



BROCKVILLE

CITY OF THE 1000 ISLANDS

Brockville Paratransit Service Policy

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1. Introduction

Paratransit is a public transportation service operated by the City of Brockville for people who, because of a disability, are restricted in using the fixed route transit system. Brockville Transit – Paratransit services are operated with the objective of providing a safe, reliable and accessible transportation option for persons with disabilities to travel with freedom and dignity.

Paratransit is not an exclusive ride service. Booking and scheduling decisions are made to allow as many customers as possible to use this shared system while staying within budget requirements. Because it is a shared ride system, policies and procedures respecting the use of the system have been developed to ensure the safe transportation of customers, smooth operation of the system and that customers are treated in a fair and equitable manner.

Paratransit customers are encouraged to use fixed route conventional transit whenever possible. Fares, Transfers, and other payment means can be used interchangeably on both systems. Brockville Transit's conventional fixed route transit vehicles are accessibility compliant to accommodate people experiencing disabilities and is an excellent alternative to paratransit. Conventional fixed route transit features vehicles with stairs as well as access lift. Conventional fixed route transit drivers are equivalently trained to provide assistance to people using mobility devices such as wheelchairs, and vehicles feature audible stop announcements. The greatest benefit to using fixed route transit is that there is no requirement to book trips in advance. People can travel where they want to when they want to.

2. Definitions:

Accessible Door means the first building door in view of the vehicle or selected by paratransit for either a customer pick-up or drop-off. Access to the door does not include any steps where a customer uses a motorized wheelchair or scooter, or more than one step where a customer uses a manual wheelchair.

AODA means the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Ambulatory means a customer who can walk but has difficulty accessing conventional transit service.

Attendant means a person who travels with a registered customer. Attendants may also be referred to as *Support Persons*, or *Medical Escorts*. An attendant's purpose is to provide the registered customer with assistance on the vehicle or at the destination beyond what the operator is required to provide. Attendants are identified on a registered customer's file. Unlike companions, attendants are not required to pay a transit fare. The Attendant is sometimes also referred to as a medical escort or support person.

Automated Fare Collection System means a system used by the City of Brockville to collect and track fare media that uses smart card or other similar technology.

BMAAC means the Brockville Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Brockville Paratransit Service Policy means this policy document.

Brockville Transit means the public transportation services of the City of Brockville which include the conventional fixed route transportation system and Brockville paratransit service.

Cancellation means a scheduled or booked trip cancelled with advance notice.

Cancellation at the Door occurs when the operator arrives at the pick-up location and the customer cancels the trip.

City means City of Brockville.

Coordinator means the Brockville Transit Administration staff position of Transit coordinator. The Transit Coordinator are person(s) who schedule, dispatch, and cancel trips for registered paratransit customers.

Companion means a person who travels with a customer in addition to the attendant, such as a friend or family member. Companions are required to pay a transit fare.

Customer is a person who has met eligibility criteria and is registered to use paratransit.

Director means the Director of Operation for the City of Brockville.

Emotional Support or Comfort Animal means an animal that may or may not be prescribed by a physician to enable people with anxiety and social phobias to be able to participate in daily life. These types of animals may not be identified by a service harness.

Fixed Route Transit means the conventional transit system which operates regular routes.

Late Cancellation means any trip cancelled by a customer with less than two hours' notice.

Medical Escort – *See Attendant*

No Show means any trip where a customer is not at the designated pick-up location.

Operators means employees of the Contractor who are drivers of the vehicles who meet the qualifications established by the City.

Paratransit Administration means Administration staff and those who work for the City of Brockville and Brockville Transit. Brockville Transit is within the Transportation and Fleet Division of the Operations Department.

Peak Travel Times means Monday to Friday from 7-9 a.m. and 2:30-5:30 p.m.

Pet means an animal that may accompany a person but is not required for medical reasons.

Pick-up Window means 10 minutes before or after the customer pick-up time.

Service Animal means an animal that has been trained to assist a person experiencing a disability that has undergone a rigorous training program and is given identification such as a working harness that makes the animal readily identifiable. Some examples include:

- Guide dogs for persons who are blind.

- assist animals used to retrieve and carry items for people with limited mobility.
- hearing alert/signal animals for people who are Deaf, late deafened, and hard of hearing.
- Seizure response animals
- Social signal animals to assist people with autism and animals trained to assist people experiencing mental health issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

In most cases the service animal will be a dog, however other types of animals can also be service animals as prescribed by a medical professional.

