

# Mobility for All: One Customer at a Time

Navigating mobility to ensure any passenger can reach any destination across the transit ecosystem



# 1 MOBILITY FOR ALL

## The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed into law in 1990 to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination in all aspects of society. Collectively, the public transportation industry was responsive when it came to embracing ADA requirements.

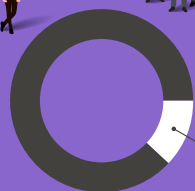
Disabilities vary in nature and severity; nearly **1 in 5** people have a disability in the U.S. As our population continues to age, the percentage of people with disabilities will increase, and their need for reliable transit remains steady. Serving this growing need are public entities that operate fixed-route transit services and complementary paratransit services for individuals with ADA eligibility who need transportation. And now, with the transit industry rapidly expanding to include mobility on demand, Mobility as a Service, and autonomous vehicles, ADA requirements will need to be adapted more broadly.

When it comes to public transit, ADA Paratransit service is an unfunded mandate and the most expensive and

challenging form of public transportation to provide. However, compliance with the ADA regulation ensures greater mobility for all.

## Compliance is our Responsibility | Compassion is our Standard

More than just enforcing a law, it is absolutely necessary to understand that each person experiences unique challenges and has needs specific to their disability, and these individuals rely on public transit services to live independent lives. It is with this understanding that RATP Dev approaches the preparation and delivery of transportation services to a variety of riders with patience, compassion and empathy - taking a true commitment and responsibility to providing high quality and reliable services to support the needs of all passengers.



12%

of the U.S. population is considered disabled (Cognitive/Mental, Hearing, Vision-Impaired, Physical, Independent Living, Self-Care)



### 3 Types of paratransit eligibility:

- Unconditional eligibility (all trips)
- Conditional eligibility (some trips)
- Temporary eligibility (trips for a period of time)



The cost to supply an average paratransit trip is about

**3x MORE** compared to that of a regular fixed route trip



When considering all forms of public transit, ADA Paratransit services have the fewest number of riders, however they are the

**most expensive** to operate



### Paratransit **required resources** include:

- Lift/Ramp, Modified facilities, Service Animals, Oxygen Supplies, Websites, Training, Connectings for the visually impaired, and Interactive Voice Response (IVR)

## 2 THE “SPIRIT” OF THE ADA

### Enhancing Seamless and Accessible Mobility for All: A Step in the Right Direction

While the ADA establishes a baseline level of services for all passengers in the transit ecosystem, complying with the ADA is just the starting line.

Embracing the “Spirit” of the ADA involves identifying opportunities to enhance the services provided to riders with disabilities; providing accessible and fully usable services, not just compliant services.

There are many opportunities to enhance the usability of your transit services. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Developing an operating culture that promotes a high level of sensitivity towards riders with disabilities

- Conducting Basic and Refresher Training Programs that include hands-on exercises; ensuring that Operators are trained to proficiency, as required by the ADA, in securing a variety of wheelchairs and other mobility aids
- Including additional frontline staff in comprehensive accessibility training, including Dispatchers, Trainers and Road Supervisors
- Supporting educational efforts for riders to enhance their ability to successfully use ADA Paratransit services
- Partnering with local disability organizations as needed to ensure fully accessible services



Understanding that provisions evolve, the right education and partnerships are essential for transit agencies to remain equipped with the power to serve their ADA community in a manner that delights customers.

## 3 SUCCESSFUL DELIVERY OF ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICES

### Accommodation Plus Applicability Equals Accessibility

While operating as a “complement” to fixed-route services in a community by mirroring days, times of operation and service area, ADA Paratransit services have their own unique operating elements that include:

- Eligibility Requirements
- Advance Reservations
- No Denial of Service
- Shared Ride Service

- The service area must be within 3/4 of a mile of a bus route or rail station
- Wait and travel times must be comparable to fixed route services
- No more than twice the regular fixed-route fare

### Eligibility Requirements

The eligibility requirements are dependent upon the infrastructure of the system. How these determinations are made must be consistent with the ADA and mandated with applicants. The following factors are typically considered, while determining and establishing eligibility:

1. A person's disability and functional abilities
2. Accessibility of the fixed-route system
3. Architectural barriers
4. Environmental conditions

Using a two-stage process, most transit agencies assess an individual's functional ability to use fixed-route followed by trip eligibility; applying unique conditions to specific trips.



