

Request for Board of Commissioners' Action

From: Faye Hughes, County Administrator Date: December 3, 2020

Subject: [Regional Transportation Grant Application](#) Item Number: Work Session

Regional Transit Update

At the beginning of FY2019, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) approached the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) about becoming a regional transit operator for all of Southern Georgia. This request was similar to subsequent recommendations of proposed legislation in the 2019-2020 State Legislature.

A regional transit system offers public transportation within a region for the benefit of increased access and mobility to its citizens. Regionalizing public transit leverages economies of scale while utilizing available funding sources to provide the matching funds needed to operate rural public transit services. Any of the DHS or Medicaid trips may utilize a 5311-funded vehicle for transport, and act as a revenue source to offset local match requirements. This would allow residents to have improved access to resources such as education, employment, healthcare and other basic services available in other parts of the region. Currently, 11 of the 18 counties served by the SGRC have a 5311 rural public transportation system. All 18 counties have other transportation options under the Department of Human Services (DHS) Coordinated Transportation program and Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation services.

The SGRC developed a Regional Transit Plan to serve as a guidebook, examining what a regional, inter-county, public transportation system might look like. Last year, funding challenges meant that the RC could not pursue a regional transit program, however, after reevaluating proposed budgets and available revenue sources the SGRC is looking to pursue a regional transit program beginning in FY2022.

SGRC Council will vote in October to determine whether to submit a regional transit application to GDOT. If the application is approved by the SGRC Council, each county will need to pass a resolution to opt in or out of a regional system and commit to proportionally funding any shortfall in funding the SGRC might incur (the SGRC proposed budget does not include any funding shortfalls) during their November commission meetings. Upon acceptance of the application by GDOT, the SGRC will begin the process of securing a vendor to operate the regional public transit system on behalf of the SGRC.

SGRC staff has already started contacting county managers and elected officials to answer any questions they might have about the application process and what their role will be in a regional public transit program. Should you have any questions please contact Megan Fowler at mfowler@sgrc.us or at 229-333-5277.

Motion made by _____

Second made by _____

Any discussion: _____

Votes _____ yes _____ no

Motion carried/ failed