Subscription Trips means ongoing trips which are made one or more times a week at the same time from the same origin to the same destination. Examples may be repeating medical appointments and/or employment schedules.

Supervisor means the Brockville Transit Administration staff position of Supervisor of Transportation and Fleet Services. Brockville Transit Administration is within the Transportation and Fleet Services Division of the Operations Department.

Support Person – *See Attendant*

Transportation and Fleet Services means the Transit and Fleet Department of the City of Brockville.

Vehicle(s) means City-owned vehicles which are used to provide paratransit service.

3. Service Eligibility

3.1 Eligibility criteria

People are eligible to use paratransit if they are a resident of the City of Brockville and are restricted in using fixed route transit because of a permanent or temporary disability.

Disabilities are quantified by a trained medical professional. A letter of support must be received from your attending medical professional along with an application for access to the service.

3.2 Assessment

Brockville Transit staff receive and review all applications for access to paratransit. Approval to access Brockville Paratransit is completed in accordance with the assessment process. Upon completion of the assessment process, the person is added to the paratransit customer registry.

If an application form is incomplete, a member of Brockville Transit staff may contact the applicant or return the application to the applicant. Brockville Transit staff may contact the applicant directly to request additional information or clarification.

Information collected as part of this review is confidential.

3.3 Eligibility review

Occasionally, an ineligible person's application is inadvertently approved, or a customer's condition changes such that he or she no longer meets the eligibility criteria. He or she will then be requested to reapply for paratransit service. Upon learning of an incorrect approval or a change in a customer's condition, the Paratransit Administration will advise the customer who may reapply.

When a request to review a customer's eligibility is received, an investigation will be conducted. The individual's application to use paratransit will be reviewed. If, following the internal investigation, there remains a question of the individual's eligibility, he or she will be contacted by letter. The letter will advise of the concern and will suggest the individual reapply for paratransit service.

Paratransit Administration will follow the registration process. This process includes the right of the applicant to appeal. Paratransit service is available to registered customers while their eligibility is being reviewed.

4. Brockville Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Brockville Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (BMAAC) is an Advisory Committee appointed by City Council with terms of reference who reports to the General Committee.

The purpose of the BMAAC is to engage residents of Brockville who are experiencing disability and other subject matter experts. BMAAC advises City Council and staff on investments, policies and other considerations that ensure compliance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

5. Service Delivery

5.1 Scope of service

The Brockville Transit – Paratransit service is an alternative public transit option for individuals with disabilities. Brockville Transit – Paratransit service provides an opportunity for approved users to access the commercial, social, employment and other important locations with the use of customized transit vehicles that provide accommodation for individuals with mobility challenges, disabilities, and mobility support devices. The Brockville Transit – Paratransit service operates as a door to door, shared ride, ride booking service for registered and approved paratransit customers.

The Brockville Transit – Paratransit service is a door-to-door service, meaning that operators will safely position the transit vehicles such that a user has as few barriers as possible to access the vehicle at pickup and access their destination at drop off. Brockville Transit – Paratransit service operators will aid users to enter and exit the transit vehicle, including securing any wheelchairs or mobility assistance devices for safe travel, pushing wheelchairs from and to an accessible entrance into a building as needed.

5.2 Service Area

The Brockville Paratransit service is a public transit service for the City of Brockville and as such, is limited to operations within the borders of the Municipality. Brockville Transit, including paratransit, has no scope of service outside the limits of the municipality.

Regional cross-boundary services are operated with accessibility compliant vehicles. However, the Brockville Transit - Paratransit service does not operate regional or cross-boundary services.

5.3 Private driveways

Paratransit vehicles cannot enter the private driveways of an independent dwelling for safety reasons. Paratransit vehicles will enter private parking lots of apartment or condominiums at the discretion of the driver, where it can be done safely.

5.4 Ramps and walkway conditions

Brockville Transit – Paratransit service operators may provide assistance to paratransit users at both pickup and drop off destinations. Ramps and walkways at pickup and drop off destinations must be clear of debris, ice, and snow. Ramps must have appropriate railings, non-slip surfaces and ramp slopes must be compliant to AODA standards.

Private ramps, walkways and driveways must be cleared of ice and snow prior to service. Failure to provide compliant ramps may result in the cancellation of your trip.

