

SIX

CASE STUDY

Transit Revitalized

Studio No. 6 Brands Asheville's Transit System



After: the new hybrid buses with the new branding by Studio No. 6



Before: the original 1996 vehicles

Urban Trans and Studio No. 6 were hired to transform Asheville's aging transit system with a new brand and visual identity. The Studio No. 6 scope included system nomenclature, vehicle design, corporate identity, visual identity, advertising and bus passes.

With an aging fleet of buses, routes needing reconfiguration and a system that lacked a strong identity and brand, the Asheville Transit Department recognized a need for an entire system update.

After being awarded a \$2.1 million federal grant in 2009, the department was poised to transform the system and redefine the perception of mass transit in their community. Asheville Transit purchased five new electric/diesel hybrid vehicles, drafted a transportation master plan and developed an RFP for branding services.





ART

Studio No. 6 designed the ART logo with a customized leaf pattern in the counter spaces of the letterforms. This contemporary logotype communicates the concept of sustainability in a clean, modern style.

Assembling the Team

In April of 2009, Urban Trans, one of the foremost transit consultancies in the country, approached Studio No. 6 to join their team on the RFP submittal. After the extensive proposal and interview phase was completed, Urban Trans and Studio No. 6 were hired to help Asheville brand and launch the new system.

Strategic Goals

We then embarked on transforming a system for a growing population: one that provided convenient routes with increased frequency and attracted a new base of riders. Additionally, social marketing goals included behavior modification from driving to riding, to ultimately impact major urban issues of increased congestion and pollution.

With clearly defined goals, our exploratory stage began. Step one was to develop nomenclature for this new and evolving transit system. The preferred name which resonated with the advisory committee was **"ART," Asheville Redefines Transit.** ART captures both the cultural identity of the city and a system re-thought, re-designed, re-configured and *Redefined*.

After the nomenclature was developed, we created the visual identity for the new system which would be applied to all forms of branding and collateral.

The Challenge

The aesthetic goal for the revitalized brand was to acknowledge and integrate with Asheville's unique sense of place and personality:

- 1 One that is rooted in a **VIBRANT ART AND CULTURAL COMMUNITY** dating from the late 1800's when the Biltmore Mansion attracted artisans far and wide to Asheville
- 2 One that is rooted in **PROGRESSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS** and sustainability
- 3 One that has a **CASUAL SMALL TOWN APPEAL COUPLED WITH AN URBAN VIBE**





Studio No. 6 designed the bus stop signage which integrates with the branded visual identity of the new system. This modern look communicates a system that is founded in progressive sustainability.

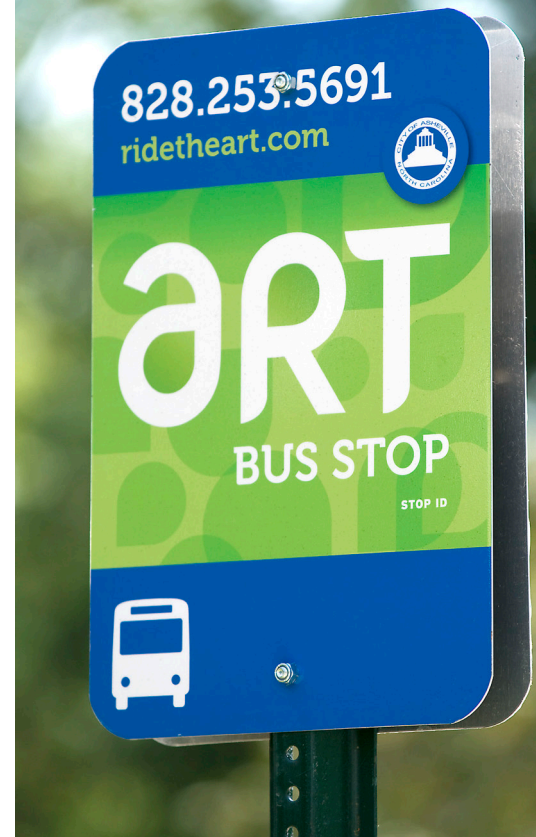
The visual design which resonated most authentically with the original mission statement connected sustainability with an urban vibe for a look that is fresh, friendly and modern.

Design is in the Details

Supplemental visuals, representative of Asheville, were also developed. The blue and green wave motif featured on the vehicle design was inspired by the lush green hills of the North Carolina landscape punctuated by a vibrant blue sky. The layering of a contemporary leaf motif was inspired by the logo and creates a signature graphic for this new brand.



The lush rolling hills of North Carolina and a vibrant blue sky inspired the blue and green wave pattern on the bus.



Total System Integration

From the corporate identity, to the visual design, signage and transit passes, transit in Asheville has now shifted perception from an aging, dated system to one which is modern, progressive and rooted in sustainability. The brand now exemplifies the character of the city and its people. It is not just a re-packaged system, but a system meeting the desires and aspirations of an environmentally conscious community. **Transit has now literally been "redefined" with updated routes, increased frequency and convenience, improved fuel efficiency and a better, cleaner, quieter experience for the riders.**

20%

The Results Are In

After just two months of launching the new service, ART is seeing a 20% increase in ridership. The modernization of an aging system is beginning its exciting evolution!