ASHEVILLE TRANSIT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Police/Fire Training Room-Municipal Building
March 10, 2010 4:30-6:30

Attending:
Commission Members: Dave Erb, Hanna Raskin, Tom Tomlin, J Neal Jackson, Georgia M. Shannon, Kevin Jenkins, Paul Van Heden
Staff: Mariate Echeverry, Edna Johnson, Janet GeorgeMurr, Shannon Tuch,
Community members: Natalie Murdock of French Broad River MPO, Tom Herman, NCDOT; Roberta Cole, Geri Solomon, Nancy Summers, Mark Opperman, Sue Ellen Morrison, Ruth F. Schwarz.

4:35 p.m.: Hanna opened the meeting.

Agenda Amendments:
- Add: Councilman Brownie Newman's request to have passes for the homeless.
- Add under New Business: To have bus routes that Transit Commission (TC) rides written on each TC name tent;
- TC group picture at retreat

Explanation of Public Comment Standards and Opportunities:
- Paul read the standards of procedures regarding public comment.

February 10, 2010 Minutes Review: Following corrections were made:
- Under Ambassador Program Policy: remove "Hanna asked for a vote."
- Under Presentation by Brett McCall on GPS/GLYMPSE: remove sentence "It was decided by TC to test the program……..
  Correct last sentence to read: Hanna moved to ask staff to further proceed with RFP process regarding vehicle locator."
- Under SNTD week; deleted the name "Craggy Mountain"

Tom moved to approve the minutes with the above corrections, Paul second the motion and all were in favor.

Welcome Public – Introductions and Pre-Meeting Public Comment
- Hanna welcomed the public with an introduction of each member of Transit Commission, staff and public. At this time, Hanna asked the public for any pre-meeting comments and none were given.
- Shannon Tuch, Planning Department, City of Asheville, will give a presentation on how the Planning Department incorporates transit into its work.
- Sue Ellen Morrison, Disease Control Manager, Buncombe County Health Department will give a presentation on the threats of contagious disease associated with public transit and review how other systems have mitigated risk.
- Geri Solomon, Director, International Link, will discuss how Asheville Transit might better serve non-native English speakers and will present results from recently completed survey.
- Ruth Schwarz suggested having a bus for the special events in the City until midnight on Fridays and Saturdays from downtown to the Asheville Mall and Arboretum. Also suggested to have bus available for the Brevard Music Festival patrons who would like to travel to Asheville to shop. Hanna stated that Ms. Schwarz has good ideas, but Transit does not have extra funds to provide the services. The Arboretum bus run was not successful in the past, but the other places are good ideas.
- Tom Herman, NCDOT
- Robert Cole, with International Link project.

- Mark Opperman, Asheville Transit System (ATS) bus driver .
- Staff and Transit Commission members introduced themselves.

Presentations:

- Shannon Tuch, City of Asheville, Planning Department: Discussed how Transportation and Transit are interrelated. Asheville is not different from other cities regarding development patterns and density. Since 1950 Asheville was a low density city, which contributed to a number of challenges in not using the optimal land use. Planning will be using the SmartGrowth program. The City Comprehensive Plan (named the City Development Plan 2025) was adopted in October, 2003 and the City Development Plan in 2025. Improving features for multi-modal programs, creating more comfortable environment, better sidewalks; burying power lines, looking at new zoning ordinance on most travelled corridors. Planning is looking at the Transit Master Plan on 30 minute frequencies in higher density areas. Shannon discussed the two year old zoning study on Merrimon and US 25 and the challenges to implement a different zoning pattern.
- Sue Ellen Morrison – Disease Control with Buncombe County Health Department presented with a PowerPoint Presentation of challenges in protecting the public from contagious diseases and what the Transit Center could implement, i.e. masks, hand sanitizers, etc. and how they can help.
- Geri Solomon – announced that Board of Directors of International Link, a mobile service that has supported the foreign-born in Asheville for several years, has dissolved the agency. Geri also mentioned that there is a proposal to partner with United Way 211 (language line) to produce wallet size cards with key vocabulary words, in Spanish and Russian; maps with stickers with keys words; transit rider 101 during SNTD week; volunteers riding with the bus new riders showing the basics of riding a bus. Also, a survey was completed through the District Attorney Offices, Warren Wilson College, UNC-Asheville focusing on the Latino community. Edna suggested teaching the drivers key words in Spanish. A discussion among Transit Commission members, staff and public suggesting: bus drivers to keep a notebook of keywords; handbooks; symbol cards; student volunteering. J. Neal asked how Transit could remove the "fear" factor in riding the buses. Hanna could write an article in the Spanish newspaper; Transit 101 during Strive Not To Drive Week 5/17-21/10. Hanna mentioned that the new maps will be redesigned and clear for any language.

