

COMPLEMENTARY ADA PARATRANSIT PASSENGER GUIDE

ADOPTED NOVEMBER 2021



INTRODUCTION

What is Complementary ADA Paratransit?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a Federal Law that requires public transit agencies that provide fixed-route service to provide “complementary (equivalent) paratransit” services to people with disabilities who cannot use the fixed-route bus because of a disability.

The ADA strictly prohibits the discrimination of persons with disabilities in the provision of public transportation service. The Township does not deny an individual the opportunity to use the fixed route transportation system based on disability if that person is capable of using the service. The Township complies with FTA Circular 4710.1, ADA Guidance as well as 49 CFR Part 27 – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance, 49 CFR Part 37- Transportation Services for Individuals with Disabilities (ADA) and 49 CFR Part 38- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Specifications for Transportation Vehicles.

The Township is committed to providing non-discriminatory service and does not discriminate as to age, sex, color, race, national origin, religion or non-religion, or disability. Complementary ADA paratransit service operate surrounding The Woodlands Town Center Trolley service.

ELIGIBILITY

Who is eligible?

The ADA defines disability, with respect to an individual, as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits the ability to conduct one or more major life activities (i.e., caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and work). All persons who are unable to use the accessible fixed-route bus service due to a disability and who meet the functionally eligible requirements are eligible to use the complementary paratransit service after completing the necessary eligibility and registration procedures.

How can I become eligible for Complementary ADA Paratransit?

If you believe you are eligible for Complementary ADA Paratransit, you must complete the ADA Eligibility Application. The completed application must be accompanied by a certification from a qualified healthcare professional with their signature on letterhead or a prescription pad. Incomplete applications for service will not be accepted. If you need assistance in completing your application, please call 281-210-3800 and ask for the Transportation department.

Determination of eligibility will be made within 21 days from receipt of the completed application. The Township will review your application and provide their determination in .

a timely manner. If you have not received notice within 21 days of the application submission, The Township will provide the individual with complementary ADA paratransit service until a determination is made.

An ADA Eligibility Application can be obtained by the following:

- 📍 **By mail or in person:** 2801 Technology Forest Blvd., The Woodlands, TX 77381
- ✉ **By email:** transitcompliance@thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov
- ☎ **By phone:** 281-210-3800
- 🌐 **Online:** www.thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov/paratransit

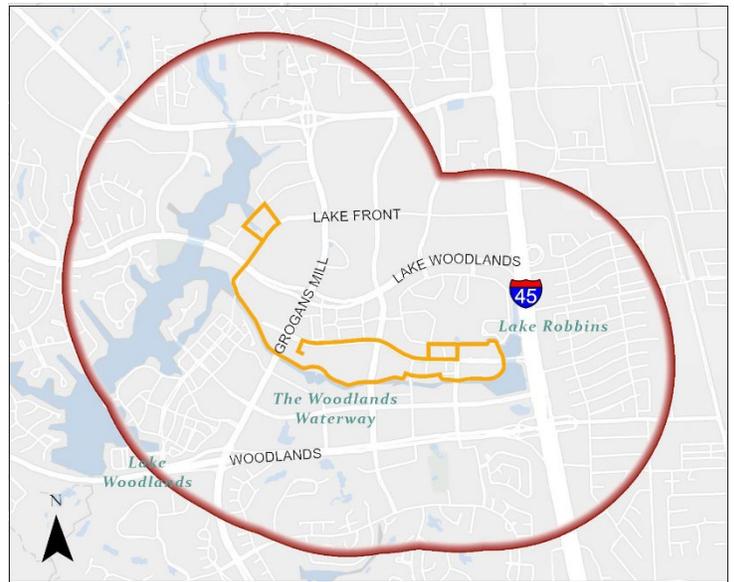
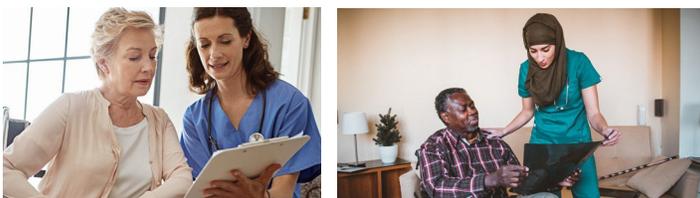
AVAILABILITY

When is the Complementary ADA Paratransit available?

The Township Complementary ADA Paratransit Service is available as the same times as the Town Center Trolley.

Hours of Operation

- Monday - Thursday: 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and 4 to 9 p.m.
- Friday - Saturday: 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 5 to 10 p.m.
- Sunday: 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
- *Note: There will be no service on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, or New Year's Day.*



- Eligibility Area
- The Woodlands Town Center Trolleys

LOCATION

Where is the Complementary ADA Paratransit available?

The Township Complementary ADA Paratransit Service is available within a 3/4-mile eligibility area surrounding the fixed route of The Woodlands Town Center Trolley service. Both trip origin and destination must be within the eligibility area.

USING THE SERVICE

How can I schedule a trip?

- ☎ Contact the Township's Transportation Department at 281-210-3800 up to the 5:00 pm the day before the scheduled trip.

How much is this service?

The cost of the trip is covered by the Woodlands Township's transit program. Companions accompanying an ADA eligible passenger, as well as Personal Care Attendants (PCA) also ride free-of-charge. You will pay for the trip with your Township issued fare card.

May I travel with a companion?

ADA Paratransit service allows for passengers to bring companions on trips to the same pick-up address and same destination.

May I use my wheelchair or scooter?

ADA standard devices are permitted. Please inform the dispatcher of your mobility device so that an appropriate vehicle is sent. Lift capacity is 660 pounds, including the person in the wheelchair.

Is passenger assistance available?

Driver may assist you into and out of the vehicle and assist you with reasonable modifications.

Is service affected during bad weather?

Every effort will be made to provide minimal service interruption for customers needing a life-sustaining service such as dialysis.

POLICIES & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Complementary ADA Paratransit Service for Visitors Policy

Individuals who live outside the Township's transit service area may apply for visitor status to use the complementary ADA Paratransit service while in the area. No verification of disability is required if the applicant's disability is apparent. If it is a "hidden disability," verification from a health care provider must be presented in advance.

Verification of ADA Complementary Paratransit eligibility from another transit system is also accepted. Twenty-one (21) days of eligibility within every 365-day period is provided to qualified visitors with disabilities.

Visitors are asked to contact the Transportation Department for more information.

Reasonable Modification Policy

The Township shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability and ensure equal access to programs, benefits, and services. When feasible, you are encouraged to request modifications in advance of the modified service to allow The Township to meet the request. The Township will make every effort to communicate with you effectively and meet all reasonable modifications.

Service Animal Policy

You may travel with a service animal on all public transportation services. Service animals are trained to work or perform tasks for persons with disabilities. Please note that the service animals must be always under control. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work, or your disability prevents using these devices. In that case, you must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

Mobility Device & Seat Belt Policy

The ADA definition of a wheelchair is: a mobility aid belonging to any class of three or more wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairment, whether operated manually or powered. If you use a mobility device such as a wheelchair, walker, scooter, or if you will need to use a wheelchair lift, please let the reservation agent know at the time of scheduling. All mobility devices that meet the vehicle manufacturer limits will be transported. The Township requires all mobility devices to be secured with the tie-down equipment provided on the vehicle, if available. Passengers who use mobility devices are encouraged to use a personal seat belt and are responsible for

providing their own personal safety devices for wheelchairs and scooters. All passengers are encouraged to use all available seat belt and tie-down equipment while the vehicle is in use.

Respirators & Portable Oxygen Equipment

Portable oxygen equipment and portable respirators are permitted on ADA Paratransit vehicles. Drivers will assist you in securing this equipment on the vehicle. Drivers are not permitted, however, to assist you in using this equipment. If you need assistance with portable life support equipment, please arrange to bring a personal care attendant along with you.

Alternative Format Policy

All ADA information for the Township can be provided to you in an alternative format upon request. The Township is obligated under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for ensuring individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) can access their programs and activities.

General Passenger Policies

The following general policies are required on the ADA Paratransit Service:

- Eating or drinking is not permitted on any service vehicle unless an individual needs to eat or drink due to a medical condition or emergency.
- Only personal assistance, service animals are permitted in any service vehicle. You must comply with the Township's Service Animal Policy.
- Loud or abusive behavior or language, including profanity/racial or vulgar comments is not permitted.
- Drivers are restricted from entering any home or facility.
- Smoking is not permitted on any service vehicle.

- You may only bring carry-on items that will fit comfortably on your lap and will not protrude into the next seat. Drivers cannot help loading or unload items and you may not leave personal items on the service vehicle.
- Drivers are required to transport customers to the pre-scheduled destination indicated on the driver's manifest. Drivers are not allowed to make any destination changes during the trip.
- Riding in service vehicles under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited.
- Audio/music players are not permitted to be played aloud while on any vehicle.
- The Township is not responsible for your personal items left on the service vehicle.

