



GREATER BRIDGEPORT TRANSIT AUTHORITY

PARATRANSIT SERVICE



(Revised 3/2005)

INTRODUCTION

The Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority (GBTA) is a shared-ride public transportation service for persons who are unable to use GBTA fixed-route buses due to a disability. GBTAcess policies and procedures are developed within the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) rules and reviewed by representatives from all service areas. This is the Paratransit Advisory Committee (PAC), who meets on an as available basis serving as advocates for your needs.

GBTAcess serves individual transit needs that cannot be filled by conventional transit services, and promotes equality of mobility for all, with the goal of offering safe and dependable transportation.

WHO DOES GBTAcess SERVE? (Eligibility criteria)

- Any person with a disability who is unable, as a result of a physical or mental impairment and without the assistance of another individual (except the operator of a wheelchair) to board, ride or disembark from any public city bus.
- Any person with a disability who has a specific impairment related condition that prevents them from traveling to or from a bus stop on the public bus system. Architectural and environmental barriers such as distance, terrain or weather, do not, alone, form a basis for eligibility. However, a person may be eligible if the interaction of the disability and barriers prevent the person from traveling to or from the bus stop.
- Individuals must apply for GBTAcess service and meet the above eligibility criteria before receiving transportation.

SERVICE AREA & TRIP PURPOSE

GBTAccess does not impose priorities or restrictions based on trip purpose for “ADA Services”. However, GBTAccess retains the right to impose trip priorities on Non-ADA service.

ADA Paratransit Service will be provided to qualified individuals who have both trip origins and destination within a ¾ mile radius of an operating GBTA public bus route. Service outside of this ¾ mile radius area is not mandated under the ADA. Service is not required within the ¾ mile. radius if the specific route used in determining the ¾ mile. radius is not in operation at the time or day you are requesting to travel. All trips requests not within the mandated ¾ mile. radius (Non-ADA) could be provided on an as available basis only. However, Non-ADA service is extremely limited. GBTAccess is required to meet all ADA obligations prior to expanding its paratransit service area and any other service criteria that exceeds the minimal requirements of the ADA.

SERVICE DAYS, HOURS & HOLIDAYS

GBTAccess operates the same days and hours as the GBTA public bus service. Service is potentially 365 days a year. Telephone reservationist will be able to assist you in determining if your trip is eligible.

Holiday schedules are operated on the public bus as listed below. Expect reductions in hours of operations and service area that also apply to GBTAccess:

*New Year’s Day, President’s Day, Memorial Day
Labor Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day,
Good Friday, Independence Day (4th of July),
Thanksgiving Day & Christmas Day*

All other holidays will be the same service hours as the day of the week that the holiday falls on.

FARES, PRE-PAID TICKETS OR CASH

The one-way fare is equal to twice the regular public bus fare and may be paid in cash or pre-paid ticket.

Books of 10 one-way trip tickets may be purchased. Individual tickets are not available for sale. Checks or money orders are to be made payable to “GBTA” and sent to: GBTAcess, 1 Cross Street, Bridgeport, CT 06610, attn: Accounting Dept. You must enclose a *self-addressed-postage-paid* envelope so that we can mail you your pre-paid tickets.

You may also purchase the pre-paid tickets in person at our address stated above, Monday thru Friday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. All tickets purchases are non-replaceable and non-refundable.

- The fare (cash / tickets) shall be paid directly to the driver.
- Exact currency is required. No change will be provided.
- The fare must be presented with a GBTAcess ID card.
- Escorts are required to pay a fare.
- If you are certified to travel with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), shown on your ID card, the PCA does not pay a fare.

RESERVATIONS

Reservation services will be made available during the normal administrative business hours, which are between 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Sunday thru Saturday. Reservations can be made as early as 5 days in advance of your travel date, but no later than 4:30 p.m., the day prior to your travel date. The phone number to call for making reservations is (203) 579-7777. The hearing impaired may call by TDD at (203) 579-8754.

WHEN MAKING RESERVATION

Reservation for outbound trips is made according to the time you need to arrive at your destination. Reservations for inbound, or return-trips, are made by the time you want to be picked-up. When making a reservation, please be prepared to give us the following information:

1. Your name and ID card number.
2. Address & phone # of origin or pick-up point.
3. Time you need to arrive at you destination & Date (i.e., If your appointment is at 8:00 a.m., your request to the reservation agent must be for "8:00 a.m. drop-off". If your appointment is finished at 9:00 a.m., your request will be a "9:00 a.m. pick-up".
4. Address & phone # (if any) of destination.
5. What mobility device you're using, if any.
6. Will an *escort* travel with you? And how many?
7. Will a PCA (personal care attendant) travel with you?
8. If there are any special instructions for driver's.

Please have all correct information on hand when you call. This will eliminate any unnecessary delays for yourself and fellow riders.

If you do not use a mobility device, but cannot board the vehicles by step, please advise the reservation agent to "provide a wheelchair on the bus to assist you on and off the bus by lift. These wheelchairs are for boarding and de-boarding purpose only.

Before ending the call, it is helpful if you review dates, times, and addresses with the reservation agents to make sure all information is correct.

*Also, please note **Conditions** placed on your eligibility, if any. These will have been explained to you when you were approved for the service. Please refer to your "Approval" letter for your Eligibility Conditions.*

CANCELLATIONS AND NO-SHOWS

In a continuing effort to provide good service to all riders, you are asked to provide at least 2 hours prior cancellations notice. Cancellations not made in accordance, will be treated as a “*No-Show or Late Cancellations*”. Consistent no-shows and late cancellations (cancellation within the 2 hr prior to schedule time) may lead to suspension of your transportation privileges. Additionally, we ask that you minimize canceling and re-scheduling the same trips within a week, because this can signify a “pattern or practice” of frequent cancellations.

First, a rider will receive notification of 3 or more no-shows, late cancellations or frequent cancellations in any one given month. This will initiate an investigation into the violation.

Second, if it is determined that a “pattern or practice” exists, the individual will be notified, again, in writing, that they are on a 60 days probationary period and face the potential of service suspension.

If the individual is cited for the same violation 1 or more times during the probationary period the rider’s service suspension will begin 60 days from the date of the second letter and will last for 30 days.

CHANGING RESERVATIONS

If you do change your reservation, please call the reservation number as soon as possible. Changes to a reservation must be made at least 1 day in advance, and will be limited to schedule availability.

GBTAccess RIDERS RESPONSIBILITY

The safety of all passengers and bus operators is one of GBTAccess most important responsibilities. To ensure safe transportation, GBTAccess requires the cooperation of riders in the following ways:

Riders who use a wheelchair or scooter are asked to:

- Maintain their wheelchair or scooter in good working order (i.e., brakes, wheels, and controls).
- Provide an accessible pathway with no steps to the entrance at their residence, and confirm the accessibility of their destinations.

All riders are asked to:

- Follow all GBTAccess policies regarding Paratransit Service.
- Refrain from behavior or language, which threatens GBTAccess operators, passengers, or other individuals.
- Keep food and beverages in closed containers.
- Refrain from smoking on GBTAccess buses.
- Maintain good personal hygiene.
- Use headphones when listening to radios or other audio devices.

GBTAccess operators are responsible for passenger safety and will report unsafe conditions or situation to the GBTAccess office. Operators may decide not to provide service if, in their judgment, a particular situation poses an immediate hazard to the passengers, themselves or others.

GBTAccess may limit, suspend, or deny service to riders who disregard GBTAccess policies, engage in unsafe or threatening behavior, or whose residence or destination is not safely accessible.

DRIVER WAIT TIME

The driver will wait a maximum of 5 minutes for riders on all outbound and inbound (return-trips).

Riders who are not available to board within 5 minutes after the GBTAccess bus arrives are considered a No-show (when the bus arrives within the pick-up window).

All passengers must have their GBTAccess identification card and exact fare or pre-paid ticket to present to the driver when boarding the bus.

Sometimes traffic conditions or unexpected events may delay the bus. If the bus has not arrived by the end of the pick-up window, call GBTAccess dispatch at 579-7777 to inquire about your ride.

PASSENGER ASSISTANCE

The driver will provide door-to-door assistance, if the door of the origin and the door of the destination are at ground level. The driver **shall not** enter the home of a rider at any given time or lift a rider in or out of a vehicle.

The drivers shall assist riders putting *grocery bags* into the bus and take them off. They may not carry bags from stores or into homes. A rider must take only as many bags as he/she can handle. **Bags may not obstruct aisle walkways or occupy any additional seating.**

All pick-ups and drop-offs at Westfield Shopping Town (5065 Main St. in Trumbull) will be at door #2, near JC Penny (Madison Avenue side) without exception.

ID CARD EXPIRATION AND RECERTIFICATION

Please note the expiration date on your ID card. In most cases, your identification card will expire approximately 3 years from the date you received it. The only exception to this rule is when a person is issued a *temporary eligibility* ID card. In either case, you will receive a re-certification application 2 months prior to the expiration date on your identification card. You must complete the recertification form and comply with all certification requirements in place at the time of renewing your eligibility ID card. If you do not submit a renewal form prior to your card's expiration date, you will be removed from our files and your transportation privileges will be revoked.

ESCORTS

On request, 1 escort shall be provided service. All escorts must have the same time, origin and destination and are required to pay the fare, as the eligible individual. An unlimited number of escorts are allowed to travel, provided that space is available for them on the GBTAcess bus carrying the eligible rider and that transportation of the additional individuals will not result in a denial of service to another eligible individual.

PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT

A personal care attendant (PCA) assists the eligible rider with daily life functions and may provide assistance during the ride or at the destination. The PCA is not required to pay a fare and must be picked-up between the same origin and destination as the eligible rider. GBTAcess eligible rider's need for a PCA must be registered with the program.

