

Better Access

WeGo Access is a specialized van service available for persons with disabilities. Because not everyone can get to a nearby bus stop, get on or off a bus, or independently ride a bus, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires this kind of door-to-door service. It's often referred to as complementary paratransit, but we just call it Access. The ADA requires that WeGo provide Access service wherever we have fixed route buses running, but WeGo actually goes the extra miles (literally) by offering service anywhere in Davidson County.

With Access, we are able to provide a critical public service of affordable transportation to work, shopping, medical appointments, and more for nearly 6,000 disabled individuals in Nashville. There is an eligibility process to sign up, but once we've confirmed eligibility, riders can start reserving their trips at least a day in advance for just \$3.70. In addition to this regular Access service, WeGo recently launched a new service called Access-On-Demand. For a premium fare, customers can reserve their trips from a list of partner taxi providers just two hours in advance on weekdays – kind of like Uber or Lyft, but exclusively for persons with disabilities, provided by drivers who can accommodate whatever mobility needs the passenger may have.

While all that is great, we know there are a lot of ways we can improve the service, and Better Bus aims to do just that. One opportunity for improvement is our reservation process. Right now, riders must call our call center to book a trip, but nowadays you can do almost anything on your phone or computer, so why not have that same technology available for Access reservations too? Better Bus will improve Access by providing other ways to book trips will make the service even easier to use.

Just like our fixed-route buses, our Access vans get stuck in traffic from time to time; so, knowing when your vehicle is running a little late with real-time arrival information can go a long way to helping Access passengers navigate around these situations. Even more than that, with technology upgrades we'll be able to better match up our drivers to riders and more accurately schedule Access service, ensuring that it's as reliable and efficient as possible. Lastly, just like our fixed-route riders, Access riders want to be able to travel earlier and later in the day, and Better Bus would extend the operating hours of both Access and Access-on-Demand services to make that possible.

But there's one other thing that we have up our sleeve: We mentioned above that some Access riders are eligible for the service because they're not able to get to a nearby bus stop. We know some of these riders would really like to use our fixed routes, but they just need a way to get to the stop - and Better Bus includes new on-demand services that provide those connections. This would be available to anyone (with or without Access eligibility) within specified zones and will help us connect people in more suburban areas that are difficult to serve with regular bus routes to our improved network of services. There are still details to work out, but we are planning to pilot this new service soon, work out the kinks, and then expand it to different parts of the county.

All these things come with a cost though. We need more funding to be able to implement these service and technology improvements and make it easier for our Access riders to get around.

Information on the rest of the Better Bus Plan is available on our website and you can [click here](#) to learn more about the Mayor's Transportation Plan.