5.5 Vehicles

Brockville Transit and Paratransit services are operated with a fleet of buses and vans, all of which are equipped with an assistance lift or ramp providing alternative barrier free access to the vehicle. Brockville Transit purchases, upfits and maintains compliant vehicles for the operation of Brockville Transit and Paratransit service.

Brockville Transit and Paratransit service vehicles may be configured to include cameras and other devices like GPS telemetry that record the vehicle. Vehicles equipped with camera systems will be identified. Camera footage is only available to be used for security purposes by an authorized person to review incidents or accidents. Camera footage is not shared nor available to be viewed live.

Vehicles may have mechanical problems or become detained while in for service or repairs from time to time. In these circumstances, Brockville Transit Administration will strive to resolve the situation as quickly as possible with customer comfort and safety as the primary concern.

If a vehicle becomes stuck or has mechanical difficulty, the operator will contact the Coordinator immediately. If the difficulty is minor and the vehicle is still safe for use, the vehicle will continue service. If the difficulty is major, another vehicle will be sent as soon as possible, and customers will be transferred. Other vehicles in service that day may be used, or an additional vehicle may be called into service. If the health or safety of any customer is

at risk, the vehicle may be evacuated, and emergency services will be contacted to assist.

If a delay in getting customers to their destination is deemed excessive, the Coordinator will attempt to call the customer's emergency contact.

5.6 Hours of operations

Brockville Transit and Paratransit services operate from Monday to Saturday each week with the exception of ten (10) statutory holidays per year.

Statutory holidays in which service does not operate include:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Civic Day
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

Public Transportation Operations:

With the exception of the identified statutory holidays, Brockville Transit and Paratransit operate:

7:00 AM to 9:00 PM Monday to Friday

9:00 AM to 6:00 PM Saturday

Reservation and Planning Services:

With the exception of the identified statutory holidays, Paratransit service customers are able to access the Coordinator for dispatch services over the phone between:

8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday to Friday

5.7 Snow and inclement weather

Brockville Transit and Paratransit public transit services strive to operate during all scheduled operating hours. Brockville Transit and Paratransit has the discretion to temporarily discontinue or modify service in the case of severe weather conditions or declaration of a city-wide significant weather event where customer or operator safety may be compromised. In these circumstances, no new trips will be provided, and every attempt will be made to provide return trips as scheduled. Cancellation of services will result in the Coordinator attempting to contact customers who have booked rides.

5.8 Booking trips

Customers can call City directory **613-342-8872** to use the department directory, or directly to the booking office at **613-342-2279**. Alternatively, paratransit customers can e-mail transit@brockville.com to book trips.

There is a 24-hour turnaround time for voicemail and e-mail bookings made during the week. If a return trip is required, it should be booked at the time the pick-up is booked or a return trip may not be available. Bookings for one-way trips are accepted.

Customers may leave information to make a booking 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by leaving a voice message or e-mail. Messages and e-mails received during weekdays will be returned within 24 hours.

Same-day or demand trip requests involve short notice, same-day calls. Service is limited for these types of trips. City staff including the coordinator and scheduled drivers are available to receive booking line calls for same day bookings:

8:00 AM to 9:00 PM Monday to Friday

9:00 AM to 6:00 PM Saturday

The coordinator is available to receive booking calls for advance, subscription, and group bookings:

8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday - Friday

All listed available times do not apply to identified holidays.

Standard trip requests can be made up to seven days in advance of the trip date and are subject to available space. No standard trip bookings in advance of seven days will be accepted.

Medical appointments, Reoccurring treatment and Employment bookings can be booked up to 30 days in advance.

The following information must be provided when booking a trip:

- First and last name.
- The exact address where the customer will be picked up, including the location of the accessible building entrance.
- The exact address to which the customer is going.
- The date and time by which the customer requests to reach his or her destination.
 - by advising when the customer requests to be at his or her destination, the Coordinator will select the best pick-up time from those times available.
- The time the customer requests to return.
- If the customer will be accompanied by an attendant and/or a companion, children, or a service animal.
- Any special accommodation such as medical condition or nonstandard mobility device.

When calling to book a trip, customers are limited to one request per call if there are other people waiting to book trips. If there are no other people waiting, customers are allowed to book additional trips. Customers may call back multiple times to book trips.

If demand for paratransit trips becomes high, the trip requested might not be available. During peak travel times, (Monday to Friday from 7:00 AM - 9:00 AM and 2:30 PM - 5:30 PM) the Coordinator may offer alternate times, if available.

