



RIDERS GUIDE 2010-2011



September 1, 2010

Re: Paratransit Riders Guide

Dear Paratransit User,

Greetings,

The City of Petaluma Transportation Staff and the Transit Advisory Committee have taken the time to evaluate and enhance the Petaluma Paratransit Riders Guide. The enclosed information will allow you to better understand and access the City of Petaluma's paratransit system.

I encourage you to read the information completely. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Petaluma Paratransit 707-765-8493 or my office at 707-778-4421.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Joseph Rye
Transit Manager

Cc: Transit Advisory Committee
Petaluma People Services

Petaluma Paratransit Rider's Information Guide

Service Days & Hours

Paratransit rides are available Monday through Friday from 6:20 a.m. to 6:15 p.m., and Saturday from 7:20am to 5:45pm, excluding certain holidays.

Numbers to Call: (707) 765-8493

(707) 765-8488 Spanish Language

Call for Reservation from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Monday through Friday, excluding certain holidays.

City of Petaluma Transit Division

(707) 778-4421

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

- Your first and last name.
- The date of your requested trip.
- Your appointment or requested time and return times.
- Your origin and destination addresses and phone numbers at those locations (including building name and specific drop-off and pick-up information). If a medical appointment, include the name of the doctor and the suite number.
- If you will be traveling with an attendant, companion (including children), or service animal.
- If you or anyone accompanying you will be traveling using a wheelchair, scooter, or other equipment.
- Any other information the driver should know to help you travel.

WELCOME

Petaluma Paratransit is ADA door-to-door, *shared-ride* transportation for individuals whose disabilities or health conditions prevent them from using Petaluma Transit buses (also referred to as fixed route). This guide is designed to help you understand the service and your responsibilities while using it.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 requires all public transportation agencies like Petaluma Transit to provide specialized transportation that is comparable to the public transit bus service for individuals who do not have the functional ability to ride public transit.

Petaluma Paratransit service is provided through a contract between The City of Petaluma and Petaluma People Services Center (PPSC), and is available on a prearranged basis for any trip purpose within our designated service area. If you are interested in using Petaluma Paratransit service, you must apply and be found eligible for the service according to American with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.

Accessible Formats

This Rider's Guide is available in large print, Braille, Spanish, and on disk and audio tape, by calling (707) 765-8493. It is also available online at <http://transit.cityofpetaluma.net>.

Service Area

The service area for Petaluma Paratransit includes the city limits of Petaluma and up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile beyond the city limits.

Certification Process

To apply, complete and mail back an application provided by Petaluma Paratransit. When Petaluma Paratransit receives your completed application, it will be evaluated to determine how your disability or health-related condition affects your ability to ride the regular Petaluma Transit fixed-route system. Only those persons whose disabilities **prevent** them from using fixed-route bus service, all of the time or some of the time, are eligible under the ADA. The number to call to obtain an application for Petaluma Paratransit service is **(707) 765-8493**. Within 21 days of receipt of your completed application, you will be notified by letter as to your eligibility status. If your application is approved you will receive written information on how to use the Petaluma Paratransit service.

If you do not get written notice of your eligibility determination within 21 days after Petaluma Paratransit receives your completed application, you may ask for and get paratransit service until a decision is made, by calling (707) 765-8493.

Out-of-Area Visitor Riding Privileges

Petaluma Paratransit will provide rides for up to 21 calendar days in a year for ADA-certified persons with disabilities who are visiting from outside the Petaluma Paratransit service area. At the time of making your trip request, let the scheduler know you are visiting from another area and by which paratransit system you have been certified. If you require paratransit service beyond the 21-day limit, you must become locally certified for ADA paratransit service.

MAKING A RIDE RESERVATION

Numbers to Call

(707) 765-8493

(707) 765-8488 Spanish Language

Reservation-Taking Hours

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Monday through Friday excluding certain holidays.

Ride requests may be made up to two weeks ahead of time, at least one or two days in advance, but no later than 3:00 p.m. one day before your ride date. Same-day emergency service is provided on a space available basis.

When you call, the reservation taker will "*negotiate your trip*" by searching for available space up to one hour on either side of the time you request. You will be given a pick up time. Write down the trip time and ask the Scheduler to read back your trip request to ensure every detail is correct. Only three reservations may be made at one time.

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

- Your first and last name.
- The date of your requested trip.
- Your appointment or requested arrival time and return times.
- **Your origin and destination addresses and phone numbers at those locations (including building name and specific drop-off and pick-up information). If a medical appointment, include the name of the doctor and the suite number.**
- If you will be traveling with an attendant, companion (including children), or service animal.
- If you or anyone accompanying you will be traveling using a wheelchair, scooter, or other equipment.
- Any other information the driver should know to help you travel.

Since **this is a shared-ride service**, the driver may make other stops on the way to your drop-off point, so we will allow plenty of time to get to and from your destination. **If you are unsure of how much time you should allow for your trip, please ask the scheduler for suggestions when reserving your pickup time.**

You will need to use your "best guess" when scheduling your return time.

Transfer Trips

For trips outside of our coverage area, a transfer to another paratransit system may be required. Transfers to Sonoma County Paratransit and to Whistle Stop Wheels are required when you live beyond their coverage area. The coverage area is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile beyond the regular fixed route for that system. A minimum of 48 hours notice is needed to have Petaluma Paratransit arrange the transfer for you. When you call to arrange your trip, please have the following information available:

- Appointment time and return time needed.
- Name and address of the business that you are going to, including any suite numbers or parking lot designations.
- The phone number.

If it is less than 48 hours before your appointment, please call the outside paratransit service you will be transferring to (Whistle Stop, or Sonoma County), then contact Petaluma Paratransit with the transfer times that you are given.

Standing Rides

Subscription reservations are offered on a limited basis for trips that recur weekly at the same time to and from the same addresses. Subscription waiting lists exist and are reviewed periodically to see if additions will create increased ride-sharing opportunities. Therefore, all scheduling is based on time, geography, and direction of the trip—not on a first-come, first-served basis. No more than half of all rides scheduled in any given time period will be on a subscription basis.

Personal Attendants

A personal attendant assists the passenger with daily life functions and may provide assistance during the ride or at the destination. If you need assistance to travel, riding with a personal attendant is strongly encouraged. Personal attendants are not required to pay fares and must be picked up and dropped off at the same locations as the passenger. Due to limited space, one attendant per passenger may ride free; any others must pay a fare. A need for a personal attendant must be registered with the Petaluma Paratransit program. The name of the attendant must be registered with us.

Companions

A companion is someone not registered who rides with a registered passenger, but not as a personal attendant. You may arrange to bring one companion along on each ride, in addition to a personal attendant. Companions must be picked up and dropped off at the same addresses. Additional companions may be scheduled if space is available. Companions pay the same fare as the registered passenger.

TAKING A TRIP

Vehicles and Drivers

Petaluma Paratransit service is provided using a variety of vehicles. You must ride in the vehicle that is sent for you. Special requests for specific vehicles and drivers cannot be honored.

Boarding Time

When you call to reserve your ride, you will be given a *pick up time* for when the vehicle will arrive. Your bus can arrive anytime between 15 minutes EARLIER than your scheduled time up to 15 minutes AFTER the scheduled pick-up time. **You will need to be ready 15 minutes before the scheduled pickup time.** For example, if your negotiated "*pick up time*" is 8:00 a.m., your 15-minute pickup window is 7:45 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. **You will need to be ready to board at the beginning of the window when the vehicle arrives.** By being ready to board when the paratransit vehicle arrives you help to keep everyone's trip on schedule.

How Long Will the Paratransit Vehicle Wait?

When the vehicle arrives within the pick up time frame, the **driver will wait no more than five minutes past the scheduled pick up time.** If the vehicle arrives before your pickup time you may leave if you are ready. If you are not ready, the driver will wait until your scheduled pick up time starts and then up to an additional five minutes.

How Long Will My Trip Take?

By rule, Paratransit trips can take up to twice as long as the same trip on the fixed route. That is, if fixed route takes 30 minutes, then Paratransit can take up to 60.

What If My Ride Is Late?

If your ride has not arrived within **5 minutes** after your *scheduled pick up time* call (707) 765-8493. A dispatcher will update you regarding the status of your ride. Whenever possible we will advise you if your bus will be late.

Canceling a Trip

The **Cancellation Line is open 24 hours**. The minimum cancellation notice required for trips that are not needed is two hours. If your travel plans change or you will not be ready to board at your *scheduled pick up time* please call (707) 765-8493. Shorter notice without a compelling reason could result in service interruption.

Preventing No-shows

It is the goal of Petaluma Paratransit to always connect with passengers and provide their scheduled ride. When riders are not available to board the bus within five minutes, and do not cancel at least two hours in advance, it is considered a “no-show”.

Riders can prevent no-show situations when they:

- Review dates, times and addresses with the scheduler to be sure information is correct.
- Call Petaluma Paratransit and cancel rides as soon as the ride is no longer needed.
- Cancel at least two hours in advance of the scheduled pickup time.
- Be prepared to board at the scheduled pick up time and within five minutes after the vehicle arrives.

When there are circumstances outside the rider's control, it may not be considered a “no-show”.

Trip Fares

Cash or Checks	\$2.25 one-way
	\$4.50 round trip
Rider Card	\$27.00 good for 12 one way rides

If you do NOT have your fare, you will NOT be allowed to ride.

No fare is required for personal attendants. All other accompanying guests must pay the applicable fare. Drivers must collect fares upon boarding, so please have the exact fare ready as they cannot give change. Alternatively, you may pay with a rider card, which can be purchased from the driver or by calling Petaluma Paratransit at (707) 765-8493.

Please Note: Trip fares are subject to change.

Boarding With a Mobility Device

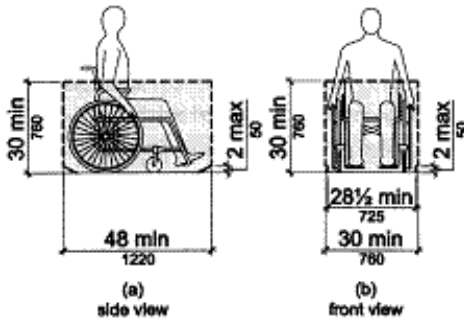
Petaluma Paratransit vans are lift-equipped and will accommodate mobility devices, such as wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers, provided the devices fit within the ADA-specified *boarding envelope*. This includes all 30” wide by 48” long mobility devices when measured starting from two inches above the ground **and** that do not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied. Larger devices may not qualify. Please be sure that your mobility device is clean, safe and in good working order before traveling. Wheelchairs without working brakes and footrests will not be transported.

How Big Can My Wheelchair or Scooter Be?

When purchasing a new wheelchair or scooter riders should consider if it will fit on Petaluma Paratransit vehicles.

Maximum Size: 48 inches long
 30 inches wide

Maximum Weight (including occupant): 600 lbs



- All drivers are trained to operate the lift and will secure you after boarding.
- Any passenger boarding the bus with a scooter **must** be able to transfer from the scooter without assistance from the driver.
- Boarding while standing on the lift is allowed if you are unable to use the stairs. Please be sure to let the scheduler know when you make your reservation that you will need to use the lift.

Transporting Life-Support Equipment

You may bring a respirator, portable oxygen, and/or other life-support equipment as long as it does not violate laws or rules related to transportation of hazardous materials.

Transporting Children

Children traveling as companions, who are under the age of six or weigh less than 60 pounds, are required by law to use a child safety seat, a booster seat, or other safety restraint system. You are responsible for providing such safety equipment and for securing it and the child in the paratransit vehicles. Petaluma Paratransit is not responsible for the safety of the child safety seat or booster or for its proper securement.

Transporting Animals

You may travel with a service animal such as a guide dog or canine companion. Please tell the scheduler when you book a trip that you will be traveling with a service animal. Small pets and other non-service animals may be carried on paratransit service vehicles only in properly secured cages or containers. You are responsible for loading and securing the containers in paratransit vehicles.

