

Valley Transit Paratransit System Policies & Procedures



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SECTION I: PARATRANSIT SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Service Background

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires federally-funded public transit systems to provide a complementary paratransit service for individuals with a disability whose condition prevents them from using the fixed-route bus service. Valley Transit's core paratransit service program, Valley Transit II, was established to comply with the ADA; however, broad funding partnerships allow Valley Transit to offer additional paratransit service programs to users, areas, and service times beyond what is required by the ADA.

Paratransit is a demand response service where the vehicle does not follow a fixed-route or schedule. The service is curb-to-curb (origin to destination) with the service area defined by each program. Valley Transit offers paratransit service programs to provide mobility to individuals with disabilities, seniors, and workers.

All of Valley Transit's paratransit services are provided by a contracted service provider. The contractor utilizes demand-response accessible vans to serve the needs of ambulatory and non-ambulatory riders. The service is shared-ride, so a rider may share the vehicle with other users during their trip.

This document is designed to provide information applicable to all of Valley Transit's paratransit programs. However, some standards and policies cited in this document are only applicable to Valley Transit II.

Valley Transit will provide to its passengers, upon request, service materials including maps, applications and policies in an accessible format for disabled individuals. If an accessible format is unavailable, Valley Transit will accommodate the individual's request to the best of its ability.

Paratransit Programs

Valley Transit's paratransit system is comprised of several separate programs with different rider eligibilities, fares, service areas and service hours. These programs are supported by funding received from the municipal partners of Valley Transit, Outagamie County, Winnebago County, Calumet County, State of Wisconsin, Federal Transit Administration, and user fares. Program rules, service area and eligibility are determined by the requirements of the funding sources used to establish each program. Below is a brief summary of each paratransit program.

ADA Complementary Paratransit (Valley Transit II): The service is a demand-responsive, limited advance reservation complementary paratransit service for persons whose disabilities prevent their use of the fixed route transit services offered by Valley Transit. This service is designed to comply with the ADA and is hereinafter referred to as 'VTII.' VTII is primarily a curb-to-curb service. However, VTII is designed to be compliant with "origin to destination service" as defined in 49 CFR §37.3. This means exceptions are made for riders whose disability necessitates additional assistance beyond the curb. Driver assistance is defined later in this document.

Further guidance for complementary ADA paratransit is established by the Federal Transit Administration in Circular 4710.1.

Senior Transportation Service: This service is an ancillary paratransit service that provides rides to elderly individuals age 60 and over residing in the Fox Cities portion of Outagamie County and the

Appleton portion of Calumet County. These riders are encouraged to use of Valley Transit's fixed route service when possible and applicable.

The Connector: This is an ancillary paratransit service designed to provide rides for customers traveling to and from work outside the fixed route area (ESA: Extended Service Area) or outside the fixed route service hours (ESH: Extended Service Hours). This demand-responsive, common-carrier transportation service provides rides to, from, and within two service area zones. The exact service area of each zone is described later in this document. The purpose of "The Connector" is to: provide transportation options to the less densely populated areas of Valley Transit's service area; offer a late and early morning option for second and third shift workers; and provide a connection to Valley Transit's fixed route transit system.

Outagamie County Human Services Transportation (OCHST): An ancillary paratransit service which provides limited advance reservation, demand-response, common-carrier transportation service to, from, and within two defined service area zones, and all of Outagamie County. The purpose of the Outagamie County Human Services Transportation program (hereinafter referred to as "OCHST") is to provide transportation options for individuals who for other reasons are unable to use the fixed route or shared ride services. The service is demand response using taxis or vans or other vehicles for transportation of those persons whose trip origin and/or destination is within Outagamie County or within the zones listed later in this document.

For more information about each paratransit program, contact Valley Transit or visit www.myvalleytransit.com.

Service Hours

VTII: Valley Transit II operates the same days and hours as Valley Transit's fixed route service, which currently is Monday - Friday, 5:30 AM - 10:30 PM, and Saturdays, 7:30 AM - 10:30 PM. Additional service is provided beyond the ADA requirement on Sundays from 7:30 AM - 2:00 PM. The following legal holidays are observed: New Year's Day; Memorial Day; Fourth of July; Labor Day; Thanksgiving; and Christmas. Valley Transit may operate reduced hours of service on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, and the program's service hours will be adjusted accordingly.

