



Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Meeting Date: 5/18/2021

Consent Agenda

Department: Planning & Development

Presenter(s): Matthew Cable, AICP

Contact(s): Matthew Cable

Subject: Suspend Rural General Public Fares through June 30, 2022

Brief Summary:

COVID-19 has lasting impacts on federal and state transit funding. At the federal level, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act increased availability of federal transit grant funds. At the state level, Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) funding was eliminated in FY21. 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). It is unknown if ROAP funding will be reinstated for FY22.

In response to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, the Board of Commissioners acted to suspend \$3.00 Rural General Public (RGP) fares from October 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Staff requests the RGP fare suspension continue through June 30, 2022. This extension of fare suspension 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 will also continue to benefit from reduced fares.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) CARES Act guidance authorized transit systems to suspend public transportation fares in response to COVID-19 on a temporary basis. The FY22 budget did not include ROAP fare revenue.

Recommended Motion & Requested Action:

Suspend Rural General Public fares for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

County Manager's Comments and Recommendation:

The County Manager agrees with this recommendation.