



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
**Department of Transportation
& Environmental Services**

Paratransit Program Updates





Summary

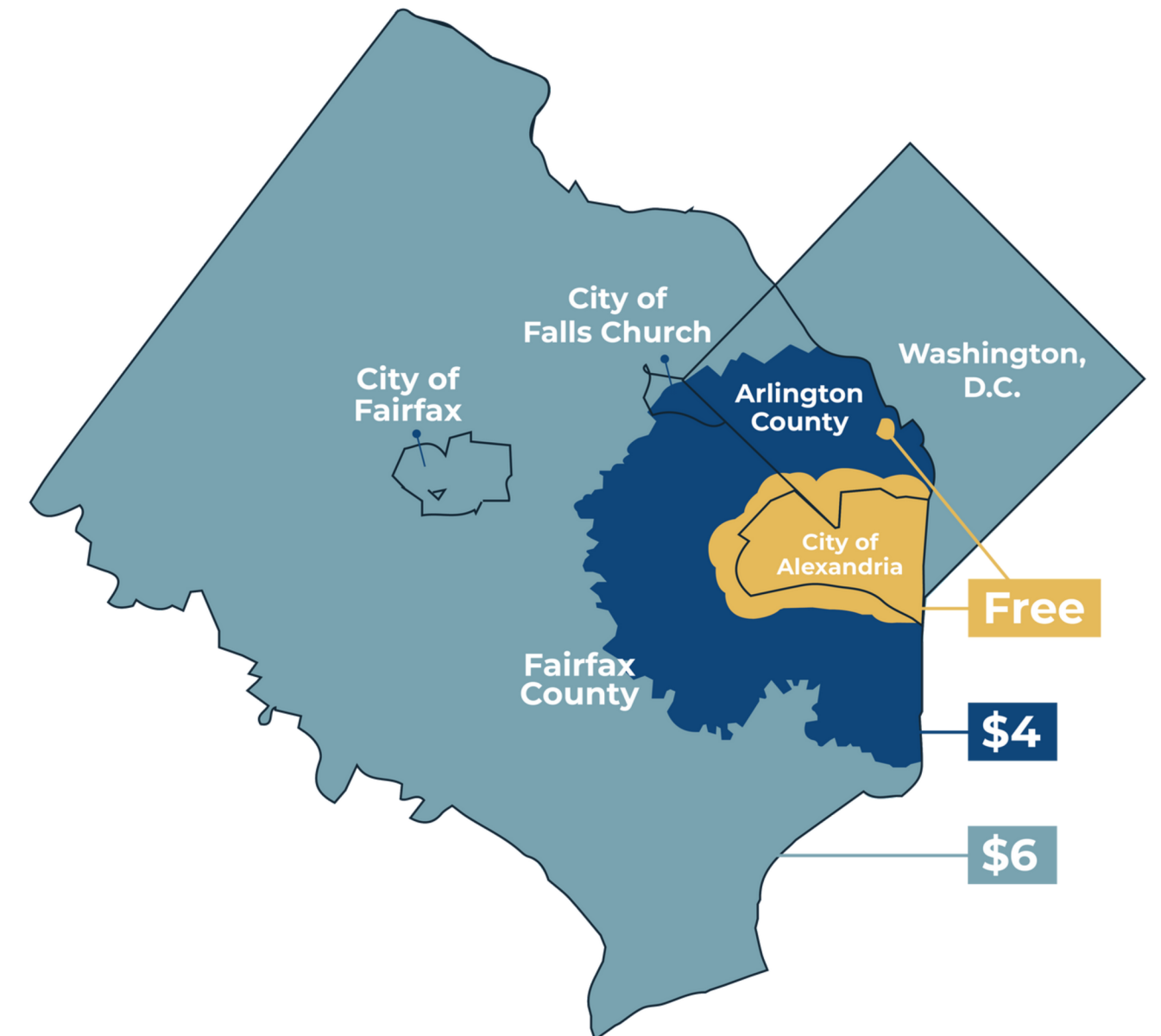
- ▶ **Request:** Consider proposed cost savings and efficiencies for DOT Paratransit Program and release funds held in contingency from FY 2026 Budget.
- ▶ **Council Action:**
 - Allocate \$513,055 of Contingent Reserves for DOT Paratransit for FY 2026.