Senior Transportation Service: This service operates Monday - Friday, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

The Connector Extended Service Area (ESA): This service will be provided during Valley Transit's regular hours of operation currently 5:30 AM to 10:00 PM Monday through Friday and 7:30 AM to 10:00 PM on Saturdays except on legal holidays. The following legal holidays are observed: New Year's Day; Memorial Day; Fourth of July; Labor Day; Thanksgiving; and Christmas. Service hours may also be reduced on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

The Connector Extended Service Hours (ESH): The service will be provided outside Valley Transit's regular hours of operation from 10:00 PM to midnight and 4:00 AM to 6:00 AM Monday through Friday and 10:00 PM to midnight and 4:00 AM to 8:00 AM on Saturdays. The following legal holidays are observed: New Year's Day; Memorial Day; Fourth of July; Labor Day; Thanksgiving; and Christmas. Service hours may also be reduced on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

OCHST: The service operates Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM thru 6:30 PM.

Service Area

VTII: The service area follows the minimum ADA standard, which is within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from fixed routes. The general geographic area served by Valley Transit's fixed route service includes the Cities of Appleton, Neenah, Menasha and Kaukauna; Towns of Buchanan and Grand Chute; and Villages of Fox Crossing, Kimberly and Little Chute.

Senior Transportation Service: The service area for elderly passengers under this program is the Outagamie County and Calumet County portions of Appleton; all of the City of Kaukauna; the Villages of Kimberly, Little Chute, and Combined Locks; and the urbanized areas of the Town of Grand Chute. Trips from Outagamie County to Winnebago County for medical purposes are allowed for elderly Outagamie County passengers on a limited basis.

The Connector, Extended Service Area (ESA): The service area begins approximately three-tenths ($\frac{3}{10}$) mile from nearest Valley Transit bus stop and is bordered on the north by County Hwy JJ, on the south by County Hwy G in the Neenah area and Hwy 10 in Calumet County, on the west by Hwy 76, and on the east by an imaginary line running south from Hwy 41 & JJ to Hwy 10. The ESA service area provides a ring around Valley Transit's fixed route bus structure and does not include it. The ESA service is designed to expand Valley Transit's service area and to provide transfer connections to the Valley Transit fixed route service at six major transfer points.

The transfer points are located on the north on First Avenue & Union Street; on the east at the Goodwill Industries building on Stoney Brook Road; on the south at the Neenah Transfer Center on Church & Doty Streets; on the west at the Fox River Mall; downtown Appleton at the Appleton Transit Center; and at the Foxdale Plaza in Little Chute.

The Connector, Extended Service Hours (ESH): The service area is the same as described above but also includes all of the Valley Transit fixed route service area. ESH is designed to offer a late night (until midnight) and early morning (beginning at 4:00 am) option for second and third shift workers.

A map showing the service areas of the Connector and VTII ($\frac{3}{4}$ mile buffer for VTII) programs can be found at www.myvalleytransit.com.

OCHST: The service area includes all of Outagamie County, The Connector ESA service area to the south and west of Lake Winnebago, and Calumet County as far south and east as Chilton, Wisconsin.

Eligible Riders

VTII: Participation in this program is restricted to those persons who have been certified as unable to use Valley Transit's fixed-route buses because of a mobility-limiting disability as defined in the ADA, codified under Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 27.

Valley Transit's ADA certification system is two-tiered. All eligible riders receive a white certification card with an 'unconditional' or 'conditional' designation. Unconditional eligibility is provided to riders that are eligible to use the service for any trips (no restrictions). Conditional eligibility is provided to riders whose disability limits their ability to travel independently under certain conditions related to weather, distance to the bus stop, and other reasons. These riders can only use the service under these conditions.

Senior Transportation Service: Participation in the elderly transportation program will be restricted to those who are age 60 and over residing in the Calumet County portion of Appleton and those who have yellow certification cards in Outagamie County.

The Connector: This service is common carrier public transportation and as such is available to the general public. There currently are no certification cards for eligible riders, but Valley Transit may implement certification for riders and issue an ID in the future.

OCHST: This service is only available to individuals who are referred by Outagamie County Human Services.

Note: For all services, passengers eligible for Family Care are required to pay for trips with an agency ticket provided by Valley Transit.

