



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
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September 29, 2020

COMMENTS TO THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU RATE COMMISSION

Regarding: TheHandi-Van Fares

The Disability and Communication Access Board adopted revised general principles on the public transit fixed route bus and paratransit services. They are attached for your reference. Based on those principles, we offer the following responses to the four questions posed by Rate Commission Chair Cheryl D. Soon.

1. What are the appropriate criteria for setting fares on Handi-Van?

Please refer to items one through six of our guiding principles (attached).

2. Should there be a method to pay Handi-Van using the Holo card?

Yes. The Holo Card is used for TheBus and it will eventually be used for the rail. It would make sense to offer the Holo Card as an option to pay the Handi-Van fare.

3. Do you have other suggestions for how fares could be paid that would be more convenient and yet simple?

Not at this time.

4. Would you deem a 25 cent increase per ride to be appropriate? Why or why not?

Yes. The increase is nominal and should not impose a financial hardship on most users. It should be noted that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides that the per trip fare for complementary paratransit service may be set at up to twice the undiscounted, full fare charged for fixed route service, which is currently set at \$2.75 for an undiscounted adult trip on TheBus. In other words, the ADA would allow the City to charge up to \$5.50 per trip on Handi-Van. A 25 cent increase in the current Handi-Van fare would not bring it close to what is permissible under the ADA. That stated, we urge the creation of a subsidy for low income users who would be financially harmed by even a nominal fare increase.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director

Attachment



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DCAB GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON PUBLIC TRANSIT FIXED ROUTE BUS AND PARATRANSIT SERVICES

These guiding principles are to assist DCAB in preparing testimony or offering comments on Federal, State, and county government proposