

# Paratransit Rider's Guide

Effective July 1, 2017



**ACCESS**  
PARATRANSIT

A Guide to Paratransit Services provided by  
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)  
ACCESS Paratransit

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**Information in the *Paratransit Rider's Guide*  
is subject to change.**

## **WELCOME TO VTA ACCESS PARATRANSIT**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a civil rights law enacted in 1990, requires that transit agencies make public transportation accessible to people with disabilities.

In accordance with the ADA, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) provides paratransit, an exterior door-to-exterior door service, to persons who are unable to independently use its local bus or light rail services some or all of the time due to physical, visual or cognitive disabilities.

VTA's ADA paratransit is available where and when VTA local bus and light rail service is available and includes services that exceed the ADA regulations' requirements at a premium fare.

VTA's paratransit provides service through contractors. VTA ACCESS Paratransit determines whether customers are eligible for paratransit services. Customers call directly to VTA ACCESS Paratransit scheduling staff to schedule trips that are assigned to contracted sedan, accessible van, and taxi companies.

## **REASONABLE MODIFICATION INFORMATION**

Customers who need reasonable accommodations to access paratransit services are encouraged to contact VTA ACCESS Paratransit, as VTA ACCESS Paratransit may modify policies and procedures to assist customers. Accommodations are not considered reasonable if they endanger the paratransit driver or others or change the nature of the ADA paratransit service as described within this Rider's Guide. Customers may request reasonable modifications at any time by calling Customers Services, during the eligibility process or while scheduling trips, or on the day of the trip if the need arises. Reasonable Modification can be requested by telephone, or by email, letter, in-person, fax, or on line.

**Examples of Reasonable Modifications include but are not limited to:**

1. Requesting to be picked up or dropped off at a specific entrance, rather than at the entrance location that was predesignated by the transit agency.
2. If a passenger with diabetes or another medical condition requests to eat or drink aboard a vehicle in order to avoid adverse health consequences, the request should be granted.
3. A passenger's request to take medication while aboard a vehicle should be granted.

**Examples of Modification Requests that are not deemed reasonable include but are not limited to:**

1. A passenger's request for an exclusive paratransit trip may be denied as a fundamental alteration of service – paratransit is by nature a shared-ride service.
2. A passenger's request that the driver take charge of a service animal may be denied
3. A passenger's request for a specific driver may be denied.

*For more information on Reasonable Modification, please see DOT 49 CFR Parts 27 and 37 "Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities: Reasonable Modification of Policies and Practices" at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-03-13/pdf/2015-05646.pdf>*

## ADA PARATRANSIT ELIGIBILITY

ADA paratransit eligibility is based on an individual's functional ability to independently use VTA bus or light rail and is determined by this criteria:

**Category 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).

**Category 2** - Any person with a disability who needs the assistance of a lift ramp to board, ride or disembark from an accessible vehicle and an accommodating vehicle is not available or key stations have not been made accessible.

**Category 3** - Any person with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition that prevents the person from traveling to or from a bus or light rail boarding and disembarking location.

Eligibility is not based on age, economic condition, or inability to drive an automobile. Applicants should note that having a medical condition or a disability will not automatically qualify them for ADA paratransit eligibility.

### **Applications for Paratransit Eligibility:**

The paratransit eligibility application process begins with an informational brochure from VTA ACCESS Paratransit:

(408) 321-2300 / (408) 321-2330 (TTY) / [www.vta.org](http://www.vta.org)

The paratransit information brochure contains a one-page application to complete and sign. Brochures are available in English, Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese, and VTA ACCESS Paratransit provides language assistance to any individual in need of translation services.

**All information about the process, materials necessary to apply for eligibility, and notices and determinations concerning eligibility are available in accessible formats upon request. Formats include, but are not limited to: audio, large print, Braille, electronic files emailed and sign language.**

The application process requires two steps:

**Submit the signed one-page application** by mail to VTA Eligibility Department or drop off to 3331 N. First St., San Jose, CA 95134. The signed application authorizes VTA ACCESS Paratransit to contact the applicant's physician or licensed third-party professional.

**Participate in a phone interview:** VTA ACCESS Paratransit will call the applicant to review their application and conduct a brief phone interview to help determine the applicant's paratransit eligibility. Translation and language assistance is provided.

### **Eligibility Determinations and Appeals:**

The ADA paratransit eligibility application process may take up to 21 days to complete. Applicants determined to be eligible will receive written notification, including specific information supporting the decision. If decisions take longer than 21 days to process, applicants who have submitted a complete eligibility application will be granted presumptive eligibility to receive services on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day until they are informed that a determination is made.

Approved applicants enrolled as new paratransit customers will receive an ID card to use as proof of eligibility. VTA ACCESS Paratransit will work with customers to arrange a time, date and location to take a photo for the ID card. Refer to Section 10 in this Rider's Guide for more information on using the Picture ID card to access free bus and light rail services.

Customers who are recertifying continue to ride throughout the application process until a determination is made and through the appeals process. If approved an updated ID card shall be issued to enable continued access to free bus and light rail services.

**APPEALS:** ADA paratransit eligibility applicants may appeal eligibility denial, temporary and/or conditional eligibility determinations. Eligibility determination letters provide information on how to appeal if applicants do not agree with their eligibility determinations. ADA paratransit eligibility applicants may appeal eligibility denial, temporary and/or conditional eligibility determinations. Applicants must submit their appeals to VTA ACCESS Paratransit Eligibility Department by letter, email, or telephone within 60 days of the date on their eligibility determination letters.

VTA ACCESS Paratransit follows a simple 2 level eligibility determination appeal process:

- Appeal Level 1 – An Administrative Review by VTA ACCESS Paratransit staff who were not involved in making the original denial; and,
- Appeal Level 2: A Functional Assessment is conducted by third party appeal vendor staff who were not involved in making the original denial. The appeal vendor will contact the appealing applicant to schedule the Functional Assessment within 2 to 5 days of receiving the appeal request and application file from VTA ACCESS Paratransit.

VTA ACCESS Paratransit will inform an applicant about the outcome of their appeal within 30 days after the completion of the Functional Assessment.

### **Eligibility Department to Request an Appeal**

3331 N. First St.  
San Jose, CA 95134

Phone: (408) 321-2300  
TTY: (408) 321-2330

### **ADA Paratransit Visitor Eligibility:**

Visitors from outside the Nine-County San Francisco Bay Area (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma) may use VTA ACCESS Paratransit services as described within this Rider's Guide for up to 21 days during any 365-day period, beginning with the visitor's first use of the service during the 365-day period.

Visitors are advised to call VTA ACCESS Paratransit Eligibility Department at (408) 321- 2300 before their visit to establish their ADA Paratransit eligibility. VTA ACCESS Paratransit will verify the visitor's ADA paratransit eligibility and inform the visitor on how to use the service. Visitors who need to use the ADA paratransit services for more than 21 days in a 365-day period, beginning with the visitor's first use of the service during the 365-day period must apply for VTA ACCESS Paratransit eligibility.

Visitors may present information about their use of complementary paratransit service in the jurisdiction in which they reside. Other visitors who do not have such documentation may be asked to present documentation of residence, and if the individual's disability is not apparent, of his or her disability. Visitors are not be required to apply for, or receive eligibility certification to use, VTA



ACCESS Paratransit service before being able to use the service.

ADA paratransit eligible residents of the eight other San Francisco Bay Area neighboring counties are not considered visitors and may use VTA ACCESS Paratransit services as described within this Rider's Guide.

## **CONTACTING VTA ACCESS PARATRANSIT**

### **Address and Telephone Numbers**

VTA ACCESS Paratransit  
3331 N. First St.  
San Jose, CA 95134

### **General Administration, Customer Service, Client Accounts & Eligibility 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Weekdays (Closed Major Holidays)**

Main Office Number (408) 321-2300  
TTY (408) 321-2330

### **Reservations Department - 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM (365 days a year)**

San Jose, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, Cupertino,  
Campbell, Milpitas, Los Gatos, Saratoga,  
Monte Sereno Gilroy, Morgan Hill, and San Martin (408) 321-2300

Palo Alto, Mountain View, Los Altos, and Los Altos Hills (800) 894-9908

### **Day Of Service Department - 5:00 AM to 8:00 PM (365 days a year)**

Confirmations, Cancellations, Late Vehicles, Open Returns, Second Vehicles,  
and Same-Day Trip Requests

San Jose, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, Cupertino,  
Campbell, Milpitas, Los Gatos, Saratoga,  
Monte Sereno Gilroy, Morgan Hill, and San Martin (408) 321-2300

Palo Alto, Mountain View, Los Altos, and Los Altos Hills (800) 894-9908

## **Online Access**

Website    [www.vta.org](http://www.vta.org)  
E-mail     [paratransit@vta.org](mailto:paratransit@vta.org)

## **Business Hours**

VTA ACCESS Paratransit Administrative, Eligibility and Customer Service Departments are open Monday through Friday between 8am and 5pm and closed on weekends and major holidays.

## **GETTING STARTED**

### **Before You Reserve Your First Trip**

Customers are encouraged to make an initial deposit into their VTA ACCESS Paratransit accounts by phone using their Visa or MasterCard or by sending a check, with their ID number, payable to VTA at the following address:

VTA ACCESS Paratransit  
Client Account Department  
3331 N. First St.  
San Jose, CA 95134

Customers who are interested in using a VISA or MasterCard to make a deposit to their account may call the VTA ACCESS Paratransit Client Account Department at (408) 321-2300, or TTY at (408) 321-2330.

An initial deposit of about \$25.00 is recommended but not required. You may start the service with a zero balance.

### **Maintaining Your Account**

VTA ACCESS Paratransit will deduct the appropriate fare from customer accounts at the time the trip is booked. See Section 7 for a Summary of Fares and Service Charges. Customers may not reach a negative account balance customers are required to have funds in their client account to pay for all pre-scheduled trips, and will not be able to book trips until their account has sufficient funds. Including subscription trips see Selection Subscription Service for details. To ensure continued availability of services, customers should maintain a positive balance in their accounts. Non-compliance with the fare payment policy may result in VTA ACCESS Paratransit placing a “hold” on the customer’s account until they make a payment.

VTA ACCESS Paratransit reservationists state account balance information during each reservation call. Customers may also obtain account activity information by requesting a monthly statement from Client Accounts.

Customers may question or contest any trip charges or provide additional information about trips that they missed by calling Customer Services or Client Accounts.

When a customer decides to discontinue using, or is no longer able to use the service, they or their designated representatives should contact VTA ACCESS Paratransit to withdraw any balances, or pay any unpaid balances. Unclaimed account balances are reported to the California State Controller in accordance with California Code of Civil Procedure §1300 et.seq.