Levels of Service & Fares

Valley Transit's paratransit programs provide curb-to-curb service. The rider is responsible for travel to the vehicle for pick-up at the origin and away from the vehicle at the destination. Once near the vicinity of the vehicle, the driver will assist with loading, securement, and unloading. Additional origin to destination service is provided to VTII eligible riders when needed due to physical barriers (e.g., sidewalk construction or adverse weather) or the nature of the rider's disability (e.g., a rider with visual disabilities may require driver assistance to the door). See 'Driver Assistance' section for more info.

Fares

Current passenger fares are listed below by service. Exact fare is required.

VTII: The one-way fare for basic service, including origin to destination, is \$4.00. The one-way fare on Sundays is \$11.00.

The Connector - Extended Service Area (ESA): The one-way fare is \$4.00.

The Connector - Extended Service Hours (ESH): The one-way fare is \$6.00, which provides transportation beyond the fixed route service hours.

OCHST: No passenger fares are associated with this service

Note: Fares are subject to change.

Sheets of VTII tickets can be purchased from Valley Transit ticket outlets or by mail from Valley Transit. Passengers can use cash or a combination of ticket and cash to pay the applicable fare.

Agency tickets are available and must be used by agencies, including Lakeland Care District, Community Care, State of Wisconsin's non-emergency medical transportation broker and IRIS. Agency tickets must be purchased from Valley Transit. Agency tickets can be used as payment for all rides authorized by the purchasing agency within the rules of the applicable paratransit program.

Service Reservation and Scheduling

Paratransit riders reserve trips by calling Valley Transit’s dedicated paratransit number (920) 832-5789. Riders should be prepared to provide the dispatcher the following information: first name; last name; phone number; program used; how they intend to pay the fare; origin address; destination address; accompanying companion(s), if needed; accompanying equipment (e.g., oxygen tank and respirators); and desired arrival time.

Riders must reserve trips by 5:00 pm the day prior to the trip. Advance service scheduling is required to allow the provider to meet all trips effectively and avoid any capacity constraints. *Exception: Connector & OCHST program users have a minimum 2 hour notice for scheduling rides.*

There are two types of advance reservation: next day and subscription. Next day service includes trips scheduled by 5:00 pm the day prior to the trip. Subscription service is defined as trips that are scheduled in advance and set up for a rider to occur on a regular basis (daily, weekly, or monthly).

Return trips from medical appointments (known as will-calls) cannot be scheduled. Will-calls are not scheduled because of the unknown duration of medical visits. Return trips from medical appointments are requested by the rider as needed and are usually served within 60 minutes of initial call.

After normal business hours (7:30 am – 5:00 pm), during high call volume or on Sundays, riders may leave a message on voicemail. The recorded voice will provide instructions. Dispatchers will respond to voicemail as soon as they are available.

A summary of service and reservation hours by program is listed below.

Program	Service Hours ¹			Reservation Policy
	Monday - Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
VTII	5:30 AM – 10:30 PM	7:30 AM – 10:30 PM	7:30 AM – 2:00 PM	Advance Reservation (next day service) – made day prior to trip by 5:00 PM
Senior Transportation Program	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM	No service	No service	Advance Reservation (next day service) – made day prior to trip by 5:00 PM
The Connector	4:00 AM – 12:00 AM	4:00 AM – 12:00 AM	No service	Minimum 2 hour notice – More advance notice is strongly encouraged
OCHST	6:00 AM – 6:30 PM	No service	No service	Minimum 2 hour notice – More advanced notice is strongly encourage

¹ Service not available on major holidays.

SECTION II: SERVICE POLICIES

Each year, Valley Transit’s paratransit system provides over 115,000 rides to individuals with disabilities, seniors, and workers. To ensure safe, efficient and effective service, the following policies have been established.

Some policies are marked with an asterisk to indicate that they are only applicable to Valley Transit II (VT II) and are designed to comply with the ADA.

Trip Scheduling/Reservations

During periods of high demand, it may be necessary for dispatchers to negotiate pick-up times; however, VTII eligible riders will not be required to schedule a trip more than one hour before or after the desired pick-up time.

If the amount of future subscription service demand limits the contractor's capacity to meet next day service requests, subscriptions may be capped at 50 percent of all scheduled trips.

Dispatchers assign drivers and vehicles to trips to ensure maximum effectiveness of the entire paratransit system and to meet all demand. The dispatcher will not assign any passenger exclusively to a specific vehicle or driver.

User Card

All eligible VTII riders receive a white certification card with an unconditional (U) or conditional (C) designation. Unconditional eligibility is provided to riders that are eligible to use the service for any trips (no restrictions). Conditional eligibility is provided to riders whose disability limits their ability to travel independently under certain conditions related to weather, distance to the bus stop, and other reasons. These riders can only use the service under these conditions.