Key Elements of the Proposal: Staff have developed a package of cost savings and efficiency measures that will be implemented in FY 2026 and beyond



Background

- ▶ The DOT Paratransit program provides critical transportation services to residents with disabilities and satisfies federal requirements for providing transportation for people with disabilities who are unable to ride public transportation.
- ▶ With the adoption of the FY 2026 budget, City Council placed 25 percent of DOT Paratransit program funding into contingency and directed staff to evaluate ways to improve performance and efficiency.





DOT Paratransit Accomplishments

▶ Service Oversight & Technology

- Implemented new software (Spare) – May 2025.
- Launched Call Center IVR system – July 2025.
- Implemented 311 feedback channel – Dec 2024.
- New scheduling/dispatch with UZURV for real-time tracking & vendor coordination.

▶ Access & Equity

- Streamlined application & recertification.
- Updated policies, closed gaps, added translations.
- Expanded fare-free zone (federal compliance).

▶ Community & Coordination

- Finished pilot with RPCA Summer Camp trips.
- Coordinating with DASH, DCHS, and RPCA to identify overlaps/efficiencies.
- Initiated discussions with Arlington STAR for potential cost savings.
- Ongoing updates to commissions & participants.
- Conversations with Council on savings options.

▶ Performance

- 95% On-Time – first time achieved.
- 44,400 trips (+3,000 from FY24).



Savings Proposals



Cost Saving



Program Efficiencies



Vehicle Procurement
and Leasing



Coordination with
Arlington STAR



Fare Changes



Travel Training

Alexandria
Mobility
Plan



Call Center AI
Agents



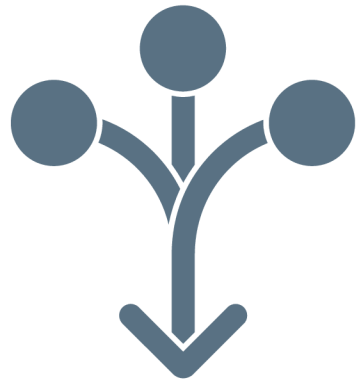
Transportation
Voucher Program



Unified Software
Across Departments



Vehicle Procurement and Leasing



Program
Efficiencies



Cost Savings

▶ **Proposal:** Procure new vehicles and lease back to contractor

▶ **Justification:**

- **Cost savings -**

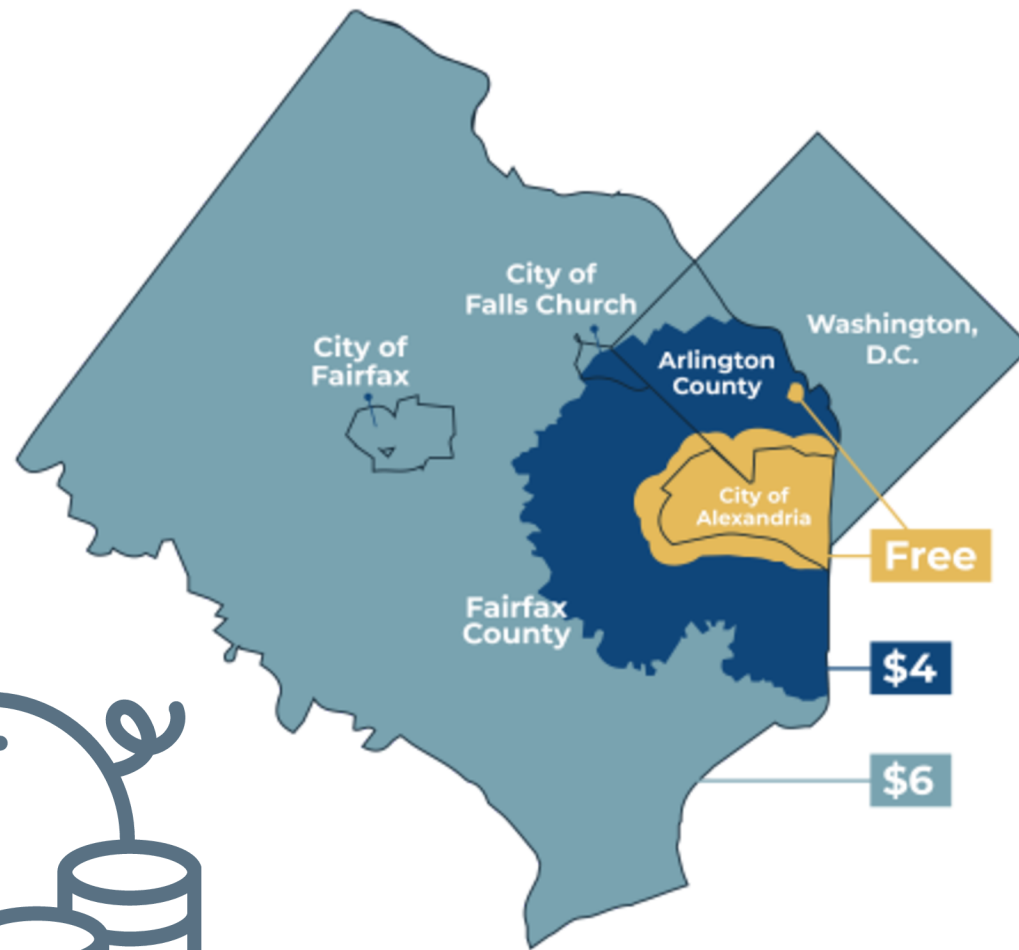
- Estimated savings: \$2,700–\$3,000/month per vehicle from lease payment from contractor
- Cost recovery: Vehicle cost recouped in 4 years by reduced vendor payments.
- Ability to purchase vehicles and begin leasing much sooner

- **Improved rider experience**



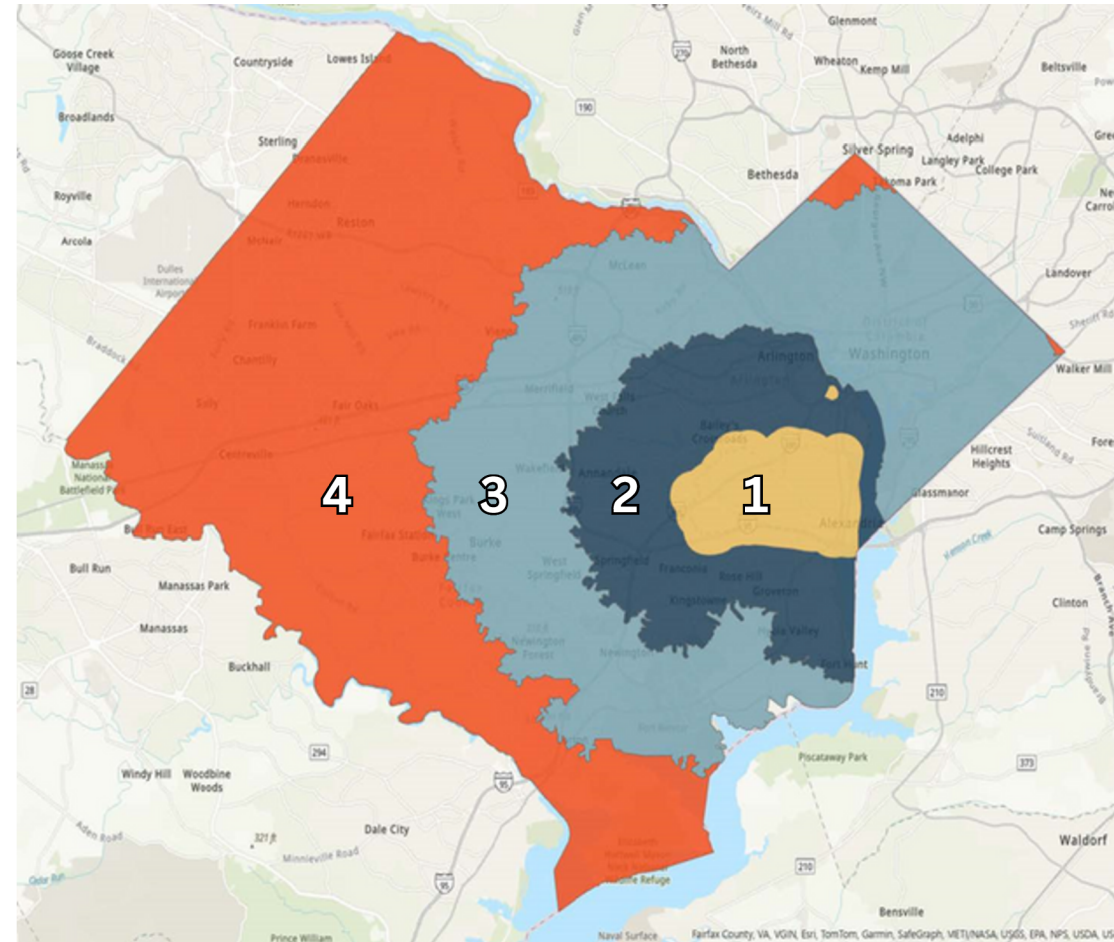
Fare Changes

Current Fares



Cost Savings

Proposed Fares



Fare Adjustments:

- Zone **1**: remains free
- Zone **2**: fare from \$4 to \$5
- Zone **3**: fare from \$6 to \$7
- Creation of Zone **4** (split from existing zone 3): \$6 to \$10

Peak-Hour Surcharge:

7–9 AM and 2–4 PM

- Implement a \$2 surcharge for trips scheduled during weekday peak periods.
- Applies to all paid zones

- Increase in revenue of up to \$17,000
- Fewer long distance trips during peak times
- Better vehicle availability and on-time performance
- No impact on ADA required paratransit trips



Call Center AI Agents

Spare AI Voice can provide Call Center service after hours and during busy periods



Program
Efficiencies



Cost Savings

- **Operational Efficiency & Cost**
 - Automates routine calls, absorbs rising volumes without new staff.
 - Extends service hours and reduces complaints, missed trips, and attrition.
- **Rider Experience & Equity**
 - Zero wait for common requests, 24/7 phone access.
 - **Multilingual support** (13+ voices).
 - Accurate, consistent info directly from Spare.
- **Performance & Compliance**
 - Strengthens **ADA/FTA compliance** with always-available access.
 - Cuts call abandonment with instant responses.





Unified Software Across Departments



Program
Efficiencies



Cost Savings

- **One System, One Platform** – Bring DCHS trips onto the same scheduling and routing system as DOT Paratransit.
- **Efficiency & Savings** – Reduce duplication, share trips, and streamline operations.
- **Better Service** – Consistent rider experience with professional navigation.
- **Future Integration** – Lays groundwork for consolidating services under DOT.
- **Smart Investment** – ~\$10–12k upfront; long-term coordination and cost savings after one year of data.





