

ACCESS219

PARATRANSIT 

Serving the City of Gary, Indiana and Surrounding Communities




ADA



RIDERS GUIDE TO

ACCESS219

PARATRANSIT 

Revised April 2022

ADA Complementary Paratransit Service

Introduction

This handbook has been prepared to familiarize you with GPTC's ADA Complementary Paratransit service for people with disabilities and to answer questions about Paratransit service. Any questions which are not addressed in the following pages should be directed to GPTC's ADA Coordinator at 219-884-6100 extension 113.

Mission Statement

GPTC is committed to providing you with quality service by offering the same safe, clean, reliable, efficient and courteous transportation services that fixed route riders are afforded. Please call 219-884-6100 whenever you have a comment.

Vision Statement

Remove travel barriers to provide an equal opportunity for people with disabilities to seamlessly travel from their primary location to their final destination.

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General Information

Overview of Accessible Public Transit & the ADA

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law in July 1990. Title II of the Act refers to public transportation and requires that all new fixed route buses purchased after July 1990 be accessible to passengers in wheelchairs. In addition, complementary paratransit service must be provided to passengers who are unable to use regular bus service due to the limitations imposed by their disability when they reside within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of fixed route services.

Bus schedules are clearly marked to indicate times of the accessible buses. Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to use fixed route bus service as much as possible. Complementary paratransit service can be used to reach destinations which cannot be accessed by fixed route bus service due to the nature of the individual's disability.

What is Complementary Paratransit Service?

Paratransit Service is complementary service provided by the Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC) to Gary and other communities where our service operates within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of the residents who are unable to use fixed route bus service due to a disability. Residents who are eligible for Paratransit Service can ride to and from any location within GPTC's service area. All Paratransit vehicles are accessible to individuals with disabilities and are equipped with wheelchair lifts and securement devices.

Since 1992, GPTC has provided Paratransit service to residents of Gary. Low-cost fares, simple trip reservations, reliable service and convenient door-to-door transportation make Paratransit attractive to residents who wish to be active in the community.

Who operates the service?

GPTC provides Paratransit Service as part of its overall transportation services in the community. By Federal Standards GPTC must provide Paratransit service to individuals with certain disabilities who reside within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of any fixed route service that GPTC provides.

How do I know if I am eligible for service?

To be eligible for Paratransit service you must be determined eligible under one of the following categories:

Category I: Inability to independently navigate the fixed route system

Any individual with a disability who is unable as the result of a physical or mental disability (including a vision impairment) and without the assistance of another individual (except the operator of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device) to board, ride, or disembark from any vehicle on the system which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

Category II: Transit system's lack of accessible vehicles, stations or bus stops on the fixed route system

Any individual with a disability who needs the assistance of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device and is able, with such assistance to board, ride, and disembark from any vehicle which is readily accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities. If the individual wants to travel on a route of the system during the hours of operation of the system or within a reasonable period of such time, when such a vehicle is not being used to provide designated public transportation on the route.

Category III: The inability to reach a boarding point or final destination on the fixed route system

Any individual with a disability who has a specific impairment related condition which prevents such individual from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location on the fixed route system.

Can I be eligible for Paratransit on a temporary basis?

Yes, in certain situations a rider can be approved for Paratransit service on a temporary basis.

Examples: periods of physical therapy after hip replacement surgery, the time during which an artificial limb is being fabricated, etc.

Temporary approval can range from one (1) to six (6) months. If the rider wishes to extend his/her temporary eligibility, a new Part II

professional certification form must be completed. Riders will be notified by mail prior to their eligibility period expiring.

Steps to Service

How do I apply to become a rider?

1. Call GPTC's ADA Coordinator at (219)884-6100 extension 113 or extension 106 to request a Paratransit application.

Or online at: gptcbus.com and click on Service Information tab and then on Access219 Paratransit page to download and complete application.

2. As the applicant, complete Part I of the application. Ask the licensed or certified professional most familiar with the limitations imposed by your disability to complete Part II of the application.

3. Send your completed application to:

ADA Coordinator
Gary Public Transportation Corp.
2101 West 35th Avenue
Gary, IN 46408

NOTE: There is no cost for processing the application.

What happens if I am not approved to use the service?

If your application is not approved, you have the right to appeal the decision by going through the appeals process.

What is the appeal process?

If an individual has been denied, they may appeal decisions that affect their ability to use Paratransit within sixty (60) days of the initial eligibility

decision by GPTC. All appeals must be submitted in writing or on video/audio tape to:

Gary Public Transportation Corporation
ADA Coordinator
2101 West 35th Avenue
Gary, Indiana 46408

If assistance is needed, GPTC will provide a person to prepare an appeal request. GPTC will arrange for individuals to be heard in person and present information or arguments regarding their disability and ability to use transportation services. Every effort will be made to schedule the hearing at a time that is convenient for the person submitting the appeal.

The appeal hearing will be conducted by GPTC Equal Opportunity Officer or other designated personnel who are not involved in the initial eligibility determination decision. The individual will be notified of the appeal decision in writing or in accessible format if requested. The notification will state the reason(s) for the decision if eligibility is still denied.

Individuals who are denied during the initial appeal hearing are afforded an opportunity to submit an appeal to the General Manager of GPTC within thirty (30) days from the denial notification. Appeal request should be submitted to the following address:

Gary Public Transportation Corporation
Attention: General Manager
100 W.4th Avenue- third floor
Gary, Indiana 46402

The final appeal hearing will be conducted by the General Manager based on a review of all relevant information and the individual will be afforded an opportunity to be heard in person. The individual will be notified of the final appeal decision in writing or in accessible format if requested. The notification will state the reason(s) for the decision if eligibility is still denied.

***Note:** During the appeals process, an individual's ridership privileges under review will not be denied transportation services.

When will I know if I can use the service?

Within 21 days of the date your application is received you will be notified in writing of approval or disapproval of your application. If your application is approved, you should visit the GPTC's Transportation Office at 2101 W. 35th Avenue weekdays between 8:30 a.m. 4:00 p.m. to obtain a GPTC ADA Complementary Paratransit Photo ID Card.

Certified Paratransit riders who are able to use GPTC's fixed route bus service may present their ADA photo ID Card to drivers on GPTC's local and express routes and ride for the reduced fare afforded to Seniors, Medicare, temporarily or permanently disabled riders.

What is an ADA Complementary Paratransit Photo ID Card?

GPTC issues ADA Complementary Paratransit Photo ID Cards free of charge to all riders who are determined eligible for Paratransit (*the first Paratransit ride to obtain the ID card is provided free of charge*). Please carry the card with you at all times when using Paratransit.

** Note: the ADA photo ID card cannot be used as a riding pass*

What are the hours of service?

Paratransit provides service during GPTC's regular hours of operation:

Monday through Friday 5:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Saturday 5:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m.

What does it cost to ride?

The fare for one-way trips on Paratransit is \$2.50 within the City of Gary boundary and \$4.00 outside the city limits.

GPTC offers rider pass as follows:

Can I travel outside of Gary?

Yes, GPTC's Service Area includes all of Gary and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile within our fixed route service in the following cities and towns: Calumet Township, Crown Point, East Chicago, Griffith, Hammond, Highland, Hobart, Merrillville and Munster.

Scheduling Trips

How should I schedule a trip?

Once you have obtained an ADA Paratransit photo ID card, you can begin using Paratransit service by phoning (219) 884-6100 extension 113 or extension 106. Requests for service can be made by calling Monday through Saturday 8:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. or by voicemail, twenty four hours a day, seven (7) days a week.

What should I tell the ADA Coordinator?

At the time of your first call you will be asked several questions which will be used to establish your record. Please give the date and time that you want to be picked up, the address of the pick up location, the address of your drop-off location, where you can be contacted in case of an emergency or delayed service, time of pick up for beginning and return trip and any information which may be helpful to a driver in finding your pickup location (i.e.; the door where you will be waiting, details about the building, etc.).

What is the best time to schedule a trip?

Heavy demands for service usually occur weekdays between 5:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and between 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Requests for service during these periods may be more difficult to accommodate than requests during off-peak hours. For your convenience, you should plan to travel during off-peak hours whenever possible.

How do I change a scheduled trip?

Because trip reservations can be made up to seven (7) days in advance, there may be times when you may have to change your travel plans and adjust your scheduled trip time. In cases like this, notify the ADA Coordinator no later than 4:00 pm on the day before your scheduled trip. The Coordinator will always try to accommodate your request but changes to your original requested trip may result in adjustments to your pick up times. Last minute changes cannot be made to pick up times or pick up locations on the day of your trip. This would be considered as same day service. These changes create an inconvenience to other riders and GPTC is not required to accommodate this type of request.

Reservation Service

What is reservation service?

If you plan to travel to different destinations at various times you should request to use Paratransit reservation service. Reservation service is offered to any ADA Paratransit eligible person at any requested time on a particular day in response to a request for service made on the previous day. Your request can be made as early as 7 **DAYS** in advance. Your request will be coordinated with others to serve as many people as possible.

What is next day reservation service?

