



## Take Action to Support Living Wages and Transit Improvements in the City and County Budget!

**Asheville City Budget:** The first draft of the City of Asheville's budget (the City Manager's Budget Proposal) came out and while we are pleased at the inclusion of a big portion of the Transit Master Plan, we need to go further and implement the rest. The route changes suggested in the Transit Master Plan cost about \$1.2 million dollars for a half year and we are requesting an additional estimated \$600,000 to include the extension of evening hours outlined in the TMP. Extended evening hours are critical for people working into the evening. We believe #transitcantwait

Additionally, City Councilman Keith Young proposed that the \$1.9 million dollar staff wage increase be applied first to bring all City employees up to a \$15/hr wage floor. Just Economics supports this proposal and believes that a more equitable distribution of wage raises at the City can keep the budget neutral while still raising the wage floor.

**CITY BUDGET ACTION:** Email Asheville City Council members. *Thank them for prioritizing transit and tell them to add the extension of hours suggested in the Transit Master Plan to begin in January of 2020 to this year's budget. Additionally tell them that you support a more equitable distribution of staff increases and a \$15/hr wage floor.*

You can attend the City Budget Hearing on the Evening of May 28th at City Hall beginning at 5pm and/or You can write all of City Council here:

AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevollenc.gov

**Buncombe County Budget:** After meeting with a delegation from Just Economics' Policy Advocacy Committee and with the effort led by County Commissioner Brownie Newman, the new County Manager has proposed an update to the County's Living Wage Policy to bring the wage floor up to \$15/hr! Additionally, Just Economics is part of the Family Friendly Affordable Buncombe initiative advocating for funding for affordable housing, transit, and early childhood education. The County budget proposal has significant added investments in affordable housing and early childhood education that we strongly support and want to keep in the budget. Finally a relatively small investment from the County for extensions of the ART (bus) system into the County could go a long way.

**COUNTY BUDGET ACTION:** E-mail the County Commissioners and tell them that you support the County Manager's proposal to raise the wage floor to \$15/hr, tell them to protect the investments in affordable housing and early childhood education proposed in the budget, and encourage them to make a modest investment in the Asheville Transit System, extending to additional areas in the County as proposed in the first phase of the Transit Master Plan. Stay tuned for the upcoming meeting announcement regarding the living wage policy.

You can find the County Commissioners' e-mails [here](#):

<https://www.buncombecounty.org/governing/commissioners/default.aspx#sec-commission-chambers>