## **RESERVING PARATRANSIT SERVICES**

### **To Reserve a Paratransit Trip**

Call the Reservations Department (see Section 3) 1 to 3 days in advance, between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM seven days a week. Next day trips are guaranteed if customers call today for a trip tomorrow. There are no trip denials or wait lists for services. Customers may reserve multiple trips with one call. Customers will not be required to begin a trip more than one hour before or after the rider's desired departure times and negotiated trip times shall take into account customer's practical constraints. The negotiated pick-up window shall not be altered without the customer's consent.

VTA ACCESS Paratransit reservationist may negotiate the 30-minute pick-up window with customers and reserve trips during a one-hour period before or after the desired pick-up (departure) time. If the arrival time is of primary importance as in the case with appointments, the customer may wish to book the trip based on the drop-off or "no later than time". Drop-off trips have quoted "no later than time" and 30-minute drop-off window before that time. The Customer's time constraints are considered during the reservation process.

Customers should make the following information available when calling to reserve a paratransit trip:

- Their paratransit identification number;
- The date and requested time of the pick-up and time of the return trip;

- The exact name and address (including suite number, if known) of the pick-up and drop-off locations (including return trip information). If the customer's home address or destination is difficult to find, special driving instructions should be provided when a trip is reserved;
- Whether they will be traveling with a mobility device, a Personal Care Attendant, Companion or Service Animal.

VTA ACCESS Paratransit service will not drop-off, wait for a customer at a location, and then take the customer to another location.

### **Reserving a Return Trip**

Customers may reserve a return trip at a specific time with a 30-minute pick-up window, or the return time may be left "open". See Section 6 for information about Open Returns, which require higher fares.

When customers need to change a pick-up location for a return trip, they must inform the Day of Service Department prior to the start of their reserved 30-minute pick-up window. Such changes are limited to locations at the same facility, to nearby addresses, or to locations across the street from where the reserved pick-up was scheduled.

### **Subscription Service**

For customers who request routine trips to the same destination on a regular schedule, subscription services may be beneficial. Customers need only call once to reserve a recurring subscription trip.

VTA ACCESS Paratransit will reserve the trip on a continuing basis until the request is terminated, or on a space available basis. Subscription trips will not automatically book if your client account does not have a sufficient balance to pay for trips three days in advance. Customers may only make changes to subscription reservations once in a 3-month period. Open Returns cannot be used on Subscription Service.

ADA paratransit regulations allow waiting lists for subscription service. VTA ACCESS Paratransit will seek to add subscription trips when they are efficient and do not negatively impact the ability to provide non-subscription trips (create capacity constraints.)

## **Canceling a Trip**

Advance Cancels/Before the Day of the Trip: Customers are encouraged to cancel their scheduled trips in advance by speaking with a Scheduling agent.

On the Day of the Trip: Customers must call the Reservations Department at least 2 hours prior to the beginning of the 30-minute pick-up window to cancel a previously reserved trip between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM seven days a week. Customers are asked to avoid **Late Cancels**. Late Cancels occur when the customer's call to cancel is so late that the vehicle is already in route to the pick-up location. A Late Cancel may under certain circumstances be recorded as a no-show (see following No Show Section).

Early Morning Cancels: While Customers are encouraged to call in the early morning hours if they have an early trip, it may not always be feasible to call 2 hours in advance. While these early morning trips will not be recorded as No-Shows if you do not cancel at least 2 hours before the scheduled pick-up, customers should call as soon as they can to cancel a trip so that other riders will not be impacted.

To cancel a trip with a pick-up window reserved to begin in less than 2 hours, customers must call the Day of Service Department. See Section 2 for contact information. VTA ACCESS Paratransit scheduling staff will provide customers with an alternate telephone number to call to cancel a trip reserved after 8:00 PM.

## **No-Shows**

A No-Show is a trip that is scheduled and mutually agreed upon by customer and the paratransit provider for the pick-up window and location and:

a) The customer cannot be located at the correct location and within the scheduled pick-up window, the driver waits 5 minutes, and reasonable efforts are made to contact rider. The driver will contact dispatch for permission to depart and Day of Service staff will try to reach the customer;

b) The driver arrives at the correct location, within the scheduled pick-up window, and the driver waits 5 minutes, but the customer informs driver that he/she no longer wishes the trip and does not board without canceling the trip. The driver will contact dispatch before permission to depart. Day of Service staff will contact the customer to confirm the No-Show;

c) The customer's call to cancel is so late that the vehicle is already in route to the pick-up location and the late cancel has the same operational effect on the system as a no-show;

**d) The circumstances under a), b) and c) are documented in real time or through follow-up contact to be within the rider's control as determined by the rider.**

**NOTE:** VTA ACCESS Paratransit is not allowed to cancel trips scheduled after a no-show without a customer's request to cancel them. Customers must cancel trips they have scheduled on the same day after a no-show. VTA ACCESS Paratransit will try to contact a customer following a no-show to ask if additional trips scheduled that day need to be cancelled. Customer will incur additional no-shows, if additional scheduled trips are not taken following the first no-show.

When a trip is cancelled less than 2-hours before the scheduled pick-up window, a Late Cancel or No-Show may be recorded on a customer's record.

Customers should call if they have any concerns that they may have no-showed a trip or cancelled late. VTA ACCESS Paratransit will call the customer to confirm whether the potential late cancel or no-show trip was within the customer's control as determined by the customer or to verify the no-show occurred.

**Pattern and Practice of No-Shows:** A pattern and practice of missing trips within a customer's control to avoid is determined by the percentage of no-shows of trips that are scheduled and the number of no-shows that substantially exceed the monthly average numbers of no-shows per customer.

Substantially exceed is defined as a factor of 3 no-shows, plus 1 additional no-show. If the system average number of no-shows is 2 verified no-shows per month, the number of no-shows needed to be considered for a suspension would be 7. Seven results from the system average 2 no-shows per month multiplied by the factor of 3 no-shows, plus the 1 additional no-show. This number of no-shows would need to be at least 60% of the trips the customer had scheduled for the customer to be suspended.

Before a suspension (one day maximum) is enacted or an optional single payment \$4.00 maximum regardless of the number of document no-shows (instead of a suspension) is made, VTA ACCESS Paratransit will follow a 3-step process to work with the customer to address the no-shows that were within their control to avoid:

1. Will call customers on the day of their no-shows or on the next day to inquire about the no-show;
2. Will call customers who have two times more than the average number of no-shows per month per customer;
3. Will send customers a letter notifying them about the no-shows they have incurred and their number and percentage of no-shows within a month. This information provides a documentation of a pattern and practice of not cancelling trips that were within their control to cancel. The letter provides information about the no-show policy and informs the customer about the potential of a 1-day suspension or the option about making a no-show payment,

Late Cancels and No-Shows are not within a customer's control if:

- A family emergency occurs
- A personal attendant or another party did not arrive on time to assist the customer
- Another party cancelled the customer's appointment
- The customer became sick or had a complication with a chronic medical condition or disability and could not call
- The customer experienced an unanticipated urgent situations such as medical or family/care-giver emergency
- The customer planned for phone access but misplaced or lost their phone or belongings out in the community and could not call or the phone stopped working
- The customer planned for adequate time but the appointment or procedure went longer than planned and/or could not be interrupted to call such as when getting x-rays are involved, etc.
- There was an error made by the scheduler, dispatcher or driver with the trip reservation or on the day of service such as incorrect time, location/building entrance, challenge with the vehicle or equipment
- The driver arrives before your pick-up window and you do not board and driver departs

- The vehicle arrives after the close of the pick-up window and you select not to take the trip as it was late
- The vehicle arrives within the window but driver does not provide the required 5 minute time for you to gather your belongings to board the vehicle
- The customer tried to reach VTA ACCESS Paratransit by phone but could not reach an agent in a timely manner due to long hold times
- The customer cancelled in a timely way but the cancellation was not recorded correctly or wasn't transmitted to the driver in time
- The customer had a very early morning trip scheduled and it would not be reasonable to call 2 hours in advance
- Other unanticipated and reasonable situations prohibited the customer from calling to cancel a scheduled trip

### **No-Show Appeals**

Customers may appeal an individual no-show or the determination by VTA ACCESS Paratransit that they have developed a pattern and practice of missing their trips. Customers may request an appeal of a no-show or a pattern and practice determination by letter, email, or telephone within 60 days of the date of the no-show or pattern and practice determination by contacting the VTA ACCESS Paratransit Customer Service Department.

#### **Customer Service Department to Appeal No-Shows**

3331 N. First St.  
San Jose, CA 95134  
paratransit@vta.org

Phone: (408) 321-2300  
TTY: (408) 321-2330

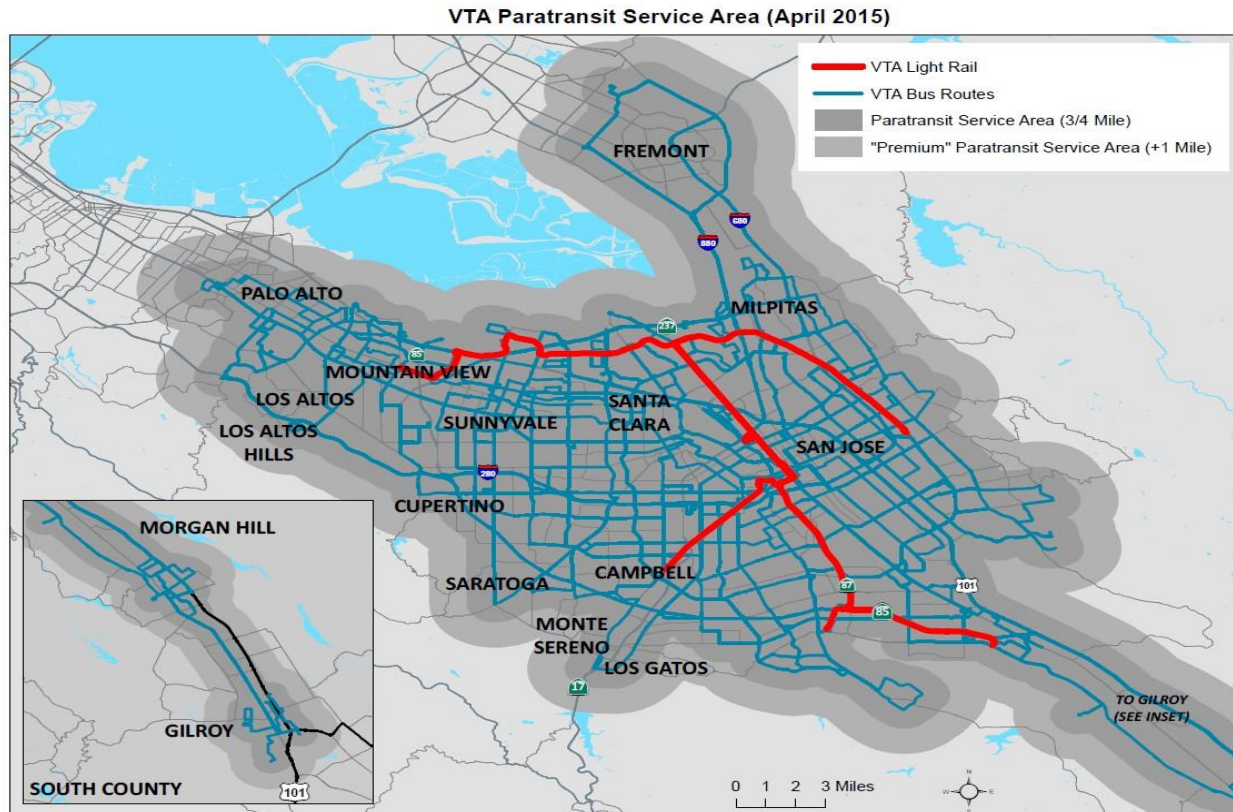
If needed, VTA ACCESS Paratransit staff will assist a customer to submit an appeal of a no-show or a pattern and practice determination. You also have the right to be heard in person and free transportation is provided to the applicant if he/she wished to have this conversation at the VTA ACCESS Paratransit office.



