



ALEXANDRIA

DOT

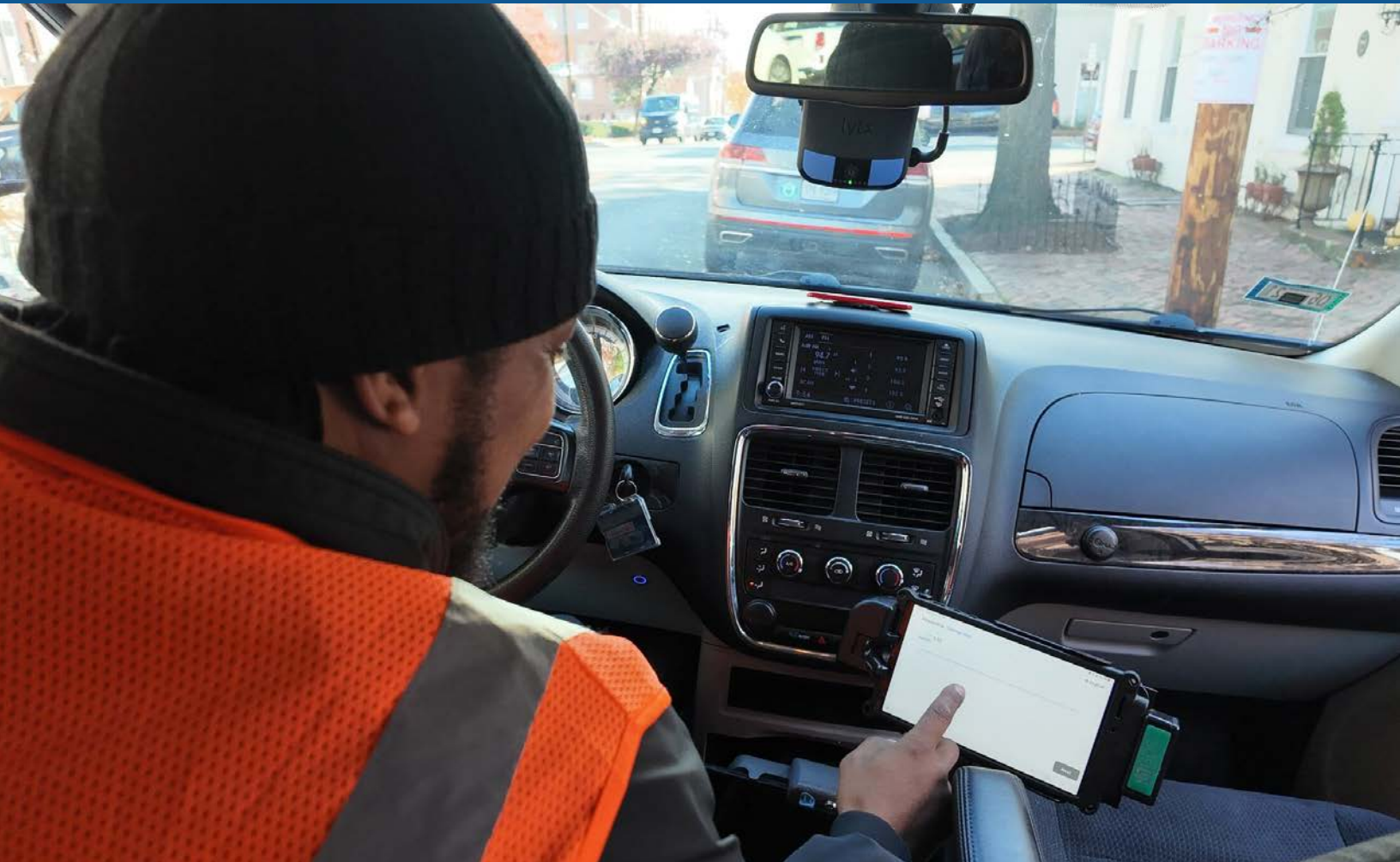
Policies & Procedures

for Alexandria's Paratransit Program

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CONTACT US



Phone

703.836.5222 (Voice)
Virginia Relay 711
8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Weekdays
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Weekends

Email

paratransit@alexandriava.gov

Fax

703.746.6433

Online Reservations

spare-rider-alexandriadot-production.vercel.app

Mail

DOT
421 King Street, Suite 230
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

After Hours Cancelations

Call 703.836.5222 and press "1" for
van company

OVERVIEW



WHAT IS DOT?

DOT is the City of Alexandria's paratransit program, which is a curb-to-curb transportation service for residents and visitors who cannot use fixed routed public transit due to their disability. DOT is regulated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

SERVICE AREA

DOT service is available for trips throughout the City of Alexandria, and parts of Fairfax County, Arlington County, City of Falls Church, City of Fairfax, and Washington DC to serve client/rider needs.

SERVICE HOURS

DOT trips are provided:

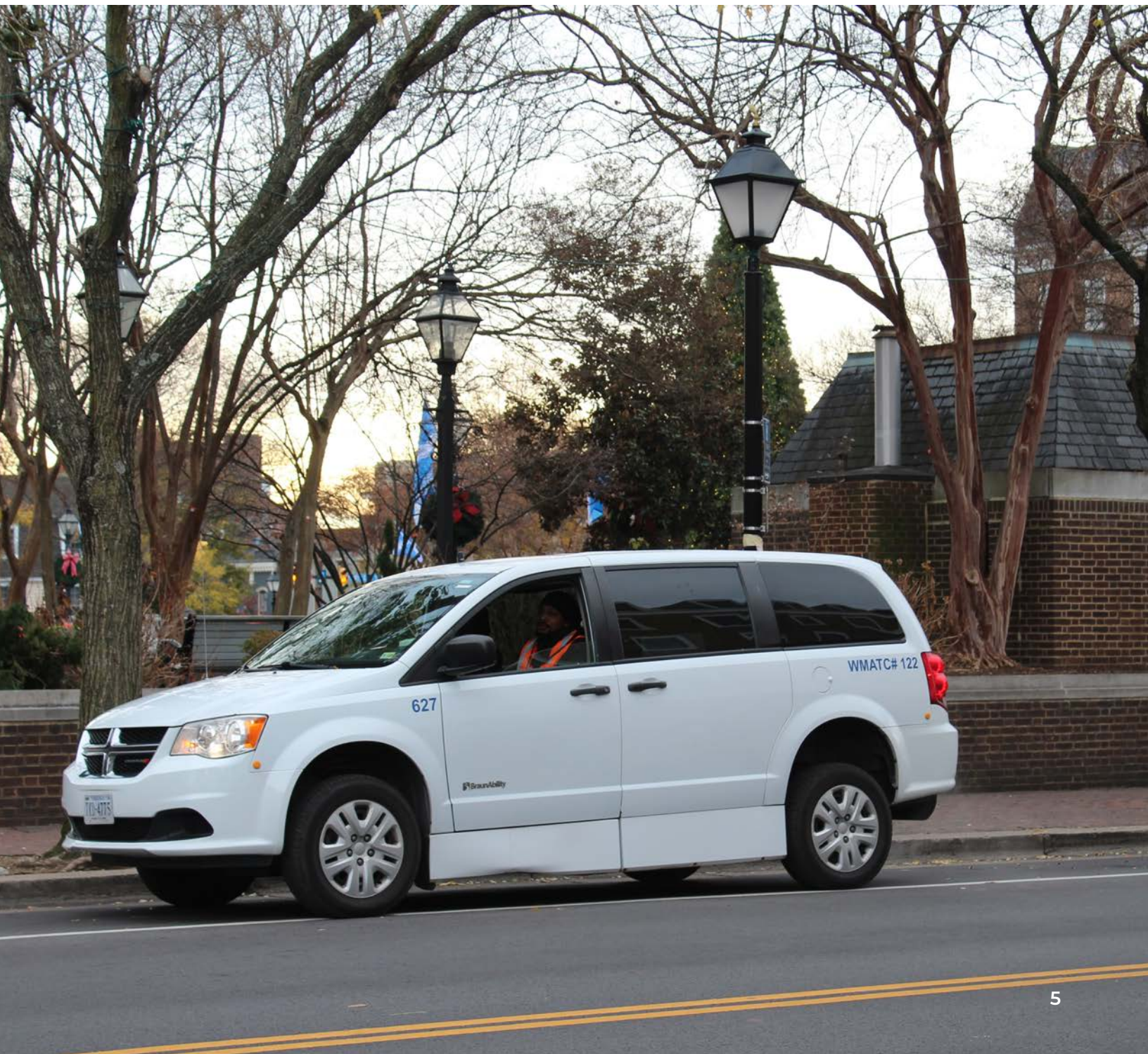
- **Monday – Saturday:** 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.
- **Sunday:** 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.

FARES

- Within the City of Alexandria: **Free**
- Up to 5 Miles outside of the City: **\$4 each way**
- More than 5 Miles outside of the City and trips to and from DC: **\$6 each way**

If you are certified to have a Personal Care Attendant (someone to assist you while traveling), the Personal Care Attendant rides with you at no charge to you.

Fares may be paid with cash at the time of the trip or in advance with a credit card. If using cash, exact change must be provided.



ELIGIBILITY

You must be certified as eligible to use DOT services. To apply, the applicant must fill out an application and return it to DOT for review. Reasonable accommodations for the application process are available.

- Application materials can be found at alexandriava.gov/Paratransit or by calling DOT at **703.836.5222**.
- Eligibility determinations will be made within 21 days of receiving your completed application. If a decision has not been made within 21 days, you will receive service until a final decision is reached. You will be notified of your eligibility status by letter.
- Per federal guidelines, individuals eligible for paratransit service include those with disabilities who cannot, due to physical or mental impairments, board, ride or disembark from a fixed route vehicle without assistance.
- DOT eligibility is based on an individual's functional ability to use fixed-route transit services. Each applicant will be evaluated on: (1) their ability to navigate the system independently, (2) accessibility of vehicles or bus stops, and (3) their ability to reach the boarding point and destination.