NEW BUSINESS

- Council Liaison Update: Hanna has begun monthly meetings with Councilman Smith. Hanna discussed GLYMPSE and the Ambassador Program and she asked Councilman Smith for his input on these programs. Hanna is to meet with the City Manager, Gary Jackson on the above subjects. J Neal asked if TC could have a councilman who is able to make the monthly meetings.
- Friends of Asheville Transit: Transit Commission member, Paul Van Heden launched a program last year for transit users and fans to gather after the commission meetings, but the club has been dormant since November.
- Hanna suggested placing each TC member's bus route number on their name card.

OLD BUSINESS:

- New Member Orientation: The new TC members are asked to complete a series of orientation activities prior to their second meeting. Hanna mentioned that Georgia was unable to attend this TC meeting due to being sick. Hanna reminded the new members to complete the questionnaire and send to her.
- Transit Commission Retreat Agenda and TC presentation schedule:
  - Transit Commission pictures will be taken
  - Mariate announced that a facilitator has been selected
  - The facilitator will assemble an agenda and send to Hanna. The agenda will include:
    - TC's vision/mission
    - Fiscal Responsibility
    - Goals for FY11
    - List of all presenters for two years
    - Projects

J. Neal asked if Councilman Smith will be attending the Retreat. Mariate volunteered to contact Councilman Smith. Paul suggested having a speaker on how ¼ cent tax for transit was passed in Mecklenburg County. Tom asked if the ¼ cent tax will be voted on by the voters in Buncombe County. Mariate stated that during this Retreat, TC will discuss what is important to them. Hanna suggested moving the presenters to May.

- Strive Not To Drive Week: From 5/19 through 5/23/10.
    - Multimodal discussions during happy hour at the Lexington Avenue Brewer (LAB).
    - Saturday, May 15th – Family Day to include bus bingo starting at P&R lot at Goodwill ends at the Health Adventure' plus chalk will be available for the children scribbling on the sidewalks; drawing at Liberty Bikes for a free child helmet safety check.
    - Multi-modal fashion show
    - Bus fares on 5/23 (Friday) will be $0.25;
    - Mayor's Leadership Ride
    - Bike valet parking at Downtown After 5 event on Friday 5/23;
    - Half-price bike rentals at participating bike shops.

Update from Staff:

- Transit Master Plan Funding: Mariate announced that the requested funding will be for on-time performance, marketing, 30 minutes routes. City Council decided to continue this discussion at the 4/13/10 Council Session. Mariate suggested the TC members to attend the April 13, 2010 Council meeting in support of the proposal. Hanna encouraged TC to attend the Council meeting on 4/13. Tom was concerned about equipment availability to provide 30-min frequency. Mariate answered that the city has the equipment. City of Asheville will have five new buses which are replacing the old buses; staff and communications will chose the color for the buses. A marketing firm will work on the design. J Neal asked if the ATS garage crew is prepared to work on the new equipment. Mariate mentioned that training of the new technology and tools will be available for the maintenance crew. Edna also mentioned that ATS can "piggyback" with Charlotte on the training.
- RFP Status vehicle locator: Mariate spoke with COA's Purchasing Director, Amy Patterson, regarding an RFP for GLYMPSE or a vehicle locator. Amy has concerns:
  1. If GLYMPSE does do a pilot program – they may not necessarily be chosen in the RFP process;
  2. The question of "free" for a lifetime as far as maintenance, phone monthly fee; liability.
  3. Amy asked if Brett is aware of any governmental agency using GLYMPSE.

