

Buncombe County Agenda Item Information Sheet

AGENDA ITEM:

Resolution Adopting an Update to Buncombe County's Community Transportation Services Plan (CTSP) for Mountain Mobility

MEETING DATE:

August 4, 2015

REQUESTED BY:

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Background information

Community Transportation Service Plans (CTSPs) are crucial to ensuring that North Carolina community transportation systems are making a strategically planned response to the projected mobility needs of the general public and targeted populations in their service area. Plans review the current performance and organizational direction of the transit system and recommend alternative operating or managing strategies that increase mobility options for passengers, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. A five-year community transportation plan is a requirement for any county that receives state or federal funding through the NCDOT for the coordination and provision of human service agency transportation and general public transportation services. CTSPs must be developed through a public education and involvement process that includes the general public, private and non-profit transportation providers, human service providers and targeted populations that include individuals with disabilities, low incomes and limited English proficiency (LEP). The result of this planning effort should produce overall growth and expansion goals that the community can support.

Since June 1981, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners has updated and adopted its Community Transportation Services Plan (CTSP) for Buncombe County and its Community Transportation System, Mountain Mobility. The last CTSP was adopted in 1999. Although the five-year plan is to be updated regularly, the NCDOT delayed starting planning studies across North Carolina for a number of years. The NCDOT entered into a contract with a consulting firm in May 2014 to update Buncombe County's CTSP, and a year-long study process has now been wrapped up. In order to continue eligibility for state and federal funding, the CTSP must be adopted by the Board of Commissioners. An Executive Summary of Buncombe County's CTSP is provided that summarizes the strengths and transportation needs, and proposed alternatives to provide a strategically planned response to the projected mobility needs of citizens and agencies that utilize Mountain Mobility services. A complete copy of the draft plan is available upon request.

The following recommendations are proposed in Buncombe County's CTSP for Mountain Mobility:

- Increase fleet size by 20% over the next five years in order to accommodate growth and demand in services, particularly among the elderly.
- Increase education and marketing efforts as both a public relations and an education effort to improve the functioning of Mountain Mobility and its performance.
- Analyze the rates charged to contracting agencies to ensure that rates are in line with operating costs, particularly for mandated programs like Medicaid and the City's ADA Comparable Paratransit Program, which is especially important in light of NCDOT funding reductions and limitations for systems operating in urbanized areas.
- Modify the RIDE Voucher Program to allow more vouchers to be used in order to reduce over capacity on vehicles.

- Perform a comprehensive route analysis to determine if route restructuring and/or a small expansion would improve level of service during peak times.
- Upgrade / replace the camera surveillance system.
- Initiate a feasibility study to evaluate the need for a new facility and screen potential sites.
- Enhance coordination with surrounding counties in help address growth and demand in services and improve the utilization of vehicle resources among transportation systems in the region and counties farther west and north.

Buncombe County's vision is for a "caring community in harmony with its environment where citizens succeed, thrive, and realize their potential." As stated in the plan, Mountain Mobility will continue to play an important role in providing transit connections that people need to help make this vision a reality.

Pro's

- CTSP adoption is required in order to receive continued federal and state funding for the administrative, operational and capital needs of Mountain Mobility;
- Implementation will enhance access to health care, shopping, education, employment, and public services, including improvements to rural transportation and connectivity with other community transportation systems in the surrounding counties;
- Implementation will encourage and facilitate the most efficient use of all transportation funds used to provide passenger transportation through the coordination of programs and services.

Con's

- None

Funds required in current budget:

None

Funds required in future budgets:

Efforts will be centered on implementing recommendations within the current local funding resources available for Mountain Mobility. However, depending on the availability of grant resources, additional match funding may be needed for expansion vehicles, replacement of camera system, or other costs related to service and capital expansion or replacement needs.

Alternatives:

None

Action recommended:

Adopt the Buncombe County Community Transportation Services Plan and proceed with implementation subject to the availability of funding at the local, state and federal levels.