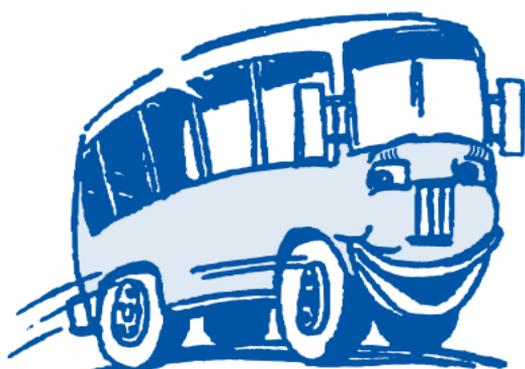


SLATS

ST. LUCIE ALTERNATIVE
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
SYSTEM



PARATRANSIT
SERVICE
RIDER'S GUIDE

FARES FREE

This brochure is designed to
“Help you Ride” SLATS
(St. Lucie Alternative
Transportation System).
In it you will find a wealth
of information regarding
policies and information that
are pertinent to making your
trip as convenient and hassle
free as possible.

For information on
eligibility, contact us at
772 464-7433, Option 1
and ask for the Eligibility
Specialist. If you have
any concerns regarding
the service, please contact
SLATS Customer Relations
at 772 345-8229.

Table of Contents	Page
An Overview	2
Service Provider	3
Service Area	3
Eligibility	4
Customer Service Hours	5
Operational Hours	6
Making a Reservation	6
New Rider Registration.....	6
Scheduling.....	7
Pick Up and Drop Off	8
Cancellations & No Shows	9
Lateness & No Shows	10
Subscription Trip Requests	12
Service Schedule	13
Boarding Early	14
Late Pickups	14
Customer’s Responsibilities & Safety Tips	15
Wheelchair Service	16
Ambulatory Customers	17
Companions	17
Personal Care Attendants	18
Out-Of-Area Visitor Riding Privileges.....	19
Service Animals	19
Oxygen Requirement	20
Drivers.....	20
Reporting Comments, Compliments or Complaints ..	22
Lost Items.....	23

AN OVERVIEW

SLATS is a shared ride paratransit, origination to destination service provided by Community Transit. The program provides complementary service for eligible individuals who are not able to use the regular bus service (also called “fixed route”) because of a disability or other limitations. However, many customers find the fixed route service is often the best, most economical way for disabled or disadvantaged customers to get to where they need to go. All our fixed route buses are fully accessible.

Because the demand for SLATS special transit service is high, it is very important that each customer carefully follow the guidelines in this booklet.

Your cooperation and flexibility will allow SLATS to serve you better and help make it possible for us to serve others.

SERVICE PROVIDER

Community Transit's Reservationists handle the Customer Call Center, which takes all reservation requests and customer service calls (where is my trip, cancellations, etc.). Community Transit's Dispatchers handle scheduling and the dispatching of trips within St. Lucie County.

SERVICE AREA

Federal regulations define the ADA paratransit service area as being within three-quarters of a mile on either side of a fixed bus route.

ELIGIBILITY

Individuals who are interested in using SLATS Paratransit Service must apply through a written application process. SLATS is responsible for determining eligibility for paratransit service. SLATS provides transportation under various programs. Program determination is based on verification of the application. All programs have a three year (3) certification period.

Paratransit eligibility is not automatic nor is eligibility recertification.

Paratransit service is provided to:

“Any individual with a disability who is unable, as the result of a physical or mental impairment (including a vision impairment), and without the assistance of another individual (except the operator of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device), to board, ride, or disembark from any vehicle on the system which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.”

CUSTOMER SERVICE HOURS

Between the hours of 7 AM and 6 PM, Monday through Friday (except holidays), Customer Service is available to make reservations, check on your trip or cancel a trip. If possible, the best time to call to make trip requests is between 9 AM – 11 AM and 2 PM – 4 PM.

To reach the SLATS Call Center:

In the Fort Pierce Area –

772 464-RIDE (7433), Option 1

In the Port St. Lucie Area –

772 TRY-1BUS (879-1287),

Option 1

Telephone Service for the Deaf –

Florida Relay – 711

You may reach Eligibility Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 AM and 5 PM at the above numbers. Ask for the Eligibility Specialist.

For Fixed Route information call 772 464-8878.

Website address

www.treasurecoastconnector.com

OPERATIONAL HOURS

SLATS services are available Monday through Friday (except holidays) between the hours of 6 AM to 7 PM. Saturdays from 8 AM to 12 PM and 1 PM to 4 PM.

MAKING A RESERVATION

If you are in an emergency situation, please call 911. SLATS cannot provide same day service or assume liability if you are in a distress situation.

Customers determined eligible to use SLATS need to register.

