



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item  
Meeting of May 22, 2010

### REVISED REPORT

**DATE:** ~~May 13, 2010~~ May 21, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Adoption of a Non-Codified Ordinance Amending the Arlington Transit (“ART”) Passenger Fare Schedule By Increasing ART and Specialized Transportation for Arlington Residents (“STAR”) Fares, to Become Effective on July 1, 2010 or on Such Future Date as Determined by the County Board.

**REVISION EXPLANATION:** This board item has been revised to clearly indicate that the current Metrobus weekly flash pass, from which WMATA has been retaining all revenue, will be replaced by a regional bus weekly pass with a regional revenue sharing agreement. If that change does not occur, Arlington Transit will have the option not to accept use of the Metrobus weekly flash pass. Arlington Transit would be authorized to accept a new regional weekly bus pass – even if that pass does not include Metrobus.

**C. M. RECOMMENDATION:**

Amend and Reenact a Non-Codified Ordinance, amending the Passenger Fare Schedule for the Arlington Transit (“ART”) Transportation System and Specialized Transportation for Arlington Residents (“STAR”), to become effective on July 1, 2010 or on Such Future Date as Determined by the County Board.

**ISSUES:** Impact of a fare increase upon Transit-Dependent riders

**SUMMARY:** ART bus fares normally coincide with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (“WMATA”) Metrobus rate by regional convention concerning fare simplification and the uniform fare collection structure. Concerning the STAR fares, the Zone 1 fare normally coincides with the WMATA MetroAccess rate, set at double the Metrobus rate. WMATA is scheduled to increase its Metrobus and MetroAccess fares. The proposed ART and STAR fare increases help offset the cost of providing these transportation services, including increased contractual costs for operation and maintenance and the cost of cash revenue collection. Riders certified for MetroAccess trips, and consequently also certified for STAR trips, are currently able to ride Metrobus and Metrorail free with presentation of a MetroAccess ID Card. This privilege would be extended to those MetroAccess-certified riders using ART.

County Manager: MB

County Attorney: JAM

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

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**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.

**DISCUSSION:** The proposed non-codified ordinance (Attachment A) addresses the amount of ART and STAR fares. ART fares are proposed to coincide with WMATA's proposed cash fare increase effective June 27, 2010. WMATA's Board of Directors will review a schedule of fare changes proposed by the Board's Finance and Administration Committee at their meeting on May 27, 2010. This proposal would increase the Metrobus regular cash fare from \$1.35 to \$1.60 and the SmarTrip fare from \$1.25 to \$1.50. The cash and SmarTrip balanced transfer fare discount for those transferring between Metrorail and bus services including ART and Metrobus would remain at \$0.50. The cash and token base fares for ART would also increase to \$1.60 with the SmarTrip fare increasing to \$1.50. The one-way base fare for students participating in the i-Ride program and senior citizens and persons with disabilities, upon presentation of Metro ID or Medicare card and photo ID, is proposed to increase from \$0.60 to \$0.75.

The \$0.10 differential between cash and SmarTrip fares on Metrobus and ART was instituted to discourage use of cash fares, which slows boarding time and impacts operations, and reduce the costs of handling cash revenue. Currently, just over 67% of ART full-fare riders use SmarTrip, just over 14% pay with cash, and 19% ride using a Metrobus Weekly Pass. All of the revenues from the Metrobus Weekly Pass are retained by WMATA.<sup>1</sup>

The current STAR Zone 1 fare of \$2.50 coincides with the MetroAccess fare in effect through February 27, 2010. The current STAR Zone 2 and Zone 3 fares are \$3.00 and \$7.00, respectively. The STAR Zone 1 fare would increase to \$3.00, in coordination with the proposed WMATA MetroAccess fare increase to be effective June 27, 2010. STAR Zone 2 fares would increase by \$1.00 to \$4.00 for a one-way trip. STAR Zone 3 fares would increase \$1.50 to \$8.50. Riders certified for MetroAccess trips, consequently also certified for STAR trips, are currently able to ride Metrobus and Metrorail free with presentation of a MetroAccess ID Card. This privilege would be extended to those MetroAccess-certified riders using ART. Some people with disabilities are able to use fixed route transit for certain trips, if they can access the stops.

