



# **Title VI Fare Equity Analysis**

***DART On Demand Fare Policy***

**July 2022**

## Background

In November 2021 a pilot microtransit service was launched in the City of Ankeny called DART On Demand. Microtransit is a type of mobility on demand (MOD) service that utilizes a DART vehicle and DART driver, equipped with a mobile ride booking and dispatch app, to transport customer point to point within a defined zone.

DART On Demand was identified in the Transit Optimization Study, DART's long range service planning document, as a way to provide flexible travel but still maintain quality control and full ADA accessibility. Prior to DART On Demand, Ankeny was served by an On-Call service that required day-ahead booking through DART customer service and cost \$3.50 to ride.

The goals of the DART On Demand pilot in Ankeny are to:

- Provide local transit in response to significant public feedback in Ankeny
- Improve the quality and convenience of the rider experience
- Pilot an innovative service delivery model to consider how to potentially apply it in other parts of the region

DART On Demand initially launched with a promotional fare of \$1 in order to incentivize early adoption and keep barriers to trying to use the new service very low. DART proposes to create a fare structure for this new service type that balances the need to collect revenue with the desire to make the service accessible to the maximum number of people and compatible with fixed route service.

## Proposed Fare Structure

DART proposes to establish a base fare for DART On Demand of \$1.75, which is the same as a local fixed route fare. DART also proposes that all local fixed route pass products and eligible forms of payment and reduced fares be accepted for DART On Demand. Additionally, customers could choose to pay using the Via mobile app that is also used to reserve and summon a trip.

This recommended fare structure is intended to:

- Create incentives for ridership, which maximizes efficiency and value by keeping the microtransit vehicles busy
- Account for potential scenarios where DART would replace a fixed route with DART On Demand and we don't wish to create a cost burden on existing riders of the route to be discontinued
- Ensure that DART's fare policies are easy to understand and that methods of fare payment are seamless between services.



## Public Outreach

The proposed fare structure for DART On Demand was shared with existing DART On Demand customers through on-board and electronic communications. A virtual public meeting was also held on June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2022, which had been published on-board DART On Demand vehicles and electronically. No negative comments were received.

## Relevant Policies

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has several requirements to ensure that transit agencies comply with Title VI, among them the requirement to analyze changes to transit service or fares to determine whether changes are being applied equitably to minority and low-income communities.

All changes to fare cost and payment methods are subject to this analysis and reporting, excluding temporary or promotional fares lasting 12 months or less.

DART's Disparate Impact Policy provides a threshold which identifies when adverse effects of a fare change are borne disproportionately by minority populations. DART will consider a proposed fare rate or media change to have a disparate impact if the proportion of minority customers likely to be negatively affected is more than 5 percentage points greater than the overall proportion of DART customers likely to be affected.

DART's Disproportionate Burden Policy provides a threshold which identifies when adverse effects of a fare change are borne disproportionately by low-income populations. DART will consider a proposed fare rate or media change to have a disproportionate burden if the proportion of low-income customers likely to be negatively affected is more than 5 percentage points greater than the overall proportion of DART customers likely to be affected.

# Impact Analysis

## ***DART On Demand Ridership***

Ordinarily DART would analyze demographic information about riders of the service in order to study the potential impacts of fare changes. However, since DART On Demand is a pilot project and DART has not yet conducted an in-depth customer satisfaction survey to collect rider demographic information, such an analysis cannot be done at this time.

## ***Fare Change Analysis***

The following analysis focuses on the impacts of the proposed fare structure by comparing the pricing for the previously available On-Call service to the proposed pricing for DART On Demand.

The proposed DART On Demand fare structure would result in a fare decrease relative to the previously available service in Ankeny as shown below.

Fare Type	Cost		Change	
	On- Call	DART On Demand	Absolute	Percentage
Base Fare	\$3.50	\$1.75	(\$1.75)	-50%
Half- fare and Ride to Thrive	\$0.75	\$0.75	0	0%

While there are not any designated pass products for the On-Call service, customers can use any local route pass product or fare media and pay an additional \$1.75 upcharge when boarding the bus.

## ***Fare Media Changes***

The proposed DART On Demand fare policy would be to accept all eligible forms of local fixed route fare payment, plus the additional fare payment method of the Via mobile app. DART already has a similar mobile ticketing solution that allows customers to use a credit card on their smart phone, so the addition of the option to pay on the Via app is not materially different than what is already offered.

Because all local fixed route fare media could be used to pay for DART On Demand, customers will have more pass options than with the previous On Call service, which did not have dedicated pass products and required customers to pay an upcharge if they used fixed route pass products.

## Findings

This analysis indicates that the proposed changes would not have a disproportionate negative impact on minority or low-income customers.

- The proposed DART On Demand fare structure would cost less for customers relative to the previously available On Call service and would not constitute a disparate impact on minority individuals.
- The proposed DART On Demand fare structure would maintain the \$0.75 half fare and Ride to Thrive rate, which many low-income riders qualify for, and would therefore not result in a disproportionate burden on low-income customers.

## Conclusions

The proposed DART On Demand fare structure does not raise any Title VI concerns because the price will be lower than the On Call system that it replaces, and customers will have more options for how to pay their fare due to the applicability of local fixed route pass products and fare media.