



All the news on Access-A-Ride

## Paratransit VP Presents to the MTA Board

At the September 21, 2022 MTA Board meeting, Paratransit VP Chris Pangilinan provided a comprehensive presentation about how Paratransit relates to ADA requirements and guidelines, a summary of the service during the pandemic, and Paratransit's plans for the future.

Chris stated public transportation is the beating heart of New York City and he joined Paratransit because "we want to embark on improving this key service for people with disabilities." He explained the he has spent his nearly 20-year career "in transportation engineering, planning, and policy to make the heart stronger in cities around the United States and, of course here in New York."

**"Empower our paratransit customers to live their lives with the reliability, flexibility, and spontaneity they need through a reimagined paratransit system alongside an accessible bus and subway system."**

**— Chris Pangilinan, VP Paratransit**

"As a wheelchair user myself (I have Cerebral Palsy), I am also a Paratransit customer and a subway elevator user and a bus user and I have been and continue to be an advocate for public transportation and accessible public transportation.... public transportation is really what makes New Yorkers be able to have and live their fullest lives when we have safe, affordable and accessible transportation that's reliable.... for our Paratransit customers we've made great strides over the last ten years, but now is that time that we want to go further."



August 25th, Paratransit welcomed NYCT President Rich Davey to their Long Island City HQ for a “Town Hall” style meeting with staff.

L-R: Paratransit DVP Donald Raimondi, President Davey and VP Chris Pangilinan.

Chris explained how, much like buses and subways, Paratransit’s ridership is returning but at a much faster rate. “While we had a dip in ridership in 2020, we were actually holding on to a lot more of our riders than the fixed-route system because of the necessity of Paratransit trips.”

Right now AAR is projected to exceed 6 million trips this year, which is about 85%-90% of pre-covid levels. This translates to about 25,000- 28,000 trips a day.

Approximately 95% of these trips are booked through the call center.

Chris continued to share critical information about Paratransit’s FTA and ADA requirements, which provide guidelines for providing AAR service. He also addressed the concerns about driver shortages and the initiatives we have taken to increase capacity.

Breaking down the anatomy of a Paratransit trip within federal guidelines proved to be an educational experience for all and his goals to provide more reliable, flexible and spontaneous transportation (for those with disabilities in NYC) in the future were positive and realistic.

To watch or listen to Chris’s plan for the future of Paratransit and his initiatives to improve the service, view the presentation in its entirety at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gDe3rt\\_cddE&t=5519s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gDe3rt_cddE&t=5519s)

(His presentation starts approximately 1 hour and 28 minutes into the meeting, if you wish to fast-forward.)

## Welcome to AAR's Supplemental Carrier

In the [summer issue of OTM](#) we shared with readers how we have introduced new providers to address the growing demand for the service. You may be scheduled with one of the three new supplement carriers who will have the AAR logo or name emblazoned on their hydraulic-lift equipped vans or wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV).



D & J Service Inc has been in service for over 35 years. They have over 30 years of experience in providing transportation for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout New York City, Westchester, and Nassau Counties and work with various OPWDD agencies across New York.



Gogo Bus Tours Inc has been in business since 2011 serving the five boroughs of NYC. They currently have 9 vehicles and looking to increase as demand increases. Their friendly staff includes 4 dispatchers and 14 drivers with a combined transportation experience of over 40 years.





VGB's has been in the transportation business for over 8 years and currently have over 300 WAV on the road in NYC. This is VGB's driver Emmanuel, who stated this summer and has exceeded their expectations with his knowledge of wheelchair securement and willingness to go the extra mile to assist his passengers.

## **Your Mobility Device**

AAR paratransit service operates within the guidelines under the Department of Transportation (DOT) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Regulations at 49 CFR Part 38 require that wheelchair lifts have a minimum design load of 600 pounds (when occupied) and that the lift platform accommodate a wheelchair measuring 30 inches by 48 inches. **The wheelchair lifts on AAR vehicles exceed these requirements, accommodating wheelchairs or scooters no wider than 33 inches wide, no longer than 51 inches and weighing no more than 800 lbs when occupied.**

We are unable to accommodate mobility devices that exceed these federal guidelines. In addition, the following devices will not be permitted on AAR vehicles:

- Hospital Chairs
- Gurney Chairs
- Hospital Stretchers
- Stand-up or Non-assistive motorized electric scooters
- Bikes (folding or full)
- Mopeds

## **Transferring from Wheelchair/Scooter to Passenger Seat**

Passenger seats are reserved for customers who walk, and wheelchair/scooter locations are reserved for customers traveling in wheelchairs/scooters. If you travel in a wheelchair/scooter and wish to transfer to a passenger seat, you must ask the driver if a seat will be vacant during your trip. You may transfer only if a seat is available. If a customer who walks is added to the route and requires the seat, you will have to return to your wheelchair/scooter.

