



## **Paratransit Service Plan**

**Prepared By:  
The City of Longview Staff**

**254 Oregon Way  
Longview, WA 98632**

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## I. General Contact Information

RiverCities Transit developed this Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit Plan in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 49 CFR Part 37 Subpart F, revised October 1, 2011. It has been prepared for:

**Agency Name:** City of Longview (d.b.a. RiverCities Transit)

**Mailing Address:** PO Box 128, Longview WA 98632

**Telephone:** (360) 442-5663

**Fax:** (360) 442-5979

**Website:** [www.rctransit.org](http://www.rctransit.org)

**Authorized Representative:** Amy Asher, Transit Manager  
[amy@rctransit.org](mailto:amy@rctransit.org)

**ADA Update Contact Person:** Tabitha Hayden, Mobility Supervisor  
[tabitha@rctransit.org](mailto:tabitha@rctransit.org)

### ADA Policy:

The United States Congress signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law on July 26, 1990. This civil rights legislation requires that persons with disabilities receive accessible transportation services equal to those available on the fixed route service.

### Title VI Policy:

RiverCities Transit operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, or national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person who would like more information on our Title VI Program or believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI and would like to make a complaint may contact:

RiverCities Transit  
Title VI Compliance Coordinator  
PO Box 128 Longview, WA 98632  
(360) 442-5663 (TTY Relay: 711) [Customerservice@rctransit.org](mailto:Customerservice@rctransit.org)

You may visit [www.rctransit.org](http://www.rctransit.org) for verification on the dissemination of the language. If you require copies of the printed material, please let us know. The Title VI Program is posted on our website and clearly outlines the process for filing a complaint with RCT or directly with FTA, along with an outline of the follow up process.

## II. RiverCities Fixed Route System

### Overview

The Cowlitz Transit Authority (CTA) is a Public Transportation Benefits Area that collects sales tax to support public transportation. The current sales tax levy is three-tenths of a percent. The CTA contracts with the City of Longview for the provision of service known as RiverCities Transit (RCT).

RCT serves the Kelso-Longview UZA in Cowlitz County. This small-urbanized area has a population of about 63,952.

	<u>Annual Ridership</u>	<u>Annual Operating Expenditures</u>
2019	334,731	\$3,089,033
2018	354,317	\$2,881,260
2017	377,835	\$3,033,187

Data based on the annual National Transit Database Annual Report Submission.

### Routes, Span, and Frequency of Service

RCT operates seven fixed routes within Longview and Kelso city limits. Six routes operate at a 60-minute frequency. One route runs at 40-minutes. See appendix A, RCT Fixed Route current service levels table.

Five routes, including the routes with a frequency of fewer than 60 minutes, connect at the Longview Transit Center. Three routes connect with Amtrak and Greyhound at the Kelso Train Depot.

RCT operates six days a week. Monday through Friday service is from 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Saturday service is from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. During periods of bad weather, buses run on modified routes and schedules on streets that are safe for travel.

### Stop Announcements

Stops at major intersections, transfer points, and destination points are announced on fixed route buses. Audio recordings or transit drivers announce other stops upon request. (49 CFR 37.167 (a-c))

### Holiday Closures

RCT does not provide service on the following nationally recognized holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Independence Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Memorial Day
- Labor Day
- Christmas Day

## Holiday Reduced Service

RCT may provide reduced service on the following nationally recognized holidays:

- Martin Luther King Day
- Veterans Day
- Christmas Eve
- Presidents Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving Day

## Fixed Route Fare Structure

Fare Media	Fare	Terms
<b>One Way Trip (Adult and Student)</b>	\$1.00	One Way w/ Transfer
<b>One Way Trip (Reduced)</b>	\$.50	One Way w/ Transfer
<b>Monthly Pass (Adult)</b>	\$14.00	Unlimited Rides during Calendar Month
<b>Monthly Pass (Reduced and Student)</b>	\$7.00	Unlimited Rides during Calendar Month
<b>Quarterly Pass (Adult)</b>	\$42.00	Unlimited Rides during Calendar Quarter
<b>Quarterly Pass (Reduced and Student)</b>	\$21.00	Unlimited Rides during Calendar Quarter
<b>Annual Pass (Adult)</b>	\$168.00	Unlimited Rides during Calendar Year
<b>Annual Pass (Reduced and Student)</b>	\$84.00	Unlimited Rides during Calendar Year
<b>Student Summer Fun Pass</b>	\$14.00	Unlimited Rides June - August

Figure 1. 2019 Fixed Route Fares

Senior citizens are those 65 and older. LIFT eligible riders, children five years and younger ride free. Personal Care Attendant of LIFT eligible riders may ride free, provided they board and disembark at the same stop.

## Fleet Inventory

RCT’s fixed route fleet consists of fourteen 35-foot Gillig buses. All buses are equipped with lifts or ramps to be wheelchair accessible and ADA compliant. All buses have at least two designated wheelchair bays and priority seating for senior and disabled riders, while two buses have three securement areas including a passive securement space. All routes are accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities, including those who use wheelchairs. See Appendix B, Table 1 - Fixed Route Vehicle Fleet.

## III. Identification of Other Service Providers

In addition to RiverCities Transit, there are other service providers that operate transportation systems that are either open to the public or specific populations such as Medicare clients.

### Lower Columbia Community Action Program

Operates three transportation services in Cowlitz County. They operate a rural transportation system on the I-5 corridor between Vancouver and Castle Rock, which includes a stop at the Longview Transit Center. They also operate a Medicaid service for those individuals who are eligible for Medicaid and authorized by the Medicaid Transportation Brokerage in Vancouver. CAP’s senior transportation is for

residents who live within Wahkiakum or Cowlitz County. Still, they will not provide trips where both the origin and destination are within the RiverCities Transit service area. This service is limited to two (2) round trips per month per client.

### Columbia County Rider

A rural transportation service operated by Columbia County, Oregon, that connects residents of that county to the Kelso-Longview area. Columbia County is a rural community that does not possess the retail, commercial, or medical opportunities present in the Longview-Kelso area.

### Wahkiakum on the Move

A rural transportation service operated by Wahkiakum County, Washington, that connects residents of that county to the Kelso-Longview area. Wahkiakum County is a rural community that does not possess the retail, commercial, or medical opportunities present in the Longview-Kelso area.

### Cowlitz Tribal Transit

The Cowlitz Tribe operates a rural transportation service whose primary purpose is to transport rural residents to urban areas. Cowlitz County pick-up areas include Ryderwood, Castle Rock, Toutle, Silver Lake, Rose Valley, Carrolls, Kalama, Woodland, Lexington, and outside the city limits of Kelso and Longview.

### Greyhound BOLT Bus

The BOLT bus pick-up in the Kelso/Longview is the Amtrak Station in Kelso. The bus stops twice daily; the midmorning stop is heading north to Seattle while the afternoon trip returns to Portland.

### Amtrak

Passenger rail service is available from downtown Kelso's Amtrak station. The Amtrak Cascades service runs five times per day between Portland OR and Seattle WA.

## IV. RiverCities LIFT – Paratransit System

### Overview

RCT provides federally mandated complementary paratransit service within  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile of all fixed routes in accordance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (see Figure 2 for service area boundary map). This service operates under the name RiverCities LIFT. The City of Longview contracts with Paratransit Services Inc. to operate LIFT. Paratransit Services Inc. is a non-profit organization headquartered in Bremerton, Washington. Paratransit Services Inc. provides drivers and scheduling/dispatch staff. The City of Longview owns and provides the vehicles.



	<u>Annual Ridership</u>	<u>Annual Operating Expenditures</u>
2019	55,867	\$1,745,641
2018	52,622	\$1,622,928
2017	49,546	\$1,592,693

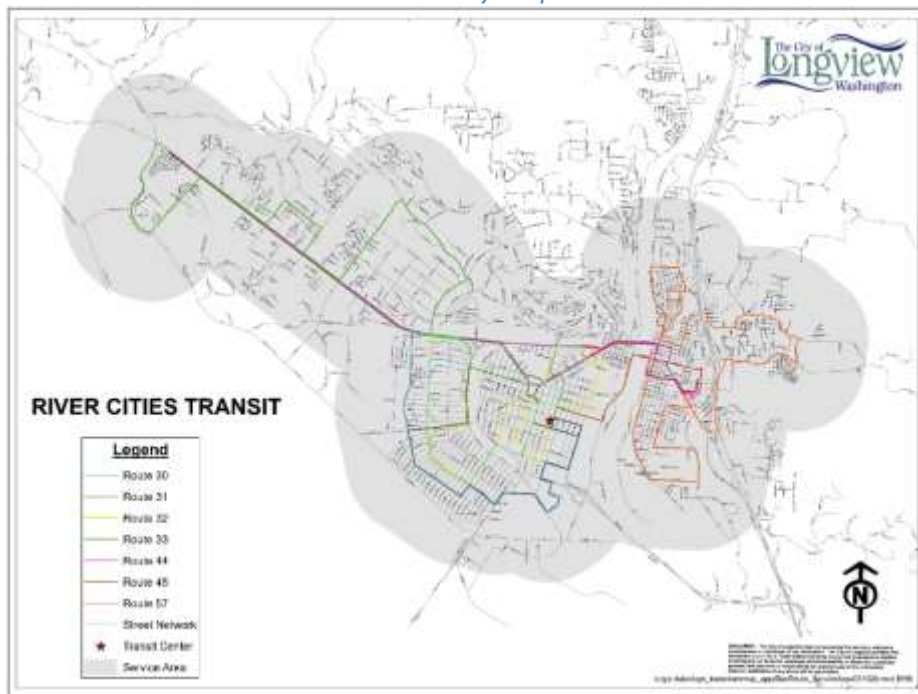
Data based annual Nation Transit Database Annual Report Submission.

