



# **WINCHESTER TRANSIT PARATRANSIT RIDER'S GUIDE**

**City of Winchester | Winchester Transit**

301 East Cork Street, Winchester, VA 22601

[transit@winchesterva.gov](mailto:transit@winchesterva.gov) | (540)667-2230

**WHAT IS ADA PARATANSIT SERVICE?** The Department of Transportation Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into Federal law in 1990. This is a civil rights law that requires all public entities operating fixed route transit to provide complementary paratransit to persons with disabilities. Eligibility is to be strictly limited to:

Any person with a disability who is unable to board, ride or disembark from an accessible vehicle without the assistance of another person (except for the operator of a lift or other boarding device).

Any person with a disability who could ride an accessible vehicle, but the route is not accessible.

Any person with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition that prevents the person from traveling to or from a boarding/disembarking location.

**WINCHESTER PARATRANSIT GUIDELINES:** Our services are designed for the rider. We use specially equipped vehicles, skilled drivers and dispatchers to provide the safest and quickest transportation possible. Our guidelines incorporate the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and many Federal, State, and City requirements.

Paratransit passengers are welcome to use any fixed route or on demand response bus for any of their trips.

**WHAT IS WinReady on Demand/DEMAND RESPONSE?** Demand Response or Microtransit is a shared ride service that operates within the city limits of Winchester and will pick you up and drop you off within 800 feet of your requested location. This is what we call WinReady on Demand. You can book up to 48 hours in advance for round trips and on demand for same day service, which means you will be placed on the first available bus if one is available. Paratransit rides and Microtransit rides are booked on the same buses and are co-mingled.

**WHAT IS FIXED ROUTE SERVICE?** Fixed route buses provide service within the City of Winchester. Fixed Route Service has designated bus stops, operates on set schedules, along specific routes. Fixed route buses have features to make riding easier, including wheelchair lifts, kneeling features, low floor buses and automated stop announcement systems.

**WHAT IS PARATRANSIT?** Paratransit service is a public transportation service that operates within the City of Winchester for people whose disability prevents them from riding fixed route transit some or all the time. Paratransit is a curb-to-curb, public rideshare transportation service with wheelchair accessible vans and buses. You must call at least a day in advance to make an appointment. Drivers can assist passengers from the vehicle to the first doorway or from the doorway to the vehicle, when additional assistance is needed. Paratransit is not a same day service unless you are calling for a return trip home. Drivers are not allowed to enter homes or assist passengers with packages

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE?** Any person living in or visiting the City of Winchester who has a disability preventing them from using a fixed route transit, who is certified eligible for Paratransit Service. An application must be completed by the applicant, with a portion that will need to be completed by their medical professional.

**TYPE OF ELIGIBILITY:**

- Unconditional eligibility- persons whose disability prevents them from using fixed route service in all situations. Certification with no expiration date (as indicated by doctor).
- Conditional eligibility- person who can use fixed route service in certain conditions but requires Paratransit service for some trips. Conditions may include extreme weather, an inaccessible bus stop, temporary construction projects, steep terrain, or distance from bus stop to the trip origin or destination. Certification with no expiration date (as indicated by doctor).

- Temporary eligibility- persons, who have recently undergone surgery or other medical treatment, has a medical condition such as a broken leg or someone with a cognitive disability expected to be resolved over time with medication or therapy. If a temporary disability is indicated, the certification will be for the expected duration of the condition (as indicated by doctor). Can be extended by a physician.
- Visitors- Individuals who reside outside of the City of Winchester. Winchester Transit provides a complementary paratransit service to individuals with disabilities who are visiting. Visitors are eligible for 21 days of service in a 365-day period beginning on the first day the service is used. For individuals who reside outside of the City of Winchester service jurisdiction, the City of Winchester shall certify an individual with a disability as a visitor when providing documentation of residence and a statement indicating that because of their disability they are unable to access the fixed route. Next day service will be provided to visitors upon requests for transportation.

**HOW TO APPLY:** Applicants will complete an application for ADA Paratransit Certification form. Simply call (540)667-2230 for an application to be mailed. For individuals with vision-impairments or developmental disabilities, information will be sent, at their request, to a third party for assistance. Instructions are provided within the application. Original applications must be returned, no copy's, faxes or emails. Applications are also available online at [www.winchesterva.gov/transit](http://www.winchesterva.gov/transit).