  Mariate stated that an RFP will still need to be completed. Amy is researching the "free" aspect and staff will wait for the research on the governmental use of GLYMPSE.
- Ridership: Mariate stated that she received a phone call from MPO that NCDOT sent out an RFP for Intercity programs and COA was not informed. The deadline was Feb, 2010. Paul asked if Tom Herman sent out notices to his representatives. Natalie Murdock stated that MPO did not receive notice. Hanna announced that TC will need to take appropriate action in contacting our representatives to send a letter to Wanda Profit of NCDOT Board of Transportation. Mariate said that it is important to communicate with the delegates as to why the Black Mountain route is so important. Letter will be addressed to Wanda Profitt, Board of Transportation, Division 13, NCDOT. Hanna suggested offering Ms. Profitt to run the Black Mountain route and attend SNTD Transit 101. Hanna made a motion to send a letter to Wanda Profitt and our state legislative delegation explaining the communication breakdown and emphasizing the importance of the Black Mountain route.

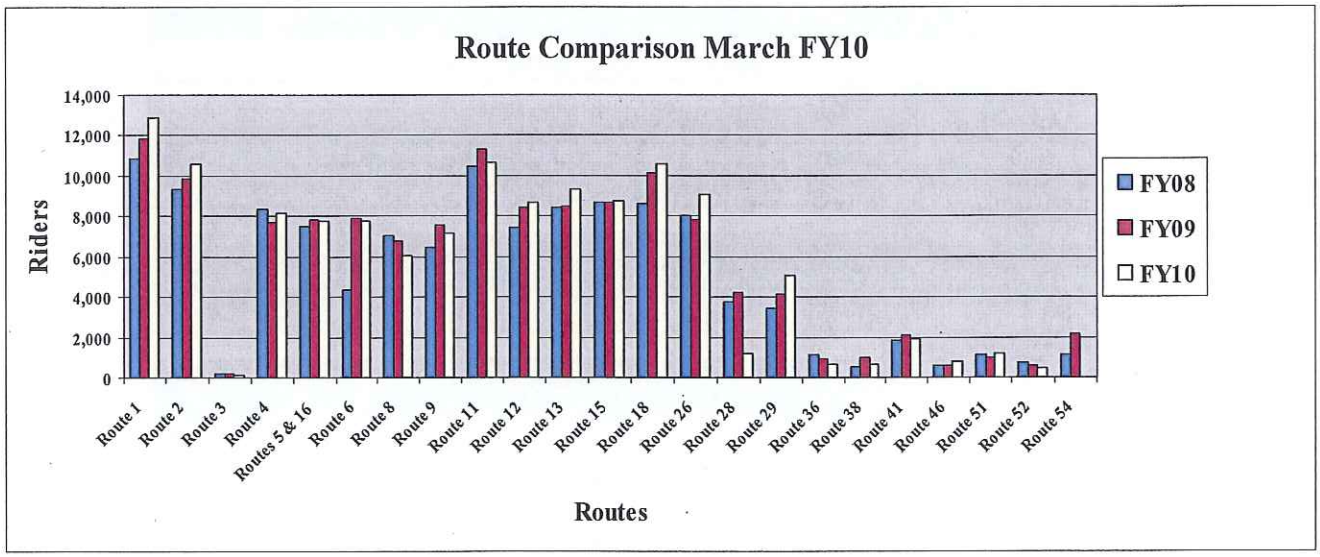
Announcements:

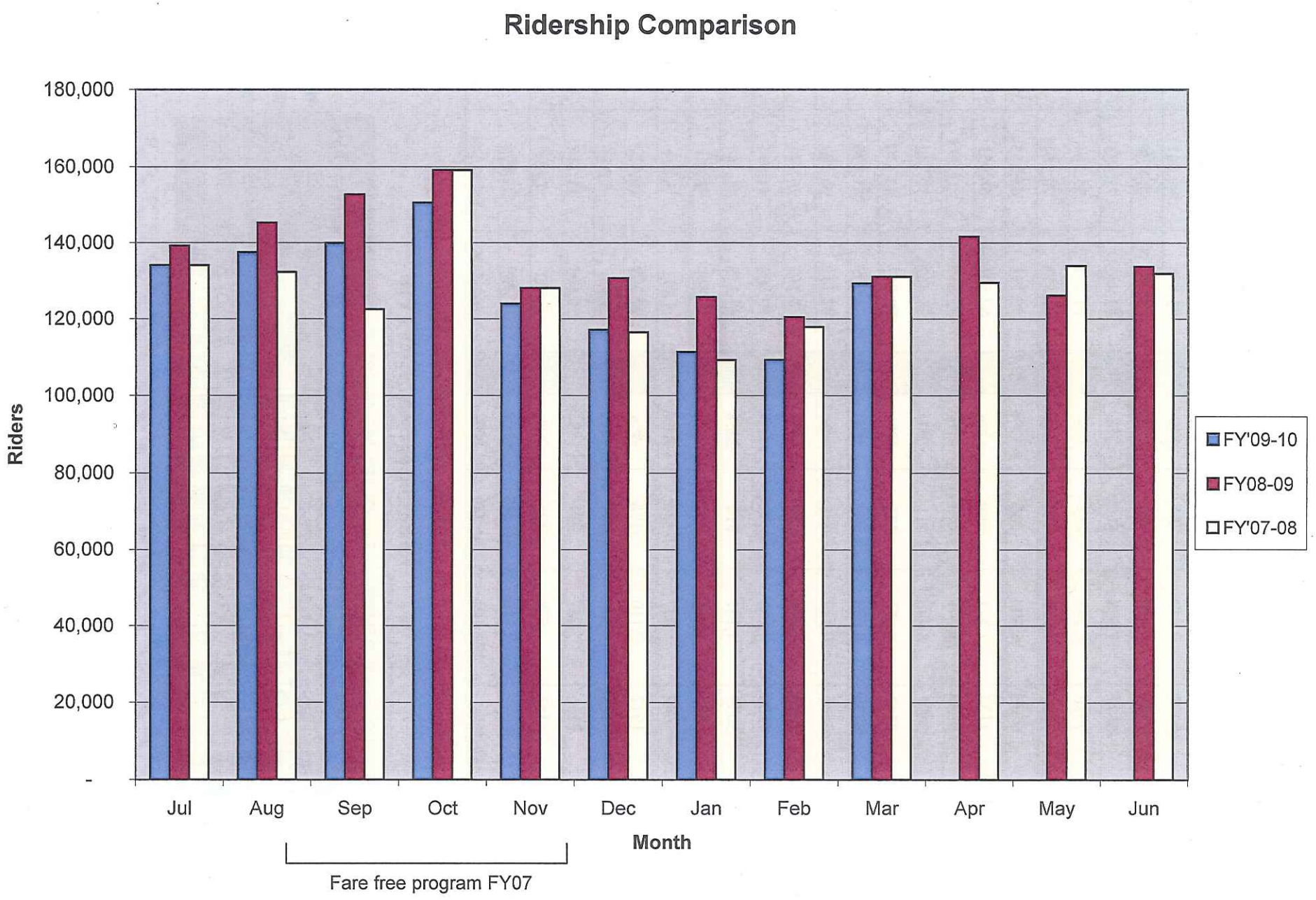
- Transit Commission Retreat Wednesday 4/14/10 from 9a-3pm at Asheville Design Center, 8 College Street.
- The Thirsty Monk has moved to April 7th for Friends of Transit informal meeting.

