2019-2020 Paratransit Plan and Service Area Information Sessions March 13, 2019 & March 15, 2019

This handout includes the text from the slides and notes that will be presented by Bill Carpenter and Jamie Mott at Paratransit Plan and Service Area information sessions. The sessions will take place on Wednesday, March 13, 2019 at 5:30 PM at the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI), and Friday, March 15, 2019 at 1:00 PM at the Center for Disability Rights.

# Slide 1: 2019-2020 Paratransit Plan March 13 & 15 Information Sessions

End of slide 1.

# Slide 2: Information Session Agenda

This information session will cover the following topics:

1. Overview of Paratransit Service and the Plan
2. Reasons and timing for the changes
3. Key changes for 2020 (service area, service span, fares)
4. Key changes for 2019 (operational policies)
5. Important dates
6. Summary

End of slide 2.

# Slide 3: Meeting Overview

## Two Topics

* Share proposal for the new Paratransit service area
* Proposed operational policy changes as part of the updated Paratransit Plan

The purpose of these sessions is to give you information about the major changes due to Reimagine and also to prepare you for the proposed policy changes to the Paratransit Plan.

This is not a public hearing. You can offer input and comments during this session but it is not part of the formal process for receiving comments. We will give you details about the public hearing and comment process during this session.

We have a lot of information to cover. Every few slides, we will pause to make sure everyone is in sync and provide opportunities to ask questions. If we haven’t addressed a topic you are interested in, please hold your question until the end of the session so we can cover the agenda topics first.

End of slide 3.

# Slide 4: Paratransit Is . . .

* Comparable transportation service required by the A D A
* For people whose disabilities prevent them from using fixed route
* Available on the same basis as that provided to people using fixed route systems
* A complementary system to the fixed route system
* Curb-to-curb by default

In crafting the Americans with Disabilities Act (A D A), Congress recognized that even when a fixed route transit system is fully accessible, there will be some individuals whose disabilities prevent them from using the system. Congress created a “safety net” to ensure that these individuals have transportation available to them on the same basis as individuals using fixed route systems.

Paratransit means comparable transportation service required by the A D A for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use fixed route transportation systems.

You will hear the expression “complementary” paratransit in the A D A regulations. The term means that the paratransit service acts to complete the whole transportation system.

End of slide 4.

# Slide 5: Paratransit and Fixed Route

The slide shows a picture of a large bed (mattress on a frame) covered with a blue blanket and blue pillows.

* Fixed route is like a bed
* Paratransit is like a blanket

Imagine a bed – it has a frame and a mattress and maybe a headboard or footboard. It has structure to support a person. Fixed route is like that bed; it has a set structure that creates the foundation of the system to support people’s transportation needs. Paratransit is like a blanket or comforter that spreads out over the top of the bed. Paratransit service lays over the top of the fixed route structure.

End of slide 5.

# Slide 6: Paratransit is Not . . .

* Not free
* Not available just because someone uses a mobility device or has a disability
* Not a non-emergency medical transportation service
* Not a substitute for assistance provided by a Personal Care Attendant
* Not identical to fixed route
* Not door-to-door by default
* Never door-through-door

Paratransit is public transportation. It is not covered by medical insurance benefits. Just like fixed route, it costs a fare to ride. The D O T A D A regulations allow agencies to charge up to twice the fare charged for fixed route service for the basic complementary paratransit service, and can determine any amount for any supplemental paratransit service.

People must apply for eligibility. Eligibility is not solely based on a person’s use of a mobility device or specific diagnosis. It is based on whether or not their disability prevents them from using the accessible fixed route buses, routes, and stop locations for all or some of their trips.

Customers can take trips for whatever purpose they need – not just for trips to medical appointments. However, RTS Access may not be the best option for people traveling in stretchers.

RTS Access Bus Operators cannot provide the same assistance with life functions as a Personal Care Attendant. The Bus Operators are limited to actions such as offering their arm to assist someone with balance as they walk, guiding or pushing a wheelchair along a clear paved path, and ringing an external doorbell or opening and closing an external door, and carrying a few small items.

Paratransit is not identical to fixed route service, partly because people need to call and reserve their rides. They also are accountable for using those reserved trips. Paratransit buses will operate within a set distance around a fixed route; so the buses can come to a curb in a safe location near a person’s home or a specific facility.

Curb-to-curb is the basic operating model. RTS Access provides door-to-door service as a reasonable modification (when requested by the customer when they reserve the trip, at the time of the trip, or when they apply or recertify for eligibility)

RTS Access does not provide door-through-door service. This means RTS Access Bus Operators cannot assist a person beyond the entrance and cannot go through the door into the dwelling or facility.

End of slide 6.

# Slide 7: What is the Paratransit Plan?

* Compares fixed route and paratransit service
* Contains operational policies and procedures
* Describes how we meet service criteria

The comparable service criteria includes the following: Service Area, Response Time, Fares, Hours and Days of Service, No Restrictions on Trip Purpose, No Capacity Constraints, and Process for Eligibility.

The Paratransit Plan is a formal, written comparison of fixed route and paratransit service.

The plan also is a comprehensive collection of operational policies and procedures for RTS Access and paratransit eligible customers.

The plan uses specific service criteria, set forth by the U.S. Department of Transportation A D A regulations, to identify how RTS Access service is comparable to RTS fixed route service.

End of slide 7.

# Slide 8: Questions

This slide provides a break for attendees to ask questions and get clarification.

End of slide 8.

# Slide 9: Reasons for Change

## Reimagine RTS (new fixed route structure)

* New system changes the routes, service area and service span
* Comparable paratransit runs in the same geographic areas and during the same hours as fixed routes

## New Director of Paratransit

* Comply with the laws
* Improve efficiency and consistency
* Include 2017 feedback
* Make our policies “doable”

### Regarding the redesigned fixed route:

The new fixed route system changes the routes, the service area, and the hours of service (“service span”). Paratransit serves people with disabilities who cannot use fixed route service for some or all of their trips. Key criteria and characteristics of paratransit are based on the fixed route structure. So as the fixed route geographic area and service span changes, so too will the paratransit geographic area and service span change to become a comparable version of the fixed route.

### Regarding the New Director of Paratransit, Jamie Mott:

Jamie took over as the Director in June of 2018. He was previously the Regional Manager for RTS service in Genesee and Orleans counties. His staff and fleet are small but play an important role in the community. It is vital for RTS Access to be as efficient as possible so they can focus energy and attention on providing paratransit service that is consistent for customers and compliant with FTA regulations and A D A laws. Jamie has used data about ridership and trips, the expertise of his staff, and the input the community gave RTS Access back in November 2017 to make adjustments to the policies and procedures so that RTS Access can best achieve efficiency, compliance, and consistency. Making the policies realistic, feasible, and available means that we can all work together better because everyone can realistically understand and carry out the expectations.

End of slide 9.

# Slide 10: Timing for Change

## June of 2019

* Board review of Paratransit Plan
* Operational policies may begin to go into effect after Board approval and when feasible

## Summer of 2020

* Redesigned RTS system goes into effect
* Changes to RTS Access service area, service span, fares, and reservations also go into effect
* All new or revised operational policies go into effect

In June 2019, the Paratransit Plan will go to the Board for review and approval. That is why we are holding information sessions with you now and will hold a Public Hearing in April. This provides you with the ability to comment on the Plan. If the Board approves the plan, we will begin to enact some of the operational policies where feasible.

When Reimagine RTS goes into effect in the Summer of 2020, the changes to the RTS Access service area, service span, and fares will also go into effect.

End of slide 10.

# Slide 11: Questions

This slide provides a break for attendees to ask questions and get clarification.

End of slide 11.

# Slide 12: Service Changes in 2020

## Key Changes for Summer 2020

* Service area
* Service span
* Fares

The service area in 2020 will change to complement (mirror) the redesigned fixed routes. We will implement 3 levels of supplemental service to expand the geographic coverage for paratransit into areas in the suburbs. We will discuss this as part of the next set of slides in this information session.

The service span refers to the hours of service. In 2020, RTS Access service will run during the same hours as fixed route during weekdays and weekends. Again, we will discuss this in detail in a few minutes.

In 2020, we will begin a simplified fare structure for paratransit services that is also compliant with ADA regulations.

End of slide 12.

# Slide 13: 2020 Service Area

This slide shows the visual image of the redesigned fixed route system. It has routes that run north to south and east to west and these are shown as defined lines. Many of the lines go to the Transit Center but a few do not.

There is a narrative describing the new fixed route system in Exhibit 1 of the Paratransit Plan.

End of slide 13.

# Slide 14: 2020 Service Area

## Paratransit Weekday Service Area: A D A Complementary (3/4 Mile Required)

This slide shows a map and visual image of the redesigned A D A complementary paratransit service area on weekdays.

The paratransit service area lays over the top of the fixed route structure. The area extends 3/4 mile beyond the fixed route, including 3/4 mile before the route starts and 3/4 mile beyond the route end.

Returning to the bed and blanket idea, there are several shapes.

The green blob shape shown on the map is the required complementary paratransit service area. This area surrounds all the fixed routes running during the week. The complementary paratransit area is the geographic space where R G R T A is required by law to provide paratransit service. It is ¾ of a mile around each side of each fixed route. The green Required Area is like the blanket on the top of a bed. It provides basic coverage.

The next few slides will show the supplemental areas surrounding the Required area. Surrounding the Required area are three levels of supplemental service: Level 1 is blue, Level 2 is orange, and Level 3 is gray.

Supplemental service is provided at R G R T A’s discretion. It is not required by D O T A D A law and does not need to comply with the same service criteria.

End of slide 14.

# Slide 15: 2020 Service Area

## Paratransit Weekday Service Area: Supplemental Level 1 (3/4 Mile Regular)

The slide shows the green “blob” that is the core of the paratransit service area and represents the Required Service. The slide shows a thick blue border surrounding the green blob shape. The blue border represents Level 1.

The supplemental service in Level 1 extends ¾ miles beyond the Required Area, to create coverage 1 ½ miles around each fixed route in the system. RTS Access provides subscription service in this area. So imagine a few people standing around the bed and holding up the edges of the blanket all around the bed; now the blanket extends beyond the edge of the mattress and frame.

RTS Access will make its best effort to deliver the same service criteria for Level 1 as it does for the Required Area. RTS Access will treat the service in Level 1 as regular service rather than supplemental service. Doing this will allow customers to negotiate pickup times, reserve rides in advance, and guarantees a ride with 1 day advance reservation. RTS Access will provide subscription service in Level 1.

End of slide 15.

# Slide 16: 2020 Service Area

## Paratransit Weekday Service Area: Supplemental Level 2 (Community Mobility Zones)

The slide shows the green “blob” that is the core of the paratransit service area and represents the Required Service. The slide shows a thick blue border surrounding the green blob shape. The blue border represents Level 1. The slide shows six orange shapes that cover the community mobility zones. Some of the shapes are linear tubes and others are irregular geometric shapes. Some shapes are completely covered by the green Required area and blue Regular areas. Some shapes have portions extending beyond the edges of the Regular area, as in the case for the shapes representing the Brockport CMZ, the Webster CMZ, and the Pittsford CMZ.

