

**REPORT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

The Universal Access Program for Paratransit Riders in Virginia Report

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



REPORT DOCUMENT NO. 180

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND 2008**



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

MATTHEW O. TUCKER
Director

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June 30, 2008

The Honorable Charles J. Colgan
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 626
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Lacey E. Putney
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 947
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Senator Colgan and Delegate Putney:

The 2007 Virginia General Assembly requested that the Director of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) "...work with local transit systems to implement by June 30, 2008, a streamlined universal access system for riders eligible for paratransit services." I am pleased to report that DRPT has successfully developed and implemented the Universal Access Program. A description of the program is provided below.

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) established universal access by requiring complementary paratransit services to be provided for visitors if they have been certified as "ADA paratransit eligible" by a public entity. The service provider being used by the visitor must honor the certification and provide up to 21 days of paratransit service during the calendar year. If the visitor needs service beyond 21 days in a calendar year, he or she must go through the paratransit system's qualification process. Working with paratransit providers across the state, DRPT has extended the ADA requirements by directing Virginia service providers to accept the certification of a visitor qualified by another public entity for a period of 60 days. This will allow visitors to have the same eligibility status with the service provider that they are visiting as they have with their home provider. The visiting rider will not have to provide any additional documentation, participate in interviews or any other reviews to gain the complementary certification.

To improve upon the availability of information regarding paratransit services, DRPT has entered into a public-private partnership with Senior Navigator to provide comprehensive

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The Honorable Charles J. Colgan
The Honorable Lacey E. Putney
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information on paratransit services to the public. Senior Navigator is a national model for aging and disability resources. By combining online assistance with a network of volunteers, Senior Navigator brings over 21,000 health and aging resources to seniors, caregivers, adults with disabilities and their families. Information on paratransit services through Senior Navigator will be made available to the public in summer 2008.

DRPT appreciates the opportunity to respond to the General Assembly's request and will continue working with transit operators and Senior Navigator to improve upon the Universal Access Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt O. Tucker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Matthew O. Tucker
Director

cc: Honorable Pierce R. Homer, Secretary of Transportation