PUBLIC BUS TRANSPORTATION FOR REDUCED-FARE

Your GBTAcess photo identification card entitles you to public bus transportation privileges for half-price on the GBTA's public bus service. These privileges include free transfers within the GBTA's transportation system and other transfer options. The rules and fees pertaining to transfer will vary from time to time based on current GBTA Policy.

FREE TRAVEL-TRAINING

The public bus system offers a wide range of flexible and cost effective traveling opportunities for everyone. If you never rode a GBTA public bus before and need assistance, individualized instruction from your place of origin to your destination is available. Just call the Paratransit Customer Service Department for information.

ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION

All information related to GBTAcess is available in printed Spanish. Information is available in alternative formats if required. Anyone needing service information in any accessible formats should call the Customer Service Department number.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTORY

Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority

- For information & service inquiries.....203-366-7070
- GBTA’s TDD number.....203-330-0657
- Public bus schedules & information.....203-333-3031
- TDD schedules & information.....203-330-0668

GBTAcess / Paratransit Service

- For reservation & cancellations.....203-579-7777
- GBTAcess TDD number.....203-579-8754

POLICY FOR MINOR

All riders under the age of 12 must be escorted by an adult.

REPLACEMENT GBTAcess ID CARDS

There is a \$10.00 service fee for replacement cards (lost, stolen or destroyed). Cash, checks or money order is the only acceptable payment method.

MOBILITY DEVICES

GBTAcess can accommodate wheelchairs or scooters up to 48 inches long, 30 inches wide and 600 pounds when occupied.

PASSENGER SECUREMENT

GBTAcess operator using the four-point belt securement system and the over the center floor mounted seat belt, must secure all wheelchairs and scooters.

Passengers who use wheelchairs and scooters are encouraged to use a personal lap belt.

An ambulatory passenger must be seated when the GBTAcess bus is in motion and are required to wear a seat belt.

Passengers who use scooters are encouraged to transfer to a seat when possible.

Infant and children with disabilities, who are not in wheelchair, must be secured in one of the following ways, at the discretion of the accompanying adult:

- Buckled into a car seat provided by the adult.
- Buckled into the seat next to the accompanying adult.
- Held on the accompanying adult’s lap.

PROHIBITED

Smoking, eating and drinking on vehicles is prohibited at all times.

PERSONAL CHANGES

When you have a change of name, address, phone number, or anything else that needs to be updated on your personal information, please be sure to make the appropriate changes by calling the Paratransit Customer Service Department at (203) 366-7070.

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND OTHER RELATED INQUIRIES

All service inquiries can be reached by calling the GBTAcess customer service department at (203) 366-7070. Hearing impaired may call by TDD at (203) 330-0657. Please call us with any issues you may experience or any suggestions you may have regarding GBTAcess. We strongly encourage you to communicate with us as your input assists the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority in providing you with the best service possible.

NEWSLETTER

Periodically GBTAcess publishes a newsletter. Please thoroughly review the newsletter, as this is the method we use to keep you updated on all service changes.

MILFORD, SHELTON & WESTPORT TRANSFER POINTS

Transportation is provided to and from the following designated locations in Shelton, Milford and Westport, for transfers to other transit agencies:

- Shelton: 902 Bridgeport Avenue @ Burger King.
- Milford: 589 Bridgeport Avenue @ K-Mart.
- Westport: 1790 Post Road East @ Super Stop & Shop.

Under no circumstances will any other location be considered. To travel beyond the designated locations, each rider is responsible for arranging transportation through the paratransit programs offered by their corresponding town.

- Shelton – Valley Transit District #203-735-6824
- Milford – Milford Transit District #203-874-4507
- Westport – Norwalk Transit District #203-852-0000

Important points to keep in mind when traveling across town lines:

1. GBTAcess will accept reservations in accordance with rules and regulations contained in this User Guidebook.
2. Bring this User Guidebook along for reference.
3. The 1-hr in advance rule applies to both outbound and inbound (return-ride) trips on GBTAcess service.
4. For advance wait rules for the other transit service, contact the respective transit agencies.
5. It is each rider's responsibility to make his or her own reservation with the individual participating transit system and to familiarize themselves with their rules of operation.
6. On you initial outbound trip, you must pay the current fare to the GBTAcess driver and request a free transfer ticket. This ticket must be presented to the driver of the Shelton, Milford or Westport bus.
7. On you inbound (return-ride) trip from a connecting system, you must pay the driver their existing fare and request a transfer ticket. This transfer ticket is then presented to the GBTAcess driver for a free ride to your destination.
8. It is each rider's responsibility to request a transfer ticket. Tickets are only given to riders that transfer at the designated transfer locations and are only valid on the day that are issued. You must present a transfer ticket to the driver in order to take advantage of the free ride. If you do not have a ticket then you must pay the full fare.