



# *Guide To Ride*

*Complementary Paratransit Service*



**Longview Transit**  
**908 Pacific Avenue**  
**Longview, Texas 75602**  
**(903) 753-2287 or 753-5265 (TTY)**  
**LongviewTransit.com**

# **CITY OF LONGVIEW-LONGVIEW TRANSIT COMPLEMENTARY PARATRANSIT SERVICE**

**Revised & Adopted by PTAC 09/30/2014**

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy of the City of Longview Transit to make available a demand-accessible transportation service to eligible passengers (based on the criteria established by the Americans with Disabilities Act) who are unable to use the Longview Transit fixed route services for particular trip needs. If you need assistance reading and/or understanding this document, require another format, or need additional information please call our office (903)753-2287 (voice), (903)753-5265 (TTY) or visit our website at [www.longviewtransit.com](http://www.longviewtransit.com)

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Information on Longview Transit's paratransit service will be provided in the following areas:

- I.** Americans with Disabilities Act
- II.** Description of Paratransit Service
- III.** Certification Process
- IV.** How to Schedule a Trip
- V.** Paratransit Service Fares
- VI.** Failure to Meet the Paratransit Service Vehicle and Cancellation Procedures
- VII.** Miscellaneous
- VIII.** Frequently Asked Questions

## **I. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a civil rights bill. It was designed to remove the physical and attitudinal barriers that have kept persons with disabilities from fully participating in American society. The ADA expects customers to use the Longview Transit regular fixed route system when possible. Fixed route service should be the primary means of public transportation for everyone, including people with disabilities.

Under the ADA, complementary paratransit service will serve as a safety net for those persons: who are unable to board, ride, or disembark from an accessible vehicle without the assistance of another person; with a disability who could ride an accessible vehicle, but the route is not accessible; with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition that prevents the person from traveling to or from a boarding/disembarking location. Paratransit Service is a shared-ride public transportation system enabling routes and schedules to be structured to transport multiple passengers to their destinations.

## **II. DESCRIPTION OF PARATRANSIT SERVICE**

Paratransit service is provided to those individuals determined to be ADA paratransit eligible when they are unable to utilize the fixed route service to meet particular trip needs. Transportation service is provided by wheelchair accessible vehicles. Operators are trained to proficiency, as appropriate, for their duties. This training is required so that personnel operate vehicles and equipment safely, assist passengers properly, and treat persons with disabilities who use the service in a respectful and courteous way. Operators are not trained to provide medical assistance. For passenger safety, operators may recommend, but will not require, passengers using a wheelchair to transfer to a seat.

### **Provision of “Origin-to-destination service”**

Longview Transit provides origin-to-destination service with the basic mode of service being curb-to curb. Although Longview Transit identifies its service mode as curb to curb, we will provide door to door service and reasonable accommodation to all customers requesting that service.

***Type of assistance includes:***

1. The operator will come to the curb of a residence or predetermined pick up location as negotiated with Longview Transit dispatch at time of scheduling.
2. The operator will sound horn to attempt to notify passengers of arrival.
3. The operator will assist passengers in boarding and exiting the paratransit vehicle, and treat individuals with disabilities with regard to sensitivity.
4. The operator will provide reasonable accommodation to all customers who request that service.

***Type of assistance DOES NOT include:***

1. Assistance getting in or out of wheelchair.
2. Assistance in getting ready for the trip.
3. Administering medication or oxygen.
4. Assistance with excessive items (i.e., packages, boxes, etc.).
5. Providing personal care for individuals who cannot be left unattended.

**Service Hours**

1. Longview Transit operates paratransit service Monday-Friday 6:15a.m.-7:15p.m. and Saturday 7:15a.m.-7:15p.m.
2. Service is provided Monday through Saturday throughout the year, except for the following observed holidays:
  - ♦ New Years Day
  - ♦ Memorial Day
  - ♦ Independence Day
  - ♦ Labor Day
  - ♦ Thanksgiving Day
  - ♦ Christmas Day\*subject to early closing the day before Thanksgiving and Christmas. There is no Sunday service.