Next day reservation service allows an ADA Paratransit eligible person to reserve a trip on the day before their scheduled ride.

Example:

You can request a Friday trip by calling during normal business hours on Thursday (the day before) your requested ride.

When will I know if my reservation has been confirmed?

Once you call the ADA coordinator or Dispatcher to schedule a ride, your ride is confirmed at that point. You do have the option to call Dispatch back to confirm your ride after 5:00 pm on the day before the ride was confirmed. To check on the status of your ride call (219-884-6100 ext. 103 or 104 to request the status of your trip).

Negotiating a Pickup Time

There may be times when a rider is unable to schedule a ride for the exact time needed. To assist in scheduling a trip, you may be offered a flexible pickup time within a 2-hour period (one hour before or one hour after) your desired pick up time. You will not be required to schedule a trip to begin more than 1 hour before or 1 hour after your desired departure time.

Example:

You would like to go shopping at the Village Shopping next Friday morning. You call and request a pickup time for 11:00 am. You may be offered a pick time between 10:00 a.m. (one hour before) and 12:00 p.m. (one hour after) your desired pick up time.

Tips for Reservation Riders

Pick up windows and timely service

GPTC uses pickup windows to enable shared-ride scheduling to manage daily operations of its complementary Paratransit service.

Traveling during off-peak hours

Example: Your doctor offers you an appointment at 3:00 p.m. Before accepting, ask if you may visit the office between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Your request for service should be made during the +/- (one hour before or one hour after) negotiation time.

Let the dispatcher know your pickup location

Example:

You are waiting for a 1:00 p.m. pickup at the shopping center. Did you let the dispatcher know the name of the store where you would be waiting? If you did not and are not at the same location where the Paratransit vehicle dropped you off, do not worry. All drivers are instructed check the status of the rider before leaving the area. Please wait in an area where you can be easily spotted by the driver. If the driver is unable to find you after this attempt, you will be considered a no-show.

Plan to be on the vehicle up to one hour

Example:

You have scheduled a 10:00 a.m. appointment. Since your trip will be coordinated with other passenger requests for service in the same area, you may be on the vehicle up to one hour. Schedule a pickup as early as 9:00 a.m. to ensure a timely arrival.

Schedule your pickup and return trips at least one hour apart

Example:

The purpose of your trip may not require you to be at your destination for more than 15 minutes. However, due to other passenger trips that need to be completed, you should plan to be at your return trip at the earliest possible time to accommodate your needs.

Missed Rides

What is a no-show?

A no-show is defined as a trip in which the passenger is not present at the confirmed pickup time and location when a Paratransit vehicle arrives to provide service. The Driver will contact the dispatcher who will attempt to reach the passenger by telephone. After such attempts, the driver will wait no longer than five (5) minutes (under normal conditions) past the passengers **confirmed pickup time** for the passenger to arrive.

If you have confirmed rides for a round trip (2 one-way trips) and you are a no-show for the first leg of the trip your return trip will **not** automatically be

cancelled unless you contact GPTC to do so. We will assume that you still need your return trip. If you are not available for the second trip this will be another no show. If for reasons beyond an individual's control (e.g., medical scheduling) they are unable to travel at the scheduled pick up, a passenger will be given a "**B**" no show.

An "**A**" no show is defined as: a passenger is not at the place of pick up at the scheduled time due to the passenger's control.

A "**B**" no show is defined as: a passenger is not at the place of pick up at the time scheduled for reasons beyond the passenger's control.

What is the Penalty for a no Show?

When a customer accumulates a certain number of no-shows within a specific period of time, they will be ineligible to use the Paratransit service for a specific period of time.

For example: When a customer who accumulates two (2) no-shows a written or verbal warning will be issued. A person accumulating four (4) no-shows will be issued a written warning. On the sixth (6) no-show a suspension of service will be issued until reinstated at the discretion of the Deputy General Manager (30-60 days). Riders will be notified in advance of any suspension of services.

An offense will be dropped if a subsequent offense does not occur within forty-five (45) days of the preceding offense.

Cancellations

What is a cancellation?

A cancellation is defined as a trip which has been confirmed but the passenger is unable to take. The passenger should make every effort to contact the service provider and cancel his/her trip as soon as possible up to a one hour notice. This will allow other passenger trips to be accommodated. If you call to cancel your trip less than one (1) hour before the scheduled pickup it could be considered a no-show.

How early should I make a cancellation?

You are encouraged to notify the service provider as soon as you know you will be unable to make a scheduled trip up to one hour before the scheduled pickup time. If you call to cancel your trip less than one (1) hour before the scheduled pickup time it could be considered a no-show. Cancellations and no-shows usually result in empty spaces on Paratransit vehicles at times when other riders are available to use the service.

