

**Published on *SeniorNavigator* (<https://seniornavigator.org>)**

## **Transportation Providers**

Many of us take transportation for granted. Whether it is driving alone or with someone else, boarding a bus or train, or calling a cab, it is part of our normal routine to work, shop, get groceries, attend meetings and clubs, and make doctor's appointments when we need or want to. However, for a growing portion of our Virginia population, both older adults and people with disabilities, transportation can be a challenge, and words such as Freedom, Independence, Choice, and Dignity are often used.

### **The Transportation Issue**

The number of older drivers is estimated to be four to five times greater in 2030 than today, according to the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA). Whether you are in a rural setting, small community, or a large city, getting to destinations can be a challenge as physical conditions decline impacting the skills necessary to leave one's home and get to another destination. Memory, vision, energy, agility, strength, flexibility, and reaction time are all necessary to travel.

Many older adults and people with disabilities do not want to burden their friends and family by asking for assistance or are reluctant to admit that they have a transportation problem. This usually results in the individual compensating by:

- unsafely continuing to drive, and therefore putting themselves and possibly others at risk.
- not leaving the home, thereby neglecting their well-being: canceling medical appointments, quitting work, withdrawing from social functions, not refilling prescriptions, changing to unhealthy eating habits due to reduced trips to the grocery store.

### **Transportation Alternatives**

There are several alternatives for people to consider that will allow many people to remain independent and mobile. While there are independent companies, taxis, there are also public transportation and paratransit services to consider:

### **1) Public Transportation**

Public transportation for older persons and people with disabilities that are in reasonably good health is a cost-efficient and logical choice depending on where you live. Many buses and trains are wheelchair accessible and have designated seating onboard for older adults and individuals with disabilities. Public transportation, however, may not be a good choice if there is a considerable walk to a bus or train stop, no seating to wait for a bus, not ample lighting and emergency phones located near stops, or bad weather conditions making it unhealthy and unsafe.

### **2) Paratransit**

Despite the great strides that have been made in public transportation in recent years, many older adults and people with disabilities find themselves requiring more specialized transportation services, and the paratransit system which is mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has become a better transportation solution. Paratransit provides flexibly scheduled transportation services for community residents who are unable to use the fixed-route public transportation system, such as older adults and individuals with a disability. It provides specialized door-to-door transport service, ensuring that the mobility needs of all Virginians are met. A comprehensive [fact sheet on Paratransit Services](#) is available for you to learn more about the service, eligibility requirements, and costs.

Our VirginiaNavigator family of websites provide access to a variety of resources to assist people with satisfying their transportation needs.

- VirginiaNavigator and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) have transportation resources to meet your needs at [Virginia Trip Planner ~ connectingVA](#)
- Use the [Virginia Transportation Finder](#) to locate transportation options.

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Last Reviewed

Thursday, March 21, 2024