Once your application is reviewed, DOT will designate a type of eligibility based on the person's functional ability to use public transportation, as follows:

- **Unconditional Eligibility** - An applicant whose disability prevents them from using the accessible fixed route bus system in all situations.
- **Conditional Eligibility** - An applicant whose disability prevents them from using the accessible fixed route bus system when specific circumstances are present.
- **Temporary Eligibility** - An applicant who is temporarily disabled and needs service for a short period of time.

An applicant with a disability that does not prohibit him/her from using the accessible fixed route bus service under the definitions of the ADA will be ineligible for DOT service. If an applicant is denied, DOT will provide a letter stating the reasons for the determination and explaining the process for filing an appeal. An applicant who is deemed ineligible has the right to an appeal. See the Appeals section for details.

DOT reserves the right to require a new eligibility assessment if:

- There are possible improvements in the passenger's ability to use the fixed route system.

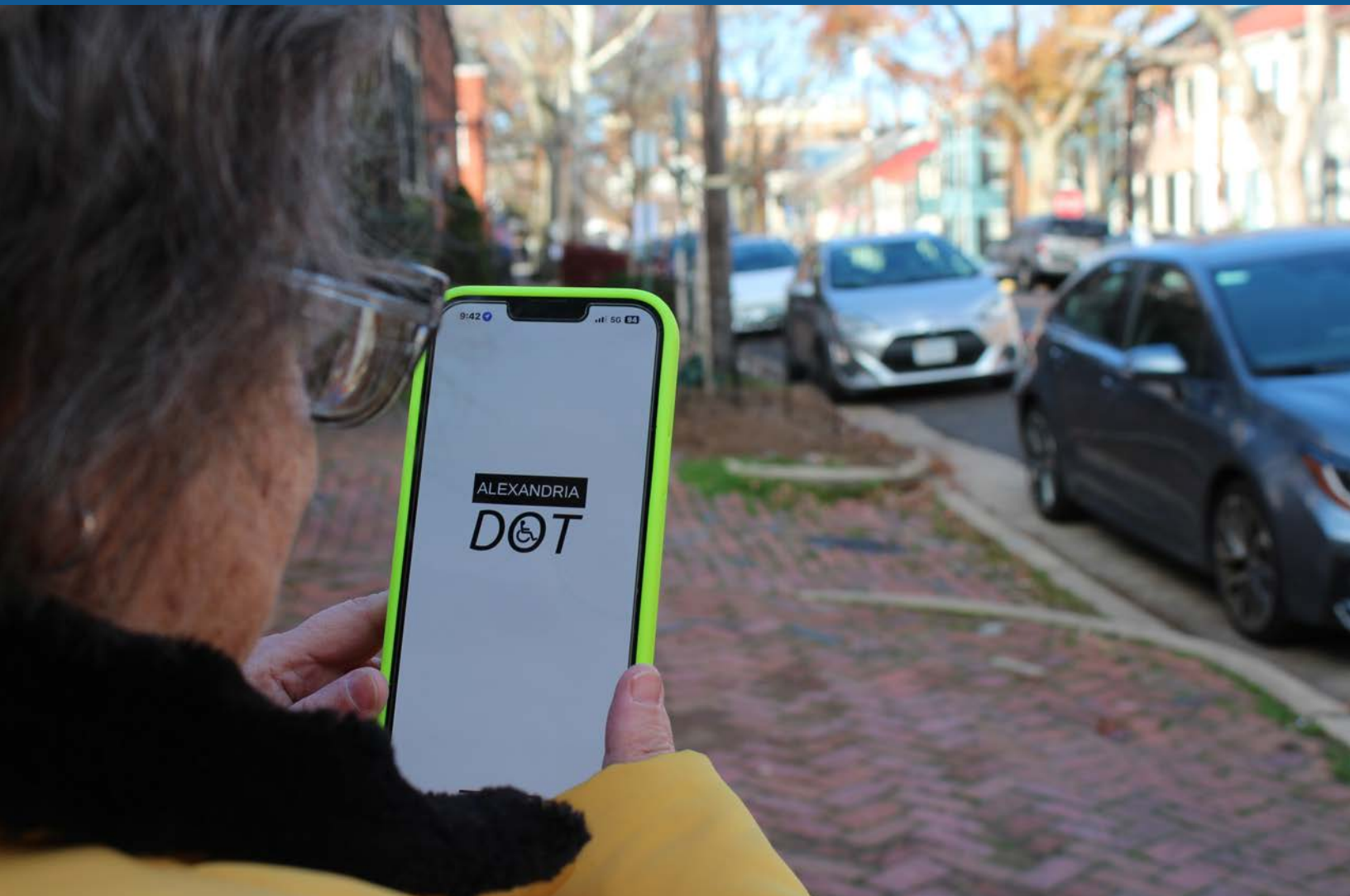
- Public physical barriers that previously prevented the passenger's use of the fixed route system have improved.

VISITORS WITH DISABILITIES

- Visitors certified with another paratransit service are granted temporary eligibility with DOT for up to 21 days in a 365-day period. Verification of eligibility is required.
- For service beyond this period, visitors must apply for certification.