When you call, please have the following information ready:

NEW RIDERS NEED TO REGISTER

Simply phone

In the Fort Pierce Area –
772 464-RIDE (7433), Option 1

In the Port St. Lucie Area –
772 TRY-1BUS (879-1287),
Option 1

Telephone Service for the Deaf –
Florida Relay – 711

and provide us with the following information:

- Name, Address and Telephone Number
- Date of Birth and Social Security Number
- Medicaid Number (Medicaid Eligible Recipients)
- Need for Special Assistance
- Mobility Aids (Wheelchair, Walker, etc.)
- Emergency Contact Number

Persons with special dietary concerns need to bring a snack or a small meal as a precaution.

SCHEDULING TRANSPORTATION

Simply phone

In the Fort Pierce Area –

772 464-RIDE (7433), Option 1

In the Port St. Lucie Area –

772 TRY-1BUS (879-1287),

Option 1

Telephone Service for the Deaf –

Florida Relay – 711

and provide us with the following information:

- Give us the date, time, address of your destination and a phone contact.
- Inform us again of any special assistance you may require.

24 Hour notice is requested for trip reservations. We can take reservations up to two (2) weeks in advance.

PICK UP AND DROP OFF

- Please be ready at least sixty (60) minutes before your scheduled appointment (unless otherwise instructed during scheduling).
- Watch for the bus. The driver will beep the horn for you to come out.
- Shoppers, because of space constraints, please limit yourself to four (4) grocery bags with a limit not to exceed ten (10) pounds per bag.

- When your appointment is concluded, it is your responsibility (or ask office staff) to call us when you are ready and a bus will be dispatched as soon as possible.

CANCELLATIONS AND NO-SHOWS

If you need to cancel your reservation, whatever the reason, please make sure that you call the office and notify us at least two (2) hours in advance of the bus arriving at your home. Failure to do so results in a “No-Show”. SLATS tracks the number of “No-Shows” that occur each month. If a passenger incurs two (2) “No-Shows” within a thirty (30) day period, the passenger’s services with SLATS could be suspended. Please be sure to cancel your reservations to avoid disruption in your service.

LATENESS AND NO SHOWS

Because you will be sharing your ride, it is important that you are ready to go when your vehicle arrives. SLATS will wait only five (5) minutes, because there are other customers either on board or waiting for their scheduled ride. If a vehicle arrives to pick you up and you are not there or you do not get in the vehicle by the scheduled time, you will be considered a “No-Show”.

TIP: When you are calling to be picked up, you must tell the reservationist exactly where you will be waiting. However, at larger facilities, we may tell you to wait in a common pick up area that has been pre-arranged with the facility.

The driver will be given the same information that you supply to the reservationist and will look for you there. Do not leave the area as you might miss your ride.

If the driver is not able to find you within five (5) minutes of arriving, or if you did not cancel at least two (2) hours before you scheduled pick up, you will be considered a “No-Show”.

SUBSCRIPTION TRIP REQUESTS

A “Subscription Trip Request” is for customers who travel to the same place at the same time on the same day(s) of the week. If you have a regular appointment that you need to go to, you may want to ask the reservationist to submit a “Subscription Trip Request” for service. Depending on the funding source of your trip, this request may be granted.

Please remember, however, that you cannot change your “Subscription Trip Request” more than once per month, or this privilege will be revoked. If you have a “Subscription Trip Request” and will not be using it for one or multiple days, please contact us to avoid having “No-Shows” recorded in your file.

SERVICE SCHEDULE

SLATS operates Monday through Saturday only. No service is provided on Sundays, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

BOARDING EARLY

If your vehicle arrives before your scheduled pick up window and you are ready, you may board immediately (i.e. SLATS arrives at 8:50 for a pick up window that runs from 9:00-10:00. If you are not ready and the vehicle arrives early, the driver must wait five (5) minutes into the pick-up window before leaving (Using the example above, the driver must wait until 9:05).

LATE PICK UPS

It can be frustrating if a vehicle is late picking you up for a scheduled appointment, or to return you home. Please wait at least one (1) hour from the time you called to be picked up before again calling SLATS Customer Service. Your driver may arrive up to one hour after your phone call.

Please remember the pick up time is based on factors such as the time you need to be at your destination, traffic delays, inclement weather and multi-loading of other customers.

CUSTOMER'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND SAFETY TIPS

- Wait in a safe, well lit location.
- Choose a pick up and drop off location that allows the driver to not lose sight of his vehicle when assisting you.
- Let the vehicle come to a complete stop before approaching.
- Allow the driver to assist you in boarding the vehicle; ask for special assistance if you need it.
- Always wear a seat belt.
- All personal belongings are your responsibility.
- Do not speak to the driver while he is driving.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke in the vehicle, though we do encourage customers who will be away from home for an extended period of time to bring a snack, drink or medications with them.

