

# REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

## HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**MEETING DATE:** July 5, 2005

**SUBJECT:** Henderson County Fiscal Year 2005/06 Public Transportation Funding

**ATTACHMENTS:** June 9, 2005 Letter From Ms. Miriam S. Perry

### **SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

County staff is pleased to present this information relating to the issues surrounding funding for the County's public transportation system. As the Board is well aware, the 2000 Census expanded the Asheville Urbanized Area to include the majority of Henderson County. The inclusion of Henderson County in the Asheville Urbanized Area triggered a number of changes in the manner in which federal and state funds flow to the County's local public transportation system. In short, this change will move Henderson County's public transportation system from "rural" system with a strong relationship with the State to an "urban" system with a direct relationship with the federal government. MPO staff, private consultants, and County staff have been working for well over a year to develop a plan and funding strategy that will guide the County in transitioning its public transportation system from a "rural" system to an "urban" system.

In 2004, the Public Transportation Division of NCDOT agreed to fund the County's public transportation operations through the State's "rural" transportation program for the 2004/05 fiscal year. However, as part of this funding agreement, NCDOT required that the County submit, prior to January 1, 2005, a plan detailing how the County would fund public transportation services for the 2005/06 fiscal year and beyond.

Based on input from the County TAC, the MPO, private consultants, County staff, and a recommendation from the County Manager, the Board committed to funding the local public transportation system \$65,603 for the 2005/06 fiscal year and took action to request that NCDOT continue to fund costs associated with the operation of Apple Country Transit's Blue Route. Furthermore, the Board directed County staff to begin the process of becoming a designated recipient of Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 funds. This agreed upon proposal was transmitted, via a letter from the Chairman, to NCDOT.

On April 12, 2005, Ms. Miriam Perry, Director of NCDOT's Public Transportation Division, met with County officials to discuss the Board's public transportation proposal and, most importantly, present NCDOT's response to the County's proposal. The attached letter contains NCDOT's response and funding proposal for the 2005/06 fiscal year. NCDOT's proposal provides for continued "rural" and discretionary funds for the operation of Apple Country Transit in the 2005/06 fiscal year. To summarize, public transportation funding for the 2005/06 fiscal year will be handled in the same manner as in past fiscal years, including the amount of required local matching funds. In exchange for this funding arrangement, the County must continue the process of becoming a designated recipient of Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 funds, effective July 1, 2006. The County must also develop a request for proposal for the purpose of procuring an operator of FTA supported urbanized services beginning July 1, 2006.

### **COUNTY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION/ACTION REQUIRED:**

Needless to note, this is wonderful news. The Public Transportation Division of NCDOT has been a pleasure to work with in dealing with this complex issue. NCDOT, in essence, is rewarding the County's commitment to public transportation by granting an additional year for the "urban" transition. This additional year will allow a more accurate funding plan to be developed and will also allow adequate time for the required procurement process. Therefore, County staff recommends acceptance of NCDOT's proposal for fiscal year 2005/06 public transportation funding.