

**Jefferson Transit MITS**  
**Mobility Impaired Transportation Service**

# 2008 Rider Guide

Available in alternate formats or languages  
upon request.



Effective Date: July 2008

# **Jefferson Transit MITS 2008 Rider Guide**

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## **WELCOME**

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service is curb-to-curb, shared-ride transportation for individuals whose functional limitations or health conditions prevent them from using the Jefferson Transit (JeT) bus system (also referred to as fixed route). This guide is designed to help you understand the Paratransit service (MITS) and your responsibilities while using it.

## **Introduction**

The MITS Rider Guide describes who is eligible to ride MITS, how to apply for the service, as well as policies, procedures, and rules for the use of MITS service. The guide will answer most questions about the MITS service. All MITS riders should review the guide carefully and refer to it whenever questions arise. For additional information, please contact the MITS Office at (504) 889-7155. Alternate versions of this guide can be obtained online at [www.jeffersontransit.org](http://www.jeffersontransit.org) or by calling the MITS Office.

The Mobility Impaired Transit System, known as MITS, is part of Jefferson Transit, the Jefferson Parish public bus service, and provides transportation for persons with disabilities who are unable to use fixed route Jefferson Transit service. The fixed route service has designated bus stops at regular 2-block intervals along specific routes, while MITS service is curb-to-curb and demand responsive.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was written to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to use the same public transportation service available to the general public. The MITS service, also known as paratransit service, is designed to meet the requirements of the ADA. LIFT/Dial-A-Ride is a comparable paratransit service operated by the Regional Transit Authority in Orleans Parish.

Jefferson Parish has purchased new equipment and improved its fixed route bus service so that everyone, including persons with

disabilities, can use the fixed route Jefferson Transit buses. With these improvements, many persons with disabilities no longer require or qualify for MITS service. The ADA requires that paratransit service be provided for persons who cannot use fixed route service. In order to comply with the ADA, MITS service is available during the same hours and within the same areas where fixed route service is available.

## **I. MITS Rider Information**

### **Service Area**

The federally mandated ADA service area includes the area within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile on either side of a JeT bus route in urbanized Jefferson Parish and a limited area of Orleans Parish. As capacity constraints allow, MITS will travel in Jefferson Parish beyond the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile ADA service area. The ADA mandated service area is shown on page 15.

MITS riders can transfer to RTA's paratransit service, known as the LIFT or Dial-a-Ride, at the designated transfer points: (1) Eastbank - Delgado Community College and Oschner Back Atrium Area (2) Westbank - Gretna/Wilty Terminal. Please refer to the transfer trip section of this guide (page 7) for more information. You may call 889-7156 for information about a specific pick-up/destination.

### **Service Days and Hours**

MITS service is available seven days a week between 6 AM and 9 PM. In addition, taxi service and lift-equipped ADA accessible bus service is available before 6 AM and after 9 PM seven days a week for individuals traveling within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of a fixed route bus line. The requested trip before or after regular MITS service hours must fall within the time period when fixed route service is available for each particular bus line. Contact the MITS Office for specific details.

## **One Way Trip Fares**

(Prices are subject to change)

Certified MITS Riders	Cash \$2.00
Guests	Cash \$2.00
Personal Assistants	No Charge

Exact fare is required upon boarding. Ride coupons can be purchased by calling MITS at 889-7155.

## **To Make a Reservation**

**Call (504) 889-7156** between **8:00 AM – 5:00 PM** daily. Ride requests may be made up to one week in advance. Next day service can only be guaranteed for trips that initiate and end in the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile ADA service area. Due to call volume, the reservationist can only book one day's reservations per conversation.

## **When you call, please have a paper, pencil, and the following information available:**

- Your first and last name.
- If you'll be traveling with an assistant, guest (including children), or service animal.
- The date of your requested trip.
- Your preferred pick-up and return times. Allow plenty of time to get to and from your destination.
- Your origin and destination addresses and phone numbers at those locations (including building name, specific drop-off and pick-up information. If a medical appointment, include the name of the doctor and the suite number.)
- Agency sponsoring the ride, if any.
- If you or anyone accompanying you will be traveling with a wheelchair, scooter, or other equipment.
- Any other information the driver should know to help you travel.

The reservationist will search for an available space **up to one hour on either side of the pick-up time you request**. If space exists, you will be offered a **"ready time"**.

When space is not available at the time you want, and an alternative day or time cannot be negotiated, your trip may be denied. Please remember that this is a shared-ride service and allow plenty of time to get to and from your destination.

There are no restrictions on the types of trips riders make. All requests for trips are accepted and handled on a first-come, first-served basis.

### **Standing Rides/Subscription Service**

Subscription reservations are offered on a limited basis for **employment** and **school** trips that recur weekly at the same time to and from the same addresses. Federal law limits subscription rides to no more than half of all rides scheduled in any given time period. With this understanding, you are welcome to place an employment or school subscription ride request with the MITS administrator.

### **Trip Cancellation**

To cancel a trip call (504) 889-7194.

The **Cancel Line is open 24 hours**. The minimum cancellation notice required is **2 hours**. If less than 2 hours notice is given, it will be considered a "no-show."

### **Preventing No-Shows**

It is the goal of Jefferson Transit MITS to always connect with passengers and provide their scheduled ride. When riders do not cancel at least 2 hours in advance or are not available to board within 5 minutes of vehicle arrival time, it is considered a **"no-show."** Riders can prevent no-show situations when they:

- Review **dates, times and addresses** with the reservationist to be sure information is correct.
- Are prepared to board at the starting time of the pickup window and within 5 minutes after the vehicle arrives. When there are circumstances outside the rider's control, it is not considered a no-show. Excessive no-shows will result in service suspension. Please refer to the suspension and appeal portion of this guide for more information.
- Call MITS at 889-7194 and **cancel rides as soon as the ride is no longer needed.**

## **Transfer Trips**

MITs riders can transfer to RTA's paratransit service, known as the LIFT or Dial-a-Ride, at the Eastbank or Westbank transfer points.

### **How to Schedule a Transfer Trip**

Each rider must call the MITS and LIFT/Dial-A-Ride offices to schedule both legs of each trip. Follow these steps to schedule a transfer trip:

- First, call the dispatch office in your service area to schedule a pickup at your home or other location.
- Then call the dispatch office for the other paratransit service and book the second half of the trip from the transfer point to your destination.
- Tell both dispatch offices that you are scheduling a transfer trip.
- Allow at least 30 minutes between the scheduled drop-off and pick-up times at the transfer point.
- Book a return trip in the same manner described above.

**MITs and LIFT/Dial-A-Ride DO NOT carry each other's riders between the Eastbank and Westbank**

## **Transfer Trip Fare**

When taking a transfer trip, the regular \$2 fare must be paid when boarding the MITS vehicle and an additional \$1 must be paid when boarding the LIFT/Dial-A-Ride vehicle. The total cost of a one-way transfer trip is **\$3**.

## **Transfer Locations**

For trips between the Jefferson and Orleans paratransit service areas on the **Eastbank** only:

- Delgado Community College Student Commons, near the intersection of City Park Avenue and Orleans Avenue.
- Ochsner Medical Foundation on Jefferson Highway at the Atrium Entrance facing River Road.

For trips between the Jefferson and Orleans paratransit service areas on the **Westbank** only:

- Gretna/Wilty Bus Terminal, near the intersection of Van Trump and Westbank Expressway.

## **Personal Assistants**

If found necessary during the evaluation, a personal assistant may accompany a rider in order to provide personal aid during the ride or at the destination. If you need assistance to travel, riding with a personal assistant is strongly encouraged. The MITS driver will accompany riders from the MITS vehicle to the curb only. Passengers requiring additional assistance to get to and from their home or destination should travel with a personal assistant. The MITS director may also determine that a PA is required for persons who repeatedly become ill, exhibit behavioral problems, or are unable to care for themselves while riding MITS. A passenger's need for a personal assistant must be registered with the Jefferson Transit MITS program. A certified rider under the age of 4 must travel with a parent.

**Personal assistants are not required to pay fares and must be picked up and dropped off at the same locations as the passenger.**

## **Guests**

A guest is someone without a MITS ID card who rides with a MITS Certified passenger but not as a personal assistant. If space permits, you may reserve a space for a guest when scheduling your trip. Guests must be picked up and dropped off at the same address as the rider, and guests pay the same fare as the MITS Certified passenger.

## **Taking a Trip**

**Please carry your MITS ID card with you at all times.**

## **Boarding Time**

When you call to reserve your ride, you will be given a "30-minute pickup window" in which the vehicle will arrive. You will need to be ready at the beginning of your pickup window. For example, if your negotiated "ready time" is 8 AM, your 30-minute pickup window is 7:45 AM to 8:15 AM. You'll need to be ready to board at 7:45 AM. By being ready when the paratransit vehicle arrives, you help keep everyone's trip on schedule.

## **How Long Will the Paratransit Vehicle Wait?**

When the vehicle arrives within the pickup window, the driver will wait **no more than 5 minutes**. If the vehicle arrives before your pickup window starts, you may leave if you are ready. If you are not ready, the driver will wait until your pickup window starts and then an additional 5 minutes.

## **What If My Ride Is Late?**

### **Call (504) 889-7194**

If your ride has not arrived within 30 minutes after your “ready time” call 889-7194 to receive an update on the status of your ride.

## **Boarding with a Mobility Device**

MIT S vans are lift-equipped and will accommodate mobility devices, such as wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers, provided the devices fit within the ADA specified boarding envelope. This includes all 30” wide by 48” long mobility devices – (measured starting from two inches above the ground) that do not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied. Larger devices may not qualify due to lift capacity and interior van configuration.

- All drivers are trained to operate the lift and are required to secure you after boarding.
- Riders are required to use seat belts
- All wheel chairs must be secured
- Boarding while standing on the lift is allowed when requested by a rider
- For safety reasons, passengers may not ride on scooters while the van is in motion. All passengers with scooters must be able to transfer to regular seat.
- MIT S is not responsible for any damage to mobility devices that occurs on MIT S vehicles

## **Designated MIT S Stops**

The following shopping centers and hospitals have designated stops which are marked with a MIT S sign. These designated stops make it possible for MIT S to provide more service.

**Riders will only be dropped off and picked up at these designated stops.**

<b>Shopping Center</b>	<b>Designated Stop</b>
Clearview Shopping Center	The rear entrance for the cinema.
Elmwood Shopping/Fitness Center	Front of Building by the Fruit Stand
Esplanade Mall	Southwest accessible Entrance
Lakeside Shopping Center	Food Court
Oakwood Shopping Center	Food Court

<b>Medical Facility</b>	<b>Designated Stop</b>
East Jefferson General Hospital	Main Entrance on Houma Blvd.
Ochsner Foundation Hospital	Atrium Entrance facing River Road
Tulane University Hospital	Horseshoe Entrance at Tulane & Saratoga
Tulane University Primary Care	Parking garage entrance waiting area
University Hospital	Perdido Entrance
Veterans Administration Hospital	<b>6:00 AM – 6:00 PM</b> Gravier by Clinic Entrance <b>After 6:00 PM</b> Perdido Entrance
West Jefferson Medical Center	Main Entrance

## **Rules of Behavior**

Please be considerate of fellow passengers by adhering to the following rules:

- No eating, drinking, or smoking
- Use earphones when listening to music
- No profane language or abusive conduct
- Do not physically disturb or infringe on rights of other riders
- No weapons
- No more than 4 shopping bags or parcels per rider

**Passengers who fail to comply with these rules may be denied service at the driver's discretion.**

## **II. MITS Eligibility and Application Process**

MITs service is available to persons who meet specific criteria described in the ADA. Individuals are eligible for MITs service only if there is some part of the fixed route bus system which they cannot use or navigate because of a disability. An individual is eligible if he or she has a permanent, temporary, or intermittent disability as described below.

### **Qualifying Categories of Permanent Disabilities**

Note: An accessible bus is one equipped with a wheelchair lift, a system to announce stops, and other necessary facilities to accommodate all persons, including those with disabilities.

**Category 1** - Persons who are unable to board, ride or disembark from a bus even if they are able to get to the bus stop and the bus is accessible. Includes persons who are unable to travel independently on fixed route transit even with some assistance from the

driver and individuals with mental and visual impairments who cannot navigate the bus system. For example, some persons with these impairments may not be able to recognize destinations and understand transfers.

**Category 2** is not applicable.

**Category 3** - Persons who cannot travel to or from a bus stop because of a specific impairment-related condition. This specific condition must prevent the person from using fixed-route transit. A person is eligible if traveling to or from a bus stop is impossible when architectural and environmental barriers, such as lack of curb cuts, are combined with the specific impairment-related condition.

### **Temporary or Intermittent Disabilities and Eligibility**

Persons with temporary or intermittent disabilities may be eligible for MITS and will be certified for eligibility based on the most limiting aspect of their disabilities using the same standards used for permanent disabilities. Persons with temporary or intermittent disabilities who are eligible for MITS will be provided service **only** when those disabilities are present.

### **Conditional and Unconditional Eligibility**

Eligibility shall be determined either conditional or unconditional for all MITS riders. An individual with conditional eligibility is approved for certain types of trips only, while an individual with unconditional eligibility is approved for all types of trips. Conditional and unconditional eligibility shall be based on an individual's mobility impairment at the time he/she is certified, and the rider's ID card will indicate the type of eligibility.

### **Residency**

Individuals who do not live in Jefferson Parish may request certification for MITS. Place of residence does not enter into a determination of ADA paratransit eligibility. Persons who are certified

as ADA paratransit eligible by another transit system may use MITS when traveling within the MITS service area. For related topics, see the discussions on visitor policy and transfer service between MITS and LIFT/Dial-A-Ride.

## **Application Process**

To apply for the MITS program, the prospective user must complete an application, the ***Jefferson Transit Evaluation***, which will identify his/her disability that prevents use of fixed route bus service. Applications for the MITS program are available by calling or writing the MITS Office and can be obtained in other formats upon request. The application package includes an explanation of the Jefferson Transit System, application form, healthcare professional authorization, participant's release of liability agreement, and complaint procedure. The applicant must answer all items and sign the release forms.

Upon receiving the completed application package from the applicant, the MITS Director will mail a certification form to the healthcare professional named on the applicant's authorization form. The applicant should name the healthcare professional who is most familiar with the disability that prevents his/her use of the fixed route bus service.

When MITS receives the completed certification form from the healthcare professional, MITS will determine whether or not an in-person interview is necessary to render a decision on the applicant's eligibility.

The MITS Director will review each application package and certify new riders or recertify current MITS riders according to the requirements of the ADA. Only those persons who qualify as ADA paratransit eligible will be able to use MITS.

## **Notification of Approval**

An application is considered complete when:

1. MITS has received a completed application package (including signed release forms) from the applicant;
2. A healthcare professional certification is completed and signed; and
3. The applicant has completed an in-person interview if required.

Within 21 days of receiving a completed application, the MITS Director will notify the applicant by letter of a decision. Any omissions render an application incomplete. If denied, the applicant will receive a letter that will specify the reasons for denial and explain the appeal process.

If the MITS Director does not make a decision within twenty-one (21) days following the submission of a completed application, the applicant will be considered eligible for service until a final decision is made.

## **Certification Renewal**

All MITS riders must apply for recertification every three years. The MITS Director will notify riders when it is time to recertify. However, if you have not received a recertification application within six (6) weeks of the expiration date, please call MITS for an application. If a MITS rider does not return the application promptly, he/she will *not* be recertified and will be unable to ride MITS.

## **Identification**

All MITS riders will receive a photo identification (ID) card to be used when requesting service and when boarding a MITS vehicle. The card can also be used as identification for service on LIFT/Dial-A-Ride or other paratransit systems. The ID card includes: the rider's photograph, name, address, and phone num-

ber; identification number of the rider; expiration date of the rider's certification; special conditions or limitations for using MITS; requirement for a personal assistant (PA), if any; the MITS phone number; and an approval signature. Replacement cards are available for \$5.00 from the MITS Office.

**Be sure to carry your ID card at all times.**

### **III. Jefferson Transit Suspension and Permanent Disqualification Policies and Complaint Procedures**

Certified riders may be suspended for repeated violations of MITS policies including refusal to wear seatbelts, refusing to allow wheel chair securement, and other acts that breach rider safety. Traveling without a personal assistant if such an assistant is needed for the rider to qualify for service is also considered a breach of rider safety.

Riders will be refused service because of violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct. The police will be called to remove the offender if there is imminent threat or harm to other riders or the driver.

Breach of MITS No Show Policy occurs when a certified rider has 5 no show violations during a 1 month period.

1<sup>st</sup> Offense - written warning

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense - temporary suspension for 14 days

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense - temporary suspension for 21 days

4<sup>th</sup> Offense - permanent disqualification

Riders will receive a written notification of their suspension.

### **MIT S Appeal Process**

The appeal process is designed for:

- individuals denied eligibility for MITS during the application process
- certified riders suspended for violation of MITS policies
- certified riders refused service because of violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct
- certified riders who have an unresolved complaint regarding the use of MITS

The MITS Manager and the MITS staff are employees of East Jefferson General Hospital. The MITS Manager is responsible for processing certification for MITS riders based on federally mandated eligibility criteria. The MITS Manager is also responsible for suspending or refusing service based on non-compliance with MITS rider rules and safety/security criteria.

The Administrative Director and members of the Jefferson Transit Appeal Board are not directly involved in the individual certification process or in individual suspension of service or refusal of service.

The Jefferson Transit Appeal Board is a five member board with representation as follows:

- One Current MITS rider
- One Transit staff person with knowledge of Federal ADA Paratransit Criteria and Service and Fixed Route Service systems
- One Transit Advisory Board Member
- One Office for Citizens with Disabilities specialist
- Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority staff member or Louisiana Rehabilitation Service Counselor/Manager familiar with different types of disabilities and associated mobility impairments.

The two-step appeal process is as follows:

**STEP 1:**

**Appeal to the Administrative Director**

When an individual is denied ADA paratransit eligibility, suspended from MITS service, or refused service, the MITS Director will notify that person in writing of the reasons for taking action and the procedures which can be followed to appeal the decision. The rider will be given an opportunity to be heard and can present situational information and arguments. This opportunity is extended for 10 days after the rider receives the notice. Accessible formats will be provided as appropriate.

An individual who wishes to contest the decision of the MITS Director has sixty (60) calendar days to file a written appeal with the Jefferson Parish Administrative Director. **The appeal must be submitted in writing.** As part of the written appeal, the individual may request to be heard in person.

The individual making an appeal has the right to be heard in person and may be represented by an individual of his or her choice. The appellant may request and receive an Americans With Disabilities Act Accommodation, if requested, for his/her appearance at a requested hearing.

The Administrative Director will make a complete investigation of the reasons for the action, consult with the Parish Attorney and Certified Rehabilitation Counselors if deemed necessary, and notify the individual in writing of the basis of the determination within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the appeal.

**The written notification will include the procedures for the next step in the appeal process.**

**Submit the written appeal to:**

Administrative Director  
Office for Citizens With Disabilities  
1221 Elmwood Park Blvd., Suite 306  
Jefferson, LA 70123

**STEP 2:**

**Appeal to the Jefferson Transit Appeal Board**

An individual may appeal the Administrative Director's decision to the Jefferson Transit Appeal Board.

The individual must send a copy of the MITS Director's action, along with the written findings of the Transit Director, to the Chairperson of the **Jefferson Transit Appeal Board within ten (10) working days of receipt of the Administrative Director's decision.**

The Appeal Board will schedule a hearing to listen to both sides of the case in the presence of a Parish Attorney or his/her designee.

The hearing shall be held within twenty (20) working days after the Board's receipt of the appeal, and the Appeal Board will make a decision and notify the appellant of its decision within ten (10) working days after the hearing.

The Jefferson Transit Appeal Board decision will serve as the final administrative authority.

**Submit the written appeal to:**

Chairperson  
Jefferson Transit Appeal Board  
c/o Office for Citizens with Disabilities  
1221 Elmwood Park Blvd, Suite 306  
Harahan, LA 70123

## **MITS Service During the Appeal Process**

If a decision has not been made within thirty (30) working days of the completion of the appeal process, the MITS Director will permit the individual to ride until a final decision is reached.

An individual who applied for MITS and was denied eligibility is **not** permitted to ride MITS during the appeal process, nor is an individual who was refused service for violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct.

An individual who was suspended for violations of MITS rider policies *is eligible* for interim MITS service if an appeal letter is submitted to the Administrative Director within 45 days of notification.

## **Complaint Procedure**

Call MITS Manager at 889-7155

Make sure to have the following information ready when making a complaint about scheduling: date, time, trip number, and date and time the request was made. All dispatch dialogue is tape recorded.

## **Contacts/Telephone Numbers**

### **MITTS**

#### **Jefferson Transit Paratransit Service**

operated by East Jefferson General Hospital

3120 Lime Street

Metairie, Louisiana 70006

504/889-7155 (Office)

504/889-7156 (Scheduling)

504/889-7194 (for cancellations, will calls, and scheduling questions)

504/889-7165 (TDD)

