

MUSKEGON AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM RESERVE-A-RIDE PROGRAM

A Temporary Public Transportation Service
Responding to Essential Travel Needs
During a Period of Demand-Response Service Transition

Effective September 27, 2020

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Background & Introduction

Effective September 27, 2020, the Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS) is implementing service changes to its fixed route and demand response programs. Fixed route bus service hours, days, and routes will change and the demand-response program formerly known as the GoBus will be transformed into two different service models.

As these changes are made, MATS continues its work to replace the GoBus program with a new on-demand transportation service to be rolled out in early 2021 to a broader eligible general public population in portions of the community. The new service promises to deliver, in a more economical and flexible manner, a mobility option and format not previously available in Muskegon County. The new program will fill in areas where former MATS services are no longer available, and will provide new expanded opportunities as resources allow.

Understanding that there is a gap in time between the Autumn 2020 implementation of MATS service changes and the Spring 2021 delivery of a new on-demand program, the County Board of Commissioners has authorized MATS to deliver a temporary transportation service for a six-month period to fill in some of the intervening transportation need. This document outlines the parameters of a “Reserve-A-Ride” program that MATS will operate on a temporary basis, from September 27, 2020, to March 31, 2021.

The Reserve-A-Ride service described here is intended for essential travel and is a pre-scheduled, curb-to-curb, shared-ride program providing transportation opportunities for the general public within defined areas of the Muskegon area. Reservations will be required to travel on the “Reserve-A-Ride” program, and can be made up to 14 days in advance or on a next-day basis.

Supplement to Fixed Route Program

The Reserve-A-Ride program is designed to be a temporary supplement to the MATS fixed route bus program. Where possible, passengers are encouraged to learn the new MATS fixed route system, with its more direct and quicker travel options. General route information can be found at www.matsbus.com, while further Travel Training and Route Orientation assistance is readily available and can be scheduled by contacting MATS at 231-724-6420. Learning and using the fixed route buses provides you the most independent travel option and is the most economical form of public transportation service provided by MATS.

Reserve-A-Ride Service Area

The service area for the Reserve-A-Ride program is bounded geographically by Sheridan Drive on the east, Lake Michigan on the west, Muskegon Lake on the north and Mona Lake on the south, with service also available to the Muskegon County Airport and the Veteran’s Administration Clinic on Hakes Drive. Reservations can only be made for trips starting and ending within the service area.

Eligibility for Reserve-A-Ride

Everyone is eligible to ride the Reserve-A-Ride. It is requested that you schedule only essential travel. As this is a shared-ride service, you should expect to ride with other passengers and should not anticipate a direct pick-up and drop-off ride. As this service is subject to resource constraints, trip requests will typically be handled on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to system capacity. Children under age 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

Service Hours of Operation

Reserve-A-Ride will operate Monday through Saturday, between the hours of 10:00 am and 5:00 pm. It does not operate on County-observed holidays. For a complete list of Holidays where the service is closed, please visit our website at www.matsbus.com. This is a temporary program that is expected to end on March 31, 2021.

Reservations

“Reserve-A-Ride” reservations will be taken Monday through Friday during normal customer care business hours (currently 8:00 am to 5:00 pm), except on designated holidays or weekends. Reservations can be made on a next-day basis or up to two weeks in advance. Same day trip requests will not be accommodated. To make a reservation, contact the MATS Customer Care Center at 231-724-6420 and request the “Reserve-A-Ride” program.

When you first call for a reservation, we must register you as a user of the system and you should be prepared to provide basic information that we will need in order to activate you in our scheduling software. This will include name, home address, birthdate, telephone number, and information on any mobility devices you may use. When scheduling each of your trip requests, you must provide the Customer Care Representative with your name, date of travel, and the addresses of your origin and destination. If children under age 12 are traveling with you, please inform the scheduler that you will have child companions so that space is reserved.

Pick-up Times and Passenger Readiness

When scheduling a ride, passengers are given an available appointed pick-up time. MATS utilizes a computer-generated flexible pickup window, which is anchored on this appointed pickup time, to allow for the best use of resources. Bus operators strive to maintain prompt schedules within the parameters of the computerized scheduling system to ensure all passengers are picked up within the scheduling pickup window. Passengers should be ready for the bus 5 to 10 minutes prior to the appointed pick-up time, and should recognize that the bus will still be considered to have arrived “on time” up to fifteen minutes after the appointed time.

Upon the vehicle's arrival, passengers have five (5) minutes to board the bus, if the bus has arrived at the appointed time or within fifteen minutes after the appointed time. If the passenger does not board the bus within 5 minutes after the vehicle arrival (assuming the vehicle arrived within the fifteen minute "on-time" window), the passenger will be reported as a No-Show and the vehicle will depart. If a vehicle arrives prior to the appointed time, the passenger is requested to, but is not required to, board the vehicle earlier than appointed.

Return Trips

If you want to use "Reserve-A-Ride" for a return trip, you must estimate your travel need and schedule that return ride in the same manner. The program does not automatically schedule return rides and does not provide "Will-Call" or same day return trips.

Fares

The General Public fare for Reserve-A-Ride is \$4.00, per one-way trip, per person.

The Reduced Fare for Reserve-A-Ride is \$2.00, per one-way trip, per person. To be eligible to pay the Reduced Fare, you must be:

- A Senior (age 65 or over) with photo id showing proof of age
- A Person with a Disability with one of the following:
 - A current MATS fixed route "Reduced Fare Card"
 - Applications available at www.matsbus.com
 - Includes access options for Medicare Cardholders
 - A current MATS ADA Complementary Paratransit Card
 - Or be a previously registered user of the GoBus program at MATS

Children under 42" tall may ride free when accompanied by an adult.

In recognition of MATS Fixed Route service changes, an additional and temporary special fare policy is in place for essential travel trips on Reserve-A-Ride to or from a home or business west of Henry Street. For these trips, the above fare rates will be scheduled at the time of booking, but the passenger, upon boarding, may use any of the following items to satisfy the required fare payment:

- A MATS 10-ride bus pass
- A MATS Round-trip or Single-trip bus pass
- A currently valid MATS monthly bus pass

Cancellation Policy:

Please call the MATS Customer Care Center as soon as possible to cancel a scheduled reservation if you will not need the ride. This allows other customers to use the service.

No-Show, Cancel at the Door or Late Cancel:

“No-show”, as well as “late cancellation” and “cancel-at-the-door” events result in wasted trips that could have been used by other passengers. As it deems appropriate, MATS may choose to record each customer’s no-show(s), late cancel, and “cancel-at-the-door” activity and apply appropriate sanctions if customers establish an excessive pattern of such activity. The policy is necessary in order to recognize the negative impact that these actions have on the services provided to other passengers.

For purposes of this program, the following terms will be used:

- No-Show: When the MATS vehicle arrives, waits the required 5 minutes, and the passenger does not emerge from the trip origin location.
- Late Cancellation: When a scheduled trip is cancelled by the passenger or representative less than 60 minutes before the scheduled pickup time.
- Cancel-at-the-Door: When the MATS vehicle arrives for a scheduled trip and the passenger or a representative of the passenger cancels the trip in person.

It is understood that these events may occur occasionally on accident or for reasons beyond the control of the passenger. Such events that occur for reasons that are beyond the passenger’s control will not be counted toward establishing a pattern or practice. Examples of excusable events include, but are not limited to:

- Illness
- Accidents
- Family Emergency
- Passenger’s appointment ran longer than expected and he/she could not call to cancel, or
- Acts of God (flood, earthquake, etc.)

Passengers should contact MATS as soon as possible to alert them of your emergency so your trip is not counted as a no-show event.