- Do not use audio or video equipment that may distract the driver's attention.
- No disruptive behavior, you may risk suspension.
- No unscheduled stops.
- Proper dress is required, including shoes and shirts.
- No special requests for specific drivers or vehicles can be honored.
- No pets are allowed except for personal assistance animals.

WHEELCHAIR SERVICE

Our service is an origin to destination service. When you make your reservation, be sure to mention if you have difficulties walking, are using a mobility device or are using a wheelchair. Wheelchairs must be provided by the passenger and you must be on the ground floor at the time you are to be picked up.

A wheelchair is a mobility aid designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.

AMBULATORY CUSTOMERS

Ambulatory customers may ride the lift if they request it.

COMPANIONS

One companion may accompany an ADA paratransit eligible rider. Both must be picked up and dropped off at the same address. SLATS must know in advance if a companion is traveling with you. When making the reservation, indicate at that time that a companion will accompany you on the trip.

PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is a person traveling as an aide to assist with life-functions and to facilitate safe travel.

A PCA must be approved on the initial application in order to be eligible to travel with a rider. If your physical status changes after the application is approved without a PCA being authorized, and one is now required, a letter must be submitted from your physician.

Both the PCA and the rider must be picked up and dropped off at the same address. Both a companion and a PCA may accompany the rider.

OUT-OF-AREA VISITOR RIDING PRIVILEGES

Paratransit provides service for persons with disabilities who are visiting from outside the service area, and who have been certified ADA paratransit eligible from another jurisdiction. Proof of ADA paratransit eligibility must be provided to obtain visitor status within SLATS program. Twenty-one days of visitor service may be used during one year. At the end of that time, the visitor must complete the local eligibility process to continue to use the service.

SERVICE ANIMALS

Any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability may travel with the customer. Service animals include, but are not limited to those that guide individuals with impaired hearing to an intruder or sounds, provide minimal protection or rescue work, pull a wheelchair or fetch dropped items.

OXYGEN REQUIREMENT

Travel with oxygen equipment is permitted, but the equipment must be small enough so that the driver does not have to assist with the loading and unloading of it. The safety and use of this equipment is the responsibility of the passenger.

DRIVERS

SLATS drivers are trained by Community Transit. Drivers must have a safe driving record, pass a criminal background check, be able to pass a Florida Department of Transportation physical and test negative for drugs and alcohol. Also, they are trained in defensive driving, and to safely assist and be sensitive to passenger's special needs. Drivers are selected based on their ability to provide the specialized service needed for the SLATS program. Drivers are not required to carry the passenger's belongings, assist wheelchairs down more than one step, push wheelchairs through grass or sand or do any lifting of the passenger into or out of their mobility device.

Drivers are expected to:

- Be courteous
- Drive Safely
- Wear a seat belt
- Securely tie down wheelchairs
- Have a SLATS photo I.D. attached to their uniform that can be easily seen by clients.
- Be properly uniformed
- Make a good faith effort to find a client

Drivers are not permitted to enter homes.

Traffic delays, tight schedules, weather conditions, passengers running late, and other factors can cause stressful situations that could affect the quality of service for SLATS customers. If a driver or passenger acts in an unreasonable manner (or contrary to our policies and procedures) the problem should be reported by calling 772 345-8229.

REPORTING COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS OR COMPLAINTS

If you have a comment, compliment or complaint, please phone our office at 772 345-8229.

If after notifying SLATS, filing your concerns and receiving your response, your comments have not been adequately addressed, you may contact the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) at 772 462-1777.

As a final step you may contact the State's Transportation Disadvantaged Helpline at 800 983-2435.

LOST ITEMS

If you have lost a personal item and believe it may be in a SLATS vehicle, please contact Customer Service at 772 464-RIDE (7433), Option 1 to report it. If the item is found, you may be asked to travel to a central pick up point to retrieve it. If the item is not located on the vehicle, SLATS nor the driver will be held responsible for replacement.

This brochure is available in other formats upon request.

SLATS operates according to the Title VI regulation, 49 CFR, Part 21 which states:

“No person or group of persons shall be discriminated against with regard to the routing, scheduling or quality of service of transportation on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status.”

If you feel you have been discriminated against in reference to the above and would like to register a complaint, please call (772) 345-8229.

The Rider's Guide summarizes SLATS goals, objectives and general policies. It is not intended to create a contract; and violation or deviation of any of the goals, objectives and practices contained in this guide will not give rise to a cause of action nor create any presumption that a legal duty has been breached. In addition, SLATS may change the goals, objectives and policies set forth in the Rider's Guide at any time without liability to anyone.



**ST. LUCIE ALTERNATIVE
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
SYSTEM (SLATS)**

**1505 ORANGE AVENUE
FORT PIERCE, FL 34950**

772 464-7433

772 879-1287

Florida Relay System - 711