



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 23, 2020

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Resolution to Increase the Fares for the Department of Transportation (DOT) Paratransit Program.[ROLL-CALL-VOTE]

ISSUE: A resolution to increase the fares for the DOT Paratransit Program.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment) as part of the FY 2021 Approved Budget. The new fee(s) will be effective July 1, 2020.

BACKGROUND: This memorandum provides information regarding a proposed fee increase for the City's paratransit program for FY 2021. The fee increase is projected to provide an annual savings of \$68,000 for the City in FY 2021 and future years.

DISCUSSION: Staff proposes a \$1 increase to the fares for the paratransit program. This fare is paid by paratransit users for each trip and would reduce the overall cost of each trip the City pays by an additional \$1. Approval of this increase will result in the following fares:

- \$4 per trip for inside the City and up to 5 miles outside the City, and
- \$6 per trip for all 5 mile and over outside the City trips.

The paratransit fares were last increased in FY 2011 when they were increased to \$3 for trips within the City (an increase of \$0.50) and \$5 for trips outside the City (an increase of \$2.50). This represented a fare that was two times the fixed route fare of DASH, which at that time was \$1.50. While the Americans with Disabilities Act permits paratransit fares up to twice the fixed route's fare, the City has consistently tried to maintain low fares. Although the DASH fare has increased since 2010 (the current fare is \$2), the paratransit fares have not increased since then. However, this program has consistently grown in ridership over the years, particularly as the aging population in Alexandria also increases.

In order to provide those individuals with disabilities the maximum amount of mobility in the City and encourage paratransit clients who may be able to use the fixed-route system to do so, in 2018, the City began providing free DASH service for anyone who qualifies for DOT paratransit. The number of DOT clients riding DASH under this program has increased each month but has not had major impact on DOT ridership. As this policy is still relatively new, staff will continue to assess the impact of DASH ridership for the paratransit program.

Staff proposes this slight increase to offset these costs and to ensure funding is available to continue this service. The fee increases would narrow the gap between the cost of services provided and recovery of those costs.

Staff have notified the Commission for Persons with Disabilities about this proposed fare increase. Additionally, staff will coordinate with existing paratransit users to ensure they are aware of changes to fares well in advance of the new fares taking effect.

FISCAL IMPACT: Increasing the paratransit fee is projected to generate approximately \$68,000 in annual savings for the General Fund revenue each year. In FY 2019, the total cost for the Paratransit program was \$1,593,562.

ATTACHMENT: Resolution

STAFF:

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager

Laura Triggs, Deputy City Manager

Morgan Routt, Director, Office of Management & Budget

Yon Lambert, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services

Hillary Orr, Deputy Director, Transportation and Environmental Services

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