5.9 Fares

In accordance with O.Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards, the Municipality is obligated to offer paratransit services at no additional costs to conventional transit services.

Transit fares for Brockville Transit are approved annually by Brockville City Council for Public Transportation service. Payment of Brockville Transit fares are available and are accepted in the form of:

- Cash fares
- Multiple pass bundles
- Student passes
- Monthly passes

Brockville Transit may opt to establish an automated fare collection system which would apply to all Brockville Transit and Paratransit customers.

5.10 Suspension of service

Customers who do not follow paratransit policies and procedures may be denied service for a period of time. Typically, a suspension of service is issued if a customer's behavior or health impacts the operation of paratransit or negatively affects other customers.

In the instance where the behavior of a customer is so disorderly or abusive that the customer presents a danger to the operator, other customers, or him/herself, paratransit may refuse to transport the customer if at a safe location.

Operators are required to submit incident reports to the Coordinator detailing any customer incidents, which are forwarded to the Supervisor for investigation and follow-up. When a particular incident has resulted in suspension of service being considered, camera footage (if available) may be reviewed to assess the incident.

When a customer's behavior or health condition threatens the safety of other customers or operators, service may be suspended immediately, pending completion of an investigation by the Coordinator or Supervisor or Director. The review may include an interview with the customer and support people, if requested. If following the review, the suspension will be continued, a letter will be issued outlining the reason for the suspension, how long the suspension will be in effect and steps required to rectify the suspension. In less serious incidents, operator reports will be investigated by the Coordinator, but service may not be suspended during the review or until the customer has had an opportunity to appeal the suspension. The customer will be forwarded a letter advising of the results of the review. In the instance that a service suspension is recommended, the letter will advise

when the suspension commences, the duration, and the appeal process that may be followed.

Further incidents may result in longer term refusal of service, with the length of service refusal to be determined by the Coordinator and Supervisor.

6. Operator and Customer Responsibility

6.1 Operator responsibilities

Brockville Transit Operators will transport customers in a safe, professional, and courteous manner at all times, and will follow all reasonable requests and instructions as noted on the customer's trip. Operators will transport customers as safely, conveniently, and lawfully close as possible to an accessible door. To minimize the amount of noise and fumes, weather permitting, vehicle engines will be turned off during customer pick-up or drop-off.

Operators will not drive onto private residential dwelling driveways or parking locations where backing the vehicle is required. When picking-up and dropping-off customers at public locations or multi-residential units, operators will avoid locations where backing the vehicle is required.

Operators will knock on the door or ring the doorbell when they arrive at private homes. When operators arrive at public buildings, they may enter the building and identify themselves as operators and call out the person's name they are picking up. Operators will display photo identification at all times.

Operators collect fares from each customer and any companions. Attendants ride for free.

Operators will assist customers, one at a time, at the place of trip origin and destination, in and out of the vehicles and between the vehicle, and the inside of the exterior set of accessible building entrance doors. At private residences, the operator will assist customers through an entrance door which allows customers to be left in a heated part of the residence. Unheated porches, covered decks and/or garages are not acceptable locations to leave customers. In other than private residences, operators will assist customers to and from a heated lobby or designated waiting area that is reasonably close to the outer accessible entrance door. Customers will not be left between a set of double entrance doors even when there is heat between the set of double doors. When a customer must be met by an

attendant, the operator will ensure that verbal and visual confirmation is received with the attendant prior to dropping the customer off.

If a customer's residence has a lift, the operator will assist in operating the lift if the customer is unable to use it on their own. The operator is not responsible for any damages related to operating a home lift.

Operators will not lock or unlock any doors at pick-up or drop-off locations.

Operators will only leave customers outside if they are travelling to a destination which does not have a building such as the Farmer's Market or a park.

Operators will push customers who use manual wheelchairs from inside the first accessible door to the vehicle if the customer does not wish to propel the wheelchair themselves. They will help customers onto the lift, apply brakes on the wheelchair, and fasten the safety straps before starting the lift. Operators will move customers to a wheelchair location on the vehicle, fasten brakes on the wheelchair, and secure the chair with wheelchair restraints and with a lap and shoulder belt. This is done in reverse when the destination is reached. All customers with mobility devices such as wheelchairs and scooters must have working brakes.