## OVERVIEW OF PARATRANSIT SERVICES

### VTA's ADA Paratransit Service Area

The ADA paratransit service area is a ¾-mile area around VTA bus routes and light rail stations. A VTA ACCESS Paratransit reservationist will advise customers when their destinations are outside of the paratransit service area.



### Inter-County Services

Customers may arrange a transfer to the paratransit operator in the adjacent counties for travel beyond VTA's ADA Paratransit Service Area.

For trips to San Mateo County, contact Redi-Wheels at (650) 508-6241, or TTY at (650) 482-9366. The recommended transfer point is Stanford Medical Center.

For trips to Alameda County or Contra Costa County, contact the East Bay Paratransit Consortium at (510) 287-5000, or TTY at (510) 287-5065. The transfer point is the Fremont BART Station.

## **Service Hours**

VTA's paratransit service operates only during the same hours of the day and days of the week that bus and light rail trains run their regular routes. This ensures the equity between the bus/rail service network and the paratransit service. VTA ACCESS Paratransit Reservationist will advise customers regarding the service hour availability for requested trips.

## **30-Minute Pick-Up Window**

All regular one-way trip pick-ups occur within a 30-minute pick-up window. A VTA ACCESS Paratransit vehicle may arrive any time during the 30-minute window. All customers must be ready to depart at the start of their pick-up window. Drivers will wait for 5-minutes upon arrival within a customer's reserved pick-up window and may depart thereafter if the customer is not ready.

Customers are not required to leave if the vehicle assigned to transport them arrives before the start of the reserved 30-minute pick-up window. Drivers may arrive early but will wait until the start of the reserved pick-up window to approach customer. Drivers will not rush the customer.

Customers may request a **notification of vehicle arrival call** as a **reasonable accommodation**. This request may be made at the time of the booking with call agent or in advance if on-going reasonable accommodation is needed for all trips by contacting VTA ACCESS Paratransit at (408) 321-2300 or at [paratransit@vta.org](mailto:paratransit@vta.org).

Customers should call the Day of Service Department if they think their trip has been missed. **Missed trips** occur when the vehicle arrives and leaves before the beginning of the pick-up window without picking up the customer; the vehicle arrives and leaves without picking up the customer and does not wait at least five minutes within the pickup window; or the vehicle arrives after the end of the pick-up window and departs without picking up the customer. Day of Service Call Agents or Customers Services representatives will address the situation to provide a real-time trip solution and will track the missed trip. Customers will be given full explanation of the cause of the missed trip, such as scheduling error or driver error, and the steps that will be taken and monitored to avert a repeat of the occurrence.

## **Late Vehicles**

If a vehicle has not arrived by the end of a customer's reserved 30-minute pick-up window, the customer should call the Day of Service Department (See Section 3 for Contact information) to report a late vehicle and to get an estimated arrival time. Customers will be given an alternative telephone number to call to check on a late vehicle for any pick-ups reserved after 8:00 PM. A trip is recorded as late when the vehicle arrives to pick-up the customer more than 10-minutes after the 30-minute pick-up window or when the vehicle arrives after the quoted drop-off "no later than time" for trips booked with emphasis on the drop-off time.

## **Excessively Early Trips**

A customer may, but is not required to, board the vehicle early if a vehicle arrives more than 30 minutes prior to the pick-up time. The driver will wait until the start of the customer's 30-minute pick-up window before approaching the customer's external door. If the vehicle arrives more than 30-minutes prior to the scheduled drop-off time and they do not wish to depart, the driver will wait until the 30-minutes prior to the scheduled drop-off time before escorting the customer to the external door.

## **On-Board Travel Times**

ADA paratransit regulations require VTA to provide paratransit service at a level that is comparable to bus and light rail service. A paratransit trip will take a comparable amount of time that a trip of a similar length would take on VTA's local bus and light rail system. Comparability is based on the length of time required to make a similar trip between the same two points using the fixed route system, including time spent traveling to and from a boarding point and waiting for fixed route vehicle to arrive and time to make any transfers from one vehicle to another.

## **Premium Services**

Premium service exceeds the base service required by the ADA paratransit regulations. VTA ACCESS Paratransit customers may request premium services and pay a rate higher than the rate paid for standard service. Premium services include Open Returns, Same-Day Service, Second Vehicle, and Extended Service Area Trips.

### **A. Open Returns**

Open Return Trips allow customers to make reservations without a specific time for their return trip. On the day of service, customers may call when they are ready for their return trips. The fare for this service is \$16. The following conditions apply to the use of Open Returns:

- only one per day may be reserved
- pick-up will occur within 90-minutes after a request is made to the Day Of Service Department
- trips must be requested by 6:30 PM
- Trips must be performed by 8:00 PM
- customers cannot reserve a fixed pick-up and an Open Return for same trip
- trips are not available for pickups at residences or for subscription trips

### **B. Same-Day Service**

Same-Day Service is only offered when space is available. To access this service, call the Day of Service Department between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM. The fare for this service is \$16.00. Please allow up to 3 hours for a pick-up.

### **C. Requesting a Second Vehicle**

Customers may request Second Vehicle service when a reserved return ride is missed and the customer is stranded in the community. To access this service, call the Day of Service Department. The fare for this service is \$16.00. Please allow up to 2 hours for pick-up. Second vehicle service is not available when the missed trip was scheduled to start at a customer's residence.

Customers must contact VTA ACCESS Paratransit if they miss their scheduled return trips due to an operator error. If an operational error caused the missed trip, the \$16 premium fare will not be charged for the Second Vehicle return ride.

### **D. Outside the Service Area Trips**

Allows customers to travel up to 1 mile beyond the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile ADA service area around VTA bus and light rail routes throughout Santa Clara County, including areas along VTA's bus routes in Morgan Hill, Gilroy, and unincorporated County communities. The fare for an Outside the Service Area trip is \$16.00.

## SUMMARY OF FARES AND SERVICE CHARGES

### Fares for Paratransit Trips (Effective October 1, 2009)

The regular paratransit One-Way Trip fare is \$4.00, or two times the Adult Base Fare for VTA bus and light rail services. Standard and Premium trip fares are and included in the following table:

Paratransit Trip Fare Table

Paratransit Service	Fare Formula	Amount
One-Way Standard Paratransit Trip	2x VTA Adult Bus Fare	\$4.00
Companion	Equal to One-Way Trip	\$4.00
Open Return Trip	4x One-Way Trip	\$16.00
Second Vehicle Sent	4x One-Way Trip	\$16.00
Same-Day Trip	4x One-Way Trip	\$16.00
Same-Day Trip Companion	4x One-Way Trip	\$16.00
Extended Service Area Trip	4x One-Way Trip	\$16.00

One (1) Personal Care Attendant and a Service Animal may accompany an eligible customer at no additional charge.

### Eco Pass Program

Paratransit eligible employees who work at companies that participate in VTA's Employer Eco Pass Program pay ½ the fare for a regular paratransit One-Way Trip. No Paratransit Eco Pass discounts are offered for premium fare paratransit services. Eligible participants must inform VTA ACCESS Paratransit that their employer participates in the VTA Eco Pass program.

## OTHER SERVICES, INFORMATION, AND POLICIES

### Personal Care Attendants

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone whose services or presence is required by the customer to meet his or her personal needs or to assist in traveling.

Though the need for a PCA is normally documented during the eligibility certification process, customers may inform VTA ACCESS Paratransit at any time regarding changes to their abilities that require the assistance of a PCA. If a PCA is requested during the eligibility process, the customer's paratransit ID card will be marked with a PCA logo. This logo allows the PCA to accompany the customer on VTA's bus and light rail service for free. (Please

refer to Section 10 for information about the paratransit ID card on VTA bus and light rail.)

Paratransit customers are responsible for providing their own PCAs. Customers should inform the reservationist when they will be traveling with a PCA to ensure an extra seat is reserved on the paratransit vehicle. One (1) PCA may ride free with an eligible customer. The PCA and the eligible customer must have the same pick-up and drop-off locations.

## **Companions**

A Companion is a friend, relative, or other person who accompanies a paratransit customer on a trip who is not a personal care attendant.

Customers shall inform the trip scheduling reservationist when they will be traveling with a companion to ensure an extra seat is reserved on the paratransit vehicle. Companions must share the same pick-up and drop-off locations as the customer. Companion trips fares are shown in the Paratransit Trip Fare Table in Section 7.

VTA ACCESS Paratransit shall accommodate one (1) companion at all times. Additional companions may ride if space permits.

## **Service Animals**

Service Animals may travel on paratransit vehicles to assist individuals with disabilities, subject to the following conditions:

- Service Animals must remain on a leash and under full control of the customer at all times.
- Service Animals must not misbehave (e.g., soiling the vehicle or growling at or harassing customers, the operator, or other Service Animals).
- Service Animals should generally remain in a down or sit position. Service Animals may not block the aisle of the vehicle.
- Service Animals shall not occupy vehicle seats unless space limitations prevent the Service Animal from remaining off the seat.
- Service Animals shall be in a state of cleanliness in the interest of other paratransit passengers and the paratransit driver.

Customers shall inform the reservationist when they will be traveling with a Service Animal to ensure sufficient room on the paratransit vehicle.

## **Pets**

Customers may also travel with a pet, in an approved cage and under the control of the customer at all times.

## **Mobility Devices**

Customers may use wheelchairs, canes, walkers, and other mobility devices that are able to fit on the paratransit vehicles. A wheelchair is a mobility device 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. Customers will not be denied service if the paratransit vehicle and equipment can safely accommodate their mobility device.