**COST:**

- \$1.50 per one-way trip
- Personal Care Attendants (PCA) who assist at home and at the destination ride at no charge
- You must have the **exact** fare; drivers are unable to make change
- A punch card for 10 rides may be purchased for \$15 to avoid carrying cash

- You can also download the app to use electronic payment method.  
\*Processing fees will be applied to each ride.

### **HOURS OF SERVICE:**

Monday-Friday: 6 AM – 8 PM | Saturday: 9 AM – 5 PM

Winchester Transit is closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. If the holiday falls on a Saturday, Winchester Transit is closed on Friday. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, Winchester Transit is closed on Monday.

**HOW TO SCHEDULE A TRIP:** Once you have been certified eligible for ADA Paratransit service, you should become familiar with how to arrange a trip.

- When calling dispatch for a trip, be sure to state that Paratransit Service is being requested.
- Trips must be scheduled at least the day before service is requested. Eligible riders may request service by calling (540) 667-2230. Office hours are Monday – Friday, 6AM to 8PM and Saturday 9AM to 5PM. There will not be a dispatcher available after hours or on Sundays. Therefore, please leave a message on the voicemail system. To leave a voicemail message, simply remain on the line and you will be automatically transferred to the voicemail system. This message should contain the same information that you would give the dispatcher if calling at any other time. Riders will receive a call to confirm their trip request. Trips are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis and are not based on priority.
- You will receive a 30-minute window for pickup. The 30-minute window allows for time to reach your destination at your requested time.
- Paratransit rides should be scheduled as a to and from, "round trip" reservation. The exception would be for medical appointments

because your home return time could vary. This is what we refer to as a “will call”. A “will call” is when you are finished with a medical appointment and call for a return ride. We will not schedule “wait” trips; all return trips must be scheduled at the same time the original trip is scheduled. Will calls will be accommodated as soon as time permits in the schedule. Please note that if the van/bus is in an area when a will-call occurs, the van will pick up the will-call while in that area. This may result in a short delay in arrival time to and from a destination. We will always ensure you receive a ride home and are not stranded at your appointment.

- If you must cancel a scheduled trip, please call the dispatcher as soon as possible. Failure to complete a requested trip without notifying the dispatcher prior to the scheduled pickup time will be recorded as a “no show” (please see the no-show policy below). Waiving of the “no show” will be considered for those individuals who were unable to make the scheduled trip due to an unexpected hospitalization, illness or errors made by a third party in appointment scheduling. Other extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To cancel a trip scheduled for a time when the dispatcher is not in the office, you must call and leave a message on the voicemail system indicating your desire to cancel a scheduled trip. The City of Winchester reserves the right to temporarily suspend a person’s eligibility for service if an excessive number of no shows are recorded for that person.
- **You will receive a 30-minute window for your pickup and will be notified 15 and 5 minutes prior to the bus arriving as well as an arrival notification. The driver will only wait 5 minutes past the arrival time notification.**

- Trips may be scheduled up to fourteen (14) days in advance. Since scheduling is done on a first-come, first-served basis, some schedule adjustments may be required to accommodate all riders. The cooperation of each patron is essential in enabling us to provide efficient transportation for all riders.

**There are several pieces of information that we will need from you when scheduling your trips:**

1. Name, address and telephone number to verify that we have your correct information.
2. The day and time of your scheduled appointment.
3. If you would like to schedule a "depart at" time or an "arrive by" time. Please schedule arrival time preference for any appointments or commitments that are time sensitive.
4. The address or name of your destination. We will require the name of the location as well as the address. If you are going to a doctor's office, we will require the name of the doctor, the name of the practice the doctor is associated with and the address of the doctor's office (including suite number).
5. The purpose of your trip (i.e., medical, recreation, shopping, etc.)
6. Whether a personal care assistant or companion will accompany you.
7. Whether you will be using a walker, wheelchair or other mobility device.

**SERVICE AREA:** Paratransit operates in the city limits of Winchester and to destinations that are  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile from any fixed route bus stop sign.

