



Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Meeting Date: 9/15/2020

New Business

Department: Planning & Development

Presenter(s): Matthew Cable, AICP

Contact(s): Matthew Cable

Subject: Suspend Rural General Public Fares October 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021

Brief Summary:

COVID-19 has impacted federal and state transit funding. At the federal level, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act has increased availability of federal transit grant funds. At the state level, the Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) has been defunded in for FY21, reducing availability of state transit grant funds. The ROAP program traditionally supported fare free transportation for elderly and disabled individuals (EDTAP program funds), fare free transportation for employment (EMPL program funds), and general public transportation with an associated \$3.00 fare (RGP funds).

Staff requests the \$3.00 Rural General Public (RGP) fare be suspended from October 1, 2020 through the remainder of the fiscal year. This action will allow citizens who historically traveled fare free under EDTAP and EMPL programs, to continue to be able to travel fare free under the general public program. General public riders would also benefit from the reduced fares for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) CARES Act guidance has authorized transit systems to suspend public transportation fares in response to COVID-19 on a temporary basis. FY21 RGP fares were anticipated to generate \$18,927 in revenues. CARES Act grant funds will assist in offsetting the reduced fare revenues and eliminated ROAP revenues.

Recommended Motion & Requested Action:

Amend the fee schedule to temporarily suspend the Rural General Public Fares for the period of October 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

County Manager's comments and Recommendation:

The County Manager agrees with this recommendation.