

STAR Focus Area Feedback Summary

Winter 2024

Project Background

STAR (Specialized Transportation for Arlington Residents) is a shared-ride service for people whose disabilities make riding other bus and rail services challenging. STAR provides a comparable level of public transportation to that provided by ART, Metrobus, MetroAccess, and Metrorail and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

We heard your thoughts on STAR's current service and learned what matters most to you. The feedback from this engagement, along with operational data, will help Arlington Transit make service recommendations for consideration as part of the STAR operations contract process.

In fall 2023, Arlington Transit asked STAR users to share their ride experiences. Based on [feedback received](#), four focus areas of service for additional engagement emerged:

- Travel Zones
- Payment Options
- Same-Day Trips
- Potential New Features

The winter 2024 engagement asked riders questions about these focus areas to help the team understand how important each element is to their transportation needs.

Public Engagement

In January 2024, the County project team launched a feedback form for current STAR customers. Customers could complete the feedback form online and this opportunity was available for six weeks. An open house was also hosted in late January where participants could provide feedback. Additionally, postcards advertising these engagement opportunities were sent to registered STAR users.

The online feedback form received 58 comments from 46 respondents, and staff received 10 comments from 10 attendees at the in-person open house.

What We Heard: Engagement Summary

The engagement summary contains three parts:

Overall: A comparison of feedback received across the focus areas Pg. 2

Feedback by question: Graphs and data for individual questions Pg. 3

Open-ended feedback summary: A summary of major themes from open-ended feedback, shared via online feedback form, phone, email or at the open house Pg. 6

Overall

Respondents indicated that service to Zones 1 and 2 were the most important to their transportation needs, with 70% sharing that each was “very important”. Reliable service was also highly rated, with 67% reporting it is “very important” to their travel needs.

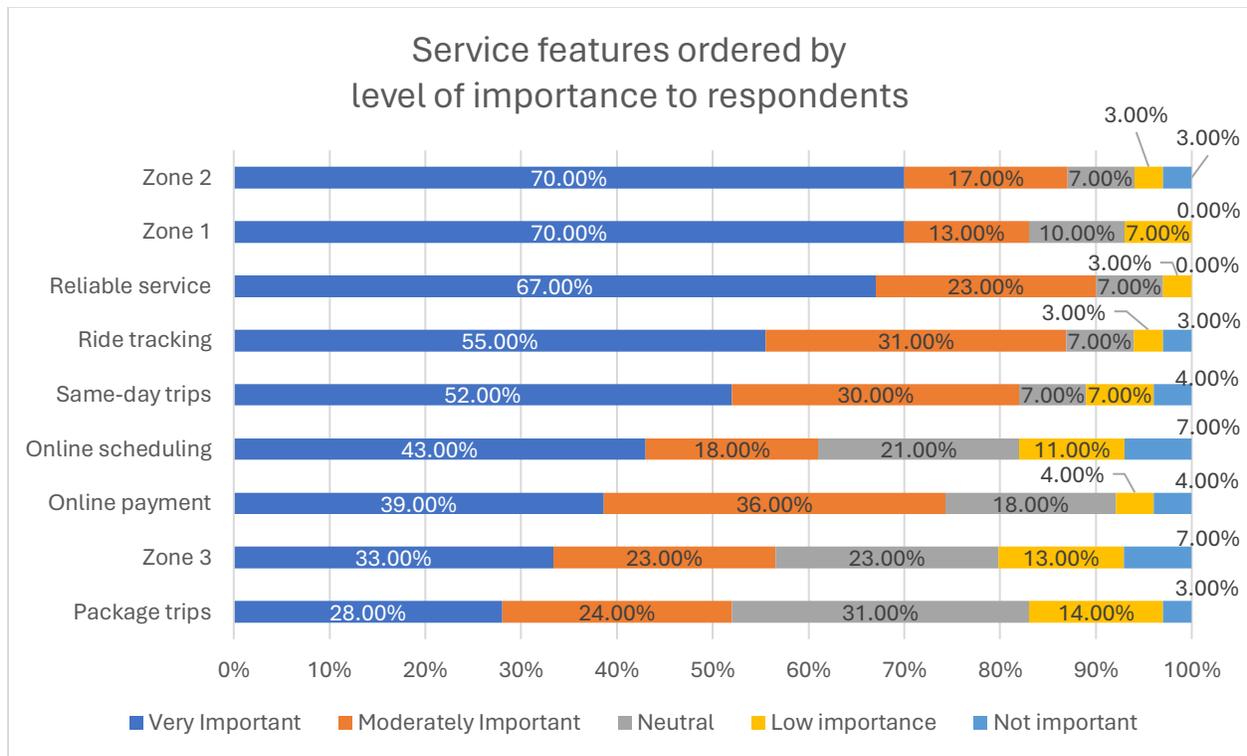
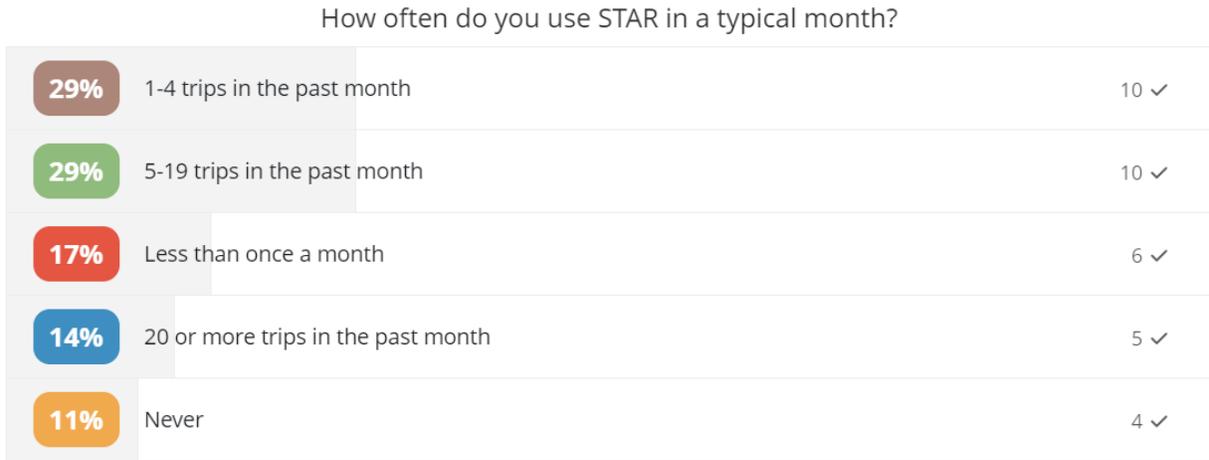


Figure 1: Service Features Combined Graph

Of the potential new features STAR could consider adding, ride tracking was highly rated, with 86% indicating that it was “very important” (55%) or “moderately important” (31%) to their transportation needs.

Feedback by Question

Most respondents used STAR for 1-4 trips (29%) or 5-19 (29%) trips a month.



35 Respondents

Figure 2: How often do you use STAR in a typical month?

Travel Zones

A majority of respondents felt that Zones 1 (70%) and 2 (70%) were very important to their transportation needs. For Zone 3, 33% of respondents felt it was very important to their transportation needs.

