THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date: March 24, 2026

Subject: ART Operations and Maintenance Contract

Staff Resource(s): Ashley Haire, Transportation Director; Jessica Morriss, Assistant Director; Christopher Whitlock, Transit Division Manager

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a four-year contract with RATP Dev in the amount of $54,899,942 for Operations and Maintenance of the Asheville Rides Transit fixed-route transit system.

Background:

- The City of Asheville contracts the operations and maintenance of the Asheville Rides Transit (ART) fixed-route transit system.
- In 2025, the City of Asheville issued a request for proposals (RFP) for the operations and maintenance of ART for four years with two renewal options of two years each.
- The RFP evaluation committee was composed of seven people, including one external evaluator, a representative from the French Broad River MPO, and representatives from the City's Finance Department, the City Attorney's Office, and the City's Transportation Department.
- The City received four proposals in response to the RFP.
- The following table provides the evaluation scores and total proposal costs for each offeror:

Offerors	Evaluation Score	Proposed Cost
Vendor 1	74	$120,317,255
Vendor 2	67	$134,579,138
Vendor 3	49	$124,706,170
Vendor 4	49	$113,111,200

- After review of the proposals, the evaluation committee came to a consensus in awarding the RFP to the offeror with the highest evaluation score, following a process standardized by the City's Purchasing Division and explained in the RFP document.
- RATP Dev has been selected as the contractor to provide operations and maintenance services for ART and will begin operating under the new contract on July 1, 2026.
- There are several new key features of the contract, including the following:
    - Addition of new, full-time key personnel that will be instrumental to improving operations and customer service, including the following:
        - Crisis Counselor
        - Customer Service Manager

        - Human Resources Manager/Recruiter
    - New software and technology for reporting, service development, and contract compliance/oversight
    - New and strengthened performance measures
        - Higher goals for on-time performance
        - New liquidated damages to mitigate instances of buses departing earlier than scheduled times
        - New liquidated damages for customer complaints not responded to within 24 hours
        - New liquidated damages to reduce instances of supervisors operating routes due to driver shortages
        - Increase in liquidated damages for improper appearance and cleanliness of ART facilities and bus stops

Vendor Outreach Efforts:

- N/A, this is a federally funded contract

Council Goal(s):

- Transportation and accessibility

Council Priority Recovery Area(s):

- People
- Infrastructure & Environment

Committee(s):

- PEDE Committee presentation, 3/17/2026 - Motion was made to forward contract to Council; however, the motion failed due to lack of a second. Two members of the Committee were present.

Pro(s): Approval of the contract will ensure uninterrupted service.

Con(s): The cost of the annual contract will increase. This increase has been incorporated into the budget.

Fiscal Impact:

- The total four-year contract amount is $54,899,942. If both two-year options are exercised, the total contract amount would be $120,317,255.
    Total contract amount:
    - Base Contract:
        - Year 1: $12,671,301
        - Year 2: $13,309,046
        - Year 3: $14,102,049
        - Year 4: $14,817,546
    - Option 1:
        - Year 1: $15,370,405
        - Year 2: $15,948,574
    - Option 2:
        - Year 3: $16,657,664
        - Year 4: $17,440,670

- Funding for this contract will be budgeted in the Transit Fund beginning in FY 2026-27 (Year 1).

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a four-year contract with RATP Dev in the amount of $54,899,942 for Operations and Maintenance of the Asheville Rides Transit fixed-route transit system.

Attachment(s):

- Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 26-____

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT FOR THE OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE OF ASHEVILLE RIDES TRANSIT (ART) WITH RATP DEV FOR A FOUR YEAR CONTRACT

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C.G.S. §§ 160A-20.1, 160A-311, and 160A-312, the City of Asheville has authority to contract for the operation of a public transportation system; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C.G.S. §§ 160A-20.1, and 143-129 the City of Asheville is authorized to procure services and enter into contracts following a competitive solicitation process; and

WHEREAS, RATP Dev had the highest evaluation score and was selected by the evaluation committee among three other firms to provide operations and maintenance of the transit system; and

WHEREAS, the evaluation committee recommends that the City enter into an agreement with RATP Dev to operate and maintain the transit system;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

City Council hereby authorizes the City Manager to execute a contract with a four-year term for the operations and maintenance of Asheville Rides Transit (ART) with RATP Dev in the amount of $54,899,942 and to sign all documents necessary to effect the contract.

Read, approved and adopted this the 24th day of March, 2026.

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City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney