



The Bus ADA Plan



September 2014

INTRODUCTION

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires that public entities that operate non-commuter fixed route transportation services also provide complementary Paratransit service for individuals whose disabilities make them unable to use the fixed route system. In addition, public entities subject to the ADA regulations must develop and administer a process for determining if individuals who request service meet the regulatory requirements for eligibility.

Essentially, the ADA requires that Paratransit service be “comparable” to the fixed route service in terms of service levels and availability. There are six (6) service criteria that are used to evaluate ADA Paratransit service comparability to the fixed route. These criteria only represent the minimum service standards and can be exceeded if the local governing body so chooses. The six (6) basic criteria for determining ADA comparability to fixed route service are as follows:

1. Availability in the same area served by the fixed route. Specifically service must be made available to all origins and destinations within a width of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile on each side of each fixed route. This includes an area within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles radius at the end of each fixed route as well;
2. Available to any ADA Paratransit eligible persons at any requested time on any particular day in response to a request for service made the previous day;
3. ADA Paratransit fares that are no more than twice the fare that would be charged to an individual paying full fare for a trip of similar length, at a similar time of day on the fixed route system;
4. There can be no trip restrictions or priorities based on trip purpose;
5. Service must be made available to eligible persons on a next day basis; and
6. There can be no constraints on the amount of service that is provided to any eligible person. Specifically, there can be no operating practice that significantly limits the availability of service to ADA Paratransit eligible individuals.

ADA Paratransit service must be provided to all individuals who are unable, because of their disability, to use the fixed route system, some of the time or all of the time. The criteria for determining eligibility are also regulated by the ADA and San Marcos Paratransit must have a documented process in place to determine if an individual qualifies for ADA service.

Public Participation Process: CARTS District will conduct public meeting to solicit input prior to implementing the ADA plan for the San Marcos UZA. Notices will be posted on the CARTS web sites, in vehicles and in the local newspaper for public participation and comment on the draft plan. All comments and input received from the public will be presented to the CARTS Board of Directors for final approval prior to full implementation.

Description of Fixed Route System: The San Marcos Transit System consists of ten (10) routes that operate from 7:00am to 6:00pm, Monday through Friday. Each of the ten, 30 minute fixed routes is paired with another route on one of five (5) buses creating a one hour re-circulation on each route. A commuter fixed route runs from the City of San Marcos with service to the Martindale and Redwood communities. All routes are accessible to persons with

disabilities and persons who use wheelchairs. A map of the current fixed route is attached as Appendix A.

Fleet Inventory: As required by the ADA, the San Marcos Transit has a 100% wheelchair accessible transit fleet to ensure that persons needing a wheelchair have equivalent access to our transportation services as ambulatory persons.

Maintenance of accessible features on vehicles as required by the ADA is maintained to a high level, so that persons needing these features receive equivalent service. If for some reason the lift is not working, another lift-equipped vehicle will be provided within 30 minutes. Bus operators will also make major stop announcements.

Transit Advisory Committee: The San Marcos Transit Advisory Committee has been established by the CARTS Board of Directors to assist with providing direction and input on transit services and will serve to provide input into the ADA plan regarding policies, eligibility, appeals or other related items.

SAN MARCOS TRANSIT ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICE PLAN

Under CARTS District Complementary Paratransit Service Plan, the level of service provided to persons determined to be ADA eligible is comparable to San Marcos Transit System fixed-route bus service. Six service criteria are included in the regulations. The following is a description of how the San Marcos Transit complementary paratransit service meets or exceeds the six service criteria:

Service Area: The San Marcos Transit System service will provide ADA paratransit to origins and destinations within the city limits of San Marcos on each side of the fixed route. Service beyond this area may be provided at the discretion of the San Marcos Transit Advisory Committee.

Eligibility Requirements: A passenger interested in riding San Marcos Paratransit will submit a completed application to the ADA Coordinator. Within 21 days, the application will be reviewed and a decision made. The completed application will include a medical professional attesting to the passenger's disability and that such disability would prevent the passenger's ability to independently use the fixed route transit or access a fixed route transit bus stop. Once approved, the passenger would be added to the eligibility list and they can begin scheduling rides. The application is included as Appendix B. CARTS has a program for Senior Citizen's 65 and older.

Reservations: Next-day service is provided on San Marcos Paratransit for requests made any time during the preceding day prior to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Reservations are taken five days a week for next-day service and on Fridays for Monday service. Reservations can be made up to two weeks in advance.

Subscription Service Policy: Passengers who use the Paratransit service to make regular trips (daily, weekly, etc.) can qualify for a standing reservation service through the Dispatch office. These reservations allow passengers to not have to call and schedule each recurring trip. The ADA does not allow more than 50% of its service to be "subscription" in nature. CARTS will take subscription requests on a first come first serve basis. If a passenger makes a standing reservation and has three no-shows, per the CARTS no-show policy, the standing reservation will be cancelled and that passenger will not be eligible to qualify for subscription service for 3

months. Trips missed by the individual for reasons beyond his or her control (including, but not limited to, trips that are missed due to operator error) shall not be a basis for determining that such a pattern or practice exists.

Fares: Fares charged for San Marcos Paratransit will be no more than twice the fixed route adult fare. A personal care attendant is permitted to accompany an ADA-eligible rider at no charge and additional riders may accompany the passenger on a space available basis at the same fare charged the ADA rider. All riders must have the same origin and destination as the ADA-eligible rider. ADA fares can and will be adjusted when and if the fixed route fares change.

Service Days and Hours: Paratransit service will be provided during the same time period as the San Marcos Transit System fixed route system, which currently operates Monday through Friday 7:00am to 6:00pm. Service is not provided on major holidays on either the fixed route or dial-a-ride.

Trip Purpose: The CARTS District will accept and handle all trip requests on an equal basis. CARTS District will not prioritize or restrict trip purposes for paratransit riders.

Capacity Constraints: Service will not be limited because of capacity constraints. No waiting lists will be maintained, and the number of trips provided to an individual will not be restricted. Reservation times may be negotiated within one hour of the requested pickup time. Subscription trips will be limited to no more than 50% of complementary paratransit service capacity.

Types of Paratransit Service that the CARTS District Offers: San Marcos Paratransit complementary paratransit service for ADA eligible users will be origin-to destination service. This includes:

- Paratransit feeder service to an accessible fixed route, where such service enables the individual to use the fixed route bus system for part of the trip;
- Coordinated paratransit service with other 5310 or 5311 programs and with commercial bus lines, such as Greyhound.
- Service from a person's home to their requested destination.

Pick Up Time: Passengers will be given an approximate time of pick up when scheduling an appointment. The CARTS District is a federally subsidized, shared ride system and cannot offer exact pick up or drop off times. Drivers strive to maintain prompt schedules to ensure that all rider reservations are honored. Passengers are asked to allow a 30-minute window of time for arrival. For example, if passengers have a pick-up scheduled for 2:00pm, the Driver may arrive between 1:45pm and 2:15pm. Passengers must be ready to board the vehicle when the Driver arrives within the 30 minute window. Drivers are instructed to wait at the place of pick up for five minutes before departing from the pick-up location. There may be times when traffic, road conditions and/or weather conditions may delay arrival.

Return Trips after Appointment: When arranging for transportation, passengers will be asked to schedule a return time if necessary at a pre-arranged location.

Attendant and Companion Policies: Personal care attendants (PCA) will be permitted to accompany ADA eligible riders on ADA eligible trips at no charge. The CARTS District will

require that passengers state the need for a PCA when they request ADA eligibility certification.

Additional companions will be allowed to accompany an ADA eligible complementary paratransit passenger on their ADA eligible paratransit trip on a space available basis. The PCA is not considered to be a companion or guest. Companions/guests are required to pay the applicable paratransit fare.

Origin-to-Destination Assistance Policy: It is the policy of the CARTS District to provide complementary paratransit services within the service area boundary of the San Marcos UZA for non-commuter bus routes. Transportation service is provided by ADA accessible buses. Drivers are trained to provide minimal assistance only. Drivers are not trained to provide medical assistance. Drivers will provide door-to-door assistance as requested at the time of reservation.

No Show Definition and Policy: The San Marcos Paratransit maintains a no show policy and is included as Appendix C. This policy requests that passengers be ready to be transported within the scheduled 30 minute pick-up window. The San Marcos No Show occurs when all four of the following circumstances have occurred:

1. The customer (or the customer's representative) has scheduled ADA paratransit service.
2. There has been no call by the customer or his/her representative to cancel the scheduled trip one or more hours before the start of the pick-up window.
3. The paratransit vehicle has arrived at the scheduled pickup point within the scheduled pick up time.
4. The driver has waited at least five (5) minutes beyond the scheduled pick up time, but the customer has failed to board the vehicle or refuses a trip.

Packages: Passengers are expected only to bring what they can safely carry on their own in one trip or with assistance of a personal care attendant (PCA).

Lift and Securement Use Policy: In accordance with ADA regulations, the San Marcos Paratransit will provide service to all individuals using mobility devices that fit within the envelope measuring 30 inches in width, 48 inches in length and measured two inches above the ground, and does not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied.

Passengers are advised that drivers are not permitted to operate a scooter or electric wheelchair onto the lift. The passenger is responsible for getting onto the lift with minimal driver assistance for these devices.

Use of the securement system on San Marcos Paratransit vehicles will be a required condition of service. All wheelchairs and mobility devices must be secured to the passenger's satisfaction before transport. When transporting passengers using mobility devices, San Marcos Paratransit can suggest but not require passengers transfer to a van/bus seat. The passenger, in this case, has the final decision as to whether a transfer is appropriate given the passengers' particular disability.

As the regulations require, a passenger who cannot enter the vehicle using the stairs or ramp, but who does not use a wheelchair, will be allowed to enter the vehicle using the lift. San Marcos Paratransit does not provide wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

Accommodating Other Mobility Devices, Life Support Equipment or Service Animals: The CARTS District will permit the use of a lift for Segway or other personal transportation devices when used as a mobility device by eligible customers as long as it does not exceed the size and weight standards for a common wheelchair 30x48 inches and not exceeding 800 pounds including the user, per 49 CFR §37.3.

All paratransit passengers will be permitted to travel with service animals trained to assist them.

Use of Portable Oxygen/Respirator Equipment: As required by the ADA, persons using our transportation service may bring respirator, portable oxygen, and/or other life support equipment on board our vehicles, as long as they do not violate the law or rules relating to the transportation of hazardous materials. All equipment must be small enough to fit into our vans safely without obstructing the aisle and/or blocking emergency exits.

Other Assistance: All material made available to applicants and passengers of CARTS District complementary paratransit service will be provided in accessible formats upon request. For visually-impaired customers, phone calls will be made in addition to letters referenced in this document. San Marcos Transit will make mobility training available upon request.

Visitor Policy: Individuals who are visitors from another area or region do have access to the use of complementary paratransit service provided by San Marcos Paratransit. A visitor will be asked to provide documentation stating that they are ADA paratransit eligible in the area in which they reside in order to utilize the service. This service is available for a total of 21 days during any 365-day period. If a visitor exceeds any combination of 21 days within a 365-day period, then that individual would be required to submit the San Marcos Transit ADA application.

Appeals Process: If you have been denied ADA paratransit eligibility or suspended from service for no-shows or other reasons you have the ability to submit an appeal. The appeal process is outlined in Appendix D.

Attachments

- Appendix A: Map San Marcos Fixed Route
- Appendix B: San Marcos ADA Complimentary Paratransit Eligibility Application
- Appendix C: San Marcos Transit No Show Policy
- Appendix D: San Marcos Transit Appeal Process

Appendix C – San Marcos Transit No Show Policy

The mission of San Marcos Transit is to provide quality and efficient Paratransit service to passengers while complying with the Americans Disabilities Act (ADA). No Shows, as well as late cancellations, result in wasted trips which could have been used by other passengers. It is the policy of San Marcos Transit to record each customer's no-shows and apply appropriate sanctions when customers establish a pattern of excessive No-Shows. The policy is necessary in order to recognize the negative impact No-Shows have on the services provided to other passengers.

Procedures

San Marcos Paratransit schedules pick-up and return trips separately. We will assume all scheduled return trips are needed unless notice is given by the passenger. If a passenger is a No-Show their first trip of the day, San Marcos Transit will not automatically cancel subsequent trips of the day. If, however, the passenger does not need the return or other subsequent trip(s), they will need to cancel them as soon as possible out of courtesy for other riders.

If a passenger has been transported to their destination, but who is a "no-show" when the bus returns, will not be stranded, however no pick-up window will be guaranteed. Return trips that are not cancelled will be counted as a no-show.

Definitions

The San Marcos Transit definition of a "no-show" is any time a driver goes to pick up a customer and he or she decides not to use the service or is not at the pickup site and has not called in to cancel their trip at least one (1) hour before the scheduled pick-up time. Customers who call at least one (1) hour before their scheduled pickup will not be charged with a "no-show."

If a vehicle arrives at the scheduled location within the 30-minute window and the bus operator cannot reasonably see the customer approaching the vehicle after waiting five minutes, passengers will be charged with a No-Show.

We understand emergencies do occur and no-shows for reasons that are beyond the passengers control will not be counted. Examples of excused no-shows include but are not limited to:

- Illness
- Accidents
- Family emergency
- Personal Care Attendant who did not arrive on time to assist the rider
- Passenger's appointment ran longer than expected and customer could not call to cancel
- Acts of God (flood, earthquake, etc.)

No-Shows are not excused when the trip is not canceled at least one (1) hours prior to the scheduled pick-up time and is missed for one of the following reasons:

- Passenger did not want to travel today
- Passenger received another ride
- Passenger told someone other than Customer Service (driver, facility, etc.) that they were not planning to travel.

Should you encounter an emergency situation please contact reservations as soon as possible to alert them of your circumstances. Taking these proper steps may prevent your trip from being recorded as a “no-show” and deter from any possible service suspensions.

No Show per 30 day Period.

- 1 to 14 trips per month – maximum of 2 no shows per month
- 15 to 39 trips per month – maximum of 4 no shows per month
- 40 to 59 trips per month – maximum of 6 no shows per month
- 60+ trips per month – maximum of 8 no shows per month

If the rider exceeds these limits on a monthly basis, they are then subject to the following schedule for suspension of service.

- 1st violation – letter of warning
- 2nd violation – 3 day suspension of service
- 3rd and 4th violations – 15 day suspension of service

Appeal Process

If you have been suspended from service and you feel information regarding your no-show is incorrect, you have the ability to submit an appeal. You can appeal in writing to Customer Service and a Representative will contact the passenger within five working days of receiving the notification to schedule a time to visit regarding the appeal. Appeals are granted at the discretion of the Director, Urban Operations.

All appeals must be submitted in writing within 30 days. Please include the time, date and pickup address of the no-showed ride you are appealing.

San Marcos Transit
Customer Service
P.O. Box 6050
Austin, TX 78666

Or email at info@ridecarts.com

Appendix D – Appeals Process

San Marcos Transit Staff will carefully review each application to ensure that only qualified persons are approved. Upon completion of review, a letter of certification or denial will be mailed. If your application for paratransit service was denied, you have the right to appeal this decision.

ADA Application Appeals

To appeal the decision, you will need to submit your request in writing, sixty (60) days within receipt of the denial letter.

Appeals may be mailed to: San Marcos Transit
338 S. Guadalupe Street
San Marcos, TX 78666
Or faxed to: (512) 805-0001
Email to: donna@rideCARTS.com

Your appeal will be heard by an ADA Appeals Board. The ADA Appeals Board consists of individuals who are not involved in the initial certification process. Their decision is made independently of the ADA Certification Process.

Upon receipt of your letter, San Marcos Transit will set up a meeting with the ADA Appeals Board. You will be notified by mail of the date and time of this meeting. You will have the opportunity to submit any additional information and written evidence and/or arguments to support your qualifications for service. You may bring a representative with you to this meeting.

You will be notified of the Appeals Board's decision in writing within thirty (30) days of the hearing. The Board's decision is final.

San Marcos Senior Transportation Program

Senior Transportation is part of the San Marcos Transit program.

Who is eligible?

- Residents who live in the City Limits of San Marcos who are 65+

How does it work?

- Services provided Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm, except holidays.
- Drivers provide curb to curb service. Assistance provided from door to door when requested. Drivers do not enter homes.
- Reservations can be made two weeks in advance, with a minimum of 24 hour notice.
- Requires proof of age (driver license, etc.)
- Passengers must register and let reservation staff know if they need handicap accessible bus when scheduling a ride.

Types of Services

- Reserve-a-Ride: Choose when and where you want to go within the City Limits of San Marcos.
- Errands: Destinations include grocery store, shopping centers, bank or hair salon.
- Medical Appointments: Destinations include doctor, dentist, etc. (non-emergency)

Fares

- \$2.00 one-way for dial-a-ride transportation, \$0.50 for San Marcos Fixed Route.
- Free for seniors to the congregate meal lunch program (requires application.)

To make a reservation call – 512-478-7433 or 800-456-7433