DATE: April 3, 2006

SUBJECT: Enactment of a Non-Codified Ordinance Adopting a Revised Arlington STAR Transit System Passenger Fare Schedule, by Increasing Certain Fares and Adding New Fares, to Become Effective on July 1, 2006.

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Enactment of a Non-Codified Ordinance Adopting a Revised Arlington STAR Transportation System Passenger Fare Schedule, to Become Effective on July 1, 2006.

ISSUES: Should the County Board increase certain Arlington STAR fares, effective July 1, 2006?

SUMMARY: The Transportation Division of the Department of Environmental Services manages the STAR paratransit program, a locally run, service-oriented and cost-effective alternative to the regional MetroAccess Program provided by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Residents who use this service are currently charged $2.00 per trip, which has not been changed since the program’s inception in 1993. A new zone fare system is proposed for FY 2007 that will charge STAR customers $2.50 per trip completed within Arlington, $3.00 per trip for travel between Arlington and northern Virginia inside the beltway or the District of Columbia, and $7.00 per trip for travel between Arlington and areas currently served in northern Virginia outside the beltway or Maryland. The proposed fare increases help offset the cost of providing these transportation services, including increased contractual costs for operation and maintenance.

BACKGROUND: Since its inception in 1994, MetroAccess has been providing eligibility certification, trip requests and scheduling services to County residents and visitors as the designated Regional Paratransit Provider in compliance with regulation promulgated under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Arlington County has operated its own paratransit service since 1993, first as a support to MetroAccess’ start-up and, subsequently, as a cost saving quality enhancement alternative to the regional service. STAR services are managed by a contractor who provides call intake and scheduling services. Actual service delivery is provided...
through three independent contractors who utilize regular and accessible taxicabs and vans. More than 90% of all eligible Arlington resident trips are provided by STAR, with the remaining 10% using MetroAccess.

Since FY 2002, the STAR program contract costs have more than doubled from $1.69 million to an estimated $3.57 million in FY 2006, while ridership has increased from 59,485 in FY 2002 to a projected 121,484 in FY 2006. As operating costs have risen significantly, fares for this program have remained the same. A zone fare system is proposed to create an incentive for persons to use STAR where its benefits and cost efficiencies are greatest and to create parity with MetroAccess. Trips within Arlington, and between Arlington and other destinations in Virginia (inside the Beltway) and the District using STAR generally cost the County less than the same trip made on MetroAccess. Longer trips to the outer Fairfax County and Maryland (less than 10% of total trips) generally cost the County more than a trip made on MetroAccess.

**DISCUSSION:** WMATA has been designated as the regional paratransit service provider, and some local jurisdictions have supplemented this service with their own specialized transportation programs. In Attachment A, a summary matrix is provided to identify the locally operated paratransit programs, their service areas, and fare structures. The proposed non-codified ordinance (Attachment B) addresses the amount of STAR fare increases presented at the public hearing before the County Board on March 30, 2006.

Staff presented the proposed fare increases to the Transportation Commission on March 2, 2006 and April 6, 2006; the Transit Advisory Committee on March 14, 2006; the Commission on Aging on March 20, 2006; and the Disability Advisory Commission on March 21, 2006. Both the Transportation Commission and the Transit Advisory Committee have endorsed the proposed fare increases, while the Commission on Aging did not take a formal position on this issue at their budget hearing. The Disability Advisory Commission did have concerns on the equitability of the proposed fare increases, and a letter from their chairman is attached to this report.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The fare increases proposed are projected to reduce the net subsidy for this program by $125,000 and are included in the County Manager’s FY 2007 Proposed Budget.
### Comparison of Locally Operated Paratransit Programs in the WMATA Service Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Fare Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arlington</td>
<td>STAR</td>
<td>WMATA’s original service area—generally within ¼-mile of current fixed service area</td>
<td>$2.00 flat fare in MetroAccess service area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>DOT</td>
<td>Alexandria, Arlington, Falls Church, Fairfax City and Fairfax County</td>
<td>$2.00 inside Alexandria &amp; $2.50 outside of Alexandria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falls Church</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfax County</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery County</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Georges County</td>
<td>Call-A-Bus</td>
<td>Prince Georges County only</td>
<td>$2.50 within service area; however, there is a graduated fare schedule of up to $6.50 for service beyond regular fixed area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMATA</td>
<td>MetroAccess</td>
<td>¼-mile beyond the weekday, peak, regular fixed service area operated by WMATA or member jurisdictions</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ENACTMENT OF A NON-CODIFIED ORDINANCE ADOPTING A REVISED
ARLINGTON STAR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PASSENGER FARE SCHEDULE, TO
BECOME EFFECTIVE ON JULY 1, 2006.

ARLINGTON STAR TRANSIT SYSTEM
PASSENGER FARE SCHEDULE

One-way fare Arlington County-to-Arlington County .......................$2.00 $2.50

One-way fare between Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, Fairfax County, City of
Falls Church and the District of Columbia, provided that the trip origination and destination each
occur inside the beltway.................................................................$3.00

One-way fare between Arlington County and all other points in the State of Virginia outside the
beltway or to the State of Maryland, as specified in the Regional Paratransit Plan and the
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Service Zone ..........$7.00

Each additional companion passenger will be charged the same fare as the STAR customer, as
applicable from the above stated fares.................................$2.00 $2.50, $3.00 or $7.00

Personal Care Attendants......................................................no charge