Arlington Transit, as well as other transit systems in the region (Fairfax Connector, Ride-On and DASH), have proposed fare increases to offset higher operating costs. Arlington Transit cash fares at the Metrobus base cash rate make transfers simpler and less confusing by keeping fares

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<sup>1</sup> According to a recent analysis, the County is losing approximately \$238,000 in annual revenue from ART riders who use the weekly pass. At the May 27, 2010 meeting, the WMATA Board of Directors may raise the Metrobus cash fare higher than \$1.60. If a more substantial differential between cash and SmarTrip fares is implemented, County staff expects that a substantial proportion of cash riders would purchase Metrobus Weekly Passes. If only ten percent of full-fare cash riders switched to the Metrobus Weekly Pass at the currently proposed \$1.60 fare, ART would lose an additional \$40,462 in annual revenue. Staff of the regional bus services have recommended that the current Metrobus weekly flash pass be replaced by a Regional Bus Weekly Pass, with revenue to be shared by the partners in the regional fare system.

compatible with WMATA's. The non-codified ordinance also includes provisions for free regional bus-to-bus transfers valid within a two hour period – reduced from the current three hours.

Staff has notified the Transit Advisory Committee and the Transportation Commission of the proposed fare increases and presented information and responded to questions to facilitate Committee comments on the proposed action. The Transportation Commission approved the concept of ART and STAR fares mirroring Metrobus and MetroAccess fares as described above, at their meetings of April 8 and May 6, 2010. The Transit Advisory Committee at their meeting of May 11, 2010 resolved that ART fares should mirror Metrobus fares; ART bus rides should be free for persons with a MetroAccess card; and ART should not accept Flash Passes (Metrobus Weekly Pass), if Metro does not share the revenue. All three provisions of this resolution are reflected in the proposed ordinance. All of the proposed fee increases would be effective July 1, 2010.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The proposed fare increases are projected to produce at least \$250,000 in additional ART revenue for Fiscal Year 2011, which either could be used to reduce the net tax support for the ART services or be used to offset in part any service reductions on Metrobus. The fare increase for STAR will reduce cost of STAR services by approximately \$50,000. The costs of STAR services are expected to increase due to an anticipated increase in ridership in FY 2011.

AMENDMENT AND REENACTMENT OF A NON-CODIFIED ORDINANCE REVISING THE PASSENGER FARE SCHEDULE FOR THE ARLINGTON TRANSIT (“ART”) TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND THE SPECIALIZED TRANSIT FOR ARLINGTON RESIDENTS (“STAR”) PROGRAM, TO BECOME EFFECTIVE ON JULY 1, 2010.

I. BE IT ORDAINED by the County Board of Arlington County, Virginia, that the following non-codified ordinance is amended and reenacted to revise the passenger fare schedule for the Arlington Transit (“ART”) Transportation System and the Specialized Transit For Arlington Residents (“Star”) Program, to become effective on July 1, 2010:

ARLINGTON TRANSIT (“ART”) PASSENGER FARE SCHEDULE

One-way base fare-cash/token .....	<del>\$1.35</del> <u>\$1.60</u>
One-way base fare – SmarTrip .....	<del>\$1.25</del> <u>\$1.50</u>
One-way base fare discount with a SmarTrip Card after transferring from Metrorail ...	\$0.50
One-way base fare upon presentation of valid Regional Weekly Bus Pass with a regional revenue-sharing agreement.....	No Extra Charge <del>free</del>
One-way base fare upon presentation of valid MetroAccess ID .....	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 .....	<del>\$0.60</del> <u>\$0.75</u>
One-way base fare for students with a valid Arlington school ID .....	<del>\$0.60</del> <u>\$0.75</u> or i-Ride token

SPECIALIZED TRANSIT FOR ARLINGTON RESIDENTS (“STAR”) PASSENGER FARE SCHEDULE

Zone 1.....	<del>\$2.50</del> <u>\$3.00</u>
Zone 2.....	<del>\$3.00</del> <u>\$4.00</u>
Zone 3.....	<del>\$7.00</del> <u>\$8.50</u>

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 December 13, 2008, and effective on January 4, 2009, not amended hereby shall remain in effect as previously enacted.