# 4 AWARENESS AND EVOLUTION

## “Take a little extra step, it goes a mile.”

John Hendrickson, VP, RATP DEV USA



### Education and Empowerment of Customers

#### Step 1 Communicate transportation solutions and options available for use

*[Example] Web-based information retrieval: Allow for a variety of accessible forms of communication to convey eligibility and receive applications – beyond printable forms, such as chat-like services.*

#### Transit Learning Day Multi-channel

This type of program includes one-on-one training, along with a guided tour that provides individuals who are not familiar with the service an opportunity to learn exactly how it works without intimidation/nerves, getting lost in the route map and schedule, as well as dispel any other fears about using public transportation. A Transit Learning Day is applicable to the fixed-route service and Paratransit service structures.

A typical training session lasts about two hours and includes a 20-minute presentation that highlights how to read the route schedules, popular destinations each route serves, the fare structure and process and where to pick up or schedule deviations of routes. After the presentation, the tour guide takes the group on a real transit trip – ideally from a nearby stop – and shows them how to pay the fare, request a stop, and ultimately, enjoy a bus trip.

#### Step 2 Encourage proper decision-making based on individual needs

*[Example] Paratransit certification/enrollment office personnel, trained and available to answer rider inquiries and concerns.*

#### ADA/Paratransit Resources

**ADA National Network** – the ADA National Network offers a variety of training opportunities to increase your knowledge of the ADA. Trainings are available in-person, via webcast, and online.

**ADA Live!** – a free monthly show broadcast nationally on the Internet.

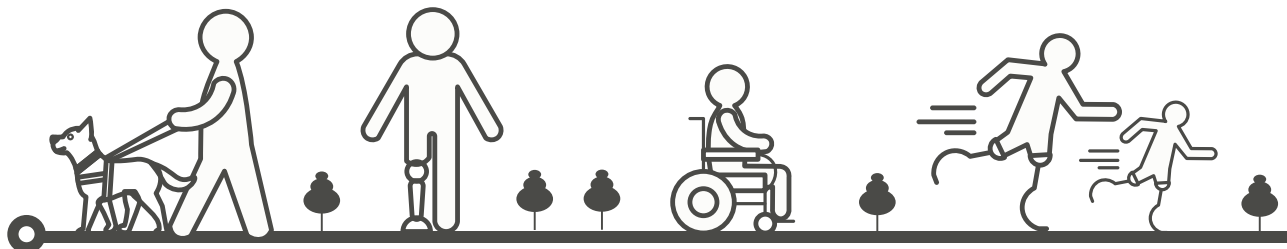
**Navigator Mobility Consulting Workshops** – Courses designed to review all of the elements required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in providing fully accessible bus and paratransit/dial-a-ride services.

#### Step 3 Provide credibility and transparency to ensure highest quality Customer Service

*[Example] Provide individuals the right tools to manage their experience, such as passenger portals through websites and/or apps, accommodating a variety of needs*

#### Partnerships Case Study

In March 2018, RATP Dev partnered with Capital Metro and Connectings, an urban technology company, to develop and launch a pilot program to deliver real-time schedule and alert information to riders via the BlindSquare app, bringing Capital Metro’s bus information to customers who are blind or visually impaired. This demonstration is part of AustinCityUp’s vision of using innovation to facilitate a truly inclusive community, while raising the quality of life in Austin, TX.



# 5 A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

Paratransit demand is expected to continually increase in the future, and this growth requires the implementation of solutions that enhance transportation services for this population. At the same time, public funds for public transportation are shrinking and cities and suburban areas keep sprawling, making distances and access to jobs, education, healthcare and leisure, longer and more difficult to travel to. Fortunately, the transportation industry has already started to adapt to these shifts using cutting edge software and technology.