Agenda: Retreat Agenda

Adjourned: 6:30 pm

	Current Month-March, 2010					Fiscal Year to Date			
Route	This Year	Last Year	Change	Delta		This Year	Last Year	Change	Delta
1	12874	11,847	1,027	9%		107,869	113,053	-5,184	-5%
2	10602	9,847	755	8%		85,838	89,041	-3,203	-4%
3	146	166	-20	-12%		2,183	3,179	-996	-31%
4	8177	7,658	519	7%		73,442	71,683	1,759	2%
5 & 16	7780	7,793	-13	0%		71,741	73,734	-1,993	-3%
6	7739	7,920	-181	-2%		62,573	70,284	-7,711	-11%
8	6063	6,802	-739	-11%		55,111	65,253	-10,142	-16%
9	7153	7,553	-400	-5%		62,531	68,951	-6,420	-9%
11	10620	11,301	-681	-6%		95,359	102,995	-7,636	-7%
12	8651	8,440	211	3%		73,452	77,344	-3,892	-5%
13	9343	8,471	872	10%		78,703	83,640	-4,937	-6%
15	8720	8,689	31	0%		84,709	81,896	2,813	3%
18	10566	10,112	454	4%		92,119	93,189	-1,070	-1%
26	9045	7,841	1,204	15%		78,767	76,771	1,996	3%
28	1208	4,230	-3,022	-71%		29,833	41,074	-11,241	-27%
29	5059	4,141	918	22%		44,315	41,447	2,868	7%
36	663	905	-242	-27%		7,294	8,764	-1,470	-17%
38	642	987	-345	-35%		5,892	5,325	567	11%
41	1912	2,110	-198	-9%		17,799	19,427	-1,628	-8%
46	773	578	195	34%		5,421	6,040	-619	-10%
51	1166	987	179	18%		10,607	11,288	-681	-6%
52	453	578	-125	-22%		5,611	7,159	-1,548	-22%
54		2,148	-2,148	100%		13,280	21,004	-7,724	-37%
	129,355	131,104	-1,749	-1%		1,164,449	1,232,541	-68,092	-6%

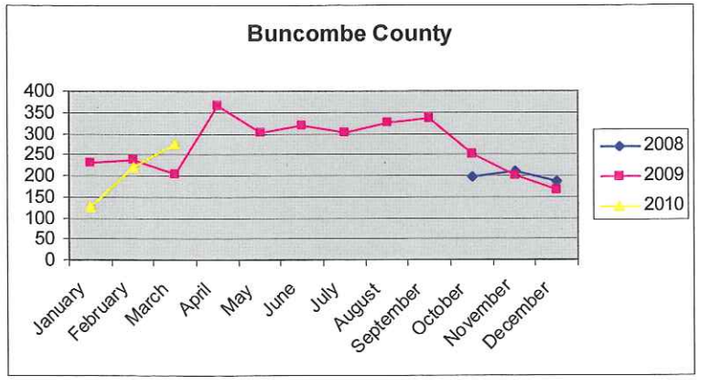


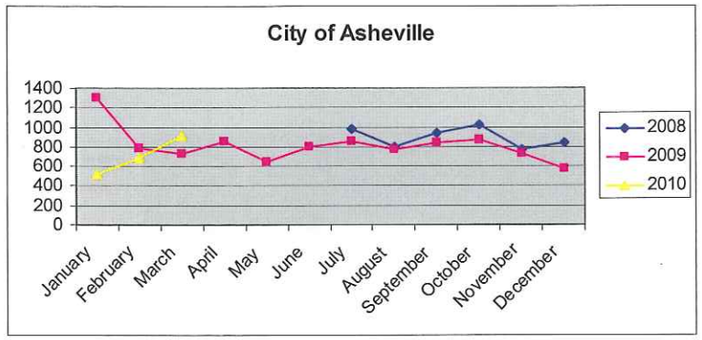

Ridership Comparison
180,000
160,000
140,000
120,000
100,000
80,000
60,000
40,000
20,000
-
Riders
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Month
Fare free program FY07
FY'09-10
FY08-09
FY'07-08