To qualify for LIFT, individuals must complete an application process and be certified as unable to utilize regular fixed route transportation because of their disability. LIFT provides paratransit service on a next-day reservation basis. In addition, LIFT offers same-day response as a "premium" service at an additional cost. LIFT operates on the same schedule as fixed route service weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. LIFT provides trips for any purpose and does not limit the number of trips an individual may take. The ADA requires there be no capacity constraints or trip denials. LIFT is a shared-ride service, meaning riders may travel with others who are going in the same direction.

LIFT is intended to serve as a "Safety Net" for individuals who are unable to use fixed route services including:

"Any individual with a disability who is unable, as the result of a physical or mental impairment (including vision impairment), and without the assistance of another individual (except the operator of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device), to board, ride, or disembark from any vehicle on the system which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities [is an ADA paratransit eligible individual]" (Title 49 Subtitle A Part 37.123).

Figure 2. March 2020 ADA Service Area Boundary Map



## Holiday Closures

RCT LIFT does not provide service on the following nationally recognized holidays:

- New Year’s Day
- Independence Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Memorial Day
- Labor Day
- Christmas Day

## Holiday Reduced Service

RCT LIFT may provide reduced service on the following nationally recognized holidays:

- Martin Luther King Day
- Veterans Day
- Christmas Eve
- Presidents Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving Day

## LIFT Fare Structure

Fare Media	Fare	Terms
<b>ADA</b>		
One Way Trip	\$1.00	One Way
5 Ride Punch Card	\$5.00	One Punch per Ride, Valid Until Last Ride Punched
20 Ride Punch Card	\$10.00	One Punch per Ride, Valid Until Last Ride Punched
Monthly Pass	\$15.00	Unlimited Rides during Calendar Month
<b>NON ADA</b>		
Will Call	\$5.00	One Way Unscheduled Trip
Premium	\$15.00	

Figure 3. 2019 LIFT Fare Structure

## Fleet Inventory

RCT’s LIFT fleet consists of fourteen Ford Eldorado cutaways, three Starcraft All Stars, a Dodge Caravan, and a MVI. All buses are equipped with lifts or ramps to be wheelchair accessible and ADA compliant. All buses have at least one designated wheelchair bay. See Appendix B, Table 2 - LIFT Paratransit Vehicle Fleet.

## V. RiverCities LIFT Eligibility Process

Disability alone does not create eligibility on RiverCities LIFT. The decision is based on the applicant’s functional ability to use RCT’s fixed route service.

The application process includes a two-part application: Part one is to be completed by the applicant, Part two is to be completed by a medical professional. A copy of the application can be found in Appendix C, RiverCities LIFT Paratransit Application. A potentially eligible person may request an application several different ways.

- In person at the RCT Transit Center located at 1135 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Longview
- By calling RCT Customer Service at 360-442-5663
- By mail to RiverCities Transit PO Box 128, Longview WA 98632
- By fax at 360-442-5979
- By email at [customerservice@rctransit.org](mailto:customerservice@rctransit.org)
- By downloading from the RCT website [www.rctransit.org/lift/](http://www.rctransit.org/lift/)

The application, which includes a description of the certification process, is available in alternate formats as requested by an individual.

Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant. If the completed application does not provide enough information to make a determination, RCT may conduct an in person or phone interview and/or assessment. The interview, the final phase of the application process, is scheduled when all sections of the application are received. RCT staff will make the eligibility determination after reviewing the completed evaluation, medical verification, and conducting the interview. All persons who, because of disability, are unable to use the accessible fixed route bus service are eligible to use the paratransit service after completing the necessary eligibility and registration procedures.

There are four levels of eligibility.

1. **Permanent Unconditional Eligibility** may be granted to applicants who are determined unable to independently use the fixed route buses, including those whose mobility is not evolving and the likelihood of new technologies is not going to change their eligibility. Those granted permanent unconditional eligibility will be required to complete pages one and two of the application once every three years to keep contact information up to date.
2. **Unconditional Eligibility** may be granted to applicants who are unable to use the fixed route service independently. Those granted unconditional status will be required to reapply by completing both parts of the application once every three years.
3. **Conditional Status** may be assigned to applicants who are able to use the fixed route buses for some of their trips but under certain circumstances and for specific trips are unable to use the fixed route service independently. Those granted conditional status will be required to reapply by completing both parts of the application once every three years.
4. **Temporary Eligibility** may be granted to applicants who are determined unable to independently use the fixed route buses for a period of time due to a temporary disability or condition. Those granted temporary status will be required to reapply by completing both parts of the application at the end of their temporary term.

Applications are processed in the order that they are received and within 21 days of receipt. If RCT is unable to determine a person's eligibility in that period, the person will be treated as eligible and provided service until a determination is made.

Notice of determination will be sent to the applicant within the 21 days required. A copy of the 60-day appeal procedure will be included for riders given conditional eligibility, temporary eligibility, or was found not eligible.

## VI. Eligibility Administrative Appeal Process

RCT's appeal process complies with paragraph 49 CFR 37.125 of the ADA regulations.

An individual who has been denied eligibility or eligible but with specified conditions may request an administrative appeal.

RCT's Appeal Process can be found in Appendix D Eligibility Administrative Appeal Process.

## VII. RiverCities Transit – Paratransit Operating Policies

### Overview

RiverCities Transit Paratransit Service (LIFT) is a specialized service that requires pre-approval. LIFT is a shared-ride service that provides origin to destination service. As a shared-ride service, riders should assume that they will share a vehicle with other riders, that the vehicles used will vary based upon the operational demands on any given day, and that you can expect travel times to be similar to travel times for the same trip on the fixed route bus. RiverCities Transit's Paratransit service will operate according to the following policies.

### Origin to Destination Service

RCT will provide origin-to-destination service to anyone eligible for paratransit service. If additional assistance such as door-to-door is needed, it will be evaluated at the time of the application.

Due to the shared-ride aspect of the service, it is the driver's duty to ensure the safety of all riders. Drivers must stay in the visual range of their vehicles. Drivers may escort passengers to/from the street level entrance of their origin/destination, as long as the driver can stay within visual range of their vehicle. For example, drivers would not be able to accompany a rider to the second floor of a building.

### Trip Restrictions

RCT will not permit trip limits or trip purpose restrictions on eligible riders. Riders who travel between their origin and destination daily may ride with others who travel at the same time interval.

### Capacity Constraints

RCT shall provide 100 percent of eligible riders' trip requests. Operational problems attributable to causes beyond the control of RCT (including, but not limited to, weather, safety, or traffic conditions affecting all vehicular traffic that were not anticipated at the time a trip was scheduled) shall not be considered a capacity constraint.

RCT does not impose:

- Limits to the number of trips an eligible rider may request,
- Waitlists for access to service, or

- Any operational pattern or practice that significantly limits the availability of service to eligible riders such as, but not limited to:
  - Shortage of drivers or dispatchers
  - Insufficient number of vehicles
  - Prioritization of program participant trips.

## Reservation Process

RCT accepts reservations 24 hours a day at 360-442-5667. Outside of regular business hours, riders may leave their trip request information on the voicemail system at 360-442-5667.

Reservation requests must include the following information:

- First and Last Name of the customer
- Customer phone number
- Day and Date of trip
- Time desired to arrive at the destination
- Time desired to be picked up at the destination
- Exact street address of the origin location and destination location. Include applicable facility names, apartment building, or suite number
- Type of mobility aid used/traveled with
- Number of persons traveling (Customer, Personal Care Attendant, Guest)
- Identify your Service Animal if traveling with one

Reservations requests provided through the voicemail system and which are determined to be incomplete will not be processed.

Riders must reserve their trip by 5:00 p.m. the day prior to the requested service. Reservations may be made up to 14 days in advance.

