



Complementary Paratransit Service Effective - August 12, 2010



This document is available on the web at www.mygreenway.org. This document may also be obtained in other formats by contacting the WPRTA Scheduling Center at 828-464-9444 or 7-1-1 or 1-877-735-8200 for Relay.

Complementary Paratransit (American with Disabilities Act)

WPRTA complementary paratransit service offers curb to curb transportation within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the fixed-route bus service to passengers who have a disability that prevents them from getting to a bus stop, getting onto the bus or understanding how to use the bus system. This service requires a passenger to fill out an ADA application and meet the eligibility requirements as established in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Service Hours

WPRTA's complementary paratransit hours (excluding holidays) are:

Weekdays- 5:45 a.m. – 6:50 p.m. Saturdays- 8:45 a.m. – 4:50 p.m.

Currently there is no Sunday service.

Service is provided Monday through Saturday throughout the year, except for the following observed holidays.

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Martin Luther King Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- Christmas Eve, Christmas and the day after Christmas

Service Parameters

Service is only provided inside the service area as defined by the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The area is defined as an area within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile on either side of a fixed route service. Passengers previously certified through Piedmont Wagon prior to July 1, 2008 will continue to use the city limits of Hickory, Newton and Conover as their defined service area.

Eligibility / Certification Criteria for Complementary Paratransit

WPRTA utilizes the certification criteria as established in the ADA, as listed below:

1. Individuals cannot independently travel to/from fixed route stops within the service area.
2. Individuals could use an accessible fixed route vehicle, but the route that would be used is not accessible.
3. Individuals cannot independently navigate the system even though they can board the bus.

The application must be legible and properly completed. Also, the applicant must sign that the information given is correct and sign the release of information form which is included in the application. A health care provider must complete the attached physician form.

After the completed application is received, a WPRTA staff member will notify the applicant of the findings within 21 days.

Determination of Eligibility for Complementary Paratransit Service

WPRTA will determine eligibility status of a passenger based on the information provided during the eligibility process. A person may be determined to be ADA-eligible, temporarily ADA-eligible, or conditionally ADA-eligible on certain trips. Following the determination by WPRTA, the applicant will be notified of the findings. If the applicant disagrees with the findings, he/she may make a written request for an appeal of the decision. The appeal procedures will be sent to the applicant along with the determination of eligibility.

Renewal of Complementary Paratransit Certification Process

WPRTA will renew certification of all ADA-eligible passengers every two (2) years.

PLEASE NOTE THAT WPRTA'S POLICY DOES NOT ALLOW AN OPERATOR TO LOSE VISUAL CONTACT WITH THE WPRTA VEHICLE.

Scheduling a Complementary Paratransit Trip

The complementary paratransit service is a shared ride, public transportation service. Requests for service may be made by calling the scheduling office at (828) 464-9444 during business hours on the preceding day that service is needed, however additional notice is recommended. Reservations may be made between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Calls on Sunday will be received by an answering system.

Same day service requests are not available. The trip requests for both destination and return shall be scheduled at the time of the request.

Stop announcement

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that passenger information is provided in the form of fixed route stop announcements and route identification methods as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. U.S. Department of Transportation regulatory requirements for fixed route stop announcements and route identification are set forth in 49 CFR §37.167:

On fixed route systems, the WPRTA shall announce stops as follows:

1. The WPRTA shall announce at least transfer points with other fixed routes, other major intersections and destination points, and intervals along a route sufficient to permit individuals with visual disabilities to be oriented to their location.
2. The WPRTA shall announce any stop on request of an individual with a disability.
3. At the Greenway Transfer Center in Downtown City of Hickory, where WPRTA buses for more than one route serve the same stop, WPRTA shall provide a means by which an individual with a visual impairment or other disability can identify the proper vehicle to enter or be identified to the vehicle operator as a person seeking to ride on a particular route.

Fixed route bus operator

Operators should be trained on all the above, plus the following:

- An understanding that making stop announcements and providing route identification is an essential job function.
- Details of when, how and where stop announcements and route identifications are to be made.
- The importance of making announcements that are clear and audible throughout the vehicle. This should be ensured through:
 - testing stop announcement and route identification equipment as part of pre-trip inspections;
 - promptly reporting in-service equipment failure;
 - using equipment appropriately;
 - making voice announcements when the PA or automated system is not working;
 - Use of a current manual stop list consistent with any automated list of stop announcements;
 - Incentive programs and disciplinary actions for noncompliance.

Employees should sign an acknowledgment of receipt of training and agree to follow the established stop announcement and route identification program protocols.

Half-Fare Identification Card

The Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority fixed route bus service has a half-Fare program for eligible persons with disabilities, elderly and individuals presenting a Medicare card. Eligibility criteria under this program is based on the following:

1. The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) defines persons with disabilities as persons "who by reason of illness, injury, age, congenital malfunction, or other incapacity or temporary or permanent disability (including any individual who is a wheelchair user or has semi-ambulatory capabilities), cannot use effectively, without special facilities, planning, or design, mass transportation service or a mass transportation facility."
2. Elderly---Under FTA regulations, "elderly" at a minimum, include all persons 65 year of age or over.
3. Medicare Card---The Half-Fare ID card is available to any person presenting a Medicare card duly issued pursuant to Sections II and XVIII of the Social Security Act. It guarantees the holder eligibility under the Half-Fare program. As a proof of eligibility, it is distinct from eligibility as an elderly or person with disabilities.

The half fare is \$.60. A Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority photo ID card will be provided to all eligible applicants.

Individuals who have **permanent or temporary conditions that may not affect their ability to make effective use of WPRTA buses and facilities** may be determined to be **ineligible** to participate in the Half-Fare program. These conditions include:

- Pregnancy
- Obesity
- Drug Addiction
- Some chronic heart or lung condition
- Loss of finger
- Contagious disease
- Controlled epilepsy
- Conditions which pose a danger to the individual or other passengers

The half-fare ID card can be obtained through the WPRTA Office, located at 1515 4th Street SW, Conover, NC 28613. Call the Customer Service Center at (828) 464-9444, TTD/TYY: (800) 735-2962 or 711 for additional information.

Trip Scheduling Information

Passengers who require trip scheduling or trip information may call the Scheduling office. When scheduling your trip for Complementary Paratransit or Demand Response, please have the following information ready:

1. Passenger name
2. Pick up address
3. Address of destination
4. Arrival time to destination
5. Approximate return trip request time
6. Type of assistance device, such as wheelchair, cane etc.
7. If a personal care attendant will accompany the passenger
8. If a service animal will accompany the passenger
9. If a guest will accompany the passenger

Trip Denials

A trip request may be denied for Demand Service if WPRTA is at full capacity or the time is not available to complete the trip as requested.

Trip requests for Complementary Paratransit will not be denied due to capacity constraints.

Subscription Service

A subscription trip for Complementary Paratransit is an ongoing reservation for a specific day of the week (for example, to work, dialysis, physical therapy, merchants, community services etc.). It is useful to schedule a subscription trip when a passenger goes to the same place one or more days each week. Subscription trips allow a passenger to schedule all trip requests with one phone call. Please call our scheduling center during business hours to request a subscription trip. Subscription service is on a space available basis.

A passenger who cancels or changes a subscription trip more than 4 times in a calendar month, will lose the option of using subscription scheduling and will be asked to call in all trips on a daily basis no more than 48 hours in advance for a 30 day period.

Pick-Up and Drop Off

Passengers will receive a designated pick up time for all for Complementary Paratransit and Demand Response trips. The driver may arrive up to thirty (30) minutes after the designated pick up time. Please be ready and waiting in a place where you can hear or see the vehicle when it arrives. Drivers are not allowed to enter a residence or other facilities to look for passengers. To avoid delaying other passengers, drivers will only wait five (5) minutes before proceeding on their route.

The vehicle requires an obstruction-free approach and sufficient turn-around area for its vehicles. Under some conditions alternate pick-up and drop-off locations may be established because of obstructed driveways, turnarounds, or other safety concerns.

Passenger Assistance

Transportation service is provided by ADA accessible lift equipped vehicles for complementary paratransit and demand response trips. All operators are trained to provide reasonable assistance. Operators are Not trained to provide medical assistance.

Reasonable assistance includes:

- The operator will come to the curb of a residence or pick up location.
- The operator will attempt to notify passengers of arrival by sounding horn.
- The operator will assist passengers in boarding and exiting the van.
- The operator will deliver the passenger to the curb of his/her destination.
- Origin to Destination service is available upon request for ADA eligible passengers. Additional assistance will be provided to the door if Origin to Destination is requested.
- Assisting passengers up and/or down ramps at residence or destination if Origin to Destination is requested.