#### **Jefferson Transit Administration**

Ryan Brown, Transit Director

21 Westbank Expressway

Gretna, LA 70053

504/364-3450

#### **Jefferson Transit Fixed Route Bus Service**

operated by Veolia Transportation

504/818-1077

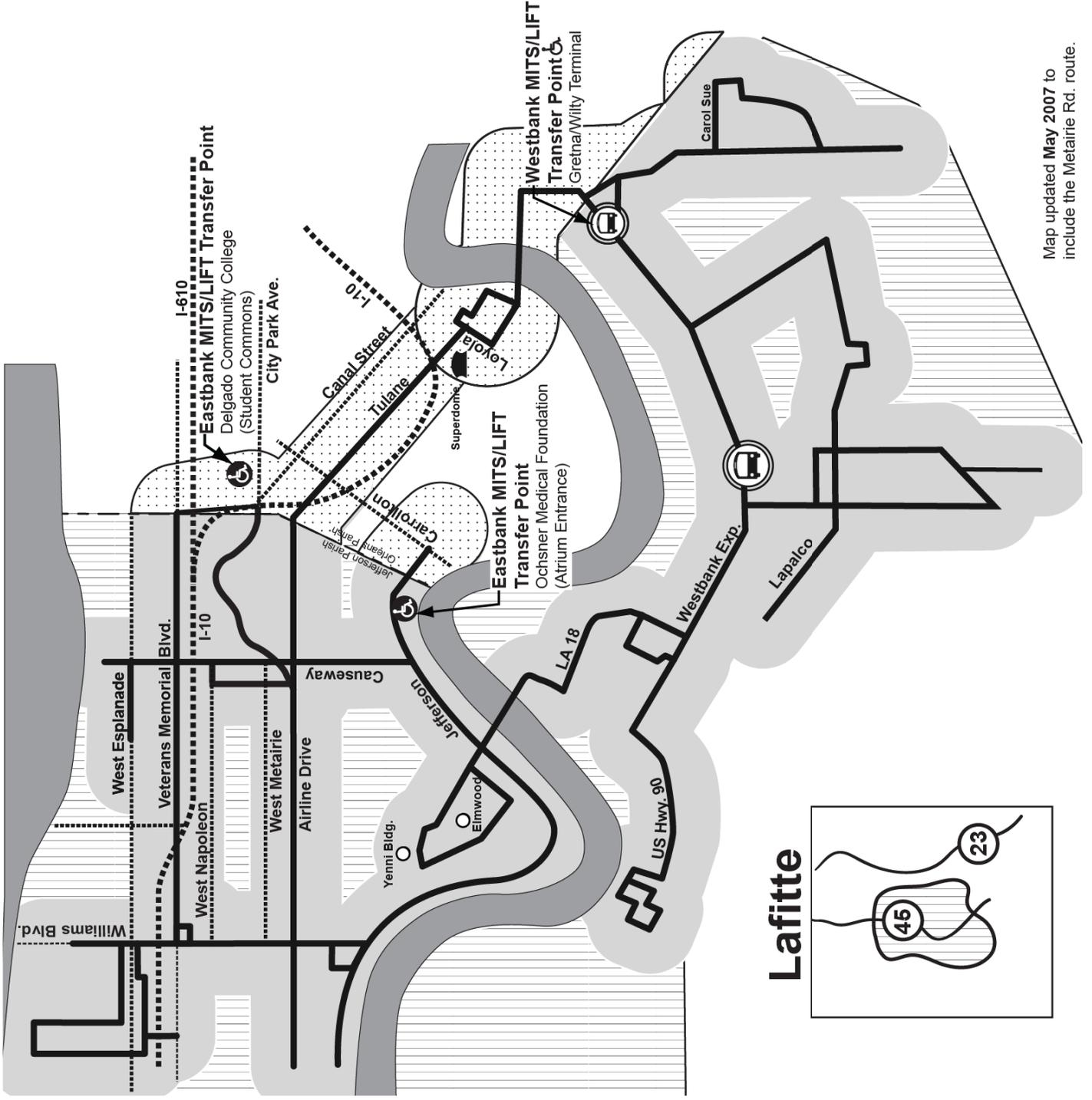
#### **LIFT/Dial-A-Ride Paratransit Service**

operated by Regional Transit Authority in

Orleans Parish, Louisiana

504/827-7433

- Required ADA Service Area - Trips begin and end within 3/4 mile of all Jet fixed routes within Jefferson Parish.
- Extended ADA Service Area - Trips begin or end in the New Orleans ADA Service Area. (Trip must begin or end in Jefferson Parish.)
- Additional MITS Service Area - Includes most of urbanized Jefferson Parish including Lafitte.



Map updated May 2007 to include the Metairie Rd. route.