SCHEDULING TRIPS



Trips are scheduled by calling the DOT Call Center, the mobile app, or online.

703.836.5222 (Voice)

Virginia Relay 711

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. – Weekdays | 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. – Weekends

spare-rider-alexandriadot-production.vercel.app

- **Advance Scheduling:** Schedule trips at least one day in advance. For example, if you have a doctor's appointment on Tuesday at 10:00 a.m., call by 4:45 p.m. on Monday. Same day reservations are not allowed. The DOT Call Center is closed when the City of Alexandria is closed.
- **Weekly Scheduling:** If you have a regular weekly schedule, make reservations for the entire week. Trips can be scheduled up to 14 days in advance.

- **Pick-Up Window:** A DOT vehicle will arrive within a 30-minute window. If the vehicle does not arrive within the window, call 703.836.5222 or Virginia Relay 711 for an update on the status of your ride.
- **Return Trips:** Provide a return trip time when making your reservation.
- **Be Ready:** The driver can wait 10 minutes after the vehicle arrives.

CANCELING A TRIP

DOT reservations should be canceled as soon as you are aware that you will not need to take the trip. Trips inside the city should be canceled at least one hour in advance, and trips outside the city should be canceled at least two hours in advance.

Canceling and reinstating reservations on the same day is not allowed.

RIDING DOT



Riding DOT is like riding DASH or Metrobus. Be ready at the scheduled arrival time. You'll have time to board, and there may be additional stops before reaching your destination.

- **30-Minute Window:** The operator will arrive within a 30-minute window.
- **Late Arrivals:** If the vehicle does not arrive within the window, call 703.836.5222 to check its status.
- **Wait Time:** The operator will wait up to 10 minutes after the they arrive or the start of the pickup window, whichever is later. If you are not ready, the trip will be marked as a No Show, but remaining trips for the day will not be canceled. Call 703.836.5222 to cancel or reschedule remaining trips to avoid additional No Shows.
- **Fare Collection:** Riders may register a credit or debit card with DOT to automatically charge each trip or they may pay a fare to the vehicle operator at the time of the trip. The operator will collect the fare before departure. Have exact change or pay in advance with a credit card; no change or credits will be given.

- **Vehicle Rules:** Eating, drinking, chewing tobacco, smoking, and vaping are not permitted in the vehicle.
- **Seatbelts:** All passengers are required to wear seatbelts on any DOT vehicle. If you need help with your seatbelt, please ask the operator for assistance.
- **Assistance:** Standard practice is for operators to assist passengers into and out of the vehicle but will not go to the door or inside a building. If you require assistance from the front door of the building to the vehicle and from the vehicle to the front door of the building, please inform the call center when making your reservation. Accommodations will be made for door-to-door service upon request. Operators can assist passengers to the door but no further than the first exterior door of the building.
- **Destination:** Changing trip destinations on the day of travel is not allowed.

GETTING THERE ON TIME

To help DOT provide efficient service:

- Make reservations as early as possible, up to 14 days in advance, but no later than the day before you wish to ride.
- Do not request unscheduled stops

Since you may share the vehicle with other passengers:

- Allow time for picking up and dropping off other passengers
- Be prepared for delays due to traffic or bad weather

Plan your trip to ensure you have enough time to reach your destination.

GENERAL TRAVEL TIME GUIDELINES

DOT is meant to replace other public transit options therefore, travel time on DOT should be similar to other transit options. For this reason, DOT has set the following general guidelines for the length of trips within our service area.

- **Trips within the limits of the City of Alexandria:** up to 1 hour
- **Trips within 5 miles of the City of Alexandria:** up to 2 hours
- **Trips within the entire service area:** up to 3 hours

INCLEMENT WEATHER

DOT reserves the right to cancel a scheduled trip if the weather is a danger to passenger or operator safety. If a passenger's location is too dangerous to access (e.g. icy sidewalks and driveways), the trip will be canceled to avoid injury. The passenger will not be penalized for the cancellation. DOT will make sure a passenger is provided a return trip home if inclement weather occurs while a passenger is away from their home.

PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS (PCA)

DOT does not provide Personal Care Attendants. If you need assistance, you must bring a PCA. A PCA helps meet your personal needs and must be indicated on your application and authorized by your medical provider. PCAs ride for free but must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as you. DOT may require a PCA for individuals with a history of violent, disruptive, or illegal behavior.

COMPANIONS

You may bring one or more companions whose presence is not necessary for your care. Companions must be noted at the time of the reservation to ensure space is available and must not result in denial of service to other passengers. Companions must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as you. Companions pay the full fare.

WHEELCHAIRS AND OTHER MOBILITY DEVICES

- **Accessibility:** DOT operates many types of vehicles. To provide you with a vehicle that meets your needs, ensure you update DOT whenever your needs or use of a mobility device changes. Some vehicles are fully accessible with lifts or ramps for boarding with or without mobility devices.
- **Accommodation:** Passengers with wheelchairs or mobility devices will be accommodated only if safe and within weight limits. DOT has the right to decline to carry a passenger if deemed unsafe including if the combined weight exceeds the lift specifications or any other safety requirements.
- **Security:** Operators will secure all mobility devices before travel. Seat belts are to be worn by all passengers, including PCAs and companions.