Please note: Customers are not permitted to reserve passenger seats for guests or PCAs who do not travel with them so that they can transfer to a passenger seat or avoid a shared ride. You may incur a suspension for such actions.

## **Terms to Know Before You Book Your Trip**

“Pickup time” is the time you wish AAR to arrive. Since AAR is a shared-ride service, you may be offered a pickup time that is up to an hour earlier or later than the time requested.

“Appointment time” is the time you wish AAR to arrive at your destination. You can request either a pickup time or appointment time.

## **Maximum Ride Times**

A trip’s maximum ride time is based on trip distance. The chart below indicates the amount of time a customer can anticipate traveling, based on trip miles.

<b>Miles</b>	<b>Maximum Ride Time</b>
0-3	50 minutes
3-6	1 hour 5 minutes
6-9	hour 35 minutes
9-12	1 hour 55 minutes
12-14	2 hours 15 minutes
Greater than 14	2 hours 35 minutes

**Masks are now optional, but still encouraged while traveling on AAR.**



**Fastest Way to Submit Authorized Taxi/Car Reimbursement Requests: ONLINE!!**

- Go to the AAR website: <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit>
- Scroll down to Policies and Forms to find the “Online Taxi/Car Service Reimbursement Request” link.
- Complete the form and attach a PDF (Scan) or Photo (JPEG) of the receipt and press “submit.”

Those who prefer to mail the request/receipt to AAR, that option is still available. Please remember, the [Taxi/Car Service Reimbursement Policy](#) still applies.



## **Access-A-Ride (AAR) Telephone Directory**

Call 877-337-2017 toll-free from area codes in the NY Metro Area and adjacent counties / call 718-393-4999 from other area codes. Customers who are deaf/hard of hearing can use their preferred relay service or the free 711 relay service.

After an important announcement, callers will be guided to

- press “1” for English (If “1” is not pressed, callers will hear choices in each of the respective languages):
- press “2” for assistance in Spanish,
- press “3” or assistance in Russian, Chinese, French Creole, Korean or Bengali, or
- press “4” for all other languages,

**Callers will then be directed to press one of the following prompts:**

### **Prompt #1 – Eligibility Unit**

Agents are available Monday – Friday from 9 am - 5 pm to assist with eligibility, appeals, certification or application questions, requests for updates to customer’s contact information, visitor/reciprocal service etc.

### **Prompt #2 – Trip Planning**

Agents are available to make a reservation 7 days a week from 7 am - 5 pm

**Prompt #3 – Change a Trip - Agents are available 7 days a week from 7 am - 5 pm to change a trip.**



**Prompt #4** – Cancel a Trip - Agents are available 24/7 to cancel a trip.

### **Prompt #5 – Travel Services**

Agents are available 24/7 assistance with same day trip. This may include getting information about your vehicle and its estimated arrival time, help with delays that may arise with your pick-ups or with your return trip such as rescheduling a later pick-up, etc.

### **Prompt #6 – Subscription Service**

Agents are available 7 days a week from 8 am - 5 pm to help arrange, re-schedule or cancel subscription service. This service is offered to any customer who travels from the same location to the same destination at the same time of day for each trip at least one day a week.

**Prompt #7** – Automated system to check status of your same day service.

### **Prompt #8 – Customer Comment Line**

Agents are available Monday – Friday from 9 am - 5 pm to submit suggestions, commendations, complaints, along with requests for publications, and outreaches. If one prefers, submit [online](#).

Callers may repeat the prompt menu by pressing “0.” They may also hold for assistance if they don’t have a touch-tone phone. Conversations with AAR personnel are recorded and may be monitored.

## **AAR Resources**

The most updated AAR information, including AAR policies, Guide, newsletter and customers' bill of rights are available Online at [new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit](https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit) or via the MYmta app.

Manage and monitor your AAR trips online or via your smartphone: <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit/making-a-reservation-and-managing-trips/faqs>

Follow us on social media @nyctAAR.

**On the Move is posted online quarterly at:**

<https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit/newsletter-and-announcements>. To ensure that you are alerted to postings and all other AAR updates, please provide AAR with a viable email address. If you don't have an email address, please consider sharing one of a trusted family member or friend who will alert you to these communications.

**Take our MTA Customers Count Survey!**

Visit <https://new.mta.info/mta-customers-research> to register to receive an email invitation for the survey when it opens on November 21, 2022. The survey runs through December 4, 2022.