## Service Parameters

The paratransit service-area includes origins within a 3/4 mile corridor on each side of each fixed route, with destinations to anywhere within the Longview city limits.

### **III. CERTIFICATION PROCESS**

Disability alone does not determine paratransit eligibility; the decision is based on the applicant's functional ability to use the fixed route service and is not a medical decision. Paratransit service utilizes the certification criteria as established in the ADA as listed below:

1. Any person with a disability who is unable to board, ride, or disembark from an accessible vehicle without the assistance of another person (except for the operator of a lift or other boarding device)
2. Any person with a disability who could ride an accessible fixed route vehicle but the route is not accessible, or the lift does not meet ADA Standards
3. Any person with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition that prevents the person from traveling to or from a boarding/disembarking location (bus shelter/stop).

To request an application by mail please call Longview Transit at (903) 753-2287 from 8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. Monday through Friday. Individuals with hearing impairments may reach us through the Longview Transit Relay Service at (903) 753-5265 (TTY).

The application for Paratransit Eligibility must be completed by the applicant, a representative or a legal guardian familiar with the applicant's disability and his/her ability to travel on a bus. A licensed health care provider familiar with applicant's condition must complete the attached physician form.

Pick-up, Mail, Fax, or Bring Completed Application to:

**Longview Transit  
908 Pacific Avenue  
Suite 200  
Longview, Texas 75602  
Fax (903) 753-2291**

### **Determination of Eligibility**

The application must be legible and properly completed by the applicant and licensed healthcare provider familiar with applicant's condition. The applicant must sign and verify that the information provided in the application is correct, and also sign the Guide To Ride Acknowledgment Form regarding receipt of this handbook.

Incomplete documents will be returned to the applicant for completion. Eligibility decisions are made within 21 days of receipt of a completed application. For those applications not processed within 21 days of receipt, Longview Transit provides presumptive eligibility for the applicant to schedule and use paratransit service beginning on the 22nd day until such time that the written determination is issued. Eligibility is determined on a case by case study. The customer will be notified by written letter, or alternative format if requested, about his/her eligibility. If approved for service the customer will be instructed as to how to obtain a Paratransit ADA Identification Card. Persons who are denied eligibility or given conditional or temporary eligibility are given specific reasons for the decision and notice of their right to appeal.

### **Application Appeals**

If you do not agree with Longview Transit's decision you have the right to an appeal. Longview Transit will offer service while the appeal is under review. Appeals should be filed with Longview Transit in writing within sixty (60) days of your receipt of a denial letter. Longview Transit will conduct an appeals hearing within thirty (30) days and applicants will be notified in writing of the location and time. If a decision is not made within thirty (30) days of completing the appeals process, transportation is provided until a decision to deny the appeal is issued.

### **Renewal of Certification Process**

Longview Transit will review certification for all ADA eligible passengers every three (3) years. Renewals are done to ensure that circumstances have not changed or invalidated an individual's eligibility.

## **IV. HOW TO SCHEDULE A TRIP**

1. Requests for service can be made during normal business hours on the preceding day that service is needed, but additional notice is appreciated. Trips can be scheduled up to 14 days in advance.

2. Trips can be scheduled in person or over the phone at (903)753-2287 ext. 10 (voice) or 903-753-5265 (TTY). Requests will be accepted from 6:00a.m. to 5:00p.m., Monday through Friday and from 8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. on Saturday. Persons needing to schedule a trip may leave a voice message and a staff member will return the call to schedule the trip.

3. Same day call-ins, including unscheduled requests or will-calls for return trips, will not be accepted. You must have a scheduled pick-up time. A client can call to request an earlier return pick-up time before their scheduled trip, however, Longview Transit cannot assure any specific pick-up time. The client is held responsible for work-in trips missed under the same policy established for general cancellations unless they are able to notify Longview Transit prior to vehicle arrival.

4. Any visitor who presents ADA eligibility documentation from another jurisdiction will be provided service. If a visitor doesn't have ADA eligibility documentation, Longview Transit may request proof of residency, and if the disability isn't apparent, request proof of the disability. Longview Transit will accept a certification by the visitor that he/she is unable to use fixed route transit. Longview Transit is not required to provide more than 21 days of service within a 365-day period. We will request that the visitor apply for eligibility in order to receive additional service beyond this number of days.