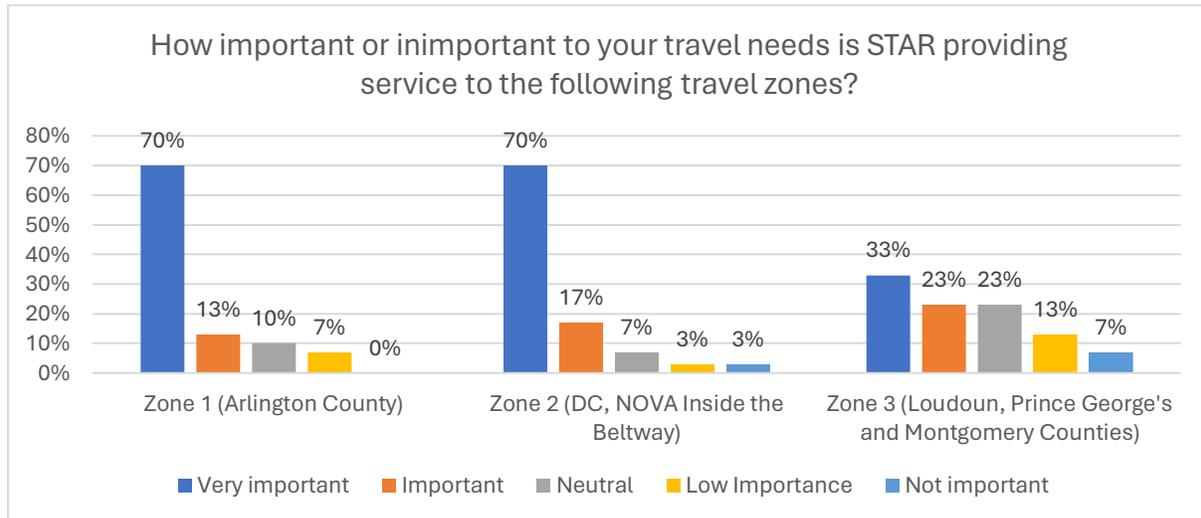
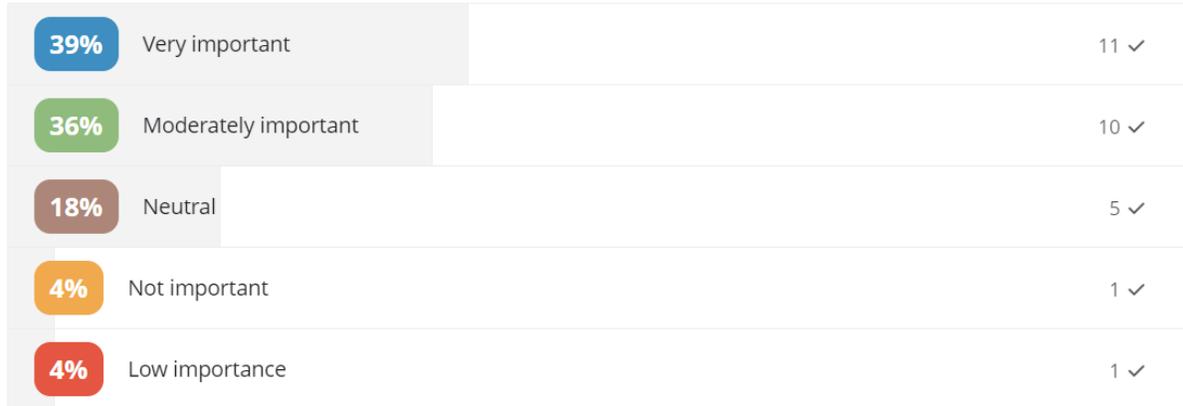


Figure 3: Travel Zones

Payment Options

A majority of respondents felt having the ability to pay for STAR trips online was moderately important (36%) or very important (39%) to their transportation needs.

6. How important or unimportant to your transportation needs is the ability to pay for STAR trips online with a credit or debit card?



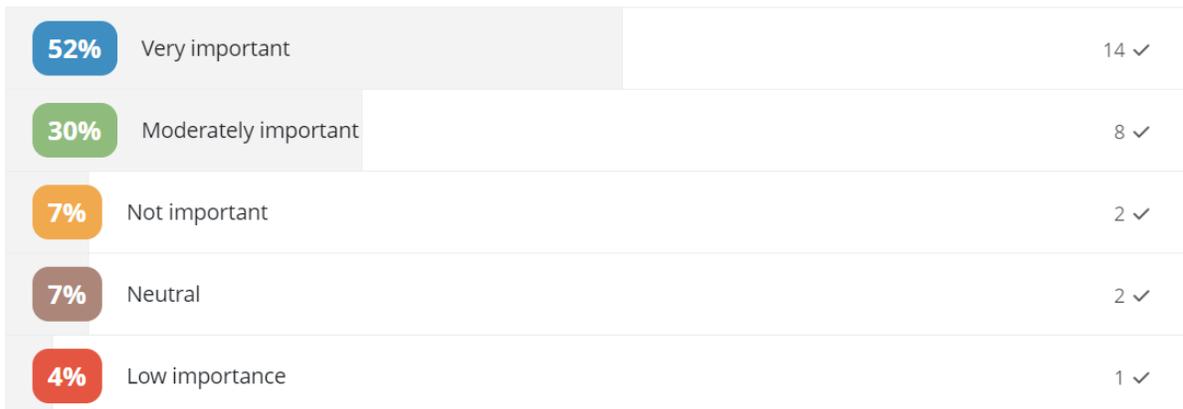
28 Respondents

Figure 4: Payment Options

Same-Day Trips

A majority of respondents felt that the ability to schedule same-day trips with STAR was moderately important (30%) or very important (52%) to their transportation needs.

