

Buncombe County Agenda Item Information Sheet

AGENDA ITEM:

Resolution Authorizing the County Manager to Execute an Agreement with the City of Asheville for Transportation Funding

MEETING DATE:

June 25, 2013

REQUESTED BY:

Buncombe County Planning and Development
Denise Braine for Jon Creighton, Assistant County Manager and Planning Director

Background Information:

Mountain Mobility, Buncombe County's Community Transportation System, began operating the Black Mountain Trailblazer route in December 2002. Ridership has grown since then from 1,300 trips to 11,696 trips in FY2012, and FY2013 ridership is expected to exceed 15,000 trips. Passengers include low-income and other individuals who travel on the Trailblazer bus to their jobs in the area or to a transfer point where they access the City's ART route and travel to jobs in Asheville. The route also serves seniors and other citizens and includes service to Blue Ridge Apartments senior housing complex, Blue Ridge Assembly, Lakeview Senior Center, Carver Community Center, Highland Farms, Swannanoa Medical Center, Black Mountain Center, Montreat College, and other locations along the established route.

Buncombe County has received grant funding for this route from a variety of funding sources over the years, and since 2011, has received federal operating funds through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) Program. Having expended funding under the first JARC grant, the County applied for and was awarded a second JARC grant in the amount of \$102,181, which will enable Mountain Mobility to continue operating the Black Mountain Trailblazer service through December 2015. Funding for the JARC program flows from the FTA to the City of Asheville, its designated recipient for these funds, then to the County as a subrecipient.

A copy of the Black Mountain Trailblazer brochure is attached. Additional information about Mountain Mobility and all Trailblazer routes is available at www.buncombecounty.org/transportation.

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows Mountain Mobility to continue to operate the Black Mountain Trailblazer for two more years. • Provides access to employment opportunities in the Black Mountain, Swannanoa, and Montreat areas. • Provides access to grocery stores and other community services for seniors and other citizens. • Provides link to ART bus service. 	<p>Con's</p>
<p>Funds required:</p> <p>The JARC grant requires a 50% match, which will be provided through passenger fares, through existing funds allocated to the Planning Department/Transportation Division, and through local contributions by the Town of Black Mountain (\$18,000/year).</p>	
<p>Alternatives:</p> <p>There are currently no other federal or state funding options to support the operation of this route.</p>	
<p>Action recommended:</p> <p>Adopt a resolution authorizing the County Manager to execute an agreement with the City of Asheville for funding under the JARC Program.</p>	