



ACCESSIBLE TRANSIT SERVICES

User Guide

Trip Bookings and Information

July 2020

About Accessible Transit

Accessible Transit is a door-to-door public transportation service for trips within the city of Grande Prairie with limited service to the Clairmont area. The service is available to anyone, regardless of age or income, who is unable to use the regular bus service due to a physical or cognitive disability. All the Accessible buses are wheelchair lift equipped to accommodate clients with special mobility needs.

Accessible Transit is operated by The City of Grande Prairie Transit department; all the buses in the fleet are clearly identified with decals on the outside of the vehicles. **Accessible Transit is NOT a taxi service**; it is a shared-ride, multi-stop public transportation service. Trips are scheduled to allow for as many riders as possible to get to their destinations quickly and efficiently.

Who can use Accessible Transit?

Accessible Transit is available to permanent residents of The City of Grande Prairie and to residents within the County of Grande Prairie who live within 5 km of the City Limits, who cannot use regular transit service because of a disability. A disability is a physical or cognitive condition that affects a person's movements, senses or activities. Many people have disabilities like difficulty walking, seeing and hearing, or learning, processing and remembering information.

How can I apply for Accessible Transit?

Those wishing to use Accessible Transit must register and be approved before booking a trip. Application forms are available at:

- City Hall (10205-98th Street, Grande Prairie, AB T8V 2E7)
- City Service Centre (9505-112th Street Grande Prairie AB T8V 6H8)

Applications are also available online at:

- <https://www.cityofgp.com/roads-transportation/public-transit/accessible-transportation>

Only fully completed and signed applications will be considered. Section Two of the application must be completed by a qualified health care or social services practitioner familiar with the applicant's mobility. A medical doctor, Registered Nurse, Registered Psychiatric Nurse, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Rehab Practitioner, or social worker can complete section Two.

Temporary Service

Individuals who are temporarily disabled and meet the registration criteria may be able to use Accessible Transit for the duration of time they are unable to use regular transit.

Conditional Service

Applications are sometimes approved with conditions attached. This means the Accessible Transit can only be used for those trips where regular transit will not work for a rider. Examples of conditions may include “in winter only”, “in dark conditions only” or for “medical appointments only”.

Bookings

Booking a Trip

Accessible Transit Bookings 780-830-7433

Dispatch Office Hours (trip bookings are only accepted during these hours)

Monday - Friday 7 am- 4 pm

Closed Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays

***Trip bookings are not accepted after hours.**

Accessible Transit Hours of Operation:

Monday to Saturday - 6:30 a.m. – 9:30 p.m. (last pick up 9:15 pm)

Sundays and Statutory Holidays - 8:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. (last pick up 6:15 pm)

No Service on Christmas Day, New Years Day, Easter Sunday.

The following information is required for booking a trip:

- Client first and last name, and if he or she will be accompanied by an attendant, companion, or service animal.
- Any special equipment used, such as a wheelchair, scooter, or walker.
- The physical address of the pick-up and drop off, and the preferred accessible building entrance.
- The appointment time, or the time when the client must arrive at the destination.
- The time and location for the return trip, if required.

Due to the high volume of calls, passengers are limited to two booking requests per call.

Please be courteous to other callers by having all your booking information ready.

Advance bookings can be made up to seven (7) days in advance and are subject to availability. Travel on weekends can be booked nine (9) days in advance (e.g. you can book Fridays for the following weekend). Last minute or short notice bookings are accepted, but there is no guarantee they can be fulfilled as these are limited due to space.

Pick-up Window (time frame)

When you book your Accessible Transit trip, you will be given a pick-up time. The pick-up window starts 15 minutes before and ends 15 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time. This window is the time frame in which the vehicle can be expected to arrive. For example, if your scheduled pick up time is 10:30, your vehicle should arrive between 10:15 and 10:45. Please be ready at the start of this window to prevent delays.

If your bus has not arrived by 5 minutes past the end of your window, please contact the Accessible Transit dispatch office at 780-830-7433.

Please remember to allow 45 to 60 minutes to get to your destination when riding the Accessible Transit, as there are often stops or possible pick-ups for other riders along the way.

NOTE: Operators are not required to enter buildings to search for passengers. Please be ready at the exterior set of accessible doors at the beginning of your pick-up window. Upon arriving at your location, Operators will only wait for a maximum of 5 minutes, so it is important that you are ready to go on time

Cancellations, Changes and Requests

Canceling a Trip

Your cooperation in phoning Accessible Transit promptly if you must cancel your trip is appreciated. This will help us provide better service for all passengers.

Please call **780-830-7433** to cancel any unwanted bookings a **minimum of 2 hours before** the pick-up time.