The orange shapes are Level 2. The supplemental service in Level 2 extends to the Community Mobility Zone areas that are not already covered by the Required Area or Level 1. The slide shows that the green and blue lay over the top of large sections of the Community Mobility Zones. So now imagine the bed and blanket again. This time, the people who are holding the edges of the blanket start to stretch the blanket out a little more. RTS Access will make its best effort to deliver the same service criteria for Level 2 as it does for the Required Area. RTS Access will provide subscription service in Level 2.

End of slide 16.

# Slide 17: 2020 Service Area

## Paratransit Weekday Service Area: Supplemental Level 3 (1.25 miles)

The slide shows the green “blob” that is the core of the paratransit service area and represents the Required Service. The slide shows a thick blue border surrounding the green blob shape. The blue border represents Level 1. The slide shows six orange shapes that cover the community mobility zones. The slide shows a gray border surrounding each of the orange CMZ shapes for Level 2.

Level 3 is the gray area farthest out in all directions from the Required Area. The supplemental service in Level 3 extends to form a 1.25 mile border around the Required Area and Level 2. The supplemental service in Level 3 will be on a space-available basis only. Reservations can be made up to 1 day in advance, but trips are not guaranteed. So, this is like the people holding the blanket stretch it out as far as it will go on all sides while still covering the bed.

End of slide 17.

# Slide 18: 2020 Service Area

## Paratransit Weekend Service Area

The slide shows the green “blob” that is the core of the paratransit service area and represents the Required Service. The slide shows a thick blue border surrounding the green blob shape. The blue border represents Level 1.

During the weekends, the paratransit service area is the Required Area (green) which provides the basic complementary coverage for the fixed route system – ¾ miles around all the fixed routes. Then, there is Level 1 supplemental service (blue). This again extends an additional ¾ miles beyond the Required Area.

On weekends, the paratransit area does not provide supplemental service to Level 2 or Level 3.

So, here there is a blanket on the bed and people are just holding up the edges of the blanket right around the bed.

End of slide 18.

# Slide 19: Questions

This slide provides a break for attendees to ask questions and get clarification.

End of slide 19.

# Slide 20: 2020 Service Span Paratransit

## Weekdays

* Required Area: Monday through Friday, 5:00 AM to midnight
* Level 1: Monday through Friday, 5:00 AM to midnight
* Level 2: Monday through Friday, 5:00 AM to 7:00 PM (no holidays)
* Level 3: Monday through Friday, 5:00 AM to 7:00 PM (no holidays)

## Weekends

* Required Area: 6:00 AM to midnight
* Level 1: 6:00 AM to midnight

End of slide 20.

# Slide 21: 2020 Fares for Paratransit

* Required Area: $2.00 per trip (GREEN Area)
* Level 1 Supplemental: $2.00 per trip (BLUE Area)
* Level 2 Supplemental: $5.00 per trip (ORANGE Area)
* Level 3 Supplemental: $8.00 per trip (GRAY Area)
* Same-day Service: additional $6 per trip
* No more Rider Rewards Program
* No more $18 Value Pass
* The $20 Value Pass = $22 in fares

End of slide 21.

# Slide 22: Summary of Service Changes

## Paratransit service area

* Weekdays: covers all locations within ¾ miles of the fixed routes and supplemental service in 3 areas
* Weekends: covers the Required Area and the supplemental service in Level 1

## Service hours

* Weekdays in the Required Area and Level 1: 5:00 AM to midnight
* Weekdays in Level 2 and Level 3: 5:00 AM to 7:00 PM (no holidays)
* Weekends in Required Area and Level 1: 6:00 AM to midnight

Fares

* $2.00 per ride for Required Area and Level 1 (advance reservation)
* $5.00 per ride for supplemental service in Level 2
* $8.00 per ride for supplemental service in Level 3
* $6 extra for same-day service

End of slide 22.

# Slide 23: Key Operational Policy Changes

1. Eligibility certification
2. Advance reservations
3. Service infractions and suspensions
4. Subscription service
5. Pickup window
6. Pickup periods for return trips (No Strand)

Remember: All policies are fully detailed in the Paratransit Plan!