RiverCities recognizes that for some trips arrival time is more important than the departure time, therefore we allow riders to request either a desired pick up time or a desired drop-off time. RCT will schedule the trip for as close as possible to the requested time; however we reserve the right to negotiate up to an hour before and an hour after the requested time. Once a trip is established any further negotiations are subject to rider acceptance; if the rider refuses, the agency is obligated to provide the trip as previously negotiated. 49 CFR 37.131 b(2)

## Pickup window

A pickup window is a reasonable window around the negotiated pickup time that tells the passenger when the vehicle may arrive. It is intended to account for day-to-day variability in the operation of complementary paratransit. RiverCities pickup window is ten minutes before to twenty minutes after the negotiated pick up time for a 30-minute on time window.

## Subscription Service

LIFT offers subscription service. This is available to riders who travel one or more days to/from the

same origin/destination at the same time each week.

Subscription service may not consume more than 50 percent of the total trips available at a given time of day if it presents a capacity issue. A waiting list may be developed if the subscription service program is at capacity. LIFT shall reduce the amount of subscription service if it creates capacity constraints for other riders.

## Visitors

Visitors to RCT who are disabled and require paratransit services, shall, for 21 days over a one-year period, have the same rights and privileges regarding ADA paratransit service as an eligible local user, without any higher priority being given to either. Visitors are required to pay the fare, as defined in the fare policy. (49 CFR 37.127)

A visitor is defined as someone who does not reside in the jurisdiction served by the public entity or with which it coordinates paratransit service.

A visitor may become eligible in one of two ways.

- 1) Present documentation from his or her “home” jurisdiction’s paratransit system.
- 2) If the individual has no such documentation, RCT may require the provision of proof of visitor status (i.e., proof of residence somewhere else) and, if the individual’s disability is not apparent, evidence of the disability. No documentation of disability is being required if the visitor’s disability is apparent.

If the visitor has surpassed the 21 days within the one year period, they must fill out an application for an eligibility determination as outlined in section IV.

## Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) and Guests

Personal attendants may accompany passengers on a trip and are not required to pay a fare. A PCA is someone who travels with you boarding and alighting at the same locations to assist you with traveling or with daily life functions or activities. You must provide your PCA if you need one. Please let staff know on your application form whether you will be using a PCA. When scheduling a trip, you will need to tell the reservationist that you are traveling with a PCA. This communication ensures that there will be room on the vehicle for you, your PCA, and other scheduled riders.

A guest may accompany an eligible rider on RCT, having the same origin and destination as the qualified individual. Guests must pay regular fare. A guest is anyone who rides with you, who is not your PCA. One guest may accompany an eligible individual. Additional guests shall be provided service if space is available for them on the LIFT vehicle without denying transportation to other eligible individuals. When scheduling your trip, you will need to tell the reservationist that you will be traveling with one or more guests. Drivers cannot add riders who do not have a reservation. (49 CFR 37 (d))

## Service Animals

A service animal is any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform

tasks for an individual with a disability.

To ride RCT:

- The service animal must be on a leash, tether or harness unless use of such device would interfere with the task the service animal performs or the person's disability prevents use of such devices.
- The service animal must remain under control of the owner, and behave appropriately at all times.
- Birds, reptiles, amphibians, rodents, and cats must be kept in an enclosed carrier/container.
- The animal must remain at your feet or on your lap. It may not sit on a vehicle seat.
- The animal must not be aggressive toward people or other animals. (49 CFR 37.167 (d))

## Carry-on Items

Eligible riders may bring no more than four grocery size bags on board. Baggage must be able to be carried onto the bus in one trip. Drivers will assist in carrying no more than four grocery size bags from their vehicle to the door of the trip destination as long as the weight of those bags poses no safety hazard or injury risk.

## Mobility Devices

Riders will be transported provided the lift or ramp, and the vehicle can physically accommodate them unless doing so is inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements (e.g., the combined weight of the wheelchair and occupant exceeds that of the lift specifications). Additionally, RCT can accommodate mobility devices that meet the following minimum standards:

- *Wheelchair* means a mobility aid belonging to any class of three or more wheels, usable indoors, designed or modified for and use by individuals with mobility impairments, whether manually operated or powered.
- Walkers must be collapsible and able to be stored between seats or in the vehicle's trunk.

The mobility device must be in good working order, with batteries charged, tires inflated, and all parts secure. (49 CFR 37.3)

DOT ADA regulations allow persons who use wheelchairs to transfer to a vehicle seat if one is available. An operator may suggest that a passenger transfer to a seat for safety concerns. (49. CFR 37.165)

## Mobility Device Brakes

When occupying a lift or securement area, we recommend that riders apply the brakes on their mobility devices, but they are not required to do so. With power chairs or scooters, we recommend that the power switch be turned to the "off" position. Again, this is not mandatory.

## Use of Seat Belts and Securement Devices

All riders must wear seat belts. Drivers will use front and rear tie-downs to secure mobility devices. Drivers will secure mobility devices at the strongest parts of the device; however, the rider can

indicate the most optimal tie-down spot. Drivers will secure mobility devices facing the front of the vehicle. Drivers will assist passengers with securement systems, ramps, and seatbelts; however, drivers cannot help riders using power chairs or scooters with the operation of their equipment. LIFT cannot refuse to transport someone whose mobility device cannot be satisfactorily restrained if the mobility device fits within the definition described in Section 3. (49 CFR 37.165) Drivers will refuse to transport if riders will not allow their mobility device to be properly secured prior to transport. For safety reasons, operators may request that passengers transfer to a bus seat if using a scooter as a mobility device.

### Mentally or Cognitively Impaired Riders

Some riders are mentally or cognitively impaired or have severe memory problems such that they cannot be safely left alone on their own at either the origin or destination. It is the responsibility of the rider's caregivers or family to identify these riders to RiverCities LIFT staff during the application process.

The driver cannot act as an attendant for these riders. Cognitively impaired passengers can travel without an attendant if they exhibit safe behavior when traveling. An attendant or caregiver must be present at the origin and destination for riders who cannot be left alone. If a responsible caregiver is not present when the driver attempts to pick up or drop off these riders, it will count as a service disruption.

### Reasonable Accommodation

Requests for modifications of RCT policies, practices, or procedures to accommodate an individual with a disability may be made either in advance or at the time of the transportation service. RCT is best able to address and accommodate a request when riders make their requests before the trip. The full Reasonable Modification of Policies and Practices plan document is available at [www.rctransit.org](http://www.rctransit.org). Contact RCT rider service at (360)442-5663 for questions.

### Operator Assistance

Operators are not permitted to enter any home or go beyond the threshold of any building. Operators are required to maintain visual contact with the vehicle at all times. Operators may enter into the main lobby of a business for the exclusive purpose of notifying a passenger that the vehicle is available for boarding, provided they are able to maintain line-of-sight contact with the vehicle at all times.

In locations where operators cannot maintain line-of-sight with their vehicle and go to the door to notify passengers of the arrival of their ride, the passenger may request telephone notification of the bus's arrival.

Operators must assist individuals with the use of ramps, lifts, and securement systems. If the operator must leave their seat to provide this assistance, they must do so. On a vehicle that uses a ramp for entry, the operator may have to assist in pushing a manual wheelchair up the ramp. Operators must ensure that passengers are able to take advantage of the accessibility and safety features on the vehicles.



Operators are not permitted to maneuver a mobility device up or down stairs, or physically lift passengers. Operators may assist in carrying no more than four grocery sized bags from their vehicle to the door if it is on the first story and within sight of the vehicle. Passengers needing more assistance than the operators are allowed to provide; are encouraged to make other arrangements for that assistance.

### Portable Oxygen Use

Individuals with disabilities who use portable oxygen devices can travel with respirators and properly secured portable oxygen supplies. Oxygen supplies must not obstruct the aisle. (49 CFR 37.167(h))

### Inclement Weather

Service may be limited and possibly canceled when adverse weather creates hazardous conditions for customers, operators, and vehicles. LIFT will run on a revised schedule parallel to the fixed routes, operating only on major streets and hills that have been made safe for travel. In the event of adverse weather conditions, RCT will notify Flash Alert, Facebook, and clients with reservations of any service limitations. When service is suspended, all transportation stops until the Transit Supervisor or Manager determines that road conditions are safe.

### Trip Denials

RiverCities Transit will count all denials for service. One denial of a multi-legged trip will count as a denial for each subsequent leg of the trip.

## VIII. Late Cancellations and No-Shows

### Overview

Rider no-shows and late cancellations affect both LIFT riders and the Cowlitz Transit Authority. No-shows reduce efficiency due to wasted fuel and time lost, verifying that a passenger is a no-show. Both no-shows and late cancellations lead to unused capacity on runs and decreased productivity. No-shows and late cancellations also unfairly affect other riders by causing unnecessary detours and delays. RCT developed the No-Show Policy and Procedures in accordance with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines for ADA complementary Paratransit service.

U.S.DOT regulations 49 CFR 37.125(h) address the issue of no-show policies in ADA complementary paratransit service programs, and state that, *“The entity may establish an administrative process to suspend, for a reasonable period of time, the provision of complementary paratransit service to ADA paratransit eligible individuals who establish a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips. Trips missed by the individual for reasons beyond his or her control (including, but not limited to, trips which are missed due to operator error) shall not be a basis for determining that such a pattern or practice exists.”*

## No Show

A No Show occurs when the LIFT vehicle arrives at the correct location within the pick-up window, and the customer does not board the vehicle within five minutes of the vehicle's arrival; the customer is not there, the customer no longer desires to take the scheduled trip and cancels at the door, or the customer arrives to board the bus as the bus is departing.