OXYGEN SUPPLIES

- **Permitted Items:** Portable oxygen supplies and respirators are allowed with advance notice.
- **Securing Requirements:** Oxygen tanks must be securely fastened to prevent movement during transport.
- **Notification:** Inform the reservationist when scheduling trips about the use of oxygen supplies.

CARRY-ON ITEMS

- **Permitted Items:** Legal personal items such as grocery bags, luggage, or other packages are allowed.
- **Operator Assistance:** Operators can assist with lightweight packages (up to 25 pounds) if requested.
- **Collapsible Carts:** Notify the reservationist if bringing a collapsible cart to ensure space availability.
- **Securing Items:** All items must be secured out of the aisle, either under your seat or on your lap.

PET POLICY

Pets are strictly prohibited on all DOT vehicles. This policy ensures the safety and comfort of all passengers, particularly those with allergies or medical conditions. Service animals, as defined by the ADA, are exempt from this policy.

SERVICE ANIMALS

- DOT welcomes service animals on all vehicles, following ADA guidelines. Service animals are trained to perform tasks for individuals with disabilities and must be under the control of their handler (e.g., leash, harness, or pet carrier).
- DOT may refuse transport to service animals that pose a direct threat, create a disruptive atmosphere, or are not under control.
- Emotional support, therapy, and companion animals are not considered service animals and are not allowed on DOT.
- When scheduling a trip, passengers should state their intent to ride with a service animal to ensure adequate space.

NO SHOWS AND LATE CANCELATIONS

Definitions

- **No Show:** Failure to board when a vehicle arrives within the pickup window; operators wait 10 minutes past arrival time.
- **Late Cancellation:** Canceling less than one hour before pickup for trips within the city or two hours for trips outside the city.
- **Refusal of Service:** Declining to take a trip when the paratransit vehicle arrives at the destination to pick you up within the pickup window.
- **Missed – Not Transported:** Trips that did not occur because a DOT vehicle did not arrive within the designated 30-minute window. These trips do not count against the rider.

Exceptions

- No Shows and Late Cancellations are not counted if caused by circumstances beyond passenger's control or DOT error, such as arriving outside the pick-up window.
- Passengers must notify DOT with justification for such incidents when requested.

Managing No Shows

- If you receive a No Show for pickup, subsequent trips on the same day remain scheduled unless canceled.
- Failure to cancel leads to multiple No Shows. You are responsible for canceling unnecessary trips to prevent this.

Refer to the section on Suspensions for additional information.

PASSENGER'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



YOUR RIGHTS

- **Safe and Clean Travel:** Ride in a vehicle with seatbelts and securement devices.
- **Quality Service:** Receive courteous and timely service from all DOT staff.
- **Personal Care Attendants:** Travel with Personal Care Attendant at no charge, if indicated on your application.
- **Services Animals:** Accompany you on your trips.
- **Timely Pickup:** Be picked up within a 30-minute window around your scheduled time.
- **Complaints:** File complaints about service to the DOT reservation office at 703.836.5222.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Follow Rules:** Understand and adhere to DOT rules and Code of Conduct for safe and pleasant travel.
- **Advance Booking:** Schedule trips at least one day in advance.
- **Provide Information:** Inform reservationists of any special disability needs and keep personal information updated.

- **Be Ready:** Be ready for pickup within the specified window; the vehicle waits up to 10 minutes.
- **Identification:** Carry and present your DOT identification card to the driver.
- **Payment:** Pay fare upon boarding or in advance; exact change required or have a credit card on file
- **Cancellations:** Cancel trips within specified times to prevent unnecessary trips.
- **Conduct:** Behave courteously towards all DOT staff and passengers. Refrain from disruptive or illegal behavior.
- **Service Animal Control:** Ensure your service animal is under control at all times.
- **Prepare for Delays:** Anticipate delays due to weather or traffic.
- **Subscription Trips:** Notify DOT of changes to scheduled subscription trips by 5pm the day before.
- Passengers must act in an orderly manner to facilitate safe vehicle operation and comply with instructions from the operator or designated personnel.

LEGAL VIOLATIONS COVERED

Violations include acts that violate the City of Alexandria City Code sections including but not limited to:

- 13-1-1 - Abusive language.
- 13-1-4 - Cursing and swearing—over telephone.
- 13-1-19.1 - Vandalism and graffiti.
- 13-1-30 - Disorderly conduct, and
- 13-1-37 - Public transit passenger vehicles, school buses, rail transit cars and rail transit stations—prohibited conduct.

CODE OF CONDUCT

DOT has established rules to maintain safety and orderliness aboard its vehicles, ensuring passengers do not engage in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct that could endanger others' health or safety. Penalties in this section are to be implemented by DOT and do not preclude the City of Alexandria from pursuing legal action where warranted.

ENFORCEMENT OF RULES

- **Severity:** Disciplinary actions correspond to the seriousness of the offense
- **Pattern of Conduct:** Repeat instances of unacceptable behavior may lead to escalated disciplinary measures.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

- **Removal from Vehicle:** Offenders may be immediately removed from the vehicle.
- **Service Suspension:** Serious or repeated violations can result in suspension of service.



