

Ottawa's Para-Transpo

Para Transpo is a Shared-ride, book-in-advance, public transit service. It is open to eligible customers who have made an application for service. The application form is on-line and has 3 parts, the last being a required health-care professional's input. To enrol you are likely to be asked for an O.D.S.P. number that belongs only to you. Para Transpo is funded by the City of Ottawa and administered by OC Transpo, which is responsible for regular city transportation vehicles.

One of the features of our system is our 'on-line' service. This is a web-based App that offers:

- booking trips
- viewing trip details (with a live map)
- tracking trips
- cancelling trip options

In order to use the App, you must have made an application and then received an I.D.# that you will use whenever you 'talk' to an agent, or choose to book on-line. There is an easy to use "how-to" document that is also on-line for you to use - it has lots of pictures so you can easily follow along and be successful.

Para Transpo offers 3 kinds of trips:

- daily - day before booking
- subscription (regular) - need to speak to Customer Service
- work schedule - 2 weeks in advance - speak to Customer Service

TIP: If you are booking by phone, you are offered a 'call-back' so you don't have to hang on the phone while you take your place in line. You just need to wait while important 'messages' are spoken followed by a voice telling you how many minutes you need to wait for a call-back. This is helpful.

TIP: ParaTransit offers an 'automated cancellation' phone line so you don't have to wait to speak to an agent to cancel a ride.

TIP: TEXT (a number is given to the account holder) and is useful to those who like to text. It's handy if you are out and your ride is very late coming, or you think you might have missed your pick-up.

FARES:

- Para-Pay where you keep money in an account and it is withdrawn by the company as you use the service.
- Cash - a cash ride is \$4.05
- Presto Card - this is the system the regular bus uses
- Credit/Debit/Mobile Wallet Card

MONTHLY FARES:

Adult regular fare in Ottawa:	\$135.00
Seniors Pass.....	58.25
Community Pass.....	43.25

To request a Community Pass, you must contact OC Transpo by phone and give them your Para Transpo I.D.# as well as your O.D.S.P. number. Once activated, you do not need to renew every year. It will be valid as long as you qualify for O.D.S.P. or reach the age of 65. You can deposit money into your Para-pay account as well as pay for your community pass on line, which saves running around. The Community Pass is only good for one month at a time so you need to remember to pay for the next month before the 1st day of the next month. That's why I keep \$20 or so in my Para-pay account - keeps my account in the black.

Your Community Pass cannot be used for anyone else who rides with you. A Support Person can ride for free as long as you take a form to the doctor for authorization. No one's name goes on the form - it's standard and is only for your use.

TIP: In Ottawa, we can purchase a book of Taxi Coupons at a good discount. The tickets allow you to ride much cheaper than a regular taxi would cost. These are handy to have in your bag in an emergency. I think each book of tickets has up to \$20.00 worth

Things I like about my service, which I have been using since 1988!

The service has improved (in some ways) and right now the service is again undergoing improvements (new busses) and needs to hire more drivers. The usage is up but the availability is down. I always add an extra half hour at each end of my trip to be sure I get out and back in good time.

I like that the drivers are mandated to take me door-to-door. They ring the bell at home while I wait inside, or they come right into the store or mall entrance to find me when I am out in the community. I have never been left sitting outside unless I chose to be there.

I like that I can call the day before, and I can call one whole week before a Stat holiday and make my booking.

I like that I mostly ride in an accessible taxi but we also have the accessible busses too and on occasion they send me one. I know many of the drivers and there's only one or two that aren't too friendly but they are good at driving me.

I like that tie-downs and seat belts are standard practice. If the taxi driver is in a hurry I sometimes have to remind him I would like a seat belt, which he accommodates.

I like knowing that once you are out there on the system, Para won't leave you stranded. You may have to call as sometimes a driver may be in a hurry and won't take the time to find you so he may leave without you (that's called a "no-show" even though you were sitting somewhere waiting for him!) Always have your phone with you and be prepared to contact the service for another ride. They will come and get you.