## Partnerships and On-Demand Paratransit Services

On-demand transportation services have a noticeably higher customer satisfaction rate with Transportation Network Company's (TNC's) playing a unique role in the solution to growing needs of the population as whole. The options for riders to pick their mode of transit, including walking (if applicable), know their trip duration prior to booking, simply pay for their trip/fare, ultimately provides an outstanding rider experience. Options empower the any passenger travel when, where, and how they want to.

To many, this is a positive; increasing flexibility and proposing solutions to the First/Last Mile improves accessibility. So why are we seeing a slow adoption of this theory? The challenge lies within securing and operating adequately equipped vehicles, the limited capability of many mobile apps and/or the passengers ability to use the mobile app, and lastly, the adherence to regulation(s). TNCs are newer to the industry and thus slightly behind in the adoption and implementation of the ADA requirements in the transit ecosystem.

## Utilization and Adaptation of Technology Solutions

True innovative thinking results in the utilization, adaptation and application of technologies for their real-time capabilities and functionalities. Currently, there are a variety of transit technologies that present the passengers with the ability to find the most optimized trip using the transit modes best fit for their specific/individual needs.

The shift towards technological advancements do not eliminate the presence of empathetic, patient and understanding employees, but do serve as an additional layer of support and empowerment for ADA-eligible passengers. Empowering ADA-eligible passengers in this way encourages the use of a multi-modal transit system, while providing the same excellent experience, regardless of disability. By enforcing that every step of the riders experience is accommodating and positive, a unique standard of performance and efficiency levels is created. Ultimately, this helps mutualize resources and create additional service options for an overall growing market.

## HOW?

One app for building the most comprehensive system that includes:

A multi-modal trip planner

A booking system for on-demand services compatible with ADA-eligible riders

Dispatching capabilities in real-time to distribute trips and riders on the most efficient transportation mode/vehicle

E-payment and ticketing



## Moving Forward

As the industry evolves in the many ways discussed above, it is crucial to evolve methodologies, processes, solutions, and products to revolve around mobility for all. If any area is lacking, it is important to investigate partners to help fulfill ADA requirements. Consider public transportation agencies across the US, many have recently acquired, invested, or partnered with technology companies or operations providers to create a holistic transit solution for all passengers in the ecosystem.



## CLOSING/AUTHOR PAGE

Customer focused service is a hallmark of all RATP Dev systems. RATP Dev USA has provided paratransit services since our founding in 1972. Twenty of our systems provide ADA Complementary Paratransit Services for persons who, because of physical or mental disability, or age are unable to transport themselves. At these systems over 4,000 trips are scheduled and provided each weekday.

As such, RATP Dev has partnered with an ADA Compliance expert, Jess Segovia, of Navigator Mobility Consulting. Mr. Segovia works to identify opportunities to enhance our

accessibility program and ensure that ADA requirements are accurately and consistently interpreted and applied; no matter the environment or situation.

Together, our commitment includes long-term partnerships and the accomplishment of goals that will resolutely and continuously improve transportation services for the ADA community.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. EEOC: The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (<https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/1990s/ada.html>)
2. Disability Statistics Annual Report 2016 ([https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/2016\\_AnnualReport.pdf](https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/2016_AnnualReport.pdf))
3. U.S. Census Bureau Disability Statistics Facts for Features
4. Federal Transit Administration (ADA) Disability Law Guidance (<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/civil-rights-ada/origin-destination-service>)
5. Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund: ADA Paratransit Eligibility (<https://dredf.org/news/publications/ada-paratransit-eligibility/>)
6. <https://www.tripspark.com/resources/8-ways-demand-response-software-encourages-business-success>
7. [http://www.nadtc.org/wp-content/uploads/634712799563561870\\_Effective\\_Communication\\_.pdf](http://www.nadtc.org/wp-content/uploads/634712799563561870_Effective_Communication_.pdf)
8. American Public Transportation Association (APTA) 2016 Annual Meeting: Developing the Tools to Allow TNCs to Provide Paratransit Service (<https://www.apta.com/mc/annual/previous/2016annual/presentations/Presentations/ANDRE%20-%20Coalice.pdf>)
9. Centers for Disease Control - CDC Newsroom (<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2015/p0730-US-disability.html>)



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