8. How important or unimportant to your transportation needs is the ability to schedule same-day trips with STAR?



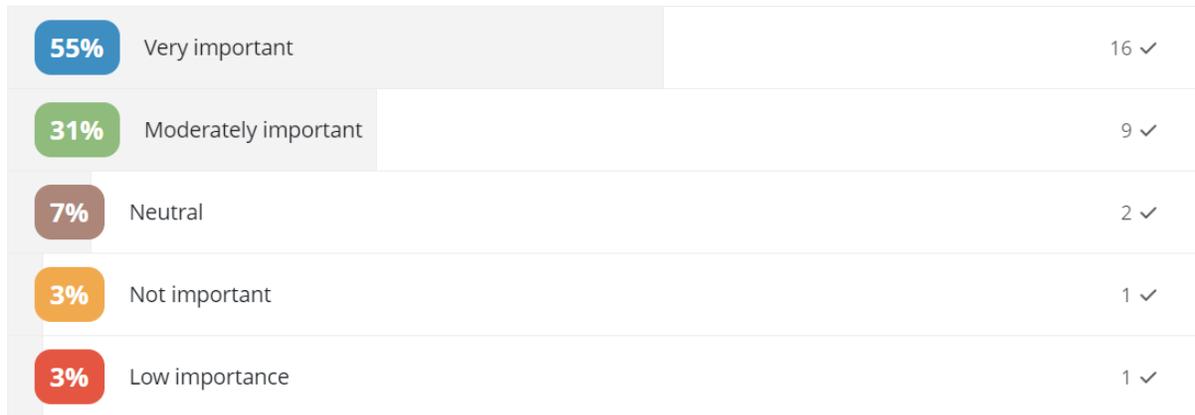
27 Respondents

Figure 5: Same-Day Trips

Potential New Features

A majority of respondents felt that the ability to track their STAR ride, schedule STAR trips online, and schedule return and pickup trips as a package online was moderately important (31%) or very important (55%) to their transportation needs.

10. How important or unimportant to your transportation needs is the ability to track your STAR ride?



29 Respondents

Figure 6: Ride Tracking

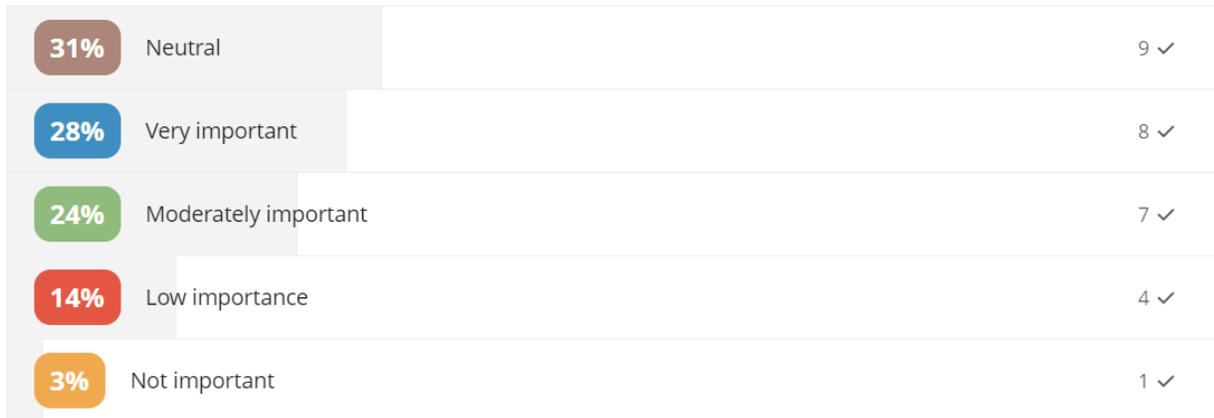
11. How important or unimportant to your transportation needs is the ability to schedule STAR trips online?