Customers who use a motorized wheelchair or scooter may be required to position it on the lift. Operators will move the motorized wheelchair or scooter using the controls only if the customer is unable to do it safely themselves. Operators will ensure the device is turned off and fasten safety straps before starting the lift. They will direct customers to a location and secure the wheelchair or scooter with wheelchair restraints and the person with a lap and shoulder belt. This is done in reverse when the destination is reached.

Operators will not transfer customers into and out of their mobility devices. Customers using a mobility device (except those using scooters) must remain in their device for the duration of their trip and are not allowed to transfer to an ambulatory seat on the vehicle. People using scooters who wish to transfer to an ambulatory seat on the vehicle must do so independently.

Customers using mobility devices must ride the lift with their back to the vehicle.

Operators will escort customers who are ambulatory from inside the first accessible door to the vehicle. Operators will assist ambulatory customers including those using walkers up and down multiple exterior stairs.

Operators will carry the walker up and down the steps if required. Operators will help customers into the vehicle, show them to their seat, and help them with their seatbelts. If customers need to use the lift, operators will ride it with them for their safety. This is done in reverse when the destination is reached. Operators will also assist ambulatory customers with carrying one bag of goods.

Operators will ensure that all oxygen tanks and walkers are secured and personal items/bags of goods are safely stowed while travelling on paratransit.

Operators may refuse to transport customers where a safety concern exists such as a ramp or walkway that is unsafe (e.g. ramp too steep or in disrepair, or broken pavement). If this occurs, a report will be provided to the paratransit administration who will investigate the incident. Customers will be advised of actions they must take, if any, to eliminate the safety hazard.

Operators may refuse to transport customers with broken mobility devices where the safety of the operator, customer or other customers may be compromised. If this occurs, a report will be provided to the paratransit administration who will investigate the incident. Customers will be advised of actions they must take, if any, to eliminate the safety hazard.

Operators will not leave vehicle doors open unnecessarily when the weather is cold to ensure that the vehicle remains warm.

Safety of Customers on Vehicles

Operators will ensure the safety of customers when unattended on the vehicle by following the guidelines set out below for single trips and multiple trips:

- A single trip is one customer being picked up at a private address. If the operator can see the customer from the vehicle, the operator may open the door, lower the lift and proceed to greet the customer. If the customer is not in sight of the operator, the door will remain closed and the lift will not be lowered until after the customer is escorted to the vehicle.
- A multiple trip is two or more customers with one pick-up or one drop-off location. If multiple pick-ups are at recurring locations where customers are out of sight, the operator may leave the door open and

lift down for subsequent customers if the vehicle is parked at the front entrance. At locations where the vehicle is not at the front entrance and is out of sight of the operator, the operator must close the door and raise the lift after subsequent customers.

6.2 Customer responsibility

- a) Be ready 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time.
- b) Keep pets under control prior to the operator arriving.
- c) Keep steps and walkways clear of snow and ice.
- d) Have the fare ready when the operator arrives.
- e) Drive mobility devices in a safe manner.
- f) Stay seated with their seatbelt fastened until the vehicle stops.
- g) Listen to the operator when getting on and off the vehicle.
- k) Wear proper clothes and footwear for the weather, unless an exception must be made for medical reasons.
- i) Not recline their motorized wheelchair unless an exception must be made for medical reasons.
- j) Speak with respect and not swear or use abusive words when speaking with operators, other customers and Coordinators.
- k) Not smoke in the vehicle including e-cigarettes.
- l) Not use scents such as aftershave and perfumes.
- m) Not use alcohol, cannabis, or non-prescription drugs in the vehicle. All alcohol and cannabis being transported must be closed and out of sight.
- n) Not touch the equipment in the vehicle.
- o) Not transport any hazardous materials.
- p) Not sell or pass out information without the approval of paratransit.
- q) Not touch other customers and operators.

Customers not adhering to the above may be subject to suspension of service.

7. Customer Feedback

Complaints, compliments, or service issues may be registered by phoning the City of Brockville (613) 342-8772. The customer service representative will record all details provided. Complaints or compliments can also be filed on the City of Brockville website: <https://brockville.com/home/website-feedback/>

Customers, or someone on their behalf who is reporting the complaint, should gather as much information as possible about the issue. Information such as the date and time of the problem, pick-up and drop-off location and the vehicle number is helpful. Customers may be contacted with a response to their complaints or additional information if they request provide callback information.

All issues are reviewed by the Brockville Transit Administration staff and a recorded for provincial statistics and reporting requirements.