SUSPENSIONS

DOT has established a structured process for suspending service to passengers who demonstrate patterns of missed trips (No Shows or Late Cancellations) or engage in unacceptable conduct.

DOT does not count as no-shows or late cancellations any missed trips due to our error, such as:

- Trips placed on the schedule in error
- Pickups scheduled at the wrong pickup location
- Drivers arriving and departing before the pickup window begins
- Drivers arriving late (after the end of the pickup window)
- Drivers arriving within the pickup window, but departing without waiting the required 10 minutes

DOT does not count as no-shows or late cancellations situations beyond a rider's control that prevent the rider from notifying us that the trip cannot be taken, such as:

- Medical emergency
- Family emergency

Passengers must notify DOT with justification for such incidents when requested.

NO SHOW/LATE CANCELATION SUSPENSION POLICY

Each verified no-show or late cancellation consistent with the above definitions counts as 1 penalty point. Riders will be subject to suspension after meeting all of the following conditions:

- Accumulate 3 penalty points in one calendar month
- Have "no-showed" or "late cancelled" at least 10 percent of trips in said month

A rider will be subject to suspension only if both the minimum percent of trips booked and the minimum number of penalty points are reached during the calendar month. Passengers will be subject to suspension should they accumulate 3 penalty points within a calendar month consistent with the criteria listed in this section of the policy above.

All suspension notices include a copy of this policy, information on disputing no-shows or late cancellations, and how to appeal suspensions.

Suspensions begin on Mondays. The first violation in a calendar year triggers a warning letter but no suspension. Subsequent violations result in the following suspensions:

- Second violation: 7-day suspension
- Third violation: 14-day suspension
- Fourth violation and subsequent violations: 21-day suspension

Your record of no-shows resets every calendar year.

UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT SUSPENSION POLICY

- DOT reserves the right to suspend passengers from service for a period of time up to 30 days for unacceptable conduct. The length of suspension is directly related to the severity and pattern of conduct. The length of suspension for unacceptable conduct will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Notice of suspension will be provided in writing.
- Upon the rare occurrence that a violation of DOT policy or City Ordinance is deemed more severe than the 30-day suspension warrants, the City of Alexandria may bring criminal charges against the accused, pursuant to the ordinance.

APPEALS

DOT allows an appeal process for the following:

1. If you believe you have been wrongly denied DOT eligibility certification.
2. If you believe you have been wrongfully cited for violating the DOT No Show/Late Cancellation policy, which has resulted in suspension of service.
3. If you believe you have been wrongfully suspended for violating DOT policies and rules.

All appeals must be sent to:

DOT
421 King St. Suite 230
Alexandria, VA 22314
paratransit@alexandriava.gov

APPEALS COMMITTEE

The Appeals Committee (hereinafter the “Committee”) will consist of a person appointed by the Chair of Alexandria’s Commission on Persons with Disabilities, an employee appointed by the Director of the Office of Human Rights, and an employee appointed by the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES).

FILING AN APPEAL

Filing a Certification Appeal

If you believe that you have been wrongly denied DOT eligibility certification, you may file an appeal. Please give specific reasons for your appeal and explain why you believe you are entitled to DOT paratransit service under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). You must file your appeal within sixty (60) calendar days from the date of denial of eligibility. Reasonable accommodations will be made.

Filing a No Show/Cancellation or Policies and Rules Appeal

You must file your appeal within fourteen (14) calendar days from the date you received notice of violating the no-show/late cancellation policy. If you do not appeal, suspension will begin on the fifteenth (15th) day. An extension of time will be granted for good cause shown. The timely filing of an appeal stays the proposed action until the conclusion of the appeal process. Reasonable accommodations will be made.

RECORDING OF APPEAL

DOT staff will record the date and time of receipt of the appeal. Acknowledgment will be mailed within two (2) calendar days. Appeal will be dismissed if not received within the required time.

REVIEW

DOT staff will evaluate all appeals. This evaluation may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Telephone or personal interview of the applicant.
- Telephone interview with the applicant's physician or medical professional verifying the application.
- Interview of staff involved in the eligibility decision.

DOT staff will determine adequate material is provided for an appeal before scheduling a hearing. Once complete appeals packet is gathered from the appellant, DOT staff will notify you of the date, time, and location, of the hearing.

HEARING PROCESS

DOT staff will advise you to produce all documents and/or witnesses at the hearing, and you will have an opportunity to present testimony and documents directly to the Appeals Committee.

You may bring a representative or witnesses who can provide information or testimony on your behalf. No special arrangements will be made, or fees paid to any professional or other individual who appears on your behalf.

You are not required to attend the hearing, but, if you do so, transportation to the hearing will be provided for you free of charge. The hearing can also be held in a "conference call" mode, over the telephone or video conference. DOT will work with you to provide reasonable accommodations for you to present your case for eligibility.