Reasonable assistance DOES NOT include:

- Assisting a passenger through the doorway or threshold of a residence.
- Assistance getting in or out of a wheelchair.
- Assistance in getting ready for the trip.
- Administering medication or oxygen.
- Assistance in carrying personal belongings or packages.
- Assisting passengers in wheelchairs up or down stairs that have more than one step.

WPRTA reserves the right to refuse passenger assistance to areas deemed unsafe by the Authority.

Complementary Paratransit Fares

The WPRTA Board of Directors establishes the fare for the complementary paratransit service. Fare must be paid upon each boarding by cash or ticket. Exact fare is required, operators cannot make change, Passengers may purchase ticket booklets from WPRTA operators. The current fares are as follows:

- \$2.50 per one way trip or one Dial-a-Ride ticket
- \$22.50 per booklet of Dial-a-Ride ticket Tickets (each booklet contains 10 tickets)

Car Seats

WPRTA requires the personal care attendant to provide an appropriate car seat for each child that requires a car seat. The proper use and installation of the Child Safety Restraint Seat is fully the responsibility of the accompanying adult. The selections and utilization of a Child Safety Restraint Seat must follow State and Federal Guidelines. A ride will not be provided for anyone violating this policy.

Car seats may not be left on WPRTA vehicles. Each one way trip will require the car seat to be removed upon exit and secured upon entry.

Personal Care Attendant and Guests

A personal care attendant (PCA) is someone who travels with a passenger to provide any assistance. A PCA rides for free and must board and de-board at the same location as the passenger. Your PCA may also meet you at both ends of your trip.

Please inform the customer service representative, each time you make a reservation, that a PCA will accompany you to ensure sufficient seating availability on the van.

Please inform the customer service representative, each time you make a reservation, if a guest will accompany you to ensure sufficient seating availability on the van.

Please note that if a passenger cannot be left alone at a destination, or if the passenger must be under constant care or supervision, WPRTA may request the passenger to travel with a PCA. WPRTA is unable to alter or modify procedures or policies in order to provide specialized services to passengers who need services beyond the passenger assistance guidelines.

Cancellations and No Shows

Passengers unable to keep scheduled appointments must call (1) hour prior to the designated pick up time for in county trips and by 4:00 p.m. the day before for out of county trips.

Failure to take a scheduled trip or cancel that trip within the cancellation policy guidelines will result in a "No-Show." A pattern of successive no-shows may result in service suspension. No-show suspension guidelines are as follows.

First No-Show: After the first no-show the passenger will receive a verbal warning to call in cancellations in advance per the cancellation guidelines along with a verbal reminder of No Show consequences.

Second No-Show: After the second no-show the passenger will receive a second verbal warning to call in cancellations in advance per the cancellation guidelines along with a additional verbal reminder of No Show consequences.

Third No-Show: After the third no-show the passenger will be placed on a thirty (30) day suspension from the date the third no-show occurred.

All no-shows following the third no-show suspension will be treated as a third no-show resulting in a thirty (30) day suspension,

No-show violations will expire at the end of each fiscal year, beginning on July 1st, and ending on June 30th.

Unattended Customer Procedure

Customers determined as unable to be left unattended (based on age, cognitive limitations or special request of the responsible party) may schedule rides and ride unattended, however, arrangements must be made to have a responsible party meet the vehicle at each location. A customer or their legal guardian must submit a request for a passenger to be determined as unable to be left unattended. The driver will only wait five minutes for the responsible party to meet the vehicle. If no one arrives, the driver will notify the Authority and continue on their route. WPRTA will attempt to reach the designated emergency contact person. If the customer is not met by the end of the route, they will be returned to the bus garage. The customer will not be left unattended, however, the appropriate authorities will be notified to assist in locating a responsible party. Customers who must continue on a route beyond their scheduled destination may be subject to suspension of services. To submit a request, please call 828-464-9444.

Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive or abusive behavior of any type, directed towards WPRTA employees or passengers, will not be tolerated. Instances of abuse will be thoroughly investigated on a case-by-case basis. The severity of the instance will determine the penalty and may range from a letter of warning to criminal prosecution. WPRTA reserves the right to suspend and/or revoke transportation privileges in cases of abusive behavior when the safety and well being of the employees and/or passengers is compromised.