If a rider's contact information changes, the rider should contact Valley Transit to update this information. To remain eligible, individuals with disabilities are required to reapply for ADA certification every three years. It is the rider's responsibility to keep certification information current with Valley Transit and reapply prior to expiration of certification.

Pick-up Window

When your pick-up time is scheduled, the vehicle can arrive anytime within a 30-minute pick-up window, which is defined as fifteen minutes before and fifteen minutes after the scheduled pick-up time. For example, if your appointment is scheduled for 9:00 am, the pick-up window time frame is 8:45 am – 9:15 am. It is the rider's responsibility to be prepared to board the vehicle within the pick-up window.

5-Minute Wait Time

Once the vehicle arrives for a pick-up, the driver will wait up to 5 minutes for a passenger. If the rider is not prepared to board within this wait time, the trip will be counted as a no-show and the vehicle will be dispatched to another location. It is the rider's responsibility to have clear visibility of the area where a vehicle would arrive for pick-up. The rider should be prepared to approach the vehicle when it arrives, unless qualifying driver assistance was requested when the ride was scheduled.

Cancellations

When a rider needs to cancel a trip, the cancellation should occur more than one hour prior to the scheduled pick-up time.

Trip Denials, Missed Trips & Excessively Long Trips *

A trip denial includes: (1) any VT II trip scheduled in advance where the scheduled pick-up time is more than one hour before or after a requested pick-up time, even if the VT II customer accepts the time offered; or (2) when a VT II customer requests a round trip and only one leg of the trip can be

accommodated, if the VT II customer declines the one-way offer, both legs of the trip are tracked as denied trips.

A missed trip occurs when a VT II passenger is waiting for a scheduled pick-up and the vehicle never arrives or arrives outside of the pick-up window (15 minutes either side of the scheduled pick-up time) and the passenger has left or does not board. If the vehicle arrives late or early and the rider elects to take the trip, it is considered a late pickup or early pickup. This is an un-timely pick-up and not a missed trip.

VT II trips longer than 90 minutes may be considered excessively long. VT II ADA trips need to be comparable to fixed-route trips (time on bus + transfer time + time walking to and waiting for bus = 90 minutes). Valley Transit's bus service covers an extensive geographic area and served by a mixture of 30 and 60 minute routes. VT II trips greater than 90 minutes will be reviewed to determine whether it is excessive when compared to the same trip by bus.

VT II ADA paratransit trips are prioritized by the service contractor over other demand response service trips to ensure adequate capacity and avoid denied, missed and/or excessively long trips.

Wheelchair Capacity

Vehicles can accommodate a combined person and chair weight of up to 800 pounds and chair widths of 33.5". If the rider and his/her mobility device are beyond the maximum capacities, the paratransit vehicles cannot safely provide a ride. Riders that have questions about the weight and size of their wheelchair should contact Valley Transit or the paratransit provider to determine if a ride can be provided.

Driver Assistance *

If needed, drivers are able to assist all riders when boarding and alighting vehicles, including securement. Additional origin to destination service is provided to VTII eligible riders when needed due to physical barriers (e.g., sidewalk construction or adverse weather) or the nature of the rider's disability (e.g., a rider with visual disabilities may require driver assistance to the door).

Origin to destination service does not include: (1) leaving the vehicle unattended or out of sight by the driver for a substantial amount of time; (2) assistance up or down stairs, transfers (e.g., assistance from mobility device to bed) or up floors in a building. If origin to destination service includes assistance through a door, it is limited to a facility's common area or reception desk. As a general rule, driver assistance will not last longer than five (5) minutes away from the vehicle.

Valley Transit paratransit drivers do not provide assistance when there is a direct threat to the health or safety of the driver and/or passenger and may deny transport. This includes unsafe assistive equipment or environmental factors, like travel across terrain when there is risk to safety. Drivers will assess whether a particular level of assistance constitutes a direct threat on a case-by-case basis.

Personal Care Attendants and Companions *

One personal care attendant (PCA) per ADA program user is permitted to ride free. A PCA is a person whose assistance is necessary in order for a passenger to complete their trip. An attendant could be necessary to provide physical and/or cognitive assistance. The arrangement for and use of personal care attendants (PCA) is the responsibility of the rider.

One companion may accompany a program user, but must pay the same fare as the user. Additional companions may ride and pay a fare, if space is available for safe transport. PCAs and companions must have the same origin and destination as the program user. Arrangements for all additional companions must be made at the time of reservation.

Visitors & Reciprocal Eligibility *

Visitors that have been certified as ADA eligible by another transit system (reciprocal eligibility) are automatically eligible for up to non-consecutive 21 days of service each year. If an individual claims eligibility from another system, but has no certification, Valley Transit will honor the request on the presumption of eligibility. Visitors with disabilities from rural areas may qualify for presumption of eligibility with other proof of a disability. Valley Transit will work with the service provider to make this determination when visitors request service.

If the visitor plans to continue using the paratransit services beyond 21 days each year, Valley Transit requires that the individual apply for eligibility through the ADA certification process.

Service Animals *

Service animals are allowed to accompany passengers on-board vehicles. ADA regulations define a service animal as “any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.” VTII does not allow a passenger to be accompanied by an animal that only functions to provide emotional support or comfort.

Customers must provide notification of their intent to travel with a service animal when they schedule their trip.

Medical Equipment *

Valley Transit allows individuals to bring medical equipment such as respirators and portable oxygen tanks on board vehicles. Oxygen tanks should remain upright at all times and must be secured to the mobility device or held in an upright position.

Trip Purpose *

The ADA prohibits restrictions or priorities based on trip purpose. All trips are served in the order received and as scheduled. VTII certified individuals will not be denied service based on trip purpose.

For state and federal reporting purposes, individuals may be requested to provide the reason for the trip, but will not be denied service based on response.

Carry-ons

Each eligible paratransit rider is allowed to carry-on up to four (4) carry-ons. This includes personal belongings and grocery bags. Medical equipment, like oxygen tank and mobility device, do not count toward the carry-on limit.

Multiple Destinations

Each trip includes one destination. Brief stops at locations before the scheduled destination will not be allowed. If multiple destinations are needed, each section of the trip must be scheduled separately and the rider must pay a fare for each ride.

Title VI Notice

Valley Transit, as a recipient of Federal Funding, assures that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its services on the grounds of race, color or national origin as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. For more information or procedures to file a Title VI complaint, call 920-832-5800, email valley.transit@appleton.org or visit our administrative office at 801 S. Whitman Avenue, Appleton, WI 54914.

Reasonable Modification Request

Upon request, reasonable modifications may be made to Valley Transit policy or practice to ensure that our transportation services are accessible to people with disabilities. Riders can request reasonable modifications of policy and practice in advance by contacting Valley Transit. See options above. Valley Transit will review the written request and respond with a written decision in 10 business days. If the decision requires more than 10 business days, the written response will indicate when a decision can be expected.

SECTION III: VTII ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

To become eligible for Valley Transit's ADA paratransit service (VTII), users must become ADA certified by completing an application. Valley Transit uses the information contained in the application to determine if the applicant's impairment causes an inability to utilize Valley Transit's bus service for some or all trips. This includes permanent and temporary disabilities.

Application Materials

Application materials and other information for Valley Transit's paratransit services are available in print form at the Valley Transit office (801 S Whitman Avenue, Appleton, WI 54914). Applications are also available for download on Valley Transit's website, www.myvalleytransit.com.

Notices and applications will be mailed to potential users of paratransit services upon request.

ADA Paratransit Eligibility Process

Valley Transit determines eligibility upon review of a completed application form containing information regarding the applicant's functional ability related to bus usage. Valley Transit reserves the right to require a medical professional's opinion, personal interview and/or a functional assessment prior to determining eligibility. Valley Transit, in accordance with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992, will determine eligibility no later than 21 days after receiving the completed application. This does not include time waiting for requests for more information from the applicant or the applicant's health care professional. Within the 21 days, a written response will be mailed to the individual notifying them of their eligibility status. If eligibility is denied, a reason for the denial will be included in the letter.

Eligibility Criteria:

Individuals meeting any of the following two criteria will be determined ADA paratransit eligible as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

1. A person who cannot navigate the transit system without assistance. This includes an inability to board, ride, or disembark from a fully accessible Valley Transit bus.
2. A person who, because of a disability, cannot travel to or from the bus stop due to, for example, distance, terrain, weather, safety, or other obstacles that impede them due to their disability.

All Valley Transit buses are equipped with a ramp and other accessible features. All routes are served by accessible buses, so there is no eligibility based on inaccessible vehicles. If there is mechanical failure of a bus's accessible features, the vehicle is immediately replaced with a fully-functioning spare bus.