MATS schedules pick-ups and return trips separately. We will assume all scheduled return trips are needed unless notice is given by the passenger. If a passenger is a no-show for the first trip of the day, MATS will not automatically cancel subsequent trips of the day. If, however, the passenger does not need the return or other subsequent trip(s), they should cancel them as soon as possible out of courtesy for other riders. If subsequent trips are not cancelled, a no-show may be documented for the passenger.

If a passenger has been transported to their destination, but is a no-show when the bus returns, they may call dispatch to request an alternate return trip; however a pick-up window will not be guaranteed.

Suspensions of service may occur when a rider exceeds the maximum number of no-shows, late cancellations, or “cancels-at-the-door” allowed per calendar month during the term of this

program. Table 1 and Table 2 outline the maximum number of no-shows allowed per number of trips scheduled and the associated penalties that may be assessed for violations.

If your service is suspended you will be mailed a Notice of Service Suspension, to your home address on file. The Notice will include dates of suspension, a no-show report, information regarding an appeal process, and a copy of this policy.

Table 1

Scheduled Trips In the Past Calendar Month	Maximum # No-Shows, Late Cancels, or “Cancel-at-the-Door” Allowed per Calendar Month
1 to 14	3
15 to 39	5
40 to 59	7
60 +	9

Table 2

No Show Penalties	
First Violation	Letter of Warning
Second Consecutive Violation	3 day Suspension
Third and Fourth Consecutive Violation	15 day Suspension

No-Show Service Suspension Appeals Process

If you have been suspended from Reserve-A-Ride service for excessive No Show or cancellation events and feel that the information regarding your no-show(s) is incorrect, you have the right to submit an appeal.

All appeals must be submitted in writing within 15 days of the date of the Notice of Service Suspension letter to:

MATS
 Transit Systems Manager
 2624 Sixth St.
 Muskegon Heights, MI 49444

The appeal should provide the reason that you feel your service should not be suspended in accordance with this policy. Appeals will be reviewed and you will be notified of the decision within 10 days of receipt of the appeal.

Service Animals, Mobility Devices, and Other Necessary Equipment

MATS shall not prohibit any mobility device, provided it does not exceed the capacity of the vehicle or its equipment (lifts/ramps) or present a safety risk to others.

MATS shall not prohibit a passenger from boarding who has a respirator, portable oxygen and/or other life support equipment, as long as the items do not violate the law or rules relating to the transportation of hazardous materials. All equipment must be small enough to fit in the vehicle safely without obstructing the aisle or blocking emergency exits.

All passengers are allowed to travel with service animals trained to assist them. Pets, Emotional Support, and Comfort animals are not permitted on MATS buses or vehicles.

Lift and Securement Use Policy

In accordance with ADA regulations, MATS will provide service to all individuals using mobility devices that fit within the capacity of the lift being operated. Passengers are advised that bus operators are not permitted to operate a mobility device onto the lift. The passenger is responsible for getting onto the lift with minimal bus operator assistance for these devices.

Use of the vehicle's securement system is required as a condition of service. All wheelchairs and mobility devices must be safely secured before transport. When transporting passengers using mobility devices, MATS can suggest but not require passengers to transfer to a seat. The passenger, in this case, has the final decision as to whether a transfer is appropriate given the passenger's particular disability.

As the regulations require, a passenger who cannot enter the vehicle using the stairs or ramp, but who does not use a wheelchair, will be allowed to enter the vehicle using the lift. MATS does not provide wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

Rider Behavior

Passengers are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible manner. Unruly, violent or illegal conduct will not be tolerated and will be dealt with promptly, including but not limited to expulsion from the vehicle, suspension from services, and/or notifying law enforcement.

Packages

Drivers must adhere to a schedule and customers are allowed to bring only what they can independently carry onboard in one load. Customers will not be allowed to get on and off the vehicle loading packages. Customers may consider purchasing a small shopping cart, one that can be safely secured in the passengers control and would not roll while in the vehicle.

Attachment 1
Reserve-A-Ride Service Area



Attachment 2 MATS Fixed Routes

