DATE: February 24, 2006

SUBJECT: Request to Advertise a Non-Codified Ordinance Adopting a Revised Arlington STAR Transit System Passenger Fare Schedule

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the advertisement of a public hearing to be held on March 30, 2006 to adopt a revised Arlington STAR Transit System Passenger Fare Schedule by adoption of a non-codified ordinance enacting such fares, effective July 1, 2006.

ISSUES: Should the County Board advertise for Public Hearing an increase in Arlington STAR fares, effective July 1, 2006?

SUMMARY: Arlington County developed the STAR paratransit program in the late 1990s to provide a locally run, service-oriented and cost-effective alternative to the regional MetroAccess Program provided by WMATA. The STAR program serves this purpose well, delivering high quality service that is cost effective for trips in the core of the region, saving the County more than $1 million per year in regional Metro payments for the equivalent MetroAccess service.

Since FY 2002, 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. Fares for this program have not been raised since the late 1990s. 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 ($32/trip). 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. A zone fare system is proposed to create an incentive for persons to use STAR where its benefits are greatest and to create parity with MetroAccess, in terms of subsidy per trip, for those longer trips throughout the service region while retaining the option for riders to choose the higher quality STAR service.
BACKGROUND: Since its inception in 1994, MetroAccess has been providing eligibility certification and trip request 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 accessible vans. More than 90% of all eligible Arlington resident trips are provided by STAR, with the remaining 10% using MetroAccess.

DISCUSSION: The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority 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 that would be advertised for public hearing before the County Board on March 30, 2006.

Staff will brief the Transportation Commission on March 2, 2006, the Transit Advisory Committee on March 14, 2006, and the Disability Advisory Commission on March 21, 2006 of the proposed fare increases and will forward Committee/Commission comments to the County Board before the public hearing on March 30, 2006. All of the proposed fee increases would be effective July 1, 2006.

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>Arlington</th>
<th>Alexandria Falls Church</th>
<th>Fairfax County</th>
<th>District of Columbia</th>
<th>Montgomery County</th>
<th>Prince Georges County</th>
<th>WMATA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program</strong></td>
<td>STAR</td>
<td>DOT</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Call-A-Bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service Area</strong></td>
<td>WMATA’s original service area—generally within ¾-mile of current fixed service area</td>
<td>Alexandria, Arlington, Falls Church, Fairfax City and Fairfax County</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Prince Georges County only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fare Structure</strong></td>
<td>$2.00 flat fare in MetroAccess service area</td>
<td>$2.00 inside Alexandria &amp; $2.50 outside of Alexandria</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$0.50</td>
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</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