**Customers who are concerned about the size of their mobility devices and whether the device will fit on board paratransit vehicles should call VTA ACCESS Paratransit to arrange to have the device measured.**

## **Mobility Devices and Customer Safety**

- Customers who are transferable are able to move from their mobility device to the seat of the vehicle and back with a minimum of assistance. A minimum of assistance is defined as a driver extending an arm or stabilizing the mobility device while the customer moves in and out of the device. Drivers are prohibited from lifting or carrying customers.
- Customers may board separately from their mobility devices but must be able to control the movement of the mobility device into the vehicle. Drivers are not allowed to control the movement of a mobility device.
- For safety reasons, customers using three-wheel scooters are strongly recommended to transfer out of their scooter into the seat of the paratransit vehicle whenever possible.
- Drivers have the discretion regarding transporting mobility devices that pose an immediate safety threat to others aboard a paratransit vehicle. VTA ACCESS Paratransit will work with customers to address the safety of their mobility devices.
- Drivers cannot assist customers who use mobility devices up or down steps or other obstructions over five eighths (5/8) of an inch in height. A ramp must be available or the customer must have someone available at the pick-up and drop-off location to provide assistance negotiating obstacles.

## **Miscellaneous Medical Equipment**

Customers may travel with oxygen tanks and respirators when using paratransit service. For safety reasons, oxygen tanks and respirators must be secured to prevent oxygen tanks from falling or becoming dislodged and striking other objects or customers in the vehicle.

## **Packages on Paratransit Vehicles**

Customers may bring up to three grocery bags or the equivalent onboard a paratransit vehicle. Equivalent items may be bags, packages, or suitcases. Customers must be able to control the packages that they bring with them aboard a paratransit vehicle.

## **Replacement ID Cards**

There is a \$5 fee for replacement cards, and the number of replacement cards issued may be limited. For more information about obtaining a replacement ID card, see Section 3 for information about contacting VTA ACCESS Paratransit.

## **General Policies**

- Drivers are required to transport customers to the pre-reserved destination indicated on the driver's trip schedule. Drivers are not allowed to make any destination changes.
- Drivers provide exterior lobby/door to door service.
- Drivers must not lose sight of their paratransit vehicle for a lengthy period of time when assisting a paratransit passenger to or from an external door of a pick-up or drop-off location.
- Drivers are prohibited from entering a customer's residence for any reason.
- Drivers may not request that customers pay them a tip for the service that they provide.
- Customers should carry their paratransit identification cards with them when using ADA paratransit service. Drivers may check customer paratransit identification cards.
- Customers are required to wear seatbelts while on paratransit vehicles. Drivers will assist with seat belts.
- Smoking is NOT allowed while onboard an ADA paratransit vehicle
- Eating, or drinking, is NOT allowed while onboard an ADA paratransit vehicle unless the customer must eat/drink to address a health condition.
- Use of alcohol or illegal drugs while riding paratransit is prohibited.



- Radios, cassette or disc players are not permitted to be played aloud while onboard an ADA paratransit vehicle.
- Customers shall NOT bring explosives, flammable liquids, acids, or other hazardous materials onboard an ADA paratransit vehicle.
- Customers are responsible for securing and removing their child's car seat.

## **Seriously Disruptive Behavior**

***Seriously Disruptive Behavior is defined as:*** Violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct; individuals who pose significant risk to the health and safety of others. Behavior by an individual that is in some way is truly disruptive to service provision and the event was both intentional and ***within the customer's control*** as verified by the customer or their representative.

Examples of Seriously Disruptive Behavior include, but not limited to:

- Getting out of a seat while a paratransit vehicle is in motion.
- Leaving a paratransit vehicle while it is parked to pick-up or drop-off another customer.
- Disturbing a paratransit vehicle operator while the operator is driving.
- Disturbing other customers.
- Refusing to wear a seatbelt or refusing to exit the vehicle.
- Violent behavior.
- Physically or verbally threatening vehicle operator or other customers.
- Engaging in conduct or activity that is a danger to the customer, other customers, or the driver.
- Smoking onboard a paratransit vehicle.
- Damaging or destroying vehicle equipment.

Notification Letters are sent to customers with complete details about seriously disruptive behavior incidents, information on how to appeal a specific the seriously disruptive behavior incident, the appeal process and their rights including the right to be heard in person and the provision of free transportation to and from the appeal. The appeal process will be conducted by administrators who were not involved in the original determination of the seriously disruptive behavior so they may be objective. Customers may request an appeal of a seriously disruptive behavior service suspension by letter, email, or telephone within 60 days of the date suspension notification (one day maximum) by contacting VTA ACCESS Paratransit.

VTA ACCESS Paratransit may recommend that a customer travel with a PCA to assist the customer control his or her disruptive behaviors.

**To Appeal a Seriously Disruptive Behavior Suspension**

3331 N. First St.  
San Jose, CA 95134  
paratransit@vta.org

Phone: (408) 321-2300

If needed, VTA ACCESS Paratransit staff will assist a customer submit an appeal of a seriously disruptive behavior service suspension.

**VTA ACCESS PARATRANSIT CUSTOMER SERVICE**

**Service Satisfaction**

VTA ACCESS Paratransit’s goal is complete customer satisfaction. There is a formal complaint process for customers to use if they are not satisfied with any service they receive or request. Customer may submit complaint, compliment, or suggestion, regarding any aspect of VTA ACCESS Paratransit’s services by contacting VTA ACCESS Paratransit at **(408) 321-2300, (408) 321-2330 (TTY)**, or [paratransit@vta.org](mailto:paratransit@vta.org).

**Compliments about Paratransit Service**

If any staff paratransit service staff has been particularly helpful, or has gone out of their way to offer assistance, contact VTA ACCESS Paratransit so a notice of commendation can be issued.