Type of ADA Eligibility:

1. Unconditional (all trips) – An individual with disabilities that can not use the fixed-route bus system under any circumstance.
2. Conditional or Trip-by-Trip (some trips) – An individual with disabilities that can be reasonably expected to make some trips by bus, but requires paratransit for trips under certain circumstances (e.g., deep snow or variable health condition)
3. Temporary Disabilities – An individual with disabilities who cannot use the fixed-route bus system for a limited period of time.

Once the applicant is certified eligible, the applicant will receive a paratransit identification card, allowing the applicant use of the paratransit system. For people granted eligibility, the identification card will include at least the following information items:

1. User name
2. An expiration date for eligibility

For individuals determined not eligible for paratransit services, the appeals process will be included in the denial letter. Please see the Appeals Process listed in Section IV.

SECTION IV: RIDER POLICY

Valley Transit's "*Rules of Conduct and Exclusion Procedure*" identifies unsafe or unlawful conduct; service refusal and the suspension process, which is applicable to both bus and paratransit services.

Additionally, the following circumstances and/or behaviors may result in bus or paratransit service refusal.

- Seriously Disruptive Behavior
- Public Health Threats
- Refusal to Pay the Applicable Fare
- Refusal to Comply with Safety Rules

Seriously Disruptive Behavior

Service may be suspended or refused to customers who engage in seriously disruptive behavior. Seriously disruptive behavior is defined as 'Illegal Conduct' in Valley Transit's Rules of Conduct and Exclusion Procedure.

Public Health Threats

Service will be refused to any person who poses a potential public health threat. Examples of public health threats include, but are not limited to the following:

- The existence of excrement on clothes or on hands
- The existence of other body fluids, such as blood or vomit

Refusal to Comply with Safety Rules

A person that refuses to comply with posted safety rules or driver instructions may be refused service.

No-Shows

The no-show policy below does not apply to Valley Transit II (ADA complimentary paratransit service).

A no-show is defined as the act of a person, who, having scheduled a paratransit trip, changes his/her mind about making the trip but does not cancel the appointment, allowing the vehicle to arrive but not being available to board in less than 5 minutes. The definition also includes cancellations less than one hour before the scheduled pick-up time but does not include incidents like scheduling problems, late pickups and other operational problems of the provider. Each no-show will count as one occurrence.

Any trips due to the service contractor's error are not count as no-shows [or late cancellations], such as:

- Trips placed on the schedule in error
- Pickups scheduled at the wrong pickup location
- Drivers arriving and departing before the pickup window begins
- Drivers arriving late (after the end of the pickup window)
- Drivers arriving within the pickup window, but departing without waiting the required five minutes
- Hold times that prevent callers from canceling trips by telephone in a timely manner

Valley Transit does not count as no-shows [or late cancellations] situations beyond a rider's control, such as:

- Medical emergency
- Family emergency

Valley Transit's will maintain records of no-show incidents and review with service provider as needed.

The Connector: Riders with 3 no-shows in a 3-month period may be suspended from service. Suspensions typically begin on Sundays.

OCHST & Senior Transportation Service: Riders with 3 or more no-shows over the period of 3 months may be contacted by Valley Transit to discuss occurrences and how to reduce or eliminate future no-shows.

Appeals Process *

If service eligibility is denied or conditional eligibility is approved through the application process, the following appeals process must take place.

As listed in the written notification, ADA certification applicants will have 60 days to appeal paratransit eligibility decisions. Through written correspondence, the person may request a personal appearance to present written and oral information and arguments. Failure to respond is considered a default finding and the denial, conditional eligibility or suspension will be sustained. The appeal should be in writing and addressed to: General Manager, Valley Transit, 801 S. Whitman Ave, Appleton, WI 54914. The General Manager will review the appeal and make a final determination within thirty (30 days). Valley Transit's review may involve consultation with the City of Appleton City Attorney's office. Valley Transit reserves the right to refuse service during the appeals process.

Should the applicant need assistance with the appeals process, please contact (if over 60 years old) Holly Keenan with Making the Ride Happen at 920-225-1719; or (if under 60 years old) Jill Gretzinger with Easter Seals at 920-832-0344.