5. No restrictions or priorities may be placed on scheduling of trip(s).

### **Scheduling**

1. All trips must be scheduled to assure available pick-up up to one (1) hour before and one (1) hour after the scheduled return pick-up time providing an hour window. If possible, Longview Transit will attempt to notify all passengers if the vehicle will be late. This allows time to make other arrangements if the vehicle is unavoidably detained. If Longview Transit does not have a telephone number on record or if the number has been changed, we will not be able to notify the passenger the vehicle is running late or waiting outside. Please make sure that we have a current telephone number and address on file.

2. Longview Transit will return to pick-up clients that miss their pick-up from a doctor's appointment that is running late. We will return to other locations that the client has in their control only if we can accommodate the missed trip.

3. Passengers may request any pick-up time within Longview Transit's service hours. However, if the requested pick-up time is not available, Longview Transit may offer an alternative pick-up time within one (1) hour of the originally requested time.

4. Some passengers may elect to provide a drop-off time instead of requesting a pick-up time. Drop-off times are the times passengers need to arrive at a designated location for a scheduled appointment.
5. The Longview Transit vehicle may arrive at a drop-off location anywhere from fifteen (15) minutes to one hour before the drop-off time and up to five (5) minutes after the drop-off time.
6. Scheduled pick-up and drop-off times should be carefully selected in order to allow ample travel time to arrive at a destination on time. Longview Transit may suggest an alternative pick-up time in order to accommodate a passenger's needed arrival time. Passengers may travel onboard the Longview Transit paratransit vehicle for up to one (1) hour.
7. Back to back trips must be scheduled with a minimum of at least thirty (30) minutes apart. This is done to ensure that a client does not miss a pick-up scheduled on a different paratransit vehicle.
8. Passengers traveling to or from buildings with multiple entrances should be prepared to specifically state the door or location designated for pick-up and drop-off when scheduling the trip.

### **Subscription Bookings**

Subscription booking service is limited to riders traveling to the same place at the same time at least once a week for a minimum period of 30 days. Clients may utilize subscription bookings for their appointments. Subscription bookings are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. Longview Transit reserves the right to restrict and/or prioritize Subscription Service to maintain a maximum level of fifty percent (50%) as required by the ADA, when there is no excess demand capacity available. New Subscription service requests and changes to existing subscriptions will be accepted on the first Monday of each week, or the first day back following a company approved holiday on a first come, first-served basis.

## **V. PARATRANSIT SERVICE FARES**

### **Price**

Fare for paratransit service is established by the Longview Public Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC), with approval of the City of Longview City Council. The current fare is as follows:

\$2.50 per trip that is ADA-eligible inside the service area.



### **Companions/Personal Care Attendant (PCA)**

Individuals serving in the capacity of a PCA for the passenger will not be charged a fare. PCAs ride for free. The PCA must be picked up and dropped off at the same address as the client. PCAs will need to be placed onto the schedule and the need for a PCA must be indicated on the certification form at time of submission of the completed application.

### **Companions**

A companion is anyone who travels with an ADA-eligible paratransit client. Companions may accompany you on your trip. A companion will be charged the same fare as the eligible rider per trip. A companion must be picked up and dropped off at the same address as the client. A PCA does not count as the one companion. Additional companions may accompany you if space on the vehicle permits. Companion(s) must be scheduled at the time the trip is scheduled.

### **Service Animals**

Guide dogs and other service animals are permitted on all Longview Transit vehicles and are allowed to accompany you if needed. When scheduling a trip, please inform Dispatch that a service animal will be accompanying you on the trip.

### **Passes**

Passes may be purchased at the Longview Transit Administrative Office located at 908 E. Pacific Avenue, Suite #200, between the hours of 8:00a.m. and 5:00p.m., Monday through Friday. You may request for tickets to be delivered with your pick-up at least 24 hours in advance. Monthly passes are not available for paratransit service. Longview Transit does not accept passes from other transit providers.