Service Animals

Service animals are welcome to ride the Complementary Paratransit vehicle. Passengers using a service animal are responsible for the animal and will be held liable for the behavior and actions of the animal. Service animals regardless of training or certification may be

denied transportation if the animal becomes out of control and effective action is not taken to control the animal by the owner. WPRTA does not transport non-service animals.

Carry on Items

Passengers are allowed to bring on the bus or van as many packages as they are capable of carrying in one trip. Drivers are only allowed to assist with two bags OR one cardboard grocery box. If help is needed for additional packages, a companion must be available to assist the passenger. Passengers packages are to be held within their lap, wheelchair or motorized scooter. Packages are not to be stored in the aisles of the vehicle or in unoccupied seats.

Rules and Regulations to Ride By

The Authority's van operations comply with all state and federal safety policies, as well as criminal statutes and municipal ordinances to ensure the safety of our passengers and the public at large. Here is a list of some of those policies that are meant to help you and your fellow passengers enjoy a safe and stress-free ride:

- No profanity.
- No Smoking.
- No eating or drinking aboard the vehicles.
- The use of portable audio equipment without headphones is prohibited.
- Keep the aisles clear of hazards such as carts, packages, and strollers.
- Life support equipment such as respirators and portable oxygen may be brought on board the vehicles as long as it does not violate the law or rules relating to transportation of hazardous materials and can fit into the vans safely and without obstructing the aisle and/or blocking emergency exits. All carry on portable units must be secured.

Lost and Found

Articles left on vehicles can be claimed by calling WPRTA at 828-464-9444 or by visiting our office at 1515 4th St. S.W., Conover, NC 28613, Monday thru Friday 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Inquiries about lost items should be made as soon as possible.

Inclement Weather

Service will be limited and possibly cancelled when adverse weather creates conditions hazardous for passengers, operators and vehicles. Passengers may call 828-464-9444 for inclement weather updates.

Seat belts and Wheelchair Securement

WPRTA utilizes wheelchair securement straps to secure devices meeting the common wheelchair definition. The vehicles are designed to utilize four (4) securement straps, a lap and a shoulder belt. WPRTA's policy requires that all passengers utilize seat belts for their own safety as well as the safety of other passengers.

Transporting devices meeting the definition of a "common wheelchair"

WPRTA will accommodate all "common wheelchairs" on board its vehicles. Common wheelchair is defined as follows:

- 3 or 4 wheeled device
- Appropriate for indoor use
- No larger than 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length (measured 2 inches above the ground)
- Weighs no more than 600 pounds when occupied.

Provision of service when a mobility device cannot be secured

In the event that a mobility device cannot be secured in any WPRTA vehicle, alternative transportation will be provided if the headway to the next accessible vehicle is more than 30 minutes. The vehicle may be kept in operations for five days from the date of the breakdown was reported to the Driver supervisor and or the Maintenance Director. The operator/driver may recommend to the passenger on the wheelchair to transfer to a seat.

Passengers using mobility devices transferring to a seat

WPRTA may not deny transportation to a wheelchair or its user on the ground that the device cannot be secured or restrained satisfactorily by the vehicle securement system. In the event that the device cannot be secured or restrained, the vehicle operator may recommend to the user of the wheelchair that he/she may transfer to a vehicle seat.

Use of lift ramps by standees

WPRTA will allow persons with ambulatory disabilities who do not use wheelchairs (e.g., persons who use leg braces and canes) to enter the vehicle by standing on the lift. Therefore, individuals who cannot climb the steps to get into a bus would not be eligible for paratransit service if they could enter the vehicle using the lift.

Requesting persons sitting in priority seats vacate those seats when a person with a disability needs to use them

When necessary, a WPRTA driver will ask passengers to vacate designated seats for persons with disabilities and senior citizens. Drivers are not required to enforce the priority seating designation beyond making such a request. Priority seating on WPRTA vehicles are located near the front of the vehicles as posted.

Public information/communications available in accessible formats

WPRTA information materials concerning transportation services are available to the public through print and electronically via the internet. Upon request, they are available in foreign languages, Braille and audio cassette.

Lift and ramp deployment at any stop

WPRTA shall permit a passenger to use the lift to disembark from a vehicle at any designated stop, unless the lift cannot be deployed, the lift

Comments are Welcome

WPRTA values passenger and agency comments, compliments, complaints and suggestions.

Comments may be mailed to WPRTA at PO Box 459 Conover, NC 28613, by calling 828-464-9444 or by e-mailing your comments to customerservice@wprta.org.