Coordination with Arlington STAR



Benefits:

1. Trip Sharing Across Jurisdictions
2. Improve Fleet Utilization
3. Shared Staff & Training
4. Data-Driven Cost Avoidance



Cost Savings

Cost Savings:

- Coordinate vendor to **identify discounts** from combined services, bulk procurement, or shared staffing.
- Leverage these savings when **developing the next RFP** to reduce overall contract costs and maximize efficiency.



Travel Training



Program
Efficiencies



Cost Savings

- ▶ **Proposal:** Provide individualized and small-group travel training for seniors & individuals with disabilities
- ▶ **Justification:**
 - **Cost Savings:** Estimated \$150k–\$200k annual savings if 50 riders shift just 2 trips/week from paratransit
 - **Operational Relief:** Frees paratransit capacity for riders unable to transition
 - **Sustainability:** Builds long-term independence and reduces demand on specialized service
 - **Equity & Inclusion:** Promotes independence and integration by teaching skills to safely use fixed-route transit



Transportation Voucher Program

Piggyback on Senior Taxi Program to shift paratransit trips to less expensive option.

- Current DOT Paratransit cost: \$46 per trip
- Fairfax County model shows average \$16 per trip
- Potential savings: \$30 per trip (63%)
- Riders gain flexibility: Uber, Lyft, taxi, & fixed-route transit
- Paratransit resources preserved for those with highest need
- Scalable: Start with new riders, expand based on savings



Cost Savings





Summary of Cost Savings

▶ **FY 2026 ~\$45,000 - \$50,000**

- Fare Changes
- Vehicle Leasing

▶ **FY 2027 ~\$300,000 - \$350,000**

- Fare Changes
- Vehicle Leasing
- Transportation Voucher Program
- Travel Training



Cost Savings



Recommendation

- ▶ **Allocate \$513,055 of Contingent Reserves for DOT Paratransit for FY 2026.**