



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item Meeting of January 22, 2022

DATE: December 21, 2021

SUBJECT: Arlington Transit Non-Codified Passenger Fare Schedule – Rail-to-bus transfer discount

C. M. RECOMMENDATION: Amend the Arlington Transit Passenger Fare Schedule One-way discounted fare with a SmarTrip Card after transferring from Metrorail to \$0.00.

ISSUES: This is to request Board approval to change the rail-to-bus transfer discount to \$2.00, effectively making the transfer free. Increasing the discount from \$1.50 to \$2 would cause a reduction in fare revenue.

SUMMARY: The transfer discount reduces the rider's cost of using two modes of transit for a one-way trip. Arlington Transit's current bus fare is \$2. If approved, with the \$2 discount, riders transferring from Metrorail to Arlington Transit would continue their one-way trip at no additional cost. Transfer from bus-to bus is now free within a 2-hour period.

Currently ART receives revenue from WMATA for riders starting their one-way travel on Metrorail, then completing the trip on ART. The result of offering the discounted transfer would mean WMATA would no longer reimburse ART for the trips originating on Metorail and ending on ART.

BACKGROUND: The Arlington Transit Passenger Fare Schedule is a Non-Codified Ordinance (Attachment A) which indicates the various fares for travel on Arlington Transit (ART) fixed-route service and the Specialized Transportation for Arlington Residents (STAR) paratransit service. The Board must authorize proposed amendments to the non-codified ordinance before fare schedule changes are implemented. The rail-to-bus transfer discount is recommended to change from \$1.50 to \$2.00 to align with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority fare change that became effective September 2021. Each WMATA compact member has the option to honor the transfer discount, therefore authorizing the acceptance of Metrorail passengers completing their one-way trip on the jurisdiction buses at no additional cost to the passenger. This action seeks the County Board's authorization to allow the \$2 transfer discount which would cover the cost of a one-way fare on ART.

County Manager:

County Attorney:

Staff: Lynn Rivers – DES-Transit

DISCUSSION: Arlington Transit and WMATA (Metrobus) provide most of the public bus transportation in Arlington County. While Arlington is a destination of most public transportation in Northern Virginia, the primary travel movements within Arlington are connections between bus and rail. Since the Covid 19 pandemic mandated government, business and school closures in March 2020, rail and bus ridership has been severely impacted. Public transit ridership in the County plummeted from FY20 (49.5M) to FY21 (13.9M). Although bus has provided most of the transit trips during the pandemic and continues to slowly increase, rail ridership increases are required in Arlington and throughout the region for major effect. To encourage transit usage on bus and rail, Staff recommends amending the transfer discount to reduce the cost of a one-way trip if using both rail and bus.

Title VI Fare Equity Analysis: This proposal has been reviewed to ensure compliance with the Title VI requirements and federal guidance, Circular 4702.1B. The transfer between Metrorail and ART far change proposal will not result in disparate impacts on any protected class or low-income population.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Level of Engagement: Communicate

Outreach Methods: Arlington Transit will keep stakeholders and community members informed about the rail-to-bus transfer discount increase. Information will be shared with the Transportation Commission (1/6/22) and the Transit Advisory Committee (1/18/22) at their next meetings. Information will be shared through Arlington Transit alerts, emails, and websites as well as through Department of Environmental Services newsletters and social media, on board ART buses and by staff at the ART Call Center, 228-RIDE (7433)

Community Feedback: Transit rider feedback is anticipated to be positive, as the new transfer discount will cover the bus fare for riders starting their trip on Metrorail and continuing their one-way trip on ART. Staff can provide a more complete feedback update after communicating information with stakeholders, presenting to the committees and commission in early January and after implementation.

FISCAL IMPACT: Based on current transfer rates and anticipated increases, revenue loss is estimated at \$90,000 through the end of FY22. Projected FY23 revenue loss is anticipated to be approximately \$242,000. The proposed discount, if approved, will be effective February 6, 2022.