A Report of No Show will document the following Event:

- There has been no call by the rider (or the rider's representative) to cancel the scheduled trip time AND
- The vehicle arrives at the scheduled location within the scheduled time AND
- Upon not seeing the passenger at the designated pick-up location the driver radios dispatch AND
- The driver cannot reasonably see the rider approaching the vehicle after waiting five minutes AND
- Dispatch is notified. At this time, Dispatch will give instructions as to how to proceed. The no show event is documented.

## Late Cancel

A late cancel of a scheduled trip constitutes a No Show. A late cancel is a trip that is canceled within two (2) hours of the scheduled pickup.

## LIFT's Trip Procedures

LIFT schedules pick-up and return trips separately. LIFT assumes all scheduled return trips are needed unless the rider or their representative gives notice. If a passenger is a No-Show their first trip of the day, RiverCities LIFT will not automatically cancel subsequent trips of the day. This practice is consistent with FTA regulations. If, however, the rider does not need the subsequent trip(s), they should cancel them as soon as possible out of courtesy for other passengers.

To ensure a rider is not left stranded when he or she misses a scheduled pickup. LIFT will provide a return trip granted the trip is within service hours.

A \$5 will call fare will be charged for will call trips, defined as return trips for appointments in which the pick-up time is not prearranged (e.g., medical or legal appointments), or when a van is required to be dispatched to pick up a rider subsequent to a missed pick-up that was within the rider's control. Will call trips are considered non-ADA service. Trips in which a rider changes the return trip time less than one hour prior to the scheduled return trip will also be considered 'will call' service, and the \$5 'will call' fare will be charged. The \$5 fare will be waived for return trips rescheduled one hour or more before the scheduled pick-up time.

When a no-show has been documented, the passenger will be notified by mail. If the rider feels that the no-show should be excused, they should contact the phone number listed as soon as possible. Repeated failures to take scheduled trips, regardless of the reason, are subject to review. Riders can cancel trips 24 hours a day by calling LIFT at (360) 442-5667.

## Unexcused No-Shows

No-Shows are not excused when the trip is not canceled at least two (2) hours prior to the scheduled pick-up time and is missed for reasons that include, but are not limited to:

- Rider didn't want to travel today
- Rider changed their mind about using the appointment
- Rider didn't know that he/she had a ride scheduled or was supposed to call to cancel
- Rider got another ride
- Rider told someone else he/she was not planning to travel (driver, facility, etc.), or someone else booked the trip for him/her.
- Rider does not want to ride with a specific driver or passenger, or in a particular vehicle.

## Sanction for Excessive No-Shows

Those riders who have been recorded as having three (3) or more no-shows in a 60 day period will be reviewed to identify the rider's trip and no-show history as well as their frequency of travel. LIFT verifies each no-show before a suspension is proposed. A Pattern or practice involves intentional, repeated, or regular actions that are not isolated, accidental, or singular incidents.

A rider who has three (3) or more no shows AND is in excess of the agency average no-show rate for the same 60 day period may have sanctions or suspensions imposed if the no-shows are determined to constitute a pattern.

The formula for determining the average No-Show rate within the 60-day window is to take:

Total trips / No-Shows = Average No-Show rate

Repeated failures to take trips as scheduled, regardless of the reason, are subject to review. Riders incurring excessive no-shows or late cancellations may be warned and then suspended for a reasonable period. Repeated violations of this policy will result in longer suspension periods each time. The following suspension periods shall apply to violations of this policy that occur within the same rolling 12-month period.

- First No-Show – Written notice documenting no show
- Second No-Show - Written warning and a reminder of no-show policy and penalties, including a listing of dates of no-show events.
- First Violation - occurs upon verification of three no-shows and greater than average no-show rate for the 60-day period. 7-day suspension.
- Second Violation – occurs if the rider has a 4<sup>th</sup> no-show in a 60-day period and greater than average no-show rate for the 60-day period - 14-day suspension.
- Third Violation and thereafter– increasing penalties by one week.

Sanctions will be imposed no sooner than fifteen (15) days after the notice has been sent to allow for alternate travel plans. The notice will include the start date for the sanctions and will list no-show events that led to the suspension.

## Restoration of Service

Any rider who has had their service suspended for less than 30 days shall have their service automatically restored upon the completion of the suspension as it is listed in the written notice of their suspension. Any rider who has had their service suspended for 30 days must contact RiverCities Transit Supervisor to have their service restored. A staff contact person will be listed in the written notification of their suspension. The purpose of this contact is to identify any issues or concerns that have caused so many incidents to occur. Staff will work with the rider to identify solutions or strategies to minimize future occurrences. If a rider who is suspended for 30 days chooses not to contact a RiverCities Transit Supervisor to discuss their suspension, then they are voluntarily choosing not to use RiverCities LIFT, and this is not a denial of service.

## Excused No-Shows

No-Shows for reasons that are beyond the rider's control will not be counted. Examples of excused no-shows include, but are not limited to:

- Illness
- Sudden turn for the worse in someone with a variable condition
- Accidents
- Family emergency
- Personal Care Attendant who did not arrive on time to assist the rider
- Rider's appointment ran long and did not provide an opportunity to cancel in a timely way
- Rider's mobility aid failed
- Late connecting transportation: late transfer trip, train, etc. caused the rider to miss the trip
- Appointment Canceled/Delayed for reasons that are not the rider's fault
- Acts of God: Flood, earthquake, etc.
- Staffing Error: Staff did not note the cancellation request or rider just realized that staff scheduled the trip inconsistently with the rider's request
- Another person canceled rider's appointment
- Bus arrival past the scheduled pick up window

Riders wishing to dispute specific no-shows (or late cancellations) must do so within 14 business days of the date on the letter. Riders should contact RiverCities Transit at (360)442-5663, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to explain the circumstance and request the removal of the no-show or late cancellation.

## Appealing Proposed Suspension

Riders wishing to appeal suspensions under this policy have the right to file an appeal request, which must be in writing by letter. Riders must submit written appeal requests within 14 business days of receiving suspension letters. Riders who miss the appeal request deadline will be suspended from RiverCities LIFT on the date listed on the suspension notice.

All suspension appeals follow RiverCities Transit's appeal policy found in Appendix E.

## IX. Service Disruption

When riding RiverCities LIFT, passenger conduct will not be accepted nor allowed that is violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal. Persons who demonstrate a willingness to engage in disruptive behavior that delays or prevents the driver from operating the vehicle in a safe and timely manner may lose their eligibility to use the service for various periods of time. This provision does not apply to unforeseen situations beyond the individual's control, including behavior symptomatic of an individual's disability (e.g., panic attacks). RiverCities LIFT may refuse service to an individual with a disability who engages in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct, using the same standards for the exclusion that would apply to any other person who acted in such an inappropriate way.

*RiverCities LIFT will not refuse to provide service to an individual with disabilities solely because the individual's disability results in appearance or involuntary behavior that may offend, annoy, or inconvenience employees of the entity or other persons.*

Examples of the violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct resulting in "refusal to provide service" include but are not limited to the following:

- Disrupting the driver while he/she is driving the vehicle.
- Engaging in any conduct or activity that represents a danger to him/her, to other passengers, or the driver.
- Spitting
- Making physical or verbal threats to the driver or the other passengers.
- Damaging or destroying vehicle equipment or any employee or rider's property.
- Getting out of the seat while the vehicle is in motion or while the trip is underway.
- Refusing to wear a seat belt.
- Refusing to disembark.
- Smoking, consuming alcoholic beverages, or using any illegal substance while onboard the LIFT vehicle.
- Disrupting other riders.
- Disrobing.
- Exceeding the four-bag limit.
- Swearing, name-calling, and/or abusive language.
- Personal hygiene condition resulting in a public health hazard.
  - When using the bus, passengers who have open wounds, sores, or other potential physical injuries need to ensure that all wounds and sores are properly covered. Passengers with medical conditions such as (including but not limited to) incontinence need to plan accordingly for such events.

Passengers who have properly covered open wounds and sores shall be transported unless their medical condition or personal hygiene presents a direct threat to staff or other passengers. Any passenger may be refused access to public transportation if visible body fluid leakage or dripping is occurring while at the bus stop. The passenger may also be asked to exit the bus if leakage or dripping occurs after they have boarded. Such leakage or dripping creates a biohazard to the other persons on the bus.

Any attempt to interfere with or distract the driver while they are operating a vehicle will be considered a service disruption. Riders are allowed basic verbal communication with a driver as it relates to their trip if it does not pose a safety hazard.

If a service disruption occurs and the nature of the incident is violent, illegal, or presents a safety risk to RiverCities LIFT vehicles, staff, or riders, then RiverCities Transit may classify that rider as a “Direct Threat.” A person who poses a significant risk to others may be excluded [from service] if reasonable modifications to the public accommodation’s policies, practices, or procedures will not eliminate that risk. (49CFR 37.5 App. D/ 29 CFR 36.208) We will be forced to discontinue service immediately until RCT management can discuss it with the rider and/or their legal guardian/caregiver.

RiverCities LIFT shall send a written notice to any rider who has a service disruption credited to them. This notification shall be in addition to any verbal notice given. The written notification shall show any incidents that have occurred in the previous 90-day period. In the advent of a suspension of service, the written notice shall include a count of all incidents that have occurred in the last 90- day period and will list out the last three events. If service has been previously suspended in the last 90-day period, then any prior suspensions shall be listed out also. The written notices include a request that the rider contact the RiverCities LIFT Manager if they have information that may explain how the incident(s) that occurred was beyond their control. Riders may also appeal a suspension of service.

### Suspension of Service for Service Disruptions

RiverCities LIFT reserves the right to suspend a person's eligibility for service if an excessive number of service disruptions are recorded for that person in a 90-day period.

- If a rider receives three service disruption incidents within a 90-day period, that individual’s paratransit service may be suspended for seven (7) days.
- If a rider receives a fourth disruption within the same 90-day period, that individual’s service may be suspended for up to 30 days.
- If a rider continues to demonstrate a pattern of incidents by having more than five disruptions in a 90-day period, that individual will be required to meet with a Transit Supervisor before service can be resumed.

When a rider is suspended, their suspension will take effect 15 days after the written notification is mailed. This notice is to allow a rider to make personal arrangements before their suspension takes effect.

Any rider who has had their service suspended may contact RiverCities LIFT Manager to file an appeal of their suspension. The contact information will be in the written notice of suspension. The rider does not have to appear in person but can opt to handle the appeal through written means or a phone conversation. They must do so before the suspension takes effect. Any rider appealing their suspension will continue to have service until their appeal is heard unless their suspension is due to a violent or illegal act.

## Restoration of Service

Any rider who has had their service suspended for less than 30 days shall have their service automatically restored upon the completion of the suspension as it is listed in the written notice of their suspension. Any rider who has had their service suspended for a 30-day period or has had more than five (5) incidents in a 90-day period must contact a RiverCities Transit Supervisor to have their service restored. A staff contact person will be listed in the written notification of their suspension.

The purpose of this contact is to identify any issues or concerns that have caused so many incidents to occur. Staff will work with the rider to identify solutions or strategies to minimize future occurrences. If a rider who is suspended for 30 days chooses not to contact a RiverCities Transit Supervisor to discuss their suspension, then they are voluntarily choosing not to use RiverCities LIFT, and this is not a denial of service.

## Appealing Proposed Suspension

Riders wishing to appeal suspensions under this policy have the right to file an appeal request, which must be in writing by letter. Riders must submit written appeal requests within 14 business days of receiving suspension letters. Riders who miss the appeal request deadline will be suspended from RiverCities LIFT on the date listed on the suspension notice.

All suspension appeals follow RiverCities Transit's appeal policy found in Appendix E.

## X. Comparison of Current Paratransit Policies to ADA Requirements

	ADA Requirement	Current Paratransit Policy
Eligibility for Paratransit Service	Persons with disabilities who are unable to access fixed route service for the particular trip being requested due to an impairment related condition.	Individual application with medical verification and in person interview for every applicant.
ADA Service Area	<p>Service is required to origins and destinations within corridors with a width of three-fourths of a mile on each side of each fixed route.</p> <p>Small areas surrounded by corridors must be served. Service is not required outside the boundaries of the jurisdiction(s) in which the transit agency's operates, if it does not have legal authority to operate in that area. This exception applies only when there is a legal bar to the entity providing service on the other side of a boundary.</p>	RiverCities LIFT serves eligible riders living within three-fourths of a mile of the RiverCities Transit's fixed routes.
Service Hours	<p>Service shall be available throughout the same hours and days as the entity's fixed route service.</p> <p>Corridors do not need to be served with paratransit when the fixed route system is not running in them.</p>	<p>RiverCities LIFT service hours mirror fixed route service, from 6:30 a.m. until 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays.</p> <p>Service is offered to entire service area during those hours, regardless of whether fixed route is running at</p>
Response Time	<p>The entity shall schedule and provide paratransit service in response to a request for service made the previous day.</p> <p>Reservations may be taken by reservation agents or by mechanical means.</p> <p>Reservations will be accepted 24 hours a day. Outside normal business hours, riders may leave their trip request on a voicemail system.</p> <p>The entity may permit advance reservations to be made up to 14 days in advance.</p> <p>The entity may negotiate pickup times with the individual, but not more than one hour before or after the individual's desired departure time.</p>	<p>Reservations will be accepted Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Reservations will also be accepted via voicemail 24 hrs. a day.</p> <p>Reservations may be taken by RiverCities LIFT Dispatch, voicemail, or fax.</p> <p>Trips may be reserved until 5 p.m. the day prior.</p> <p>Trips may be reserved up to 14 days in advance.</p>



	ADA Requirement	Current Paratransit Policy
Fares	<p>The fare shall not exceed twice the fare that would be charged to an individual paying full fare (i.e., without regard to discounts) for a trip of similar length, at a similar time of day, on the entity’s fixed route system.</p> <p>In calculating the full fare, the entity may include transfer and premium charges.</p> <p>Companions pay the same fare as the ADA eligible rider. An attendant rides free.</p> <p>A higher fare may be charged to a social service agency or other organization for agency trips (i.e., trips guaranteed to the organization).</p>	<p>RiverCities LIFT one-way fare is identical to fixed route fare at \$1.00. A 20 Ride Punch card is available to LIFT clients which reduces the fare to 50¢ one-way.</p> <p>Companions pay the same fare as the ADA eligible rider, \$1.00 one-way. Personal Care Attendants ride free. Riders should specify when making their reservation if they will be accompanied by a Personal Care Attendant or companion to ensure there will be no capacity constraints.</p>
Trip Purpose Restrictions	<p>The entity shall not impose restrictions or priorities based on trip purpose.</p>	<p>RCT will not permit trip purpose restrictions on eligible riders. Riders who travel between their origin and destination on a daily basis may ride with riders who travel at the same time interval.</p>
Capacity Constraints	<p>The entity shall not limit the availability of complementary paratransit service to ADA paratransit eligible individuals by any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Restrictions on the number of trips an individual will be provided</li> <li>– Waiting lists for access to the service</li> <li>– Any operational pattern or practice that significantly limits the availability of service to ADA paratransit eligible persons including but not limited to substantial numbers of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o significantly untimely pickups for initial or return trips</li> <li>o trip denials</li> <li>o missed trips</li> <li>o trips with excessive trip lengths</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Operational problems attributable to causes beyond the control of the entity shall not be a basis for determining that a pattern or practice exists.</p>	<p>RCT will not permit trip limits on eligible riders or impose a wait list for access to the service.</p> <p>RCT reviews trip statistics on a monthly basis.</p>

	ADA Requirement	Current Paratransit Policy
Rider Assistance Level	Origin-to-destination service standard. Door-to-door service should be provided when requested in a situation that does not provide a safety hazard or other policy violation.	<p>RCT will provide origin-to-destination service to anyone who is eligible for paratransit service. If additional service such as door-to-door is needed it will be evaluated at the time of the application and when requested.</p> <p>Due to the shared-ride aspect of the service, it is the driver's duty to ensure the safety of all riders using the service; drivers must stay within non-interrupted visual range of their vehicle. For example, drivers would not be able to accompany a rider to the second floor of a building.</p>
Same Day Service	Not required	<p>Same day "non-ADA" service may be scheduled at a premium fare of \$15 each way. Will call service may also apply.</p> <p>Will-call service is available and is defined as trips where the pickup time is not prearranged or it is a return trip that is changed less than one hour before pickup. A \$5.00 fare will be charged unless it is a return trip that is rescheduled more than an hour in advance of the scheduled pick up time.</p>

## XI. Public Participation and Information

### Efforts to Include Persons with Disabilities in Planning Process

In an effort to include persons with disabilities in the Paratransit planning process, the City of Longview's Disability Advisory Committee consisting of community members with and without disabilities who utilize various forms of transportation within the RCT system, were advised during their March 2021 meeting that the plan is available for review and comment. In addition, it is available on RCT's website, office, and transit center. Paratransit riders have been notified via signs on the paratransit vehicles.

### Availability of the Plan in Accessible Format

The RCT Paratransit Plan is available in alternate formats as requested by an individual.

### Documentation that Draft Plan was Subject to Public Review and Comment

On March 10, 2021, a 30-day Public Comment period opened. Copies of all public comments received are included in the April 14, 2021 Board of Directors meeting packets. During this period, public outreach occurred in several ways.