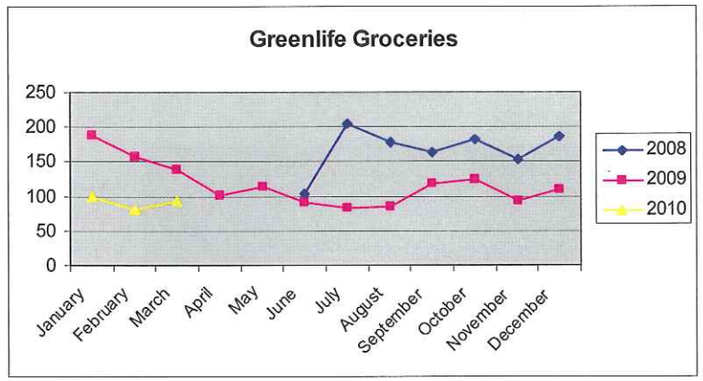
Buncombe County			
	2008	**2009**	**2010**
January		231	127
February		236	222
March		204	275
April		366	
May		302	
June		319	
July		301	
August		324	
September		334	
October	195	251	
November	209	199	
December	187	165	
Year Totals	591	3232	624
Overall Totals	**4447**		

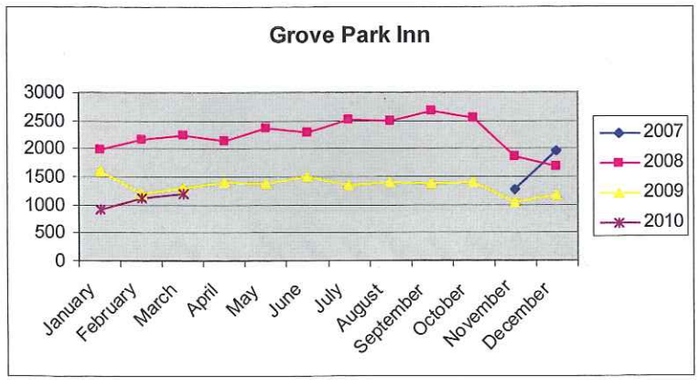
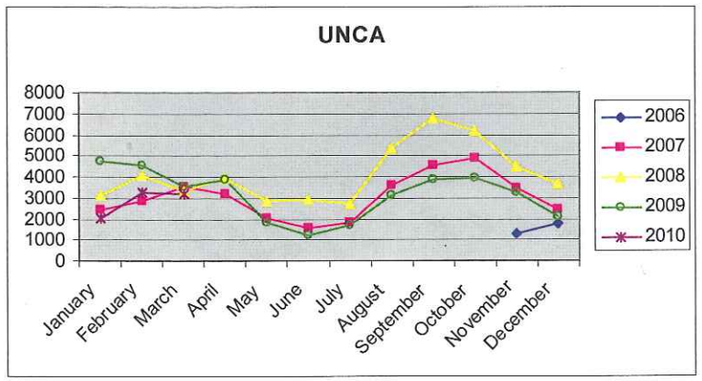
City of Asheville			
	2008	**2009**	**2010**
January		1306	515
February		779	688
March		733	916
April		850	
May		643	
June		793	
July	976	857	
August	797	774	
September	940	844	
October	1018	873	
November	770	735	
December	835	575	
Year Totals	5336	9762	2119
Overall Totals	**17217**		

Greenlife			
	2008	**2009**	**2010**
January		188	100
February		156	80
March		138	94
April		101	
May		113	
June	103	90	
July	205	82	
August	177	84	
September	164	117	
October	181	125	
November	152	93	
December	185	109	
Year Totals	1167	1396	274
Overall Totals	**2837**		







Grove Park Inn				
	2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
January		1993	1592	913
February		2156	1198	1119
March		2225	1305	1205
April		2128	1386	
May		2356	1366	
June		2298	1509	
July		2520	1345	
August		2494	1387	
September		2659	1376	
October		2552	1410	
November	1268	1863	1042	
December	1969	1676	1167	
Year Totals	3237	26920	16083	3237
Overall Totals	**49477**			

UNCA					
	2006	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
January		2433	3140	4777	2020
February		2860	4041	4562	3227
March		3536	3346	3554	3208
April		3163	3906	3891	
May		2010	2870	1803	
June		1529	2882	1253	
July		1816	2692	1677	
August		3611	5336	3118	
September		4512	6755	3897	
October		4881	6169	3935	
November	1285	3452	4444	3234	
December	1754	2443	3649	2124	
Year Totals	3039	36246	49230	37825	8455
Overall Totals	**134795**