Compliments may also be made emailed at [paratransit@vta.org](mailto:paratransit@vta.org).

**Complaints about Paratransit Service**

Customers should file a complaint any time that the service is not satisfactory, safe, or secure. Complaints must be filed with VTA ACCESS Paratransit. Complaints may be filed in writing or by telephone by calling VTA ACCESS Paratransit.

Complaints may also be emailed to [paratransit@vta.org](mailto:paratransit@vta.org).

To assist with the investigation, complaints should be made as soon as possible. When filing a complaint, customers will be asked for the following information:

- Customer paratransit identification number;
- Exact date and time of the trip;
- Description of the incident; and,
- Address of the pick-up location or destination.

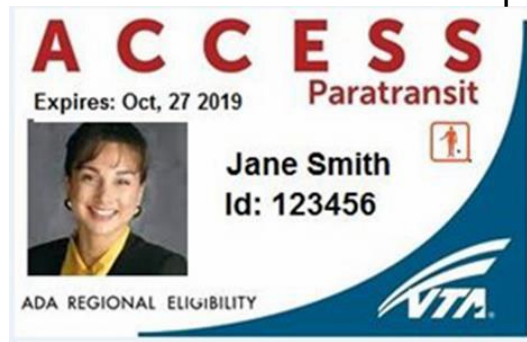
All complaints are taken seriously and every effort is made to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Tracking numbers are assigned to each complaint received by VTA ACCESS Paratransit and are provided to customers for their future reference. A complete description of the complaint process and how to appeal any resolution if unsatisfactory is available at [www.vta.org](http://www.vta.org).

If a customer believes that VTA ACCESS Paratransit has not responded appropriately to a complaint, customers may call VTA Customer Services Department at (408) 321-2300, or TTY (408) 321-2330 for assistance.

## VTA ACCESSIBLE BUS AND LIGHT RAIL SERVICES

VTA ACCESS Paratransit customers are encouraged to take trips by bus and light rail whenever they are able. The paratransit photo ID card qualifies customers for free service on VTA bus and light rail services. The card is not honored on Highway 17 Express, Dumbarton Express, or Caltrain services.

The paratransit photo ID card is available upon request to any paratransit customer. If the card has an Attendant icon on its upper right corner, a PCA may accompany the customer on VTA bus and light rail for free. If a paratransit ID card does not have a photo on it, the customer is encouraged to call VTA ACCESS Paratransit to arrange a time and place for a photo to be taken if they wish to use VTA bus and light rail for free. VTA ACCESS Paratransit shall arrange to take the photo at the customer's convenience. Customers can also obtain a paratransit photo ID card by emailing a picture/headshot with their name and date of birth to [paratransit@vta.org](mailto:paratransit@vta.org).



Simply present the paratransit photo ID card to VTA Coach Operators upon boarding VTA buses, or present it to any VTA Light Rail Fare Inspector upon request. (Not valid on Highway 17 Express, Dumbarton Express, Caltrain, or Sports service.)

**Mobility Device Securement**

All mobility devices must be secured on VTA buses. VTA also recommends, but does not require, the use of lap belts and shoulder harnesses.

**VTA Customer Service**

VTA Customer Service is available weekdays from 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM, and Saturdays/Holidays from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM. (Closed Sundays, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years Day.) VTA's automated phone system provides reservation information 24 hours a day, seven days a week in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

<b>VTA Customer Service Assistance</b>	<b>Telephone Numbers</b>
Route and Schedule Information	(408) 321-2300
Information for all Toll Areas	(800) 894-9908
TTY number	(408) 321-2330

**Online Access**

Website: [www.vta.org](http://www.vta.org)  
E-mail: [customer.service@vta.org](mailto:customer.service@vta.org)

**Regional Transportation Information** is available by calling 511. TTY users can access 511 telephone information by dialing the national 711 number for access to Telecommunication Relay Services (TRS).

**Title VI**

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act requires that “No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance”.

VTA ACCESS Paratransit have adopted policies that promote equal access and quality service to all our customers.

Any person with a disability who believes that he/she has been discriminated against in any of VTA's transportation services is encouraged to contact VTA's Office of Civil Rights and Employee Relations at (408) 321-5571 or (408) 321-2330 (TTY) for assistance or to file a complaint.

VTA's Civil Rights Complaint and Grievance Procedure information is available at:

[www.vta.org/about-us/title-vi/title-vi-complaint-process](http://www.vta.org/about-us/title-vi/title-vi-complaint-process)

VTA's ADA Paratransit Complaint and Grievance Procedure information and form are available at:

- Public Notice  
[www.vta.org/getting-around/paratransit/ada-notice-to-the-public](http://www.vta.org/getting-around/paratransit/ada-notice-to-the-public)
- ADA Grievance Process and Complaint Form:  
[www.vta.org/getting-around/paratransit/ada-grievance](http://www.vta.org/getting-around/paratransit/ada-grievance)

### **Contacting the Federal Transit Administration**

VTA, and their customers or ADA paratransit eligibility applicants are responsible for addressing service and Civil Rights concerns at the local level first. If a customer or eligibility applicant feels that VTA ACCESS Paratransit or VTA has failed to comply with the federal ADA paratransit regulations in regards to any aspect of its paratransit service program, the customer or applicant may contact the Federal Transit Administration's Office of Civil Rights at the following address, telephone number, or website:

Federal Transit Administration  
Office of Civil Rights Attention:  
Complaint Team East Building,  
5th Floor – TCR  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590  
1-888-446-4511  
[www.fta.dot.gov](http://www.fta.dot.gov)