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POLICY & PROCEDURE

TRIP LENGTH (Excessively Long Trips)

The length of complementary paratransit trips (also called travel time, trip duration, on-board time, or in-vehicle time) is another important measure of service. A pattern or practice of substantial numbers of trips with excessive trip lengths is a form of capacity constraint per § 37.131(f)(3)(i)(C); excessively long trips may discourage riders from using complementary paratransit services. It is important to understand that “excessive” is in comparison to the time required to make a similar trip using the fixed route system; while a 1-hour travel time for a 5-mile complementary paratransit trip may seem excessive in the abstract, if the same trip takes an hour using the fixed route system, it is comparable, not excessive.

As with on-time performance, operational problems that are attributable to causes beyond the control of the transit agency are not a basis for determining that a pattern or practice of excessive trip length exists. Complementary paratransit service is by nature a shared-ride service. The standard of service is not intended to reflect that of a taxi service, which typically transports passengers directly to their destination. BJCTA recognizes that Paratransit travel time or trip length is a performance standard that must be monitored separately from on-time performance. However, travel times must be estimated correctly to set pick-up times in a way that ensures on-time performance. Too long travel times will contribute to late arrivals which result in capacity constraints which is a violation of the ADA.

A trip may require more than one-half hour from origin to destination due to the size of Paratransit service area. We are committed to trips that are not excessive in length and have established a trip-length performance standard, defined in relation to the length of comparable fixed route trips. BJCTA’s performance standard is that at least 90 percent of complementary paratransit trips shall have travel times equal to or less than comparable fixed route travel times.

BJCTA closely monitors trip length performance by analyzing a sample of complementary paratransit trip lengths periodically (monthly), focusing on trips longer than a certain duration of 30 minutes, even though FTA provides an example of more than 45 or 60 minutes. By monitoring and analyzing trip lengths, BJCTA is aware of service issues and, if necessary, makes operational adjustments to improve performance. To account for in-vehicle time and transfer times that may vary by day of week and time of day, BJCTA uses performance standards that account for such variations, and has an online trip planner that estimates the varying travel times for specific trips. January 2017, BJCTA launched a new

automated dispatching/Scheduling system, RouteMatch, which uses a graduated travel time parameter system. These parameters have been calibrated for the BJCTA service area within Jefferson County. RouteMatch software has in place safeguards to alert schedulers and dispatchers of potentially excessive travel times. To ensure that these parameters are correct and up to date, Operations Managers and the ADA officer will evaluate and compare Paratransit travel times with fixed route. The test trips will be performed monthly by randomly selecting 16 to 25 trips to evaluate travel time to and from the nearest bus stop, including transfers times, if applicable, and travel from the stop to their destination. These trips should not exceed travel time on fixed route.

BJCTA considers all elements of fixed route trips between origins and destinations when determining comparability in paratransit travel time, including:

- Walking time to the stop/station from the origin address
- Waiting time
- In-vehicle time (for all trip segments)
- Transfer times (if any)
- Walking time from the final stop/station to the destination address

Should there be an instance when travel time exceeds fixed route travel times, an evaluation of that trip will be made to see why it exceeded the allowable travel time and adjustments made by negotiating trip times.

If a passenger or their representative feels that a trip had an excessive travel time, that trip will be added to the selection of trips for evaluation. If the finding is that their trip exceeds acceptable standard, their trip time will be adjusted manually until the parameters can be adjusted.