- Public notices were placed in the following publications: The Daily News and City Info Weekly
- Public notice was posted on the RiverCities Website and on RiverCities Facebook page
- A press release announcing the draft plan was published
- Handouts were available to riders on both fixed-route and LIFT.
- Signs were posted on all revenue service vehicles in the RCT fleet
- Staff called our point of contact at each high-use facility, and an invitation to comment was extended.
- Public Hearing held April 14, 2021 during the Cowlitz Transit Authority Board meeting.

### Documentation of Issues Raised by Public and How They Were/Will be Addressed

During the public comment period, RCT received (1) comment(s) in the following general categories:

i. General Comments

March 31, 2021 via [customerservice@rctransit.org](mailto:customerservice@rctransit.org)

A note of appreciation. The service is first rate. I live at Westgate Terrace Apartments. There are many residents here that depend on the Service. The Drivers are wonderful, so helpful. You serve the Disabled/Elderly of the Community that otherwise would be stranded. A great community service.

Thank You!

Jerry Bakken

During the public hearing, RCT received (1) comment(s) in the following general categories:

i. General Comments

April 14, 2012 via Zoom during Cowlitz Transit Authority

Ken Pearrow from the Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG) thanked Tabitha Hayden and RiverCities Transit for putting together a good plan and continuing to provide needed service to the community. This helps the CWCOG meet its Human Services Transportation Plan goals and objectives.

## XII. Implementation Plan

To be compliant with the updated plan, RCT will take the steps outlined below:

RCT will immediately advise staff of plan changes and begin any necessary training.

All other portions of this Paratransit Plan are currently in practice.

### XIII. Appendix

#### Appendix A Fixed Route Service Levels

**Table 1 - RCT Fixed-Route Current Service Levels**

Route	Morning	Mid-day	Afternoon
30 – Downtown to Highlands		60 minute	60 minute
31 - Highlands	60 minute	60 minute	60 minute
32 - Downtown Longview	60 minute	60 minute	60 minute
33 – West Longview/LCC	60 minute	60 minute	60 minute
44 – Shopper Shuttle	60 minute	60 minute	60 minute
45 – Longview/Kelso	40 minute	20 minute	20 minute
57 – Kelso Loop CCW	60 minute	60 minute	60 minute

#### Appendix B RCT Vehicle Fleet

**Table 1 - Fixed Route Vehicle Fleet**

Vehicle No.	Make	Model	Seating Capacity	Wheelchair Capacity	Lift / Ramp	Lift Capacity
42-03	GILLIG	<i>Phantom</i>	35	2	Lift	600 pounds
42-04	GILLIG	<i>Phantom</i>	35	2	Lift	600 pounds
42-05	GILLIG	<i>Phantom</i>	35	2	Lift	600 pounds
42-06	GILLIG	<i>Phantom</i>	35	2	Lift	600 pounds
42-07	GILLIG	<i>Low Floor</i>	32	2	Ramp	
42-09	GILLIG	<i>Low Floor - Hybrid</i>	32	2	Ramp	
42-10	GILLIG	<i>Low Floor BRT</i>	32	2	Ramp	
42-11	GILLIG	<i>Low Floor BRT</i>	32	2	Ramp	
42-12	GILLIG	<i>Low Floor BRT</i>	32	2	Ramp	
42-13	GILLIG	<i>Low Floor BRT</i>	32	2	Ramp	
42-14	GILLIG	<i>Low Floor BRT</i>	32	2	Ramp	
42-15	GILLIG	<i>Low Floor BRT</i>	32	2	Ramp	
42-16	GILLIG	<i>Low-Floor G27B</i>	28	3	Ramp	
42-17	GILLIG	<i>Low-Floor G27B</i>	28	3	Ramp	

**Table 2 - LIFT Paratransit Vehicle Fleet**

<b>Vehicle No.</b>	<b>Make</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Seating Capacity</b>	<b>Wheelchair Capacity</b>	<b>Lift / Ramp</b>	<b>Lift Capacity</b>
42-35	Ford	Eldorado	15	3	Lift	650 pounds
42-39	Ford	Eldorado	15	3	Lift	650 pounds
42-40	Ford	Eldorado	15	3	Lift	650 pounds
42-42	Ford	Eldorado	15	3	Lift	650 pounds
42-43	Dodge	Caravan	3	1	Ramp	
42-44	Ford	Eldorado	13	3	Lift	650 pounds
42-45	Ford	Eldorado	13	3	Lift	650 pounds
42-46	Ford	Eldorado	13	3	Lift	650 pounds
42-47	Ford	Eldorado	13	3	Lift	650 pounds
42-48	Ford	Eldorado	13	3	Lift	650 pounds
42-49	MVI	MV-1	4		Ramp	
42-50	Ford	Eldorado	13	3	Lift	650 pounds
42-51	Ford	Eldorado	13	3	Lift	650 pounds
42-52	Ford	Eldorado	14	3	Lift	750 pounds
42-53	Ford	Eldorado	14	3	Lift	750 pounds
42-54	Ford	Eldorado	14	3	Lift	750 pounds
42-55	Ford	Allstar	14	3	Lift	1000 pounds
42-56	Ford	Allstar	14	3	Lift	1000 pounds
42-57	Ford	Allstar	14	3	Lift	1000 pounds

## Appendix C RCT Eligibility Application

### **Eligibility Application**



## Paratransit Application

**Greetings! Please take a moment to read this letter before filling out your application. It contains information that will be helpful to you and your Qualified Professional.**

### **Purpose**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that we provide our LIFT service as a “safety net” for people who cannot use our Fixed Route service (big blue buses) by themselves because of a disability. We work hard to make Fixed Route accessible. We intend it to be the main mode of public transportation for everyone in Longview and Kelso, including people with disabilities. All Fixed Route buses are wheelchair accessible with ramps or lifts, securement areas, and both visible and audible stop announcements.

### **Service Provided**

LIFT is a shared-ride service, meaning Riders may travel with others who are going in the same direction. Drivers may stop to pick up or drop off other Riders along the way. Drivers cannot go inside a building to pick up or drop off Riders.

### **Operating Hours and Area**

LIFT operates Monday – Friday 6:30 a.m. -7 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. We provide service within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of our Fixed Routes. If you live outside the service area you may still ride LIFT if eligible, but you will need to get into the service area before we can transport you.

### **Eligibility**

ADA rules require people apply and be found eligible in order to receive these tax-supported services. We base eligibility on your ability to use our Fixed Routes. We do not base it on a diagnosis of a disability or the type of mobility aid that you use. For example, using a wheelchair does not imply automatic eligibility since many people who use wheelchairs are able to use Fixed Route for many or all of their trips.

### **These are not factors for eligibility:**

- Age
- Income
- Convenience
- Inability to drive, carry packages, or transfer from a wheelchair

### **The three categories of eligibility that may result in your approval are:**

**Category 1:** Being unable to use Fixed Route by yourself.

**Category 2:** Lack of accessible vehicles, stations, or bus stops.

**Category 3:** Being unable to reach a boarding point or final destination.

We look forward to helping you use our services. We provide Travel Training if you need a little extra help to ride either Fixed Route or LIFT.

Contact us at (360) 442-5663 if you need help filling out this form or have any questions about our services.



# Application Instructions

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## 1 Eligibility Questionnaire

You or someone on your behalf must complete this part. You must sign the Release of Information included on page 4.

## 2 Professional Verification

A Qualified Professional (right) who is familiar with your abilities must complete this part.

## 3 Submit Both Parts Together

## 4 Phone or In-Person Assessment

The eligibility of most applicants can be determined by reviewing the paper application, but there may be cases when we need to assess your abilities. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Talking about your mobility.
- Reading a bus schedule.
- Taking a short walk or roll.
- Practicing how to get on a bus.

If we need to conduct an assessment, your eligibility will be determined within 21 days of the assessment. We'll call to schedule it and we'll provide transportation to and from the assessment.

If an assessment is not required, we'll determine your eligibility within 21 days after we receive your complete application. Then we'll notify you of our determination in writing.

## Qualified Professionals:

- Physician or Psychiatrist
- Physical Therapist
- Physician Assistant
- Licensed Independent Social Worker (LISW, LICSW)
- Occupational Therapist
- Registered Nurse or Nurse Practitioner
- Psychologist
- Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist
- Speech/Language Pathologist
- Licensed Case Manager

We know that many professionals work with people with disabilities. This list isn't meant to exclude those professionals. In general, this means they completed a multi-year degree, are licensed by a public agency such as the WA State Department of Health, or both.

A primary care physician is often able to complete this section. You do not need to visit a specialist.

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## Avoid Delays

- Make sure all questions in both sections are answered.
- Make sure all signatures are present.
- Work with us to schedule assessments as soon as possible.

An incomplete application will be returned with a notice of what is missing.

1

PART 1

# Eligibility Questionnaire

Complete the entire application. Incomplete applications will be returned.