In 2019, we will begin to roll out operational policies where feasible, but not until we have Board approval in June 2019.

End of slide 23.

# Slide 24: Key Operational Policy Changes

## 1. Eligibility Certification

* All-Trip Eligibility with a simple renewal process replaces the current Unconditional Eligibility
* Conditional Eligibility now includes Seasonal Eligibility
* Temporary Eligibility and Visitors – no change

## 2. Advance Reservations

* 5-day advance reservations (down from 7-day advance reservations)
* Scheduling hours on weekends: 8am – 1pm
* On-line scheduling coming soon!

### Regarding Eligibility:

With All-Trip Certification, you are eligible to use A D A paratransit for all trips within the paratransit service areas. The basis for an All-Trip determination is as follows. The condition preventing you from functionally using fixed route in any capacity is unlikely to improve and there is strong evidence that your inability to use fixed route will not change. Your certification will expire every three years and you will be required to renew it. We will have you fill out a simple form to make sure we have accurate information about you, such as your phone number, address, designees, and travel needs.

With Conditional Certification, you can use A D A paratransit for some trips, but not others, depending on your disabilities, the availability of accessible fixed-route service, and the barriers to reaching it.

You can use paratransit under the conditions where your disability prevents you from using fixed route service. As a result of your application or recertification and functional assessment, we determined that you are able to use fixed route bus service under certain conditions and are eligible to use paratransit when you are not able to use fixed route buses. We will provide you with a description of the conditions under which you can use paratransit as well as the basis for our determination.

End of slide 24.

# Slide 25: Key Operational Policy Changes

## Service Infractions and Suspensions

* Includes No-shows, Late Cancellations and Cancel at Door
* Measured each month; everyone starts the 1st day of a new month at zero infractions!
* Resets every year; everyone starts January at zero
* Always excludes situations outside of your control but you must tell us!

## Subscription Service

* Easier to apply; no more wait period unless capacity is met
* Easier to change address – we will do it unless capacity is met
* Introducing short-term subscriptions!

End of slide 25.

# Slide 26: Key Operational Policy Changes

## Pickup window

* The window will change to 5 minutes before the pickup time and end 15 minutes after the pickup time
* The “Pickup Period” remains at 20 minutes (the window of time scheduled for the bus to arrive for your pickup)

## Pickup Periods for Return Trips (No Strand)

* The “Final Pickup Period” is the latest pickup period for a return trip
* If you don’t show for your scheduled return trip pickup, you can ask us to schedule a return trip so you are not stranded
* Only during regular service hours
* Might need to wait longer than normal

End of slide 26.

# Slide 27: Questions

This slide provides a break for attendees to ask questions and get clarification.

# Slide 28: Other Details in the Plan

1. States explicitly what the Scheduler asks
2. Addresses the topics that customers voiced concerns about in 2017
3. Service animals
4. Children
5. PCAs
6. Early departures
7. Restroom requests

End of slide 28.

# Slide 29: Important Dates

## Review the Plan

March 19: An accessible Word file of the Paratransit Plan that is compatible with Screen Readers will be posted online.

## Public Hearing on the Paratransit Plan

April 2 at RTS

## Written Comment Deadline

April 16

End of slide 29.

# Slide 30: Public Hearing

## When:

Tuesday, April 2, 2019 from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

## Where:

RTS Board Conference Room, 13 72 East Main Street, Rochester NY 14609

## Written Comment Deadline:

April 16 at 5:00 PM

Rochester Genesee Regional Transportation Authority, Attn: General Counsel, 1372 East Main Street, Rochester, NY 14609, or written comments submitted via the Contact Us link on <https://rts.secure.force.com/RTSContactUs>.

End of slide 30.

# Slide 31: Thank You

This slide allows attendees to ask more questions or raise a particular topic that was not addressed in the presentation.

End of slide 31.

End of presentation.