28 Respondents

Figure 7: Online Scheduling

12. How important or unimportant to your transportation needs is the ability to schedule STAR pick-up and return trips as a package online?



29 Respondents

Figure 8: Scheduling Pick-up and Return Trips Together

Open-Ended Feedback Summary

There were a total of 68 comments, including 58 comments from the online feedback form and 10 comments from the open house. There were a total of 56 respondents, consisting of 46 respondents for the online feedback form and 10 respondents at the open house. These comments are summarized within the four focus areas for this engagement (travel zones, payment options, same-day trips, and potential new features). General feedback and suggestions from respondents are outlined below.

Travel Zones

There were 19 comments specifically about travel zones. Comment feedback included:

- General Feedback
 - **Zone Coverage** - Many commenters expressed that it was important to keep all 3 current travel zones and that a zone reduction would have a negative impact on them.
 - **Driver Timeliness** – A few respondents mentioned that they had issues with rides while using STAR service. Issues that were mentioned include a lack of timeliness for pickups, especially on weekends, and a rider was stranded having an hour-long pickup time.
- Suggestions
 - **Price Increase** - One respondent suggested adding a fourth zone that is priced significantly higher than the other zones.
 - **Zone Distance & Limitations** - Another respondent said that zones should be based on distance or that there should be limitations on the number of Zone 3 trips each rider can take.
 - **Waiting for Pickup** - A couple respondents asked if there could be a solution to organize a place to sit or an outdoor shelter while they are waiting for pickup.

Payment Options

There were 16 comments specifically about payment options. Comment feedback included:

- General Feedback
 - **Paying Online** – There is a strong desire among respondents to have the ability to pay online. However, there was a minority of respondents who mentioned that they do not think the STAR payment system needs to be changed at all.
 - **Lack of Awareness** – There were some commenters who lacked awareness about STAR’s online payment option, which can be [accessed through CommuterDirect](#).
- Suggestions
 - **STAR Application** – One respondent suggested that STAR create an application that allows users to interact with their STAR data more directly, including a payment portal. (This suggestion was also previously made under the ‘Potential New Features’ section)
 - **Payment Portal** – A commenter mentioned that having an account where riders can load money to be used for STAR trips could be very useful.

Same-Day Trips

There were 22 comments specifically about same-day trips. Comment feedback included:

- General Feedback
 - **Pro Same-Day Trips** - Almost all commenters agreed that they would like same-day trips to be available through STAR service.
 - **Willing to Pay More** – There were a few commenters who said they would be willing to pay a higher fee to be able to take a same-day trip.
 - **Lack of Awareness** – A few respondents did not know that STAR currently provides same-day trips in cases of emergency.
- Suggestions
 - **Dedicated Drivers** – One respondent suggested that STAR have a dedicated group of drivers available to complete same-day trip requests.
 - **Extra Fee** – Some commenters agreed that there could be an extra fee associated with taking a same-day trip.
 - **Rideshare Partnership** – Quite a few respondents suggested that there could be a partnership between STAR and rideshare services to help fulfil same-day trip requests for STAR users.

Potential New Features

There were 11 comments specifically about potential new features. Comment feedback included:

- General Feedback
 - **Tracking Rides Online** – A few respondents said that they would like the ability to track their rides online (similar to how one can track rides on commercial rideshare applications).
 - **Website Improvements** – Commenters mentioned wanting more control over their STAR experience, specifically riders being able to schedule rides online by themselves and having the ability to track their rides. A commenter also mentioned that it would be useful to make the website more functional.
- Suggestions
 - **Calendar Connection** - One respondent suggested connecting their STAR ride appointments to their online calendars after their ride booking.
 - **STAR Application** – One respondent suggested that STAR create an application that allows users to interact with their STAR data more directly. (This suggestion was also previously made under the ‘Payment Options’ section)

Next Steps

The feedback from this engagement, along with operational data, will help Arlington Transit make service recommendations for consideration as part of the STAR operations contract process.

More Information

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