### **Collection of Fare/Passes**

Without exception, paratransit passengers shall pay the operator promptly for each trip **PRIOR** to the vehicle's departure. **Passengers shall pay the fare in exact change or with a *PARATRANSIT SERVICE* pass.** Longview Transit will not accept personal checks from customers.

### **"No Strand" Policy**

Longview Transit will not strand passengers who have been transported to their destination and missed their scheduled pickup. Upon notification that the passenger is ready for their return trip, a vehicle will be sent as soon as possible; however, no pick-up window will be guaranteed.

## **VI. FAILURE TO MEET THE VEHICLE & CANCELLATION PROCEDURES**

Operators will utilize the following guidelines concerning a person's failure to meet the paratransit vehicle:

1. Paratransit operators will not wait longer than five (5) minutes from the arrival time for clients to board the vehicle. If the vehicle arrives within the hour window, 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time, the client must board the vehicle within five minutes of the arrival time. Passengers or their associates may not ask operators to delay this five-minute interval; this is to assure the timely pick-up and transportation of all paratransit clients.
2. Riders who fail to meet the vehicle five minutes from the time of arrival will constitute a no-show in the event the failure is a result of rider's control.

### **Cancellation Procedures**

Failing to notify us that you will not make a scheduled trip causes the vehicle to be dispatched unnecessarily to you. No shows/Late Cancellations are an inconvenience to other riders. For paratransit service to provide on-time performance, the number of no shows/late cancellations must be kept to a minimum.

To emphasize the importance of avoiding No-Shows/Late Cancellations, Longview Transit has adopted the following No-Show policy. A chargeable No-Show/Late Cancellation violation will be added to your records when no-shows/late cancellations are under the rider's control:

- Customer is not at the scheduled pick-up location at the established ready-time and fails to board the vehicle. (No-Show)
- Customer cancels a scheduled trip within an hour of the scheduled pickup. (Late Cancellation)
- Customer chooses not to ride the vehicle after it arrives at the scheduled pick-up. (Late Cancellation)

No Shows and Late Cancellations are regarded in the same manner. Only no-shows that are under the rider's control are counted against the rider. Longview Transit will make the final determination on what is out of the rider's control.

### **Suspending Procedures**

Passenger no-show trips and late cancellations affect both the customer and the agent. No shows and cancellations lead to wasted fuel and time as well as decreased productivity which impacts other clients causing unnecessary delays and detours. U.S.DOT regulation 49 CFR 37.125 addresses the issue of no-show policies in ADA complementary paratransit service programs. Longview Transit has a suspension policy for riders who demonstrate a pattern or practice of no-shows and/or late cancellations. This policy takes into account the rider's frequency of ridership along with the number of no-shows and late cancellations. When riders' no-shows and/or late cancellations exceed 20% of their average ridership within a sixty day period, sanctions are imposed.

### **No-Show/Cancellations:**

A no-show occurs when the vehicle arrives at the pick-up location within the 15 minute pick up window, waits the required 5 minutes, an attempt is made to contact the client and the client does not board the vehicle. If there is a return trip scheduled, the operator will attempt to call the client to make certain if the return trip is necessary. If no contact is made the vehicle will attempt the return trip, if the client does not board after the required wait time that will be considered another no-show.

Cancellations made within one hour of the scheduled trip may result in a no show. Riders are encouraged to call as soon as possible. There is no penalty if the No-Show or Late Cancellation is beyond the rider's control.

A No-Show door card will be left at the customer's residence each time a no-show occurs. Upon the second violation a written warning letter will be sent to the customer. If a rider accumulates or establishes a No Show/Late Cancellation pattern equivalent to 20% or more of scheduled trips during a rolling sixty (60) day period the rider will be subject to suspension.

### **Calculation Method to Determine No-Shows and/or Late Cancellations**

At the end of a rolling sixty (60) day period those passengers who have been recorded as having 20% or more of their scheduled trips as No-Shows and/or Late Cancellations will be verified as being correct. Those passengers whose No-Show/Late Cancellation Rate is more than 20% of their scheduled trips may have sanctions or suspensions imposed. Excused occurrences are not part of the calculation.

