



Bus Plus Service Change – November 2023

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What changes were made to DART Paratransit's Bus Plus service in November?

Effective November 1, 2023, DART Paratransit began providing additional amenities exclusively available for [approved Bus Plus riders](#) including **1)** a new Premium Service Zone to further extend Bus Plus's coverage area, and **2)** free rides on DART's Fixed Route services for Bus Plus riders.

ABOUT THE PREMIUM SERVICE ZONE

What area is included in the Bus Plus Premium Service Zone?

The Premium Service Zone will cover the area not currently included in the Bus Plus Base Service Area, to include service within the footprint of all of DART's [member communities](#): Altoona, Ankeny, Bondurant, Clive, Des Moines, Grimes, Johnston, Pleasant Hill, Polk County, Urbandale, West Des Moines and Windsor Heights. A map of the Premium Service Zone is available at ridedart.com/Paratransit. With specific questions, please call DART Customer Service at 515-283-8100.

How much does it cost?

Trips in the Bus Plus Premium Service Zone cost \$30 per trip and must be paid each time a rider boards the bus (or taxi). The exact fare payment must be received at the time of service, and only cash or check will be accepted.

When do I pay?

Riders will be expected to pay at the time of service, when they board the bus (or taxi).

Do you accept credit or debit cards?

Unfortunately, DART will not accept credit or debit cards for any trips booked in the Bus Plus Premium Service Zone at this time. Only the exact fare in cash or check will be accepted. Similar to fixed route transit and regular Paratransit services, drivers do not make change for riders, nor will overpayments be credited for future trips.

How do I book a trip?

To book a trip in the Premium Service Zone, Bus Plus riders can follow the same [ride reservation process](#) they are already using for Bus Plus transportation by contacting DART Paratransit at 515-283-8136. Premium trips can be booked 48 hours prior to the requested trip time or up to five (5) days in advance. Premium trips will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis, and Premium trips are not ADA protected and are not guaranteed. (Please see the [Paratransit reservation process](#) for more information about ADA trips.)

Are trips guaranteed?

Premium trips are not guaranteed as they are not ADA protected, and DART's priority will be to service ADA trips first. For this reason, Premium trips will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis and can only be booked 48 hours prior to the requested trip time or up to five (5) days in advance, whereas ADA trips can be booked seven (7) days in advance.

What are the hours this service is available?

The Bus Plus Premium Service Zone operates within comparable hours to DART's Fixed Route bus services. Typically, the service operates 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. on weekdays, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturdays and 7a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sundays. Actual times may vary depending on your trip locations. Additionally, holiday hours may apply.

What type of vehicle is used?

Customers should expect a DART vehicle or a taxi to arrive for their trip. Please be sure to include any special instructions when booking your trip with DART Customer Service, such as wheelchair accessibility, assistance needs or if a personal care attendant (PCA) will be traveling on the trip.

ABOUT FREE FIXED ROUTE RIDES

What all is included as part of the free Fixed Route rides for Bus Plus customers?

Bus Plus riders will have free access to DART's Fixed Route services, which includes [Local Routes](#) and [Express Routes](#). Bus Plus riders will need to show a Bus Plus ID confirming their eligibility to utilize the free Fixed Route service.

How do I get a Bus Plus ID to utilize the free Fixed Route service?

Approved Bus Plus riders will need to initiate a request for a Bus Plus ID:

- Call DART Paratransit at 515-283-8136 to begin the process.
- All Bus Plus IDs must include a photo; you can submit an existing photo to busplus@ridedart.com or schedule a time to have your photo taken with DART's Customer Service.
- Bus Plus IDs will be available for pick up at the Customer Service window at DART Central Station (620 Cherry Street, Des Moines) or can be mailed to customers if preferred.
- Of note, only approved Bus Plus riders are eligible for this free Fixed Route service. Learn more about the Bus Plus application process at ridedart.com/Paratransit.

When can I begin to use my Bus Plus ID to ride Fixed Route for free?

Bus Plus riders can begin to use their Bus Plus IDs to access the free Fixed Route rides effective November 1, 2023.

I don't have a photo to send for my Bus Plus ID. Can DART help with this?

Yes, you can schedule a time to have your photo taken for your Bus Plus ID by contacting DART's Customer Service team: 515-283-8100.

I am not able to come in-person to pick up my Bus Plus ID. Can DART help with this?

Yes, DART Customer Service can mail the Bus Plus ID to you. Please provide your mailing address when speaking to DART Customer Service via phone at 515-283-8100 or via email at busplus@ridedart.com.

What are some examples of when it would make sense to ride Paratransit?

If a rider needs assistance entering or exiting the vehicle, it would be best to ride Paratransit as the Fixed Route operators are not able to provide assistance. Additionally, if the nearest bus stop is farther than the rider is comfortable traveling, riding Paratransit could be preferred as this service is door-to-door accessible.

What are some examples of when it would make sense to ride Fixed Route?

If a trip is on or nearby DART's Fixed Route service with a bus stop that is accessible for the rider, utilizing this service instead of Paratransit might make sense. However, the decision to ride Fixed Route versus Paratransit is at the riders' discretion based on their own comfort level and the specific situation at-hand.

What resources are available to help me become more familiar with what it is like to ride Fixed Route?

DART has several resources to offer:

- [Tips for Booking & Riding the Bus](#)
- [More Rider Training Events Coming Soon*](#)
- [How to Read the Bus Schedule](#)

**Please note, the set monthly rider training events are a classroom-style format and open to the public.*

ABOUT BUS PLUS CERTIFICATION

I am not an approved Bus Plus customer. Can I still take advantage of the free Fixed Route services?

Unfortunately, no. The free Fixed Route service is exclusively available for approved Bus Plus customers. You can learn more about the Bus Plus application process at ridedart.com/Paratransit.

I am not an approved Bus Plus customer. Can I still take advantage of DART Paratransit's Bus Plus Premium Service Zone?

Unfortunately, no. The free Fixed Route service is exclusively available for approved Bus Plus customers. You can learn more about the Bus Plus application process at ridedart.com/Paratransit.

Where and how do I apply for Bus Plus status?

A new enrollee application went into effect on July 1, 2023, including a section requiring verification of disability status from a medical provider or another qualified professional. To start the eligibility process, prospective riders should fill out a DART Bus Service Eligibility Form at ridedart.com/Paratransit.

What if I don't have a medical or other qualified professional that can help me?

As needed, DART can help new Bus Plus applicants find a medical or other qualified professional to verify their disability status for the application. Please call 515-283-8100, then select Option 0, to speak to DART Customer Service.

I don't speak English. Is DART able to help me with my application?

In addition to English, the Bus Service Eligibility Form is available in translated versions including Spanish, Arabic and Vietnamese at ridedart.com/Paratransit. For additional assistance, please call DART's Customer Service team at 515-283-8100, Option 0.

I have fully completed the Bus Plus Eligibility Form. Where do I submit my application?

Once completed, the Bus Plus Eligibility Form can be returned several ways:

1. In-person at the Customer Service window at DART Central Station, 620 Cherry Street, Des Moines
2. Email to busplus@ridedart.com
3. Fax to DART Customer Service at 515-283-8103
4. Mail to attn: DART Customer Service, 620 Cherry Street, Des Moines, IA 50309

Do I need the internet or a printer to complete the Bus Plus application?

You do not need internet or a printer to complete the application. DART's Customer Service team can provide printed copies of the application. Please stop in to DART Central Station and visit the Customer Service window at 620 Cherry Street, Des Moines. Alternatively, the application can be mailed for the customer to complete, and can also be returned fully completed either in-person or by mail.

Does DART accept old versions of the Bus Plus application?

DART is no longer accepting versions of the Bus Plus application that were in use prior to July 1, 2023. The Bus Plus application now requires certification of disability status from a medical provider or other qualified professional. With specific questions, please speak to DART Customer Service by phone at 515-283-8100 or in person at DART Central Station's Customer Service window located at 620 Cherry Street, Des Moines.

Can a DART Customer Service rep fill out the application on behalf of the applicant?

DART staff are not authorized to complete a Bus Plus application on behalf of the applicant. Individuals filling out an application may have someone complete the application on the individual's behalf.

Why do I have to recertify for Paratransit service?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as defined in Part 37 – Transportation Services for Individuals with Disabilities, states that a public transit entity, in this case, DART, may require recertification of the eligibility of ADA paratransit eligible individuals at reasonable intervals. Effective July 1, 2023, DART will require paratransit eligible customers to recertify their eligibility every three (3) years.

I am an existing Paratransit Bus Plus service user. What will I need to do to recertify my disability status every three years?

DART will share recertification instructions with existing Paratransit Bus Plus service users prior to January 1, 2024, to confirm their continued eligibility for Paratransit services.