Timely Arrivals and Departures

Will the driver wait if I am late?

After arriving within the 30-minute window (15 minutes before or 15 minutes after the scheduled pickup time), the driver will wait 5 minutes after the **confirmed pickup time** as a courtesy to the rider. If the rider has not arrived after this time, he/she will be assessed a no-show.

What if the vehicle arrives early?

All Paratransit rides are scheduled prior to the start of the driver's day. If a cancellation occurs while the driver is enroute and another trip cannot be scheduled in its place, the driver may arrive at your pickup location earlier than scheduled. You are **not** required to leave earlier than your scheduled pickup time.

If you are prepared to leave you may board the vehicle at that time. However, if you are not prepared to leave, the driver will adhere to the 30-minute pickup window (15 minutes before or 15 minutes after scheduled pickup time) policy.

What should I do if service is delayed?

Traffic congestion, impeding weather or highway construction may cause delays in service. If the vehicle is more than 10 minutes late, call 'GPTC at 219-884-6100 extension 113. A Dispatcher will radio your driver and provide you with the driver's anticipated arrival time. Please be patient, as these incidents are limited and uncontrollable.

Visitors and additional riders

Visitor Policy

A visitor is an individual with disabilities who does not reside in GPTC's service area. GPTC provides ADA Paratransit service for visitors with disabilities who do not live in the GPTC service area. To receive Paratransit service all visitors must present documentation that they are ADA eligible for the jurisdiction they reside in. If a visitor is unable to present this documentation they will be required by GPTC to provide residency and/or disability documentation, or certification of said disability. Visitors may be found eligible based on an apparent disability and/or their use of a mobility device. Visitors will be eligible to use Paratransit service for a total of 21 days within a 365 day period beginning with the visitor's first use of service during the 365 day period.

Individuals must apply for eligibility with GPTC and be approved in order to receive service beyond the twenty-one (21) day period.

Personal Care Attendants

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone who may travel with a rider to assist with travel or personal care needs. If during the application process it is determined that you require a PCA when you travel, the PCA may ride free of charge. A PCA must board and alight at the same location as the eligible rider and will not be allowed to board or travel without the eligible rider.

Companion

A Companion is an additional individual accompanying the ADA Paratransit eligible rider, not someone a rider must bring to assist them. Additional individuals (Companions) will be provided service if there is

space available for them on the Paratransit vehicle transporting the ADA eligible individual and that transportation of additional individuals will not result in a denial of service of the ADA eligible rider. Companions are required to pay a fare (same fare paid by the ADA eligible rider) when accompanying an eligible rider and must board and alight the vehicle at the same location and time as the ADA eligible rider. When reserving a trip, advise the ADA Coordinator that you will be traveling with a companion (s). ADA drivers are not allowed to add riders who do not have a reservation.

Type of service and assistance provided

GPTC provides Origin to Destination (door-to-door) service. Which means: service is provided from a rider's origin of travel (start point) to their destination (end point).

Paratransit drivers are trained to assist a rider when boarding or exiting a vehicle. Normal assistance is provided immediately outside the vehicle or at the curb. The assistance may include walking support and when possible, the maneuvering of a wheel-chair over the curb. Drivers are permitted to assist a rider from the curb to the first entry door upon request of the rider, but under no circumstances are they required to enter a building or your residence.

Service Guidelines

GPTC has developed the following guidelines, which will be helpful as you use the ADA Complementary Paratransit service.

Prompt Service

Timely pickups and arrivals are fundamental elements of Paratransit service. GPTC encourages riders to be ready to depart 10 minutes before the Paratransit vehicle is scheduled to arrive at the pickup location in an attempt to prevent unnecessary delays in travel.

On-Time Arrivals

Drivers may arrive 15 minutes before or 15 minutes after a confirmed trip time and still be considered on time.

Destinations

Drivers are permitted to stop only at locations designated in the reservation. Travel arrangements with more than one destination will be treated as separate trips and must be scheduled as such. Please plan to schedule the appropriate number of reservations.

Fares

Established fares must be paid at the time a rider boards a vehicle. If a fare is not paid, including the use of a riding pass, the driver can refuse to provide a ride and a no-show will be assessed.

The fare for one-way trips on Paratransit is \$2.50 within the City of Gary boundary and \$4.00 outside the city limits. Riders are encouraged to purchase ADA Paratransit Multiple Ride Passes

20 Local Rides	\$50.00
12 Non Local Rides	\$48.00

Passes can be purchased at the Metro Center, 100 West 4th, Ave, Gary, IN, 3rd floor, 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Wheelchairs

“A wheelchair is defined as: a mobility aid belonging to any class of three or more wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.”

GPTC must carry a wheelchair and its user, as long as the lift can accommodate the size and weight of the wheelchair and its user and there is space for the wheelchair on the vehicle. However, if a lift or vehicle is unable to accommodate the wheelchair and its user (if the combined weight exceeds that of the lift specifications or if carriage of the wheelchair is

demonstrated to be inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements), GPTC can decline to carry it. Wheelchairs that have brakes should be kept in good working order. GPTC is not required to permit (riders who use) wheelchairs to ride in places other than designated securement locations on the vehicle, where such locations exist.

Scooters

Some scooters (three wheeled mobility device) can be difficult to secure on Paratransit vehicles and come with a manufacture warning that they should not be used as seats on moving vehicles.

Passengers who use battery powered scooters for mobility who cannot be restrained may be asked by the driver to transfer to a seat and secured with a seat belt and the scooter will be secured as a wheelchair should be.

Mobility Device securement and seat belt policy

All passengers are required to use the seat belts provided in the vehicles. Drivers are responsible for ensuring that mobility devices are properly secured. At all times during travel, wheelchairs and scooters are required to be secured in the four point securement position.

Respirators and Portable Oxygen Equipment

GPTC does not prohibit an individual with a disability from traveling with a respirator or portable oxygen supply. Drivers may assist the rider in securing this equipment on the vehicle but is not permitted to assist in the use of this equipment. If assistance is needed with this equipment, it is recommended that arrangements be made by the rider to have a qualified attendant to travel with them.

Service Animals

GPTC must “permit service animals to accompany individuals with disabilities in vehicles and facilities.” A service animal is “any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.

Service animals must be “individually trained.” GPTC is not required to transport animals that have not been individually trained. GPTC cannot require riders to provide documentation for their service animal, but may

ask riders whether animals are service animals (or pets) and what task(s) they perform.

The following guidelines also applies to service animals:

- GPTC may ask riders for notification of their intent to ride with a service animal in order to help ensure adequate space is available for the animal.
- GPTC cannot impose limits on the number of service animals that accompany riders on a single trip.
- GPTC can require service animals to remain under riders' control and can require that service animals pose no direct threat to the safety or health of drivers or other riders or create a seriously disruptive atmosphere.

***For example:** a rider with a service dog is responsible for ensuring that the dog does not snap or lunge at the driver or other riders. Conversely, a dog that barks occasionally would not likely pose a direct threat or be seriously disruptive.

Packages

The driver may also assist you in carrying packages to and from the vehicle. Packages should be limited to no more than what can be carried in your lap.

Obstacles

Please keep ramps, sidewalks and driveways free of ice, snow, toys and other obstructions which may present a safety hazard to you and the driver offering assistance.

Minimum age Requirement

Passengers four years of age and younger must be accompanied by a responsible guardian or adult, and will not be charged a fare. However, the adult accompanying the minor on board must pay a full fare.

Proper Conduct

All passengers are expected to exercise proper conduct on vehicles. GPTC reserves the right to revoke riding privileges of riders who threaten the health or safety of driver or other passengers.

State Laws

Smoking, eating, drinking and the playing of radios while aboard the vehicle is prohibited by state law.

Complaints and Commendations

The goal of the GPTC is to provide the best ADA Complementary Paratransit service possible to the residents of the city of Gary and our surrounding service area. There are instances when the riding public may wish to express their thoughts and concerns to ensure that GPTC obtain that goal. Therefore, we encourage your input when we fall below normal standards as well as when we go beyond them.

A complaint: is a report by an ADA Paratransit rider (or representative of an eligible rider) to an objection to something that is unfair, unacceptable, or otherwise not up to normal standard by a GPTC driver or representative of the GPTC.

A commendation: is a recommendation by an ADA Paratransit rider (or representative of an eligible rider) to acknowledge a driver or GPTC representative who have gone above and/or beyond what is required to provide outstanding service or the normal standard of the GPTC.

Complaints and Commendations can be reported via:

Mail: Gary Public Transportation Corporation
Attention: Director of Transportation
2101 West 35th Avenue
Gary, Indiana 46408

Telephone: GPTC Complaint Hotline
219-884-6100 extension: 110 or 104

Website: gptcbus.com

In person: Gary Public Transportation Corporation
Administrative Office: 100 W. 4th Avenue (3rd floor)
Transportation Department: 2101 West 35th Avenue

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