The formula for determining the No-Show/Late Cancellation Rate is:

*One minus (Total trips per period minus No-shows/Late Cancellations) divided by total number of trips = No-Show Rate for the period*

*Example: 5 missed trips out of 20 scheduled trips during a 60 days period:*

$$1 - \frac{(20-5)}{20} = 25\% \text{ No-Show Rate}$$

### **No-Show Appeal Process**

If the rider is in disagreement and would like to appeal the decision they must submit an appeal in writing within ten (10) days from receipt of the Sanction Letter.

Mail all Appeals to the following address:

Longview Transit Management, Inc.  
908 E. Pacific Avenue, Suite # 200  
Longview, Texas 75602

Appeals will be heard and decided within fourteen (14) days of the receipt of request. While the appeal is in process riders will continue to receive the paratransit service they were eligible for prior to the suspension of service until a final decision is rendered.

Appeals will be heard by the General Manager of Longview Transit. If the rider is not satisfied with that decision it will be sent to the Public Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) who will make the final determination.

The individual has the right to appear in person and request any necessary accommodations needed.

The determination resulting from the appeal will be made in writing and state the reason (s) for the decision.

## **VII. MISCELLANEOUS**

1. Paratransit riders can request the use of a boarding chair at time of trip booking to assist passengers as needed.

2. Due to the high center of gravity of scooter-type mobility aids and the recommendation by scooter manufacturers, Longview Transit recommends passengers not be seated on the scooter either while the lift or the van is in motion. It is recommended also that passengers utilize the boarding chair during these instances. This recommendation is for the safety of the passengers.

3. Mobility devices that do not fit on the lift will not be able to be transported. A mobility device will be considered to fit on the wheelchair ramp if it can be moved up the ramp and through the door unobstructed. This requirement is for the protection of all passengers. A mobility device may not exceed 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length (measured two inches above the ground) and which does not weigh more than 800 pounds when occupied. A “mobility device” is defined as any mobility aid belonging to any class of three-or four-wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairments.

4. Longview Transit utilizes a two part securement system to secure wheelchairs. The securement system is comprised of straps to secure wheelchairs, scooters, or other mobility aids that meet the definition of a mobility device, and a seatbelt and shoulder harness for the wheelchair user. The vehicles are designed to utilize four straps: two in the front; two in the back. All four straps must be secured to the mobility device prior to moving the vehicle.

5. It is required that all passengers utilize seatbelts for their safety and the safety of other passengers.

6. For passenger safety and the comfort of other riders, Longview Transit reserves the right to limit the number of bags passengers can bring on the vehicle.

## VIII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Question:** *When can I start riding Longview Transit's paratransit service?*

**Answer:** As soon as you receive your approval letter you may schedule a trip.

**Question:** *What if I run late at the doctor?*

**Answer:** You must notify Longview Transit that you will not make your pick-up time and will call when you are ready. Longview Transit will send a ride as soon as possible. Trips not in control of the customer will not be counted.

**Question:** *Does the time of a cancellation left on the answering machine count as the time the ride was cancelled?*

**Answer:** Yes, the recorder time stamps each message and will be listed as the cancellation time.

**Question:** *Do I have to call everyday for a trip if the time and days that I travel are the same week-to-week?*

**Answer:** No, subscription service is available when travel is at the same time and day each week. However, when necessary a passenger must remember to cancel a subscription ride to avoid a no-show being recorded.

**Question:** *Will I be taken directly to and from my destination?*

**Answer:** Not necessarily, Longview Transit's paratransit service is public transportation and service is delivered in a shared ride environment.

**Question:** *Where does Longview Transit's paratransit service pick up passengers when there are many entrances to a building?*

**Answer:** When scheduling a pick-up or drop-off, Longview Transit schedulers need to be notified of which entrance you will be using.

**Question:** *Will Longview Transit carry my groceries to and from the vehicle?*

**Answer:** Longview Transit will assist within reason, keeping in mind that we are a transit provider with professional drivers and not a courier service.

**Question:** *How will I know when my eligibility expires?*

**Answer:** Upon approval, your letter will contain your expiration date. You must note that date and call to request a recertification application.