NOTE: Trips cancelled less than two (2) hours before the scheduled pick-up time are recorded as a 'Late Cancellation'. Frequent late cancellations may affect client trip booking privileges and lead to a possible suspension of service.

No-Show

What is considered a "No-Show"?

- If the operator arrives at the scheduled time and pick-up location and no one is there
- When the client cancels at the door

No-Shows are recorded in the client's file at the Accessible Transit office. Frequent no-shows will be reviewed and may lead to a suspension of service. Operators will wait for five minutes upon arrival within your scheduled pick-up window. If you are not ready during this five-minute period, your trip is considered a NO-SHOW and the Operator will proceed to his or her next call.

NOTE: The scheduled return trip will automatically be cancelled in the event of a NO-SHOW.

Trip Adjustments

Accessible Transit Operators will not accept requests for changes of destination or pick-up times at the time of boarding. This will disrupt the carefully planned schedule and negatively impact other riders.

Changes can be requested by calling the dispatch office at 780-830-7433 a minimum of two (2) hours in advance, during dispatch business hours only.

Late changes may not be accommodated due to time or space limitations.

Assignment of Vehicles

Accessible Transit tries to minimize travel time; however, riders may be required to spend up to 60 minutes on the vehicle during any one-way trip. This is especially important for scheduling appointments that are time-sensitive like a doctor's appointment.

Travel Time on Vehicles

Unfortunately, we are not able to accommodate requests for specific vehicle types, seating locations, or operators.

Riding Accessible Transit

Passenger Safety on Accessible Transit

Grande Prairie Accessible Transit is dedicated to the safety of every passenger on every trip. All passengers are required to use the appropriate securement system or transfer to a vehicle seat for the safest trip possible.

It is mandatory to use a securement safety system for any mobility aid and to wear a seatbelt/shoulder strap. If a rider is unable to wear a seat belt/shoulder strap for health reasons, there must be a medical exemption on file.

Fares

Fares must be paid at time of travel, and can be paid by the following:

- Cash payment – Must be exact change only; Operators do not carry change
- Tickets and Monthly Passes – Tickets and monthly passes can be pre-purchased on the bus by cash or cheque. Cheques are made payable to “The City of Grande Prairie” and are accepted when purchasing sheets of tickets.
- Additionally, tickets and passes may be purchased at City Hall Cashiers and at the City Service Centre.
- Soon we will be introducing Smartcards to Accessible Transit which will replace the paper tickets and passes.

Passenger Procedures

As a registered rider on Grande Prairie Accessible Transit, it is your responsibility to:

- Be ready 15 minutes before your scheduled pick up time.
- Have the exact fare or ticket ready when the Accessible Transit vehicle arrives.
- Remain seated with the seatbelt or tie-down fastened while the vehicle is in motion.
- Always follow the Operator’s instructions while boarding, riding, and exiting the Accessible Transit vehicle. Improper conduct may result in a refusal of service.
- Refrain from smoking within five metres of the vehicle; smoking is not allowed on the bus.
- Refrain from wearing scented products such as aftershaves or perfumes. Other passengers or Operators may have allergies to these products.
- Do not consume alcohol or non-prescription drugs on the bus.
- Refrain from interfering with the operation of the vehicle and all equipment attached to it.
- Wear appropriate attire and footwear, unless exceptions must be made for medical reasons.
- Ensure the sidewalk and step outside your residence is cleared of ice and snow. Ramps must be kept in good repair. Your trip may be cancelled if we cannot get you to and from the bus safely.

Medical Seatbelt Exemption

Accessible Transit will not transport any customer without a seat belt unless specific exemption requirements are met. The Province of Alberta has specific regulatory requirements Accessible Transit must follow regarding seatbelt exemptions for medical reasons. Please contact the Accessible Transit office if you require a medical seatbelt exemption.

Carry-On Items

Carry-on items are allowed but limited to what the client can carry on at one time, conforming to the size restrictions if being attached to a wheelchair or scooter.

Operators **DO NOT** assist clients with their carry-on baggage.

Operator Assistance

Accessible Transit Operators DO:

- Operate power lifts and ramps on the vehicle.
- Secure wheelchairs and scooters in restraint devices to the floor.
- Assist clients with lap/shoulder straps and belts.
- Assist clients on and off the bus.
- Assist clients between the vehicle and the inside of the first exterior set of accessible doors at the place of origin and/or destination. An accessible door is an outside door with no more than one step.

Accessible Transit Operators DO NOT:

- Assist clients in climbing more than one step.
- Enter a client's residence under any circumstances.
- Make repairs or adjustments to equipment.
- Carry parcels or load baggage. Limit carry-on items to what can be carried by you at one time.

Travelling with Pets

Service Animals

Accessible Transit Operators are required by law to transport assistance or service dogs accompanying people who are visually impaired, hearing impaired or persons with other disabilities.

Upon registration for Accessible Transit, clients are required to provide an identification card for the animal that verifies that a recognized dog school has trained the animal.

- An assistance dog can be recognized as follows:
- Visually impaired - by its leather harness and the identification card.
- Hearing impaired - by its bright orange leash and collar and/or vest and the identification card.

- Other disabilities - black harness and leash and/or blue saddle bags and the ID card issued by a recognized dog school.
- Assistance dogs are trained to be non-threatening and unobtrusive and do not require a seat as they are trained to sit at the owner's feet.

Family Pets

Accessible Transit must balance the desire to be pet friendly with the comfort of all passengers on the bus. Therefore, some restrictions apply:

- Only small dogs and cats are allowed if they are contained in a fully enclosed, clean, hand-held crate appropriate to the animal's size.
- All crates must have a solid bottom to contain any animal waste.
- Crates must be small enough to fit on the owner's lap.
- Only one hand-held crate allowed per passenger.
- Passengers are responsible for their pets and must always hold onto their crates. If there is room on the bus, crates may be placed on the floor beside the owner without blocking the aisle or other passengers.
- Pets may be refused if they misbehave or pose a health or safety risk.
- Above restrictions do not apply to Assistant/Service dogs.
- Concerns with allergies are minimized when pets are contained in crates, which reduce the spread of dander. If a passenger with pet allergies notifies the Operator of a problem, the passenger carrying a dog or cat on board may be placed in a different location on the bus.

Travelling with a Personal Care Attendant

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) can travel with you on Accessible Transit if you require assistance during your trip or require assistance at your destination. When booking your trip on Accessible Transit, make sure you book a seat for your PCA if you will have one travelling with you.

- A PCA must be 12 years of age or older.
- A registered customer cannot be a PCA for another registered customer.
- There is no additional charge to have 1 PCA travel with you

You must provide your own attendant if:

- You require help beyond the exterior door of the building at your pick-up or destination locations.
- You require assistance with exterior stairs that exceed the one step policy.

- You require assistance carrying mobility equipment.
- You cannot be left alone and there is no one to meet you at your destination.
- You require assistance with oxygen or other medical equipment.
- Accessible Transit has determined an attendant is required because your conduct compromises the safety and/or comfort of yourself, other customers or the Operator.

NOTE: It is not the Operator's responsibility to supervise customers. The Operator will leave the vehicle to escort customers to and from the exterior doors of their pick up and drop off locations. If the client requires supervision, a PCA is required.

Clients travelling with a mandatory Personal Care Attendant

Accessible Transit clients required to travel with a mandatory PCA can never travel alone on Accessible Transit and will have a designation on their file stating that all trips must be booked with an attendant as a condition of travel. The PCA does not have to be the same person for every trip, but they must be able to address the medical condition and/or behavioral concern. PCAs do not have to pay a fare. A present client of the Accessible Transit cannot be a Personal Care Attendant for another client.

Passenger Safety – PCAs

Grande Prairie Transit is committed to providing safe and comfortable transportation for all passengers. Accessible Transit Operators are not trained to provide attendant care or emergency medical type services. This is the responsibility of the client and/or their guardians

Travelling with Mobility Aids and Baggage

Mobility Aids aren't what they used to be! People who use mobility aids are finding they have much more variety than they did a few years ago. Walkers now can have wheels, seats, baskets, trays, bags and various other attachments on them, and can weigh from a few pounds to over 9 kg (20 lbs.). Wheelchairs and scooters can be customized to make them truly one-of-a-kind, from small sports chairs to extra-large scooters.

Sometimes this newer equipment may not fit on Accessible Transit vehicles or may not be able to be tied down securely. If you are thinking of buying a new walker, scooter or wheelchair, please be aware of the guidelines for mobility aids on Accessible Transit. Accessible Transit may not be able to transport oversized wheelchairs and scooters.

Wheelchairs

The base of the wheelchair (with push rings and attachments) cannot measure more than 76 cm x 127 cm (30" x 50"). Bags attached to the backs of wheelchairs must be compact and fit into the space behind the chair's back.

If the wheelchair has handles, bags should not extend past the end of the handles or below the level of the seat. If there are no handles, suggested bag size is 36 cm x 46 cm x 15 cm (14" wide x 18" high x 6" deep), or smaller.

Wheelchairs must have a secure, easily identifiable place on the frame for the tie-downs to be attached at approximately a 45-degree angle to the floor.

The wheelchair, passenger and parcels/baggage cannot have combined weight of more than 337 kg (750 lbs.).

Scooters

Although Accessible Transit allows scooters, they can be a problem because some scooters cannot be tied down safely. They are also becoming larger and heavier than in the past and are often too big to be used on public transportation.

The base of the scooter, including bumpers and other attachments, cannot measure more than 76 cm x 127 cm (30" x 50"). Bags attached to the backs or sides of scooters cannot extend past the 76 cm x 127 cm (30" x 50") size limit.

Scooters must be tied down separately. The client will be asked to transfer to a seat for their safety. Scooters must have a secure, easily identifiable place on the frame for the tie-downs to be attached at approximately a 45-degree angle to the floor.

The scooter, passenger and parcels/baggage cannot have combined weight of more than 337 kg (750 lbs.).

Other Considerations

Please keep in mind how many people and how much equipment will be required on your trip. Can smaller equipment be used? This may affect trip availability.

For safety reasons, Accessible Transit will not transport walkers, wheelchairs and scooters that are too large or cannot be tied down safely. Smaller equipment will allow more flexibility and travel options.

When buying new equipment, ask the vendor if any securement devices, such as D-rings, can be added to the main frame to ensure safe travel on public transit.

Service Locations

Guidelines

Locations that Accessible Transit serves need to be accessible and safe for public transportation.

- Address is clearly visible from the roadway.
- Good lighting in the area.
- Sidewalks and driveways must be well maintained and free of snow, ice and debris.
- All ramps must meet City of Grande Prairie building code requirements and maintained to the standards acceptable within the bylaw.
- Parking area should be clear for Accessible Transit to safely pick up and drop off passengers. Accessible Transit vehicles will not double park to load and unload clients.

One-Step Maximum

A building entrance is considered to be “wheelchair accessible” if it has one step or less to enter it. The Operator will assist a customer in a wheelchair up or down a maximum of one step plus the door threshold. Please confirm your destination has an accessible entrance before booking a trip.

Snow and Ice

Ramps, sidewalks, driveways and roadways must be cleared of snow, ice and other debris. Accessible Transit may be unable to provide service if a clear and safe path is not available from the location’s doorway to where the vehicle door or lift is opened.

Ramps

Make sure that permanent ramps are installed for everyone’s safety.

- For every 0.3 m (1 ft) in height you need at least 3.6 m (12 ft) of ramp.
- Non-slip surface for walking and handrails.
- Handrails should be no higher than 0.86 m (33”).
- Ramp should be at least 0.87 m (34”) wide (between handrails).
- Be sure you have adequate room to maneuver a chair or walker at the top landing of the stairs or at doorways at residences. The Barrier Free design standards state there should be a landing at the top and the bottom of not less than 1.5 m by 1.5 m (approximately 4.9 ft.).
- If there is a curve or turn in the ramp there should be a level area not less than 1.2 m x 1.2 m (3.4 ft.).

Can conventional fixed-route Transit Service work as Accessible Transit?

All our fixed route transit buses are wheelchair accessible. Many of our Accessible Transit Clients have discovered that taking fixed-route transit can make travelling a breeze. When using these transit services, keep the following information in mind:

- Optimal dimensions for wheelchairs and scooters are 71 cm x 121 cm (28" x 48") or smaller, including push rings and attachments, or they will not fit through the doors (note: this is a slightly smaller size allowance than on the Accessible Transit).
- Regular Transit may be unable to transport scooters or wheelchairs that are too large or cannot be tied down safely.
- For everyone's safety, walkers should be folded down to approximately 20 cm (8") and stowed away from the aisle.
- Low floor buses can accommodate two wheelchair/scooters at a time. Customers with children in strollers are also encouraged to use this space. All buses operated by The City of Grande Prairie are low floor buses and require only one step to enter the bus. They are also equipped with a ramp that can be deployed for passengers using a mobility aid.
- Passengers must be able to secure their own mobility devices upon entering the bus or should bring along an attendant to assist.
- Baggage must be carried on lap and cannot block the aisle.

For information on transit's fixed route accessible features contact the Citizen Contact Centre at 780-538-0300.

Questions and Concerns

We are here to help!

Please feel free to contact Transit Services at the City of Grande Prairie for all transit concerns. For further information on the Accessible Transit mobility aid securement devices or baggage limitations, please call the dispatch office.

Grande Prairie Accessible Transit

P.O. Bag 4000

10205 98 St.

Grande Prairie, AB

T8V 6V3

City of Grande Prairie Main Phone Line: 780-538-0300 (request to speak to Accessible Transit)

Dispatch Office: 780-830-7433 Fax: 780-538-4667 Email: dispatch@cityofgp.com