You will be permitted to review all documents used by the Committee to review your case and to submit additional evidence. The formal hearing will be held within twenty-one (21) calendar days of the date the appeal was received.

The following comprise the hearing procedures:

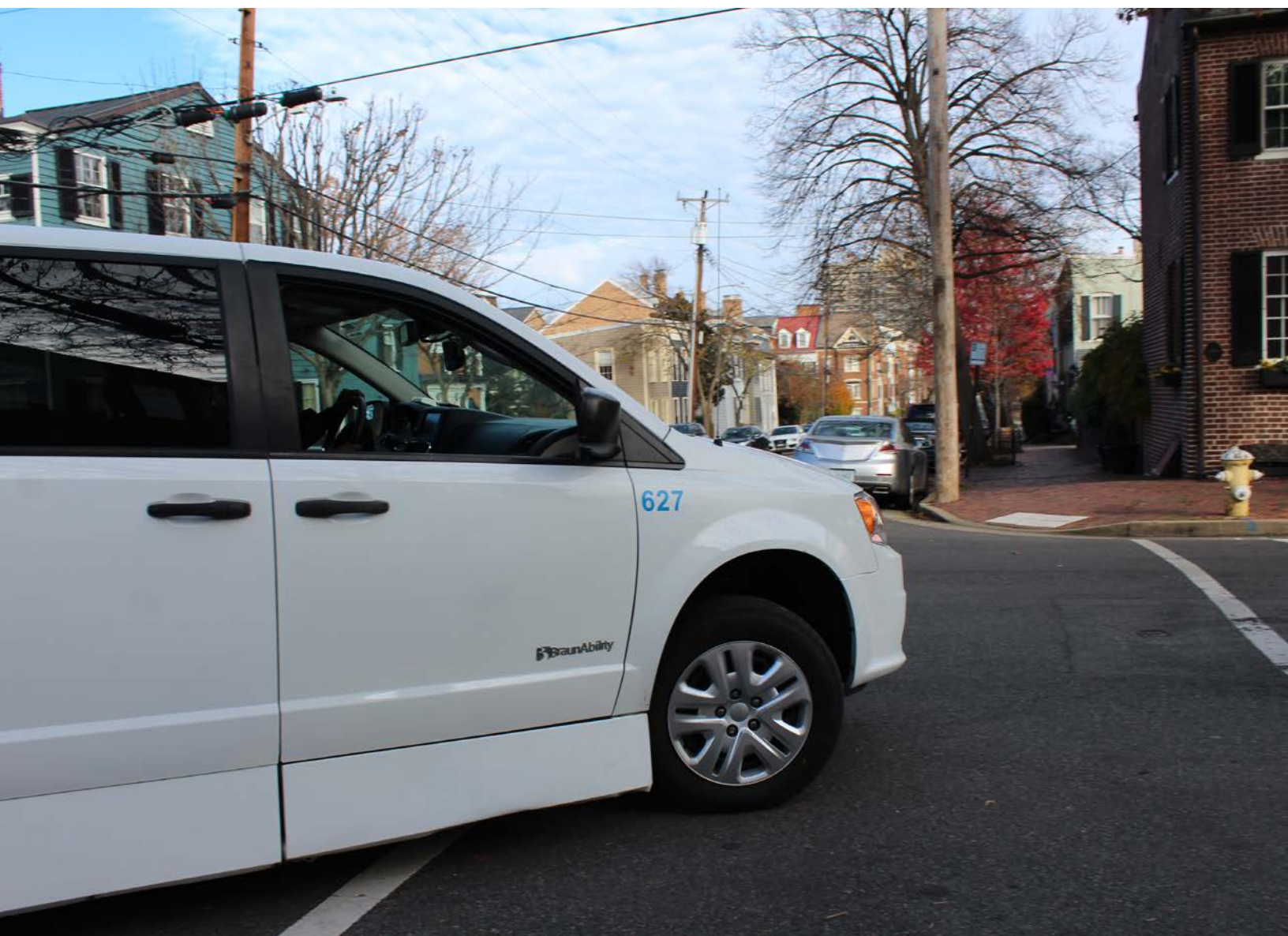
- You have the right to participate in the hearing and to present oral argument.
- Committee members will review all evidence, which individually or collectively forms the basis of the proposed action to be taken against you.
- Committee members will review all evidence submitted by you or on your behalf.

- Committee members may conduct in-person interviews with you and/or your witnesses to obtain information or seek clarification.
- Committee members will deliberate in a closed session.
- Committee members will complete ballot forms to indicate their respective recommendations to uphold, modify, or reverse the action taken or planned to be taken against you.
- Committee members will render a majority decision, which shall be final.

RESOLUTION

The Committee will render its decision within seven (7) calendar days of the hearing, and DOT staff shall notify you of the decision by certified mail, return receipt requested. The Committee decision will advise you of any and all rights or remedies to which you may be entitled and will include referral information.

Reasonable accommodations for disabilities, including alternative formats for submitting appeals will be made.



REFUND POLICY

All payments made for fares on DOT are nonrefundable. Once a fare is paid, it cannot be refunded under any circumstances. DOT reserves the right to enforce this policy to ensure consistent service operations and equitable treatment of all passengers.