The Township has the following thresholds for suspension based on behavioral issues: Three (3) instances of the following activities will constitute the first violation:

- Eating and drinking on a service vehicle after being asked not to by the driver.
- Failing to control a service animal on a service vehicle.
- Using loud or abusive behavior or language including profanity/racial or vulgar comments after being asked not to by the driver.
- Being unable to control packages.
- Playing loud music on a service vehicle after being asked not to by the driver.

One (1) instance of violence or threat of violence will constitute the first violation. All suspension notices include a copy of this policy, information on disputing violations, and how to appeal suspensions.

No Show Policy

The Township understands that because the ADA paratransit service requires trips to be scheduled in advance, you may sometimes miss scheduled rides or forget to cancel rides you no longer need. The Township also understands that you may sometimes be unable to cancel trips in a timely way for reasons that are beyond your control. However, repeatedly missing scheduled trips or failing to cancel trips in a timely way can lead to suspension of service.

A “no shows” occur when a passenger fails to appear to board the vehicle for a scheduled trip, presuming the vehicle arrives at the scheduled pickup location within the pickup window and the driver waits at least five (5) minutes. Trips missed by passengers for reasons beyond their control (including, but not limited to, operator error, illness, and failure of caregiver to show up) shall not be counted as a missed trip. The Township reviews all recorded no-shows and late cancellations to ensure accuracy before recording them in your account.

Each verified no-show or late cancellation counts as one no-show.

You will be subject to suspension after you meet both of the following conditions:

- Have booked at least twenty (20) trips in the same month; and
- Accumulate at least four (4) no shows in one calendar month.

You will only be subject to suspension if both the minimum number of trips booked and the minimum number of no shows and/or late cancellations are reached during the same calendar month. The Township will notify you by telephone once you have three (3) no-shows and would be subject to suspension should you

no-show occur one more time that month consistent with the criteria listed in this section of the policy above.

Suspension Policy for Behavior or No Shows

All suspension notices include a copy of this policy, information on disputing violations, and how to appeal suspensions.

The first violation in a calendar year triggers a warning. Each subsequent violation results in the following suspensions:

- Second violation: Five (5) day suspension;
- Third violation: Eight (8) day suspension;
- Fourth violation: Ten (10) day suspension; and
- Fifth violation and subsequent violations; Twelve (12) day suspension.

Policy for Appealing Proposed Suspensions

All suspension appeals follow the Township appeal process:

- If you wish to appeal suspensions under this policy, you have the right to file an appeal request which must be in writing by letter to:

***The Woodlands Township
ATTN: Transportation and Infrastructure
Services Department
2801 Technology Forest Boulevard The
Woodlands, TX 77381***

- You must submit written appeal requests within fifteen (15) business days of the date of suspension letter.
- If you miss the appeal request deadline, then you will be suspended from The Woodlands Township ADA paratransit service indicated in your appeal letter.

Review Period for Appeal

If an appeal is requested, it will be scheduled for The Township's Assistant General Manager of the Community Services department to review within thirty (30) days of the request, and the suspension of service will be delayed until the appeal is heard.

You may bring other persons to represent you including a lawyer, an independent living or rehabilitation counselor, or other professional to testify on your behalf. A sign interpreter will be provided if requested, and an attempt will be made to provide language interpreters.

Passenger Rights under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

The Woodlands Township operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with The Woodlands Township.

For more information on The Woodlands Township's civil rights program, and the procedures to file a complaint:

 **Contact** 281-210-3800

 **Email** transitcompliance@thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov

 **Visit** our offices at 2801 Technology Forest Blvd, The Woodlands, TX 77381

 For more information, please visit: www.woodlandstransit.com

A complainant may file a complaint directly with the Federal Transit Administration by filing a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5th Floor-TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590.

If information is needed in another language, please contact (281) 210-3800.

Si se necesita información en otro idioma, por favor póngase en contacto con (281) 210-3800.

Compliments, Comments & Complaints

Compliments, Comments & Complaints can be filed in person or by mail at The Township transit offices: 2801 Technology Forest Blvd., The Woodlands, TX 77381; by email transitcompliance@thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov; or by phone 281-210-3800, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of disability by The Township may file an ADA complaint. The Township will investigate complaints received within 180 days after the alleged incident. The Township will promptly investigate all complaints of alleged discrimination based on disability in its services and programs.