Is this a new application, or a recertification?  New  Recertification

## Applicant Information

First Name	M.I.	Last Name	
Home Address			Apt#
City		State	ZIP
Is this an apartment complex, mobile home park, or facility? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Name of complex or facility	
Home Phone	Mobile Phone		Gender <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
<b>Date of Birth ( mm/dd/yyyy )</b>	Primary Language <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		
Mailing Address (If different)			
City		State	ZIP

1. What mobility device(s) do you travel with? Larger, heavier, wheelchairs may exceed equipment safety specifications.

- Cane       White Cane       Manual Wheelchair
- Crutches       Prosthesis       Powered Wheelchair/scooter
- Walker       Portable Oxygen       No aid required

2. If you qualify for LIFT, would you require a helper (Personal Care Attendant or PCA) to travel with you?

- Yes       No       Sometimes, **specify:** \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you travel with a service animal?

- No       Yes, **type:** \_\_\_\_\_

Unconditional  
 Conditional  
 Temporary  
 Denial

OFFICE USE ONLY

EXPIRES:

REVIEWED BY:

FIRST:

LAST:

**4. In case of emergency, who should we contact?**

Emergency Contact Name
Phone
Work Phone
Relationship

**Who is authorized to contact RCT on your behalf?**

Contact Name 1 (Individual or Organization)
Phone
Contact Name 2 (Individual or Organization)
Phone

**5. Please list three trips you frequently take:**

Starting Address

Ending Address

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**6. How do you currently travel to complete your frequent trips? Check all that apply.**

Fixed Route (big) bus     Walk     LIFT     Other, specify:  
 Drive myself     Bicycle  
 Ride with somebody     Taxi

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. What best describes your ability to use RCT's Fixed Route (big) bus?**

I can use the bus for most trips.  
 I can use the bus but it is difficult.  
 I can use the bus only for specific trips or destinations.  
 I have never tried to use the bus.  
 I cannot use the bus.

**8. We provide free, in-person training to help you learn to ride our Fixed Route (big) buses. Are you interested in receiving this training?**

Yes     No

**9. How far can you travel by yourself? With your mobility aid, if any.**

Less than one block  
 1 block (1/8 mile)  
 2 blocks (1/4 mile)  
 4 blocks or more (1/2 mile +)

**10. Can you be left unattended at your destination?**     Yes     No

**11. Can you be left unattended at your home/residence?**     Yes     No

12.

**Are you able to complete the following tasks by yourself?**  
Check a box for each question. If you answer **Sometimes** please explain.

	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
A. Travel to/from the bus stop closest to where you live?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. With help from the Driver, can you get on and off a ramp or lift-equipped bus?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. With any necessary mobility aid(s), can you wait 15 minutes at a bus stop without a bench/shelter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. With any necessary mobility aid(s), can you wait 15 minutes at a bus stop with a bench/shelter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Recognize stops and landmarks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Ask for, understand, and follow directions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Plan, understand, and follow through with the actions necessary to take a bus trip?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Clearly communicate information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explain any boxes checked "Sometimes": \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. Is your disability:

Permanent  Stable  Progressive  Temporary, **how long?** Months \_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_

14. Explain as completely as possible how your disability prevents you from getting on, riding, or getting off a Fixed Route (big) bus or how it prevents you from getting to or from a bus stop. Add another page if needed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I certify that the information provided in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the falsification of information may result in the denial of service. I understand this application will be used to determine paratransit eligibility under the ADA and may include an in-person functional assessment. I also understand that periodic recertification and/or assessment may be required. I certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct (RCW 9A.72.085).

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant, or Legal Guardian's Signature Date

Check this box if someone other than the applicant is completing this form.

# Release of Information

## Medical Information Release / HIPAA Authorization

I authorize the Qualified Professional, and their office staff, completing this application to release to RiverCities LIFT any protected health information about my disability in order to verify my eligibility for paratransit service. I also authorize the release of further information should it be needed for this application for a period of 60 days from the date of my signature on this application unless revoked in writing.

\_\_\_\_\_ / / \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Applicant Name Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

### Your Qualified Professional

The professional listed below should complete and copy the remainder of this application.

Name	Profession	
Address	Phone	Fax

**The following section must be filled out by your Qualified Professional.**

## **2** PART 2 Professional Verification

Complete the entire application. Incomplete applications will be returned.

Dear Qualified Professional,

RiverCities Transit will use the information to help determine the applicant’s paratransit (LIFT) eligibility in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). LIFT is a tax-supported service for individuals who, because of their disabilities/functional limitations, are unable to ride the regular ramp-equipped and fully accessible bus. Age, use of a mobility device, convenience of LIFT, fear of falling, inability to drive, and inability to carry packages are not qualifying factors for LIFT service. Individuals are not ADA paratransit eligible if getting to or from fixed route stops and stations is only more difficult or inconvenient. Please call (360) 442-5663 if you have any questions.



**Is the applicant's disability:**

- Permanent
- Stable
- Progressive
- Temporary, How long?  
Month \_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_

**Does the applicant's disability:**

- Affect mobility
- Affect judgement
- Require** them to have assistance when traveling outside their residence?

**How far can the applicant travel without help from another person?**

- Less than one block
- 1 block (1/8 mile)
- 2 blocks (1/4 mile)
- 4 blocks or more (1/2 mile +)

**Is the applicant able to complete the following tasks by themselves?**

	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
A. Travel to/from the bus stop?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. With help from the Driver, can they get on and off a ramp or lift-equipped bus?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. With any necessary mobility aid(s), can they wait 15 minutes at a bus stop without a bench/shelter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. With any necessary mobility aid(s), can they wait 15 minutes at a bus stop with a bench/shelter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Recognize stops and landmarks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Ask for, understand, and follow directions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Plan, understand, and follow through with the actions necessary to take a bus trip?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Clearly communicate information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Describe how the applicant's disability prevents them from getting on, riding, or getting off a Fixed Route (big) bus, or how it prevents them from getting to or from a bus stop.

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<b>National Provider Identifier (NPI) or Tax ID:</b>	
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**Provider Signature and Affirmation**

I am a licensed medical provider or qualified service provider with a state/county agency in the field indicated below and certify that the above mentioned individual has the disability and limitations indicated above. (RCW 9A.72.085 & RCW 40.16.030)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Provider Signature

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Provider Printed Name



## 3 Submit Both Parts Together

**Make sure all questions have been answered and required signatures are in place.**

**Submit both the Eligibility Questionnaire and the Professional Verification parts to:**

RiverCities Transit  
ATTN: Mobility Supervisor  
PO Box 128  
Longview, WA 98632  
Fax : (360) 442-5979

**You may also submit this in person at the Transit Center**

1135 12th Ave  
Longview, WA 98632

**Transit Center Hours:**

Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.  
Saturday 8:00 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

## 4 Phone or In-Person Assessment

If we need to conduct an assessment, your eligibility will be determined within 21 days of the assessment. We'll call to schedule it and we'll provide transportation to and from the assessment.

RiverCities Transit operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, or national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person who would like more information on our Title VI Program or believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI and would like to make a complaint, may contact:

**RiverCities Transit**

**Title VI Compliance Coordinator**

**PO Box 128**

**Longview, WA 98632**

**(360) 442-5663**

**TTY Relay: 711**

**customerservice@rctransit.org**

**Thank you for filling out the paratransit application, making sure all questions have been answered, signatures gathered, and both parts are complete before submitting. We look forward to serving you.**

**(360) 442-5663**

 [www.rctransit.org/LIFT](http://www.rctransit.org/LIFT)

## Appendix D Eligibility Appeal Process

### **Eligibility Administrative Appeal Process**



### **Requesting an Appeal on a Eligibility Determination**

Appeals must be requested in writing within sixty (60) days of the date that the decision being appealed was mailed from RCT. The individual shall inform RiverCities Transit of any special accommodations needed (e.g., interrupter, TTY, etc). Appeals may be mailed or faxed to:

RiverCities Transit  
ATTN: Mobility Supervisor  
PO Box 128  
Longview, WA 98632  
Fax: 360-442-5979  
Email: [CustomerService@rctransit.org](mailto:CustomerService@rctransit.org)

RCT staff is responsible for receiving requests for appeals of service suspensions or eligibility denials. An administrative review is performed by RiverCities Transit for all appeal requests. The administrative review is designed to evaluate the appellant’s record to insure that all the appropriate steps were taken during the application and certification process and that the eligibility determination is justified based on the information in the file.

If the initial eligibility determination is not changed as a result of the administrative review, the appeal request is forwarded to the appeals panel for a formal appeal hearing. If the initial eligibility determination is changed as a result of an administrative review, the appellant will be provided written notification of the change. If the appellant still disagrees with the eligibility determination, the appellant may contact RiverCities Transit, RCT staff will ask the requesting individual if they desire an in-person hearing. The Appeals Panel will be promptly advised of a request for an appeal hearing, shall coordinate an appeal date and time with the individual, and shall reserve sufficient time for the hearing. RCT staff shall notify the individual in writing of the date, time and location of the appeal hearing. If necessary, staff shall arrange for the individual to receive RiverCities LIFT transportation to and from the place of hearing. RCT will make every effort to schedule the Appeal Hearing within two (2) weeks of the request. Individuals needing special accommodations may request so at time of request for hearing.

The Administrative Appeals committee will be comprised of representatives from the medical or social services community, persons with disabilities or public agency staff not associated with the original eligibility determination process. Service on this committee is voluntary and membership of this committee may change without notice.

### **Prior to Hearing**

Individuals may request copies of documents and information relating to the decision. The Appeals Panel or its designee shall promptly consider and decide all requests for documents and information. Documents and information shall be provided if the documents or information are relevant to the decision being appealed or are likely to assist the Appeals Panel in deciding the appeal. The individual may bring another person to support their case to the hearing.

The individual may decline the hearing at any time by calling RCT prior to the hearing date.

**At Hearing**

Individuals may represent themselves at the hearing, or may be represented by another person designated by the individual to present the case.

The parties may present documents and offer other oral, written or recorded information to support their respective positions or to respond to each other's position. RCT shall present its position first, then the individual may present next. As required or appropriate, the parties shall be permitted to present additional documents and information.

The Appeals Panel may continue a hearing or permit the post-hearing submission of additional evidence, information and arguments. If a continuance or post-hearing submission is permitted, the Appeals Panel shall promptly advise the parties of the date, time and location of the continued hearing or the date by which the post-hearing submission must be received by the Appeals Panel. The hearing shall be recorded.

**Appeal without a Hearing**

If the individual declines an in-person appeal hearing, RCT staff shall inform the individual of the date by which they must submit to RCT any written materials the individual wishes the Appeals Panel to consider in determining their appeal. Extensions of this date may be allowed.

Following the submission date, the Appeals Panel shall review the individual's file and written submissions, if any, and decide the matter. The Appeals Panel may uphold the eligibility determination, overturn the eligibility determination or service suspension, modify the eligibility determination, impose conditions upon eligibility, or take any appropriate action to decide the matter.

**Evidentiary Burden and Standard**

RCT shall have the burden of demonstrating that the individual's eligibility for paratransit service was appropriately determined. This burden must be satisfied by a preponderance of all the information submitted in connection with the appeal or otherwise in the individual's record. The standard of admissibility for information presented in connection with an appeal shall be whether the information is of the type that a reasonable person would rely upon in making decisions about their personal affairs.

**Notification of Decision**

The Appeals Panel shall notify the individual of its decision and the reasons for its decision in writing by mail, within thirty (30) days of the date of the appeal hearing or, if the individual declined hearing, of the date on which the Appeals Panel reviewed and considered the matter. The letter will be in accessible format as necessary and will detail any reasons for a continued reason of ineligibility.

If no decision is made on an appeal of eligibility determination within thirty (30) days of the date of the appeal hearing or date of appeals panel consideration, the individual will be eligible for RiverCities LIFT service as of the 31st day, until and unless a decision to deny the appeal is rendered by the Appeal Panel.

## Appendix E Suspension Appeal Process

### **Suspension Appeal Process**

## **Requesting an Appeal on a Suspension Determination**

Appeals must be requested in writing within fourteen (14) days of the date that the decision being appealed was mailed from RCT. The individual shall inform RiverCities Transit of any special accommodations needed (e.g., interrupter, TTY, etc). Appeals may be mailed or faxed to:

RiverCities Transit  
ATTN: Mobility Supervisor  
PO Box 128  
Longview, WA 98632  
Fax: 360-442-5979  
Email: [CustomerService@rctransit.org](mailto:CustomerService@rctransit.org)

RCT staff is responsible for receiving requests for appeals of service suspensions. Passengers will be granted a stay-of-suspension while a “no-show” suspension appeal is pending. When the suspension is for conduct other than “no-shows,” a passenger may request a stay-of-suspension. RiverCities will evaluate such request for a stay-of-suspension based on the facts of the suspension and notify the passenger of the decision. No stay-of-suspension will be granted when the suspension is for conduct that posed an immediate, actual, or potential risk to the safety of the passenger, the operator, or others.

An administrative review is performed by RiverCities Transit for all appeal requests. The administrative review is designed to evaluate the appellant’s record to insure that all the appropriate steps were taken during the suspension process and that the suspension is justified based on the information in the file.

If the initial suspension is not changed as a result of the administrative review, the appeal request is forwarded to the appeals panel for a formal appeal hearing. If the initial suspension is changed as a result of an administrative review, the appellant will be provided written notification of the change. If the appellant still disagrees with the determination, the appellant may contact the RiverCities, RCT staff will ask the requesting individual if they desire an in-person hearing. The Appeals Panel will be promptly advised of a request for an appeal hearing, shall coordinate an appeal date and time with the individual, and shall reserve sufficient time for the hearing. RCT staff shall notify the individual in writing of the date, time and location of the appeal hearing. If necessary, staff shall arrange for the individual to receive RiverCities LIFT transportation to and from the place of hearing. RCT will make every effort to schedule the Appeal Hearing within two (2) weeks of the request. Individuals needing special accommodations may request so at time of request for hearing.

The Administrative Appeals committee will be comprised of representatives from the medical or social services community, persons with disabilities or public agency staff not associated with the original suspension process. Service on this committee is voluntary and membership of this committee may change without notice.

### **Prior to Hearing**

Individuals may request copies of documents and information relating to the decision. The Appeals Panel or its designee shall promptly consider and decide all requests for documents and information. Documents and information shall be provided if the documents or information are relevant to the decision being appealed or are likely to assist the Appeals Panel in deciding the appeal. The individual may bring another person to support their case to the hearing.

The individual may decline the hearing at any time by calling RCT prior to the hearing date.

### **At Hearing**

Individuals may represent themselves at the hearing, or may be represented by another person designated by the individual to present the case.

The parties may present documents and offer other oral, written or recorded information to support their respective positions or to respond to each other's position. RCT shall present its position first, then the individual may present next. As required or appropriate, the parties shall be permitted to present additional documents and information.

The Appeals Panel may continue a hearing or permit the post-hearing submission of additional evidence, information and arguments. If a continuance or post-hearing submission is permitted, the Appeals Panel shall promptly advise the parties of the date, time and location of the continued hearing or the date by which the post-hearing submission must be received by the Appeals Panel. The hearing shall be recorded.

### **Appeal without a Hearing**

If the individual declines an in-person appeal hearing, RCT staff shall inform the individual of the date by which they must submit to RCT any written materials the individual wishes the Appeals Panel to consider in determining their appeal. Extensions of this date may be allowed.

Following the submission date, the Appeals Panel shall review the individual's file and written submissions, if any, and decide the matter. The Appeals Panel may uphold the service suspension, overturn the service suspension, modify the service suspension, impose conditions upon returning the individual to service, or take any appropriate action to decide the matter.

### **Evidentiary Burden and Standard**

RCT shall have the burden of demonstrating that the individual's that the individual's service was suspended for appropriate cause and in accordance with the procedures for service suspension. This burden must be satisfied by a preponderance of all the information submitted in connection with the appeal or otherwise in the individual's record. The standard of admissibility for information presented in connection with an appeal shall be whether the information is of the type that a reasonable person would rely upon in making decisions about their personal affairs.

### **Notification of Decision**

The Appeals Panel shall notify the individual of its decision and the reasons for its decision in writing by mail, within thirty (30) days of the date of the appeal hearing or, if the individual declined hearing, of the date on which the Appeals Panel reviewed and considered the matter. The letter will be in accessible format as necessary and will detail any reasons for a continued reason of ineligibility.

If no decision is made on an appeal of suspension determination within fifteen (15) days of the date of the appeal hearing or date of appeals panel consideration, the individual will be eligible for RiverCities LIFT service as of the 16<sup>th</sup> day, until and unless a decision to deny the appeal is rendered by the Appeal Panel.

## Appendix F Board Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-01

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A RESOLUTION OF THE COWLITZ TRANSIT AUTHORITY TO APPROVE THE 2021  
ADA PARATRANSIT PLAN

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WHEREAS, 49 CFR Part 37 and the Federal Transit Administration regulations require public transportation agencies that receive State and Federal financial assistance to develop, implement and maintain a Paratransit Plan.

WHEREAS, 49 CFR Part 37.139 g.1 requires a resolution adopted by the board of the entity authorizing the plan as submitted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Cowlitz Transit Authority that the 2021 Paratransit Plan is hereby approved.

PASSED by the Cowlitz Transit Authority in regular session and approved this 14th day of April 2021.



DENNIS WEBER, CHAIR  
Cowlitz Transit Authority

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MIKE WALLIN  
Cowlitz Transit Authority

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JEFFREY MCALLISTER  
Cowlitz Transit Authority


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CHET MAKINSTER  
Cowlitz Transit Authority

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LISA ALEXANDER  
Cowlitz Transit Authority

ATTEST:



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Elizabeth Halili, Clerk of the Board