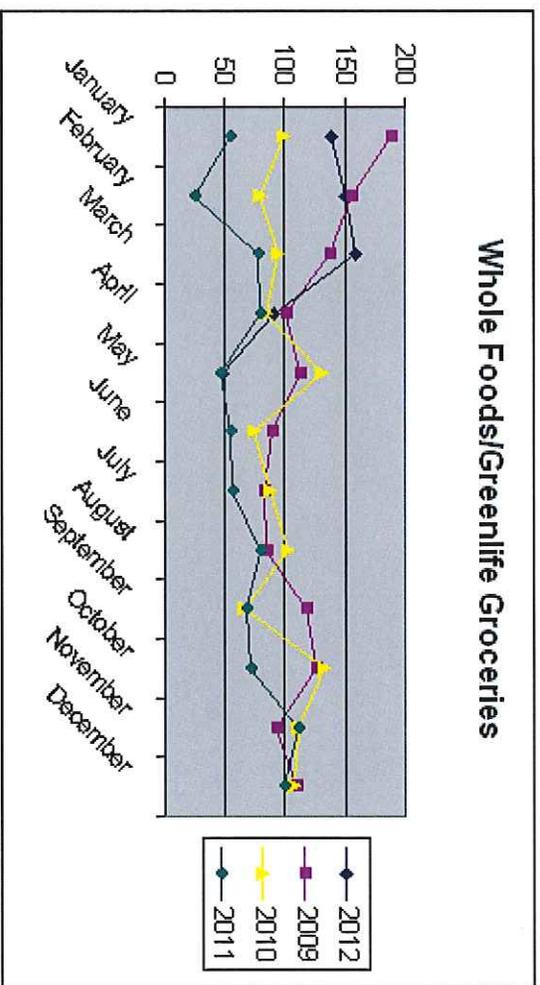


Buncombe County	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
January	195	209	187	591	10804
February	231	236	204	366	302
March	222	275	264	189	259
April	127	311	430	294	313
May	231	221	230	230	213
June	238	329	254	207	359
July	329	311	207	359	
August	264	430	294	313	
September	189	259	313	283	
October	319	208	167	236	
November	301	167	203	169	
December	324	203	184	211	
Year Totals	334	205	183	197	1263
Overall Totals	591	3232	2486	3232	1263

UNCA	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
January	2433	2860	3536	3163	2010	1529	1816
February	3140	4041	3346	3906	2870	2882	2692
March	4777	4562	3554	3891	1803	1253	1677
April	2020	3346	3335	3433	2248	2129	1890
May	2326	2652	2662	2888	1582	2055	1918
June	3349	3245	3737	1301			
July							
August							
September							
October							
November							
December							
Year Totals	3039	36246	49230	37825	34965	33977	15030
Overall Totals	210312						



<b>Whole Foods/Greenlife</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
January		188	100	54	139
February		156	80	25	151
March		138	94	77	158
April		101	85	79	91
May		113	131	46	48
June	103	90	75	54	
July	205	82	88	57	
August	177	84	103	79	
September	164	117	66	68	
October	181	125	133	71	
November	152	93	110	111	
December	185	109	107	99	
<b>Year Totals</b>	<b>1167</b>	<b>1396</b>	<b>1172</b>	<b>820</b>	
<b>Overall Totals</b>	<b>4555</b>				<b>587</b>



Asheville Transit System									
Route Ridership-May, 2012									
Current Month					Fiscal Year to Date				
Route	This Year	Last Year	Change	Delta	This Year	Last Year	Change	Delta	
1	7,674	12,061	-4,387	-36%	128,180	119,187	8,993	8%	
2	6,630	10,017	-3,387	-34%	108,427	99,588	8,839	9%	
4	5,488	8,094	-2,606	-32%	87,192	64,290	22,902	36%	
5	1,629	2,073	-444	-21%	18,511	73,692	-55,181	-75%	
6	5,009	7,123	-2,114	-30%	74,258	25,356	48,902	193%	
8	4,337	6,299	-1,962	-31%	67,146	66,553	593	1%	
9	4,337	5,853	-1,516	-26%	67,337	58,234	9,103	16%	
11	6,371	10,150	-3,779	-37%	105,638	71,446	34,192	48%	
12	5,307	8,423	-3,116	-37%	89,629	92,685	-3,056	-3%	
13	6,018	9,218	-3,200	-35%	97,930	82,590	15,340	19%	
15	6,232	10,079	-3,847	-38%	95,752	84,898	10,854	13%	
16	3,494	4,914	-1,420	-29%		77,334			
18	5,534	8,710	-3,176	-36%	105,805	96,540	9,265	10%	
26	6,034	8,548	-2,514	-29%	91,284	81,062	10,222	13%	
36	510	720	-210	-29%	49,591	8,588	41,003	477%	
38	455	456	-1	0%	6,915	22,962	-16,047	-70%	
41	1,369	2,203	-834	-38%	18,622	12,546	6,076	48%	
46	567	844	-277	-33%	9,561	7,149	2,412	34%	
51	562	899	-337	-37%	9,551	16,963	-7,412	-44%	
52	353	566	-213	-38%	7,544	9,285	-1,741	-19%	
170	3,728	5,651	-1,923	-57%	15,073	14,526	547	4%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>81,638</b>	<b>122,901</b>	<b>-41,263</b>	<b>-34%</b>	<b>1,253,946</b>	<b>1,185,474</b>	<b>145,806</b>	<b>6%</b>	
C	2,418								
N	1,523								
N1	2,321								
N2	1,641								
N3	2,848								
E1	6,325								
E2	3,459								
S1	3,552								
S2	1,454								
S3	3,076								
S4	2,404								
W1	4,162								
W2	2,405								
W3	2,930								
W4	1,657								
170	1,501								
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43,676</b>								
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>125,314</b>	<b>122,901</b>	<b>2,413</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1,379,260</b>	<b>1,185,474</b>	<b>193,786</b>	<b>16%</b>	