For trips where a vehicle does not arrive in the designated pickup window, please contact DOT at 703.836.5222. If the DOT staff approves, you may cancel your trip without penalty and be provided with a two, \$6, trip credits to your account. You must ask for the cancelation and trip credit immediately after your scheduled trip pick up window while you are waiting for a vehicle to arrive. Credits will not be provided if a passenger fails to gain approval from DOT staff while waiting for their vehicle to arrive. Trip credits are provided at the discretion of DOT staff whose priority is to provide transportation with a DOT vehicle. If a DOT vehicle is close by when a passenger calls, DOT staff will not provide trip credits.

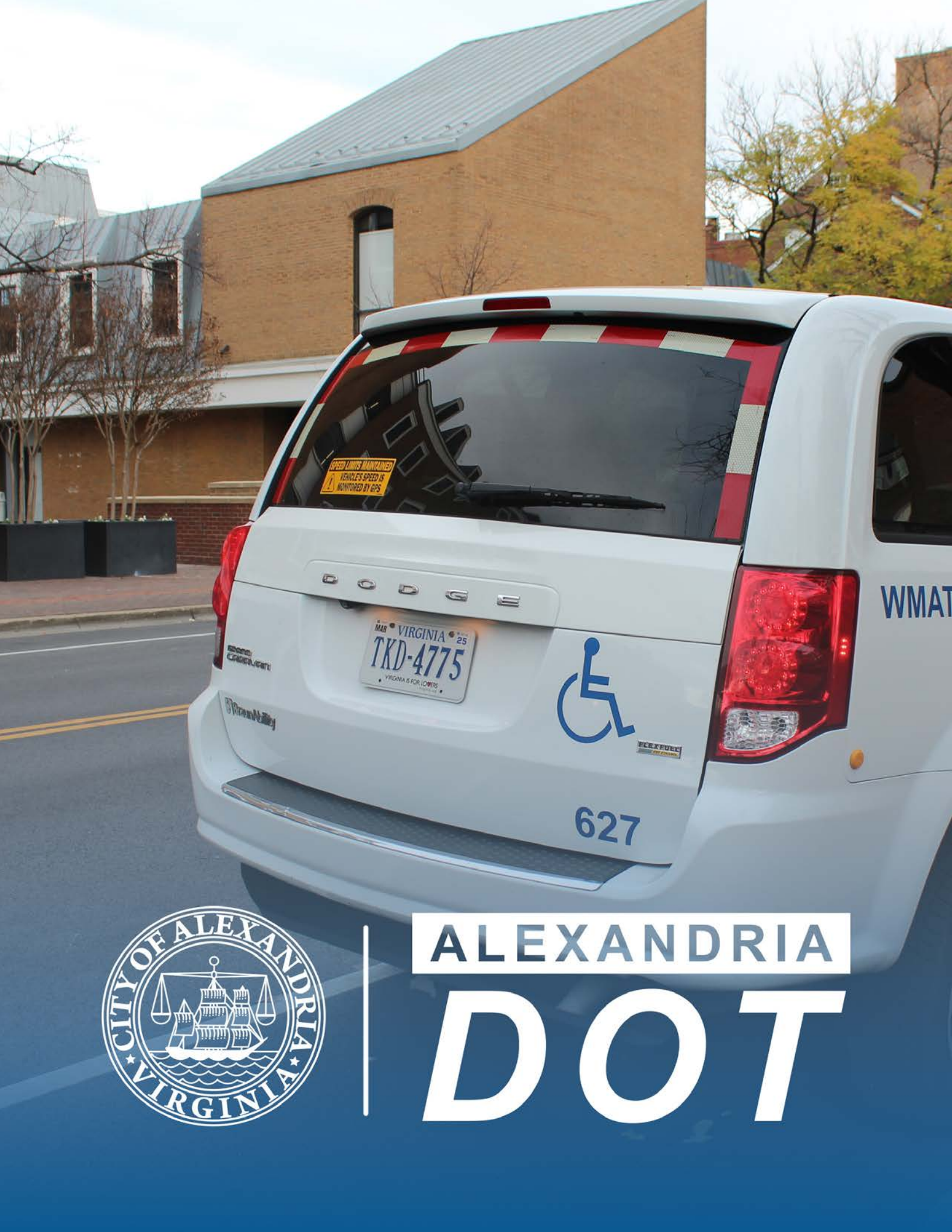
Reimbursement for the cost of trips made with another transportation provider will not be issued. Trips taken by taxi or ride-share not initiated through the DOT reservation system will not be reimbursed.

REASONABLE MODIFICATIONS

A reasonable modification is a change or exception to a policy, practice, or procedure that allows individuals with disabilities to have equal access to programs, services, and activities. DOT will make reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures when necessary to ensure access to transit services.

REASONABLE ACCOMODATIONS

For reasonable disability accommodation, contact paratransit@alexandriava.gov or 703.836.5222, Virginia Relay 711. If you prefer communication in another language, free interpretation and translation services are available to you. Please email LanguageAccess@alexandriava.gov or call 703.746.3960.



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