**NO SHOW POLICY:** A "no-show" is when a rider fails to notify the transit office of a cancellation, and the van arrives to pick them up. It is also considered a "no-show" when the rider is not ready to board the van at the scheduled pick-up time. The driver must move on in order to stay on schedule (the driver will wait a maximum of 5 minutes). Riders with a pattern or practice of no shows may be suspended. No-shows will be considered excessive if the person's travel history indicates a percentage of

no-shows that exceed two times the system average. When no-shows occur, and before they become excessive, the dispatcher will contact the rider by phone. The person will be advised of the no-show policy. If no-shows continue, a letter will be sent to notify the person that their eligibility will be temporarily suspended. Eligibility will be suspended for one week for a first violation and one month for a second or subsequent violation. The suspension of service will become effective 30 days from the date of the letter of notification, in order to allow the individual to appeal the suspension.

If you feel you have been considered a "no-show" in error, you may contact the Transit Office at (540)667-2230 to contest your "no-show."

If your rider privileges are suspended, you may contact the Transit Office at (540) 667-2230 or at Winchester Transit, Attn: Kenny Johnson, 301 East Cork Street, Winchester, VA 22601, to exercise your right to appeal.

- **APPLICATION APPEALS PROCESS:** Should an applicant wish to appeal a decision regarding Paratransit eligibility, Winchester Transit will provide an applicant with an appeals application. The applicant is not required to fill out the appeals application prior to having the opportunity to be heard; however, the intent to appeal must be filed by phone or by application within 60 days of the denial being issued. If denied eligibility and you choose to appeal the decision, service will be provided until a final decision is determined for eligibility.

All appeals will be heard and decided within 30 days from the date the applicant was notified.

To exercise your right to appeal, please contact Perry Eisenach at (540) 667-1815 or at City of Winchester, Attn: Perry Eisenach, 301 East Cork Street, Winchester, VA 22601.



**PASSENGER SAFETY:** The safety of our passengers and drivers is our primary responsibility as a transit provider. Bus transportation, like all automotive transportation, involves frequent changes of speed, merging, lane changes, some sharp turns, and unexpected stops. These characteristics create potential risks of injury for passengers traveling in unsecured mobility devices as they have the potential to tip over, causing injury to themselves or other passengers. Additionally, many scooter manufacturers explicitly advise that remaining seated on a scooter while in a moving vehicle may result in personal injury and/or property damage. It is the responsibility of the passenger to make sure their mobility device is in good working condition (brakes tight & frames secure). All mobility devices should have a safety belt, and it is the responsibility of the rider to keep it fastened while riding the bus. All mobility devices (scooters, wheelchairs, etc.) will be secured to the vehicle using the installed security system. All devices must be forward-facing.

**MOBILITY DEVICE SECUREMENT POLICY:** All mobility devices will be properly secured to the vehicle using the installed securement system. We use a 4-point tie down system. Winchester Transit drivers will decline transport to a passenger that refuses to have their mobility device properly secured as defined in 49 CFR 37.165 (c) (2) (3). Passengers using a mobility device will be requested to wear a seat belt. Those able to do so will be requested to move to a seat and use the vehicle seat belt system if vehicle is so designed.

**Please note:** Drivers have a choice to wear protective gloving when handling a mobility device for their safety and for the safety of the passenger.

## OTHER:

- Smoking, drinking, eating, and foul language is prohibited while on the bus.
- Fares must be paid when boarding the bus. Remember, your bus driver cannot make change.
- Our buses are not equipped with storage areas for bags. Passengers are only permitted to bring as many bags as they can carry in one trip. We ask that passengers not occupy an empty seat with bags as we may be picking up additional passengers who will need to occupy the seat. **If planning a large shopping trip plan to have an alternative ride home or bring along a Personal Care Attendant (PCA).**
- Service animals are welcome. Pets are only permitted in approved pet carriers.

**WINCHESTER TRANSIT SYSTEM  
PARATRANSIT SYSTEM  
RIDER'S GUIDE CERTIFICATION**

I \_\_\_\_\_, have received and reviewed the Winchester Paratransit Rider's Guide and understand the terms and conditions. Further, I understand that failure to comply with the outlined guidelines may result in my riding privileges being suspended.

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**Date**

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**Signature**

Please return to:  
Winchester Transit System  
301 East Cork Street  
Winchester, VA 22601