City of Asheville Staff Report

City Council Meeting Date: September 22, 2026

Staff Resources: Ashley Haire, Transportation Director; Jessica Morriss, Assistant Transportation Director; and Christopher Whitlock, Transit Division Manager

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply for the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Public Transit Apprenticeship Grant Program and if awarded, authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with NCDOT to fund the Apprenticeship for Fiscal Year (FY) 2028 and to expend funding on the local match or balance of project costs.

Background:

- The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Integrated Mobility Division (IMD) manages an annual Public Transit Apprenticeship Grant Program that places recent university graduates in municipal transit agencies for one year. The program reimburses 90% of eligible expenses up to set maximum line-item limits, requiring a 10% local match from the host transit system. Sponsor systems determine apprentice wages, benefits, and travel allowances within these maximum limitations. The allowable expenses are structured as follows:
    - Salary / Wages: Subject to a maximum state reimbursement of $44,928, paired with a required 10% local match of $4,992, resulting in a total allowable cost of $49,920 (equivalent to a maximum hourly rate of $24.00/hr.).
    - FICA / Social Security Contributions: Subject to a maximum state reimbursement of $3,437, paired with a required 10% local match of $382, resulting in a total allowable cost of $3,819.
    - Travel Allowances: Subject to a maximum state reimbursement of $900, paired with a required 10% local match of $100, resulting in a total allowable cost of $1,000.
    - Total Combined Funding: Reflects a maximum state contribution of $49,265 and a 10% local match of $5,474, culminating in a comprehensive project budget of $54,739.
- The above detailed figures encompass 100% of the maximum allowable apprenticeship operational costs eligible for cost-sharing under the NCDOT grant guidelines. Any expenditure exceeding these thresholds must be borne exclusively by the City of Asheville.
- The City has participated in this program several times over the last decade.
- The transit apprentice would work within the Transit Division of the Transportation Department and would assist the division with ongoing work program items related to transit service. The apprentice is also required by the NCDOT to prepare a research report at the end of the apprenticeship.

Vendor Outreach:

- N/A

Council Vision 2036 Focus Area(s):

- Transportation and Accessibility

Council Priority Recovery Area(s):

- N/A

Committee(s):

- None.

Fiscal Impact:

- The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) provides a maximum of $49,265 in reimbursement funding for the apprentice's salary, benefits, and travel expenses; the City Transit Operations Fund will cover the remaining 10% local match of $5,474, as well as any expenditures exceeding the maximum threshold established by the State.
- This funding will be included in the FY 2027-28 Transit Operating Fund.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply for the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Public Transit Apprenticeship Grant Program and, if awarded, authorize the City Manager accept the funds, enter into any agreement with NCDOT to fund the Apprenticeship for Fiscal Year (FY) 2028, and to expend funding on the local match or balance of project costs.

Attachment(s):

- Resolution

City of Asheville Resolution Number 26-___

Resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply for the 2028 North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Apprenticeship Grant Program for Public Transit and, if awarded, authorizes the City Manager to enter into an agreement with NCDOT to fund the apprenticeship and to expend funding on the local match or balance of project costs.

Whereas, the City of Asheville has the authority, pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 160A-17.1, to apply for and receive grants from the Federal and State government and to enter contracts for the administration of said grants, and

Whereas, the funds for the apprenticeship grant program for FY 2028 are available from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), which would provide the Transit Planning Division of the City of Asheville's Transportation Department with a full-time, paid apprentice for one year; and

Whereas, the City's Transit Division plans to apply for said grant funds for FY 2028; and

Whereas, the NCDOT will fund 90 percent (maximum of $49,265) of project costs. The City of Asheville will fund the remaining 10 percent ($5,474) or balance of project costs;

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Asheville hereby authorizes the City Manager to apply for the 2028 North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Apprenticeship Grant Program for Public Transit and, if awarded, authorizes the City Manager to enter into an agreement with NCDOT to fund the apprenticeship and to expend funding on the local match or balance of project costs.

Read, approved and adopted this 22nd day of September, 2026.

_____
Esther E. Manheimer, Mayor

_____
Brad Branham, City Attorney

_____
Magdalen Burleson, City Clerk