The individual will be notified in writing about the final determination, the reasons for it, and the sanctions imposed, if any. Within ten (10) days, the individual can request an appeal of Valley Transit's final determination. This appeal should be in writing and addressed to: General Manager, Valley Transit, 801 S. Whitman Ave, Appleton, WI 54914. An Appeals Board, consisting of Fox Cities Transit Commission members, will hold a hearing within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of appeal request by the Chair or designee. The Appeals Board will review and make a final determination of the appeal.

If a decision is not made within the specified timeframe, transportation is provided until and unless a decision to deny the appeal is issued.

Rider Feedback & Records Retention

Valley Transit strives to provide safe, affordable, and dependable transportation to all users. If for any reason the service does not live up to these expectations, passengers are encouraged to register a complaint with Valley Transit at (920) 832-5800. A thorough and prompt investigation of all complaints shall be conducted by Valley Transit.

Valley Transit's complaint process is defined in its *Transit Input Report Policy*.

Records of ADA-related complaints are retained for one year after creation of record and a summary of all ADA-related complaints for 5 years after creation of record.

SECTION VI: PARATRANSIT PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Valley Transit is responsible for ensuring VTII service performance complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Service oversight of the provider is completed through review of monthly trip records, on-site meetings, feedback received through the complaint and comment process, and periodic surveys of riders. In general, the ADA requires VT II service provided to individuals with disabilities to be comparable to what is provided to riders of the fixed-route bus system. Valley Transit has developed standards based on regulatory requirements and nationally recognized guidance related to paratransit service. Below is a list of performance measures applicable to ADA paratransit service and established standards within each measure.

On-Time Performance

A paratransit vehicle is on-time if the vehicle arrives within a 30 minute pick-up window. This is defined as fifteen minutes before and fifteen minutes after the scheduled pick-up time. Valley Transit monitors trip records from all ADA trips to track on-time performance. The ultimate goal is for all trips to be served on-time. Valley Transit sets a minimum level of performance of 95 percent on-time. Will-call trips and other non-ADA trips are not included in this standard. When on-time performance falls below 90 percent, Valley Transit will meet with the contractor to determine factors that impact on-time performance and corrective actions, if needed.

Phone System Access

The standard is to minimize call hold times. Valley Transit's standard is for 95 percent of calls to be answered within 3 minutes and 99 percent answered within 5 minutes. Valley Transit analyzes this measure by randomly monitoring the provider's phone access and documenting call hold times. Customer complaints are also used to determine if phone access capacity constraints have occurred.

Overall Customer Satisfaction

To determine customer satisfaction, Valley Transit surveys a segment of ADA paratransit riders. Riders are asked to rate their satisfaction with on-time performance, dispatcher courtesy, driver courtesy, driver sensitivity, vehicle cleanliness, and overall ride quality. The survey also allows customers to provide other comments. This data provides valuable information about customer satisfaction over time. The results are reviewed with the provider to identify areas of improvement and areas of success.

System Capacity

Valley Transit's paratransit system is prohibited from having any capacity constraints. Trip demand must be adequately served to provide equivalent access when compared to the fixed-route bus system. Valley Transit monitors the following to ensure adequate capacity: trip denials, no-shows, advance reservations, customer complaints, trip lengths and vehicles used. Data is tracked to determine if there are on-going issues that show operational patterns or practices, which significantly limit the availability of ADA paratransit service.

ADA paratransit trips are prioritized by the service contractor over other demand response service trips to ensure adequate system capacity.

Valley Transit's bus and paratransit services can both be impacted by weather, traffic, vehicle breakdowns and other unforeseen interruptions to service. Both services strive to mitigate service delays and focus on reliability.

SECTION V: VALLEY TRANSIT'S ACCESSIBLE BUS SERVICE

ADA paratransit programs are designed to provide transportation for individuals with disabilities that are unable to board, ride or alight from a bus; or when environmental or architectural barriers prevent an individual with disabilities from getting to or from a bus route stop. When these conditions are not present, individuals with disabilities must utilize the fixed-route bus routes to meet their mobility needs.

The bus offers a cost-effective and accessible service. By presenting a VTII, Medicare or reduced fare card to the bus driver, individuals with disabilities qualify for half fare according to Valley Transit fare schedule.

Each bus contains accessible features, including: kneeling capability (bus lowers to make the first step easier); a ramp for wheelchair boarding; on-board wheelchair securement areas; and stop announcements.

Valley Transit drivers are trained to safely secure wheelchairs and other mobility devices. Valley Transit drivers also assist with boarding, as necessary.