



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of December 13, 2008**

DATE: November 20, 2008

SUBJECT: Adoption of a Non-Codified Ordinance Amending the Arlington Transit (“ART”) Passenger Fare Schedule By Deleting Paper Transfers, to Become Effective on January 4, 2009 or on Such Future Date as Determined by the County Board.

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Amend and Reenact a Non-Codified Ordinance, amending the Passenger Fare Schedule for the Arlington Transit (“ART”) Transportation System by Deleting Paper Transfers, to become effective on January 4, 2009 or on Such Future Date as Determined by the County Board.

ISSUES: County Board approval is needed for Adoption of a Non-Codified Ordinance Amending the Arlington Transit (“ART”) Passenger Fare Schedule By Deleting Paper Transfers. No issues have been identified.

SUMMARY: The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (“WMATA”) plans to eliminate paper transfers, effective January 4, 2009. This proposed ordinance amendment would eliminate use of paper transfers on Arlington Transit (“ART”) buses on the same date. Over seventy percent of transfer activity on ART buses is between Metrobus routes and ART routes. Transfer activity exclusively between ART routes is about 35 per day.

BACKGROUND: Arlington County has operated a transit system since FY 1987 when State Transit Funds were approved for an eight-month pilot period to operate the Arlington Trolley in Crystal City. In FY 1989, the County Board approved annual funding for the mass transportation service. All service changes and fare increases have since been approved by the County Board.

Arlington Transit base bus fares currently coincide with the WMATA Metrobus rate of \$1.35 cash and \$1.25 SmarTrip Card, with free two-hour paper transfers issued upon request to cash riders. SmarTrip riders also have free transfers for two hours programmed on their cards. The sole exception, ART route #67, is a free lunch-time shuttle. By this ordinance amendment, staff proposes that the County Board eliminate the free paper transfers, in conjunction with approved

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Steve Yaffe, Transit Services Manager, Dept. of Environmental Services – Transportation Division

WMATA policy, which policy becomes effective on January 4, 2009. ART base fares paid with a SmarTrip card for a ride involving a bus transfer would remain at the current Metrobus rate of \$1.25. ART riders paying cash fares for a bus ride requiring one transfer would have to pay the full fare twice – a total of \$2.70 for that same ride. This proposed ordinance amendment would affect all full-fare bus riders regardless of age. The one-way base cash fare for senior citizens and persons with disabilities, upon presentation of Metro ID or Medicare card and photo ID, for a ride requiring one transfer would increase from \$0.60 to \$1.20.

The proposed elimination of paper transfers will encourage increased use of SmarTrip cards, reduce the costs of cash revenue collection, and eliminate abuse of paper transfers where they are handed from passenger to passenger or used after the expiration time.

DISCUSSION: Bus riders who continue to pay cash and transfer between routes will have to pay the fare each time they board a bus. For those cash riders who transfer once between bus routes, the cost of using transit will double.

WMATA has developed and is refining a bilingual marketing and advertising campaign to inform riders of this policy change and encourage them to obtain SmarTrip cards. WMATA is finalizing a contractual arrangement with several Giant grocery stores in the metropolitan area to enable riders to obtain SmarTrip cards and add fare to those SmarTrip cards. Similar opportunities are already available at Metrorail stations and at Arlington's four Commuter Stores (Ballston, Rosslyn, Crystal City, and Shirlington) as well as the Mobile Commuter Store. While ART is distributing these same WMATA marketing and advertising materials, Arlington plans to distribute additional materials with a more pointed, direct and succinct approach to gain the attention of the riders. A letter in English and Spanish is being distributed on ART buses. The winter issue of the ART forum will also discuss this proposal. This marketing effort would be executed within current budgetary constraints.

WMATA and Arlington Staff have discussed the impact of the elimination of paper transfers with the Transit Advisory Committee at their regularly scheduled meeting on October 14, 2008. Committee members expressed concern over the lack of places to purchase SmarTrip cards and to add value to the cards. Riders can add value at the bus farebox, but that would delay boarding. Also, the fareboxes do not take credit cards. Metro is negotiating with Giant, Safeway and CVS to install equipment at customer service desks that will sell and add value to SmarTrip cards. Committee members also provided several suggestions to make the elimination of paper transfers go more smoothly. This issue was also raised with the Transportation Commission at their November 24, 2008 meeting, which approved the concept of eliminating paper transfers on ART buses.

The proposed elimination of paper transfers on ART would be effective January 4, 2009. If WMATA postpones the elimination of paper transfers on WMATA buses to a later date, then the Arlington County Board may enact the proposed ordinance with an effective date other than January 4, 2009. The elimination of both WMATA and ART paper transfers should occur on the same date to avoid additional confusion to people transferring between the two systems. The attached proposed ordinance, if enacted, would amend the ART Passenger Fare Schedule by deleting the option of presenting a valid Metrorail transfer or regional bus to bus transfer.

FISCAL IMPACT: As riders using paper transfer convert to SmarTrip cards, there will be a nominal amount of additional revenue generated by some riders paying twice for a bus trip that was previously free using the paper transfer. This transition period is not expected to raise a significant amount of additional revenue and any additional revenue received will be used to offset the net tax support of the ART program. Arlington County will also save \$1,600 annually in transfer printing costs.

Attachment A

AMENDMENT AND REENACTMENT OF A NON-CODIFIED ORDINANCE REVISING THE PASSENGER FARE SCHEDULE FOR THE ARLINGTON TRANSIT (“ART”) TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, TO BECOME EFFECTIVE ON JANUARY 4, 2009.

I. BE IT ORDAINED by the County Board of Arlington County, Virginia, that the non-codified ordinance enacted by the County Board on April 19, 2008 is amended and reenacted to revise the passenger fare schedule for the Arlington Transit (“ART”) Transportation System, to become effective on January 4, 2009. The passenger fare schedule, as hereby amended and re-enacted, shall be as follows:

**ARLINGTON TRANSIT (“ART”)
PASSENGER FARE SCHEDULE**

One-way base fare-cash/token	\$1.35
One-way base fare-SmarTrip card	\$1.25
Full-Fare Gold Token (bag of 16)	\$21.60
Transfer Silver Token (bag of 16)	\$7.20
iRide Youth Token (bag of 20)	\$10.00
One-way base fare upon presentation of valid Metrorail paper transfer\$0.45
One-way base Metrorail transfer fare-SmarTrip card	\$0.35
One-way base fare upon presentation of valid regional bus to bus transfer or Metrobus Flash Pass	free
One-way base fare upon presentation of valid Virginia Hospital Center-Arlington employees with hospital ID.....	free
One-way base fare for senior citizens and persons with disabilities, upon presentation of valid WMATA ID or Medicare card	\$0.60
One-way base fare for middle and high school students, upon presentation of valid middle school or high school Identification	\$0.60 or i-Ride token

II. The remaining portions of the Non-Codified Ordinance Amending and Reenacting A Passenger Fare Schedule for the Arlington Transit (“ART”) Transportation System, enacted by the County Board on April 19, 2008, and effective on July 1, 2008, not amended hereby shall remain in effect as previously enacted.