PASSENGER RESPONSIBILITIES

Petaluma Paratransit has a list of common-sense responsibilities designed to ensure safety and comfort for all riders and drivers.

Passengers have a responsibility to:

- Read all sections of this Guide carefully.
- Make reservations at most up to two weeks or at least two days in advance, if possible. Same day rides will be provided on a “space available” basis, and are NOT guaranteed.
- Be at designated pick-up locations during the “30 minute pick-up window”.
- **Board the vehicle as soon as it arrives and**

please have the fare ready.

- **Convalescent or hospital passengers should be ready in the lobby at the time specified, with the fare amount ready.**
- Do not expect assistance in personal care, such as dressing, grooming or housekeeping in order to expedite preparation for travel.
- Call to inquire if the vehicle has not arrived within 5 minutes after your *pick up time*.
- **Call to cancel rides that are not needed or please leave a message on the answering machine.**
- Pay the correct fare upon boarding with cash, check, or rider card.
- Wear seat belts.
- Avoid distracting the driver or annoying other passengers with inappropriate behavior.
- Maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene.
- **Drivers can carry no more than 4 grocery bags, totaling no more than 40 pounds, to the entrance of the client's home and will set them inside the entrance.** (i.e. a large pack of paper towels is counted as one bag.)
- Do not wear perfumes or scents as many people have allergies.
- Bring a personal travel attendant if needed.
- No eating or drinking is allowed on the Petaluma Paratransit vehicles.
- Provide proper wheelchair ramps – drivers will NOT pull wheelchairs up stairs.
- Smoking is not allowed on the vehicles.

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

Petaluma Paratransit drivers will treat you with courtesy and dignity as they escort you to and from the main door of your pick-up locations and help you get on and off the vehicle. They can stow small personal belongings, but if you need other types of help, like filling prescriptions, dressing, etc., please bring along a personal attendant.

Drivers are not permitted to:

- Transfer passengers from wheelchairs to vehicle seats unless first approved by the Petaluma Paratransit office staff or management.
- Lift or carry riders.
- Carry riders or wheelchairs up or down steps.
- Secure child safety systems in the vehicle or children into such systems.

SUSPENSION OF SERVICE

1. Suspension for Untimely Cancellation Notice, No-shows, and Lateness. A suspension will be imposed as described below for a documented pattern:

All no-shows listed below occur within any 90-day period.

- **First No-show:** A postcard will be sent stating the date and time of the passenger's first no-show violation.
- **Second No-show:** A letter will be sent stating the dates and times of both no-shows and warn of impending suspension for third no-show.
- **Third No-show:** A letter will be sent stating the dates and times of all three no-shows and will notify the passenger of the one week suspension. This

letter will include a copy of the appeal process. Petaluma Paratransit staff will then contact the passenger to determine the dates of the suspension period. The suspension is applicable to both standing and demand-response trips.

2. Service Suspension for Abusive or Disruptive Behavior. Service will immediately be denied on a long-term basis to passengers who engage in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct directed at other riders or Petaluma Paratransit staff. Conduct includes, but is not limited to: threats or fear of physical or verbal abuse; unlawful harassment, including unwelcome verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior having sexual or racial connotations; unauthorized use of equipment on the vehicle; voluntarily and repeatedly violating vehicle-riding rules, including smoking in the vehicle, eating or drinking without medical indication, or defacing equipment.

Suspensions will not be imposed for circumstances that are beyond your control. Examples of situations not within your control are:

- A sudden personal emergency.
- Sudden or worsening illness.
- Inability to get through on Petaluma Paratransit phone lines.
- Late arrival of the vehicle.
- Disruptive behavior caused by a disability.

3. Steps of the Suspension Process.

You will be provided an opportunity to explain the reason for each occurrence. Prior to a suspension for

incidents other than for abusive or seriously disruptive behavior, you will receive a written warning of the proposed suspension period and the reason(s) for the suspension. You will also receive written instructions for appealing your suspension, should you wish to appeal the decision to suspend you. Appeals are handled by the Petaluma Paratransit Advisory Committee and their decision is final.

