

Texarkana Urban Transit District



ADA Complementary Paratransit Service Plan

1402 Texas Blvd.

Texarkana, Tx 75501

903-794-8883

www.t-linebus.org



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ADA Complementary Paratransit Service Policy & Procedures

I. General

A. Goal

It is the goal of the Texarkana Urban Transit District (TUTD), through its ADA Complementary Paratransit Service, to design, implement and maintain an efficient and effective transportation system for persons with disabilities who are “ADA Paratransit Eligible.”

B. Policy

It is the policy of TUTD that no otherwise qualified person shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity undertaken by TUTD that receives or benefits from financial assistance.

C. Purpose

The ADA Complimentary Paratransit Service was developed to provide safe and efficient transportation comparable to that provided by the fixed route system within the City of Texarkana to persons with disabilities who are “ADA Paratransit Eligible.”

D. Objectives

The specific objectives of the ADA Complementary Paratransit Services are:

1. To provide demand-response, door-to-door transportation on specially equipped vehicles designed to accommodate persons with disabilities.
2. To maintain a trained staff for the operation and control of the service.
3. To provide on-going mechanisms for persons with disabilities to provide input on ADA Complementary Paratransit Service, policies and procedures.
4. To provide all public information tools on TUTD services in accessible formats.

E. Plan Description

Paratransit service exceeds ADA requirements in these areas:

- Reservations are taken earlier in the morning and later in the evening than required. TUTD utilizes a message machine for reservations that are made outside the normal reservation hours. Clients who call between 5pm and 8am will be added to the day's reservation list.
- Clients within in the City of Texarkana are able to travel to Texarkana A&M University despite the fact that it exceeds the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile service guideline.
- Return trips guaranteed to their point of origin after hours, due to appointment delays, if they were picked up by TUTD.
- Same day trips can be scheduled provided there is availability.

Paratransit Service for the City of Texarkana commenced simultaneously with the Texarkana Metro Fixed-Route service starting.

F. Service Description

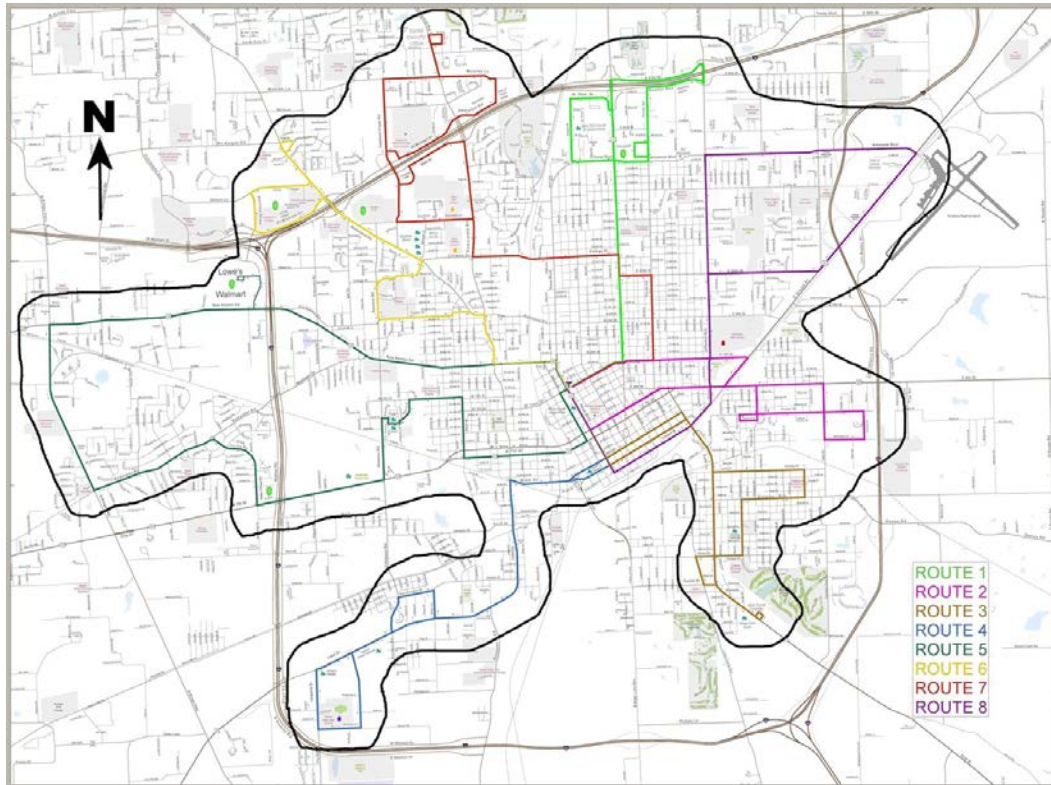
The Paratransit service commenced with the start of the Texarkana Fixed-Route Service. The Paratransit routes are structured to enable any person who has difficulties using the fixed route service to have door-to-door service. Days of operation are the same as the fixed routes which is Monday thru Saturday, 5:30am till 6:30pm. The fare is \$2.50 per trip and Personal Care Attendants ride free to assist the passenger to board and depart the bus and to help carry groceries and packages. The Paratransit service serves the populous within the Cities of Texarkana, TX & AR, as well as, Nash and Wake Village.

G. Contact Person

Nancy L. Hoehn, Transportation Manager
903-255-3553
903-792-3014 (fax)
nhoehn@TUTD.org
4808 Elizabeth Street
Texarkana, TX 75503

H. Service Area

Below is a map showing the area of service for the Paratransit service.



Outlined in black is the approximate service area for the Paratransit service.

TUTD's paratransit services go "above and beyond" ADA requirements of serving the population within the ¼ mile area of all our fixed-route services and serves all residents with the Texarkana "Loop". The majority of paratransit passengers are located in various retirement residences which are all located within TUTD's service area.

TUTD has a fleet of eight (8) fixed route buses and four (4) Paratransit vehicles. All buses are ADA compliant with lifts and/or ramps for easy access. TUTD has spare vehicles should they be needed. All vehicles with the TUTD fleet are 100% ADA accessible. Below is a chart of the accessibility of the fixed-route service in Texarkana. With this being a newly launched service, efforts are ongoing to improve accessibility, including the installation of shelters and benches.

Fixed Route Bus Stop Inventory					
	Number of Stops	Sidewalks @ Stops	Wheelchair Ramps	Shelters	Benches
Route 1	37	12 (32%)	12 (32%)	2 (5%)	14 (38%)
Route 2	23	11 (48%)	11 (48%)	1 (4%)	8 (35%)
Route 3	27	19 (70%)	12 (44%)	3 (11%)	11 (41%)
Route 4	22	9 (41%)	7 (32%)	2 (9%)	7 (32%)
Route 5	38	8 (21%)	6 (16%)	6 (16%)	7 (18%)
Route 6	42	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Route 7	47	4 (9%)	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	6 (13%)
Route 8	22	2 (9%)	3 (14%)	2 (9%)	8 (36%)
TOTAL	258	66 (26%)	55 (21%)	18 (7%)	62 (24%)
OVERALL	258 Stops	26% Sidewalks	21% WC Ramps	7% Shelters	24% Benches

ADA Complementary Paratransit Service is provided in accordance with the six service criteria established by the Federal Transit Administration for ADA Paratransit operations including days and hours of service, service area, response time, fares, trip purposes and capacity constraints.

B. Days and Hours of Service

The ADA Complementary Paratransit Service shall operate from 5:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday. No Sunday service is provided.

Service is not offered on the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Memorial Day	Independence Day
Labor Day	Thanksgiving Day	Christmas Day

ADA Complementary Paratransit Service shall be provided to all origins and destinations within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the fixed-routes in the Texarkana UZA and Texarkana A&M campus.

C. Response Time

ADA Complementary Paratransit Service shall offer origin to destination, demand response transportation service to certified passengers. Two types of service will be available, subscription and reservation.

Subscription service will be offered for any trip that occurs every week, originates and terminates at the same scheduled location and at the same hour each day. Requests for subscription service must be made at least the day prior to the first trip and may be made up to 14 days in advance. The number of subscription service trips accepted shall not exceed 50% of the total trips scheduled by all passengers.

Reservation service shall be available for any trip. Requests for reservation service may be made up to the close of business the day prior to the desired trip time and may be made up to 14 days in advance.

Requests for service for the next operating day will be accepted up the close of business the previous business day of requested trip. All return trips must be scheduled regardless of whether the passenger knows the exact return time or not. Passengers should estimate the return time and call the office as soon as possible if they will not be ready at the scheduled time. When TUTD is closed before the next service day, an answering machine will be available to accept the Paratransit trip requests.

Trips will be scheduled within one hour of the requested pick-up time. The trip shall be scheduled so as to arrive at the pick-up location within a 15- minute time frame. For instance, if a passenger needs to be at a medical appointment at 2 p.m. and the estimated drive time is 20 minutes, the passenger may be told to expect the driver between 1:10 – 1:40 p.m.

D. Fares

The sum of \$2.50 per one-way trip shall be charged all Paratransit certified passengers. Payment of the \$2.50 may be in cash and in the exact amount as the drivers carry no change. Fares can also be paid in tickets. Fares shall be paid at the time of boarding.

TUTD operates a total of eight (8) fixed routes. These eight (8) routes service the Texarkana UZA. The fixed route fare is \$1.25 and must be paid upon entering the bus. Transfer slips are free and are used to complete any given trip. Transfers are only good at the Transfer Station and are only good for thirty (30) minutes once the bus arrives at the Transfer Station.

Personal Care Attendants (PCA) ride free with passengers who require assistance while boarding, riding or alighting from a vehicle. Passengers must state the need for a Personal Care Attendant on the ADA Paratransit Eligibility Certification Application and make the reservationist aware that a PCA will be riding as well.

Paratransit passengers are guaranteed a seat for at least one accompanying guest. Additional guests will be scheduled on a space-available basis. Guests pay a fare of \$2.50 per one-way trip.

Tickets are available for purchase at a cost of \$1.25 each. One free ticket is issued for every 10 tickets purchased for \$12.50. Discounted tickets are available for Senior/Disabled for \$.60 or \$6.00 for 10 (with one free). It requires 1 tickets for each one-way trip on the fixed-route and 2 for Paratransit. Tickets can be purchased at the TUTD Transit Center. Youth (6-18) or Student fare is \$1.00/trip with Children under 5 FREE.

E. Trip Purpose

Trips for any purpose within the Paratransit service area will be accommodated and will not be prioritized by trip purpose. Passengers will not be asked to provide information regarding their trip purpose.

F. Capacity Constraint Monitoring

TUTD will not constrain capacity by restricting the number of trips an individual will be provided: by maintaining waiting lists for access to the service: or by providing a service which has a substantial number of significantly untimely pick-ups for initial or return trips, trip denials missed trips or trips with excessive trip lengths.

Performance data will be collected and reported for the purpose of establishing whether capacity constraints exist. The TUTD Board of Directors has established the following performance criteria for the purpose of making such a determination.

Missed Trips – 99% of all trips scheduled will be provided as scheduled

Late Pick-Ups – 95% of all pick-ups will be on time (within or no more than five minutes past the 15 minute scheduling window)

Late Drop-Offs – 95% of all drop-offs will be on time (at the time of the passenger's appointment or at the scheduled time of drop-off)

Denials – 0% of request will be denied

Ride Time – 99% of ride times will be one hour or less

G. Complementary Passes

Whenever TUTD, or its service contractor, makes an error that greatly inconveniences a passenger, a complementary pass, good for one free ride, may be issued to the passenger. Circumstances that may warrant the issuance of a complementary pass include:

- Vehicle arrival more than 10 minutes beyond the 15 minute scheduling window;
- Passenger was inadvertently left off the schedule;
- Passenger was stranded on broken vehicle; or
- Other incidents as approved by the TUTD Public Transportation Manager.

H. Inclement Weather

In the unlikely event of service cancellations due to inclement weather, TUTD personnel shall attempt to contact all scheduled passengers at the telephone numbers listed on the ADA Complementary Paratransit Service Eligibility Application.

I. Lost and Found

Neither TUTD nor its service contractor will be responsible for items left on vehicles. However, if found, the item(s) will be held for thirty (30) days. If the item(s) is not claimed within thirty (30) days, it may be donated to a local charitable organization.

Passengers attempting to locate lost items should call the TUTD office (903) 794-8883. If the passenger's item has been located, every effort will be made to return the item to the passenger on his/her next scheduled trip.

III. Eligibility and Certification Procedures

A. General Eligibility

To receive ADA Complementary Paratransit Service, individuals must be certified "ADA Paratransit Eligible." The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 defines "ADA Paratransit Eligible" as:

1. Any person with a disability who can use an accessible vehicle, but for whom any desired trip cannot be made because the fixed-route service he/she needs to use is not yet accessible. This category includes persons who use wheelchairs, walkers or braces and others whose disabilities prevent them from utilizing an inaccessible vehicle or facility.
2. Persons, who because of the nature of their disabilities, cannot navigate even a transit system that is otherwise accessible. This category includes persons who because of their disability cannot independently board, ride or disembark from an accessible vehicle. This is based on the assumption the individual will not and need not to be able to operate a boarding system such as a wheelchair lift, ramp or securement device. The presence of a traveling companion does not affect this eligibility.
3. Persons with impairment-related conditions which prevent them from getting to or from a boarding or disembarking location. This relates to an individual's particular functional disability. This eligibility requires functional evaluation of its application to a particular system and a particular trip. Examples of eligibility under this category include severe, chronic fatigue related to HIV infection and AIDS, heat sensitivity due to cardiovascular disease and hypothermia due to quadriplegia.

Generally, the following four tests are applied when determining an applicant's eligibility:

1. Does the individual's disability prevent him/her from getting to and from a bus stop at point of origin or destination?
2. Can the individual board, utilize and disembark the vehicle at the bus stop?
3. Can the individual recognize the destination and disembark the bus?
4. If the passenger's trip requires transfers, are the paths of travel between routes accessible and navigable by the individual?

B. Trip-By-Trip Eligibility

While there are some passengers who are eligible to ride ADA Complementary Paratransit Service for all their transportation needs, most passengers are certified for service on a trip-by-trip basis. In other words, passengers who may normally be able to ride TUSD's fixed-route service may be eligible for certain trips on the Paratransit service. Examples include:

1. An impairment-related condition severely sensitive to cold or hot temperatures;
2. A person unable to maneuver a wheelchair through snow or mud;
3. An individual with cognitive disabilities who must use a route other than the one he/she has learned or been trained to ride;

4. An individual who must travel an alternative route due to circumstances, where this alternate route is inaccessible to persons with disabilities.

C. Eligibility for Visitors and Out-of-Area Residents

Visitors to the Texarkana area, who have been certified by another transit provider, are automatically presumed eligible for TUTD's ADA Complementary Paratransit Service for up to twenty-one (21) days. Should the visitor need service beyond the twenty-one (21) day period, he/she is required to become certified for the TUTD's service through the normal certification process.

D. Application Process

Applications are available at our Transit Center Office or by visiting www.t-linebus.org. If assistance is needed with this process please call our Texarkana Transit Center at 903-794-8883 and staff will provide assistance. Applications are available in accessible formats on request.

The applicant shall return the completed ADA Paratransit Application to the TUTD Transit Center Office. To be considered complete, all of the information requested on the application and the application must be signed by the applicant. In addition, the Medical Professional Verification Section must be completed and signed by a qualified licensed professional.

TUTD staff will attempt to make a determination from the information included in the ADA Paratransit Application. Should the staff be unable to make a determination based upon the information provided, they may request clarification from the applicant or the qualified professional who completed the Medical Professional Verification Section.

If a determination still cannot be made, TUTD may require applicants to submit to a functional assessment to determine if they can use the regular fixed-route bus service. TUTD will pay the cost of the functional assessment as well as provide transportation to and from the appointment.

TUTD staff will make a determination regarding eligibility within 21 days of receipt of a completed ADA Paratransit Application. Should the staff fail to make such a determination within the 21 day period, the applicant will be "presumed eligible" until such time a determination has been made.

When applications are approved, applicants will be notified that they have been certified to use ADA Complementary Paratransit Service for one year if they are permanently disabled or for a shorter, specified time if their disability is temporary. Certified passengers may begin using service immediately following notification.

At the renewal time of a passenger's one year certification, TUTD staff may require the certified passenger to submit a new ADA Paratransit Application if there is sufficient cause to believe the passenger's condition has changed making the person no longer "ADA Paratransit Eligible." Otherwise, TUTD staff will automatically renew the one year term.

Applicants who are deemed ineligible for ADA Complementary Paratransit Service may appeal by following the procedure established in Section VII, Appeal Procedures. Applicants denied service may reapply for service at any time.

All passenger information will be kept confidential by the TUTD staff unless the release is required by law or court order.

E. Estimate of Demand for Comparable Paratransit Service

Demand for Paratransit Service for Texarkana Metro Service has been estimated at 30-40 trips/day. This demand has been estimated using data from current ridership.

F. Timetable for Implementation

Complementary Paratransit service in Texarkana, TX was fully operational the same day that the fixed-route service was launched and runs concurrently with the fixed-route service from that date forward.

G. Budget for Comparable Paratransit Service

The budget to provide Comparable Paratransit Service in Texarkana, TX is estimated to be \$124,085 for 2017 with a 5% escalation/year for operations (\$130,289 FY18, \$136,804 FY19, \$143,644 FY 20, \$150,826 FY21). This assumes that demand stays at a level that can be served by 3.0 FTE's). Capital budget is expected to be \$75,000 FY17, \$75,000 FY18 and \$10,000/year for FY19, FY20 & FY21.

IV. Passenger Responsibilities

A. General Passenger Condition

All passengers must be able to sit in a seat or wheelchair in order to be transported.

Any passenger whose medical condition is such that the passenger is incoherent or requires immediate medical attention to sustain life will be denied service. ADA Complementary Paratransit Service is to be considered a "common carrier" and does not perform ambulance or emergency service.

If the driver reasonably believes a passenger's physical condition or conduct is hazardous or if a passenger possesses weapons, instruments or equipment that are reasonably believed to be dangerous, service may be terminated immediately. The passenger will be notified of their right to appeal the termination. The appeal can be filed in the usual and customary manner outlined in Section VI-B.

All passengers must be attired appropriately so that all private areas are adequately covered. Any passenger attempting passage without such appropriate attire may be refused service and that trip recorded as a "no show" or cancellation.

B. Requesting Service

A request for service may be made up to the close of business the day prior to requested trip or up to 14 days prior to the desired trip time. In order to schedule a trip, one must speak (either in person or via telephone messaging) with TUTD staff who will require the following in scheduling a trip.

1. Name
2. Phone Number
3. Pick-Up Address
4. Destination Address
5. Desired Pick-Up Time
6. Desired Drop-Off Time (Appointment Time)
7. Number of Passengers
8. If Round Trip, Approximate Time of Return Trip

Passengers can schedule service by calling the TUTD phone number 903-794-8883.

C. Riding ADA Complementary Paratransit Service

ADA Complementary Paratransit passengers shall be ready no later than the designated pick-up time. However, due to variations in timepieces, it is recommended passengers be ready fifteen minutes before their pick-up time when possible.

When drivers arrive at the pick-up location, they are **not** required to wait more than ten minutes past the time of arrival unless they arrive early. In the event the drivers arrive early, they will not leave the pick-up location until ten minutes past the designated pick-up time.

Service may not be rendered if the vehicle cannot access origin or destination location or if the location does not provide safe passage for the vehicle or safe access to the vehicle by the passenger. The driver shall immediately notify the dispatcher for further instructions in such case.

Drivers are not permitted to enter a passenger's home under any circumstance.

Drivers are not permitted to maneuver a wheelchair up or down more than one step. This rule is provided for the safety of the passenger and the driver.

Drivers are not permitted to lift passengers.

Passengers must pay their fares upon boarding the bus. Failure to do so may result in no service for that trip and the recording of a "no show" or cancellation (see Section IV. E. "No Shows and Cancellations").

Profanity or abusive conduct shall not be permitted and may result in suspension or termination of service.

Eating or smoking is not allowed on TUTD or contractor vehicles. Drinking of non-alcoholic beverages is permissible only from a container with a snap-on lid. Note that passengers may eat or drink to avoid adverse health consequences.

D. Transportation of Children

The minimum age for a child to travel alone aboard ADA Complementary Paratransit Service is twelve (12) years of age. Children under the age of twelve (12) must have an adult accompany them during transport. Only the TUTD Public Transportation Manager may grant exceptions.

E. “No Shows” and Cancellations

If passengers are unable to keep the scheduled appointment time, they should notify TUTD the day prior to the trip and in no instance later than 2 hours prior to pick-up time. Failure to do so may result in the recording of a “no show.” A record of all “no shows” will be maintained at the TUTD office.

Operators will utilize the following guidelines concerning a person’s failure to meet the TUTD bus. TUTD will work with passengers in a positive way to reduce No-Shows.

1. For trips scheduled with a requested pick-up time, the TUTD operator will not wait longer than ten (10) minutes from the arrival time for clients to board the vehicle. If the bus arrives within the thirty (30) minute window (fifteen (15) minutes before and fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time), the client must board the bus within five (5) minutes of arrival.
2. For trips scheduled with a requested drop-off time, the bus may arrive anytime within one (1) hour prior to the drop-off time. If the bus arrives anytime within one (1) hour prior to the requested drop-off time, the client must board the bus within five (5) minutes of arrival.
3. Failure to meet the bus within five (5) minutes from the time of arrival will constitute a no-show, unless it is beyond the passenger’s control.
4. Passengers or their associates should not ask operators to delay the five (5) minute interval under any circumstance; this is to assure the timely pick-up and transportation of all TUTD clients.
5. TUTD scheduler will not hold or otherwise detain the TUTD bus because a passenger is late for a scheduled pick-up. The scheduler will facilitate an alternative pick up time with the passenger and then relay it to the operator.

Cancellations

A trip cancelled from two (2) hours up until the scheduled time will be recorded as a late cancellation. A trip cancelled at least two (2) hours before the scheduled time will be recorded as an advance cancellation, and will not be penalized. Passengers are requested to cancel trips the day prior to the trip to allow for other passengers to be scheduled at that time.

No-Show Penalties

A pattern of successive no-shows may result in service suspension. No-shows by type shall be tracked through a program in conjunction with the computer dispatch software utilized to schedule Paratransit trips. This program will be used to track cancellations as well as no-shows. TUTD reserves the right to suspend service to a Paratransit passenger who engages in violent, seriously disruptive or illegal conduct on a Paratransit vehicle or to a paratransit driver.

No Shows are EXCUSED when the trip is missed for reasons beyond the customer's control. Trips missed that are beyond the passenger's control will be carefully monitored and tracked through the dispatch software by the Paratransit scheduler.

Although no shows will not be issued for reasons beyond the customer's control, the customer (or the customer's advocate) should ALWAYS make every effort to cancel scheduled trips in a timely manner. It is the customer's (or the customer's advocate) responsibility to provide the reasoning for not canceling a trip. Contact should be made with TUTD as soon as reasonably possible. Lack of any contact will result in a No Show being issued. Any patterns or practices of excessive volume of unexcused No Shows will be reviewed for appropriate action.

The following table indicates the volume of No Shows that may be accumulated per month before action will be taken:

Trips Booked per Month and not cancelled in advance	Maximum Number of No Shows per Month
1 - 14	2
15 - 39	4
40 - 59	6
60 - 79	8
80 - 99	10

100 or more	12
Please do not consider this guideline as a justification for not calling when a trip is not needed.	
Consequences for an Established Pattern/Practice of No Shows as defined in the table above:	
1st Violation	2 Day Suspension
2nd Violation	14 Day Suspension
3rd Violation	30 Day Suspension
Violation history covers a 6 month floating period.	

F. No-Show Appeals Process

TUTD has established the following administrative appeals process through which a passenger who has service suspended due to excessive No-Shows or behavior can obtain review of the suspension:

Appeal of the decision to suspend service to a passenger must be filed within 10 days of the notification to suspend services.

Passengers who have been suspended from ADA Complementary Paratransit Service may file an appeal whereas a decision can be based solely upon the information provided by the applicant and/or his/her representative or additional information may be obtained.

A passenger who wishes to appeal a suspension may appeal, in writing, to the Public Transportation Manager. The passenger shall also be entitled to be heard in person and to have necessary support, such as a sign interpreter or may choose to be represented by another person. The passenger will be notified in writing of the Manager’s decision upon completion of the appeals process and the reasons for it. It will normally take less than 10 days for the Manager to render a decision from the date the appeal is filed.

Passengers aggrieved of the decision of the Public Transportation Manager may appeal to the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall fully investigate the suspension, the appeal and render the final resolution.

Passengers appealing service terminations or suspensions will continue to be scheduled for ADA Complementary Paratransit Service trips during the entire period of time the Executive Director is considering the appeal. The termination or suspension, if upheld, will not become effective until such time as the Executive Director has rendered a final decision.

Persons filing an appeal to TUTD will be treated with respect and dignity at all times. TUTD will not tolerate retaliation or the appearance of retaliation by any TUTD employee to any person filing an appeal. Any employee of TUTD refusing to follow these rules is subject to discipline up to and including termination.

G. Accommodation of Mobility Devices

TUTD will carry a mobility device and passenger if the lift and vehicle can physically accommodate them unless doing so it is inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements. Legitimate safety requirements must be based on actual risks to the health and safety of the passenger or others. Any passenger who utilizes a mobility device will not be denied service because particular devices are problematic to secure.

H. Personal Care Attendant (PCA)

TUTD allows a personal care attendant to accompany a passenger at no additional charge when such an attendant is required to utilize the service. Such required assistance is established in the certification process. Reasons for a personal care attendant may include, but are not limited to the following:

Immobility – The passenger is unable to provide self-mobility or self-mobility is possible but a great risk of falling or physical injury exists.

Disorientation – The passenger, due to a visual or mental impairment, is unable to properly orient him/herself and navigate to reach a particular destination.

Non-Comprehension – The passenger, due to mental impairment, is unable to adequately perform those mental processes necessary to handle common occurrences or is unable to effectively control his/her own actions.

Communication Impairment – The passenger is unable to effectively transmit or receive communication due to sensory or mental problems.

Personal care attendants are required to specifically assist the passenger. This assistance includes, but is not limited to, the following duties:

- assisting the passenger from his/her door to the bus/van and back again:
- opening doors:

- pushing wheelchairs:
- assisting with boarding:
- carrying packages, and
- communicating with driver (if passenger is unable).

If the personal care attendant does not perform some type of assistance for the passenger, that individual will be considered a guest and may be charged the \$2.50 fare.

I. Service Animals & Accommodation of Animals

Animals other than service animals as described below are allowed to ride only if they are in a secured pet travel carrier.

It is the policy of TUTD to allow service animals to accompany their owner without restraint. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, a service animal means a guide dog, signal dog or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 allows for the imposition of legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for the safe operation of ADA Complementary Paratransit Service.

J. Carry-On Packages

Drivers will help passengers take lightweight items off the vehicle and set them on the curb. If additional assistance is required, best effort to assist will be provided by the operator.

V. Public Involvement

• Outreach

TUTD is committed to providing on-going mechanisms to involve the public in decisions regarding its services, policies and procedures. Toward that end, TUTD shall solicit participation in the development of its plan by the widest range of persons qualified to utilize the service. TUTD is developing contacts, mailing lists and other appropriate means of notification of opportunities to participate in the development and subsequent revisions of the Paratransit Plan.

• Consultation with individuals with disabilities

TUTD maintains ongoing contact with individuals with disabilities and groups representing them in the community. Consultation began in the early stages of the Paratransit Plan development and continued through Plan adoption. Following adoption the continued involvement is assured through their participation in the Regional Steering Committee that meets quarterly to review service and recommend changes as necessary. All information from the planning process are available to the general public in the form of

public notices, agendas, minutes and rosters from all meetings, as well as, the actual plan adopted.

- **Opportunity for Public Comment**

Prior to the finalization of the Paratransit plan, a series of meetings were held. The plan is available at the Texarkana Transit Office and on-line at www.t-linebus.org . Upon request the plan will be provided in accessible formats.

- **Public Hearing/Public Meetings**

TUTD held a public meeting titled 'Complementary Paratransit & Title VI Public Participation Meeting' on April 23, 2014, from 4:00 – 6:00pm. An advertisement went into the local newspaper on April 16, 2014 giving the general public an invitation to bring up any ideas, comments, suggestions or issues concerning the TUTD Paratransit Service. 17 people showed up for the meeting. No significant issues were brought to attention about the services. Attendees were more interested in how you became eligible to ride the paratransit service. The meeting concluded with providing the attendees information about the Title VI program and what TUTD's obligations were to the general public. Attendees were given the opportunity for questions and to participate in a voluntary Title VI Public Involvement Survey.

No significant issues were raised at the public meeting held on April 23, 2014.

- **Ongoing Requirement**

TUTD fully recognizes the need for the continued input and participation in evaluating and modifying the Paratransit service. Toward that end, the Regional Steering Committee meets quarterly. Members of the committee ride both the fixed-route and Paratransit service to interact with the passengers and seek their input. Additionally, survey forms will be distributed at least one time each year to all certified ADA Complementary Paratransit Service passengers. These surveys, available in accessible formats on request, will measure customer satisfaction with aspects of TUTD services including prompt telephone answering, scheduler courtesy, ability to get requested pick-up times, timeliness of pick-ups and drop-offs, response time for return trips, amount of time traveling, courtesy of drivers, level of assistance by drivers, safety of service and general satisfaction with service. The results of these surveys will be compiled and reported to the Public Transportation Manager, Executive Director and the TUTD Board of Directors.

- **Public Participation Description**

Service for TUTD Paratransit passengers has existed for over 15 years. This service has continually expanded and sought ongoing input from the public. Public Meetings are held semi-annually at the TUTD Transit Center to seek feedback from the ridership. Surveys are also utilized for more input.

TUTD has adopted the policy when reviewing Paratransit applications to take into consideration the distance and the conditions of the roads/sidewalks when making a

determination. Conditional Paratransit eligibility was also explained. Several attendees expressed the desire to ride the fixed-route bus to improve their independence but were unsure of their ability to do so. TUTD explained that Travel Training is available to anyone interested. This has proven to be a valuable service.

- **Steering Committee**

As stated previously, the Steering Committee formed during the planning and development of these services will continue to function going forward. It is made up of persons with disabilities and representatives from agencies serving the needs of persons with disabilities will be held on a quarterly basis to deal with specific service and policy issues that require in-depth discussion. The Steering Committee continues to meet quarterly to discuss the service.

- **Coordinated Services**

There are no overlapping or contiguous complementary Paratransit services within the Texarkana Urban Transit District service area.

VI. Appeals

TUTD is committed to providing due process for any person with a disability who has been denied eligibility for ADA Complementary Paratransit Service.

Applicants who have been denied eligibility for ADA Complementary Paratransit Service may file an appeal whereas a decision can be based solely upon the information provided by the applicant and/or his/her representative or additional information may be obtained.

The following administrative procedure has been established to insure prompt and equitable resolution of appeals of any applicant with a disability that has been denied eligibility for ADA Complementary Paratransit Service.

An applicant who wishes to appeal an eligibility determination may appeal, in writing, to the Public Transportation Manager. The applicant shall also be entitled to be heard in person and to have necessary support, such as a sign interpreter or may choose to be represented by another person.

The applicant will be notified in writing of the Manager's decision as soon as possible. It will normally take less than 10 days for the Manager to render a decision from the date the appeal is filed.

If failure to resolve the appeal by the above mentioned process does not resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the applicant, the applicant has the right to appeal the Manager's decision to the Executive Director. The decision of the Executive Director will be considered the final resolution. For persons appealing ADA Complementary Paratransit Service no service will be provided during the period of time the appeal is being considered. However, if an appeal has not been decided within 30 days from the date the appeal is received by the Executive Director, presumptive eligibility will apply and ADA

Complementary Paratransit Service will be provided until such time as a decision is rendered.

Persons filing an appeal to TUTD will be treated with respect and dignity at all times. TUTD will not tolerate retaliation or the appearance of retaliation by any TUTD employee to any person filing an appeal. Any employee of TUTD refusing to follow these rules is subject to discipline up to and including termination.

VII. Plan Adoption

The Revised Paratransit Plan was formally adopted at the Texarkana Urban Transit District Board Meeting held June 22, 2017.