

Buncombe County Agenda Item Information Sheet

AGENDA ITEM:

- (1) Public Hearing on the Proposed Use of FY 2015 NCDOT Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) Funds
- (2) Resolution Authorizing the Submission of an Application to the NCDOT for ROAP Funds

MEETING DATE:

October 21, 2014

REQUESTED BY:

Denise Braine, Planner III, Buncombe County Planning and Development

Background information

Mountain Mobility, Buncombe County's Community Transportation System, is designated by the NCDOT-Public Transportation Division as the lead transportation provider for community transportation in Buncombe County. This public hearing and resolution relate to Buncombe County's annual grant application to the NCDOT for funds under the Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP). The FY 2015 ROAP application is due to the NCDOT on October 24, 2014. The period of performance for expenditure of the funds is July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015. The NCDOT delayed release of the application until the state budget was approved for FY 2015. The NCDOT has advanced a partial disbursement of funds to counties prior to the submission of the application.

The ROAP Program consolidates the application process for three state grant programs: the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP), the Employment Transportation Assistance Program (EMP), and the Rural General Public (RGP) Program. This state funding program will support over 44,000 passenger trips provided by Mountain Mobility and volunteer transportation programs. Due to an overall state funding reduction, Buncombe County's allocation of funding was reduced by 14% due to an overall decrease in state funding for operating assistance funds, which will result in a reduction to approximately 10,000 trips. A comparison of annual funding information is included with the agenda information.

A chart outlining Proposed Uses for ROAP funds is included with the agenda information. According to state guidelines, funds allocated under the EMP and RGP Programs must be allocated for use by Mountain Mobility for the provision of employment and general public transportation services. EDTAP funds may be utilized by Mountain Mobility and also may be allocated to eligible agencies and organizations and used to purchase transportation services either through Mountain Mobility, to support transportation provided by agency volunteers, or for other eligible services. Proposed EDTAP allocations are based on each agency's utilization of last year's funds and established funding priorities. The Buncombe County Community Transportation Advisory Board (CTAB) will review the proposed allocations at an upcoming meeting, and it is anticipated that the advisory board will recommend approval by the Board of Commissioners.

The public hearing scheduled for this meeting will provide an opportunity for local input regarding the proposed use of ROAP funds. Interested persons, including minorities, women, elderly, disabled, those with limited English proficiency, low-income individuals, and the general public, are invited to offer comments regarding the availability of and proposed uses of ROAP funds to meet transportation needs in the County.

*Presenters: Denise Braine, Planner III
Buncombe County Planning and Development*

*Lyuba Zuyeva, Transit Program Manager
Land-of-Sky Regional Council
Mountain Mobility Administration*

Pro's

- ROAP funds help support the operational cost of services provided by Mountain Mobility.
- Provides funds for the purchase of services that likely would not be available otherwise.
- Only the RGP program requires a 10% match contribution, which is typically met through passenger fares.
- The ROAP program is 100% state funds allocated through the General Assembly, so the program offers some flexibility in meeting needs.

Con's

- Services must be provided throughout the period of performance, even if ROAP funds are expended prior to the end of a fiscal year, which necessitates limitations on EDTAP and RGP services.
- There is always a need for more funding and services than is available through the ROAP program.

Funds required

There is a 10% match requirement for RGP funds. Match funds are available from passenger fares and within the current approved budget.

Alternatives

There are no funding alternatives to receiving \$299,557 in state funding available through the ROAP Program.

Action recommended:

- (1) Hold public hearing and receive comments on the proposed use of ROAP funds.
- (2) Approve Resolution Authorizing the Submission of an Application for State Grant Funds Under FY 2014 Rural Operating Assistance Program.