KEEPING ELIGIBILITY AND INFORMATION UP TO DATE

- Please call Petaluma Paratransit at (707) 765-8493 if there is a change in the following:
- Your address or telephone number (including cell phones).
- Your emergency contact's name or telephone number.
- The type of mobility device you are using.
- Your physical or mental condition.
- Your need for a personal attendant.

When a person is registered as eligible for Petaluma Paratransit service and does not use the service for 12 consecutive months, he or she is considered an "inactive" customer and the file is "archived". If a scheduler informs you that you are an inactive customer, you will be asked to verify basic information in your file. Petaluma Paratransit will reactivate your records and provide you with service, provided your eligibility has not expired.

PARATRANSIT CUSTOMER ADVOCACY AND ASSISTANCE

Your paratransit service staff care what you think and welcome your compliments, complaints and suggestions. Write or call Petaluma Paratransit staff at (707) 765-8493 or call Petaluma Transit at (707) 778-4421 as soon as a good or bad deed has occurred and let them know: Who? What? Where? When? Why? The mailing address for Petaluma Paratransit is 555 North McDowell Blvd, Petaluma CA 94954. Petaluma Paratransit will work diligently to resolve rider concerns and provide positive results.

FIXED-ROUTE TRANSIT SERVICE (Petaluma Transit)

Services and Accessible Features

Petaluma Transit provides fully accessible fixed-route transit service in Petaluma. Seniors and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to take advantage of the independence and flexibility that is provided by its bus system, which offers the following services and accessible features:

- Reduced fare for seniors and individuals with disabilities (\$.50 per ride).
- Free travel training.
- Trip planning.
- Stops, including transfer points and major intersections, as well as any requested stops, are announced by drivers to orient passengers.
- Priority seating for elderly and disabled riders

- Partial low-floor bus fleet, with “kneeling” buses that are easy to board, without steps, and comfortable. Summer of 2011 will feature fully low-floor vehicles, as 4 new buses arrive.
- Non low-floor buses are all lift-equipped, to assist riders who use wheelchairs or have difficulty getting up and down the bus steps.
- Reserved wheelchair securement spaces on buses.

Learning to Use Regular Fixed-Route Transit Service

Volunteer instructors are available through Petaluma Senior Center to provide personal travel-training lessons. These lessons are free of charge and will teach seniors and people with disabilities how to ride Petaluma Transit buses. For more information about travel training, call (707) 778-4399 and ask about the Bus Buddy Travel Training Program.

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

- Ride reservations, cancellations, information (707) 765-8493
- TTY (for hearing impaired) Dial 711 or 1-800-855-2880 to reach a relay Communications Assistant directly.
- Sonoma County Paratransit (707) 573-3377
- Whistle Stop Wheels (415) 456-9062
- Petaluma Transit (fixed route) (707) 778-4460

GLOSSARY

Cancellation: When ride is cancelled at least 2 hours in advance.

Late Cancel/No show: When a ride is cancelled less than 2 hours in advance or the rider is not at the pick-up location or refuses the ride at the door, or is unavailable.

Negotiated ride: A ride scheduled within a time frame that will allow the rider to get to their destination by the time requested or within one hour of the requested time, if no closer times are available.

Companion: A companion is a rider who is not registered for Petaluma Paratransit service, and accompanies a registered rider. Companions pay the same fare as the client.

Personal attendant: A personal attendant is a person who accompanies the rider specifically to help the client. This person must be registered as an attendant with the paratransit office. Attendants do not pay a fare when riding with the registered client.

Mobility device: Wheelchairs, walkers, three wheel scooters, canes, crutches or any device that aides the rider with ambulation.

ADA: (Americans with Disabilities Act) requires all public transit operators to provide a paratransit (door to door) service to persons whose disabilities prevent them from using accessible fixed route public transit.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Address of Frequent Trips:

Work Phone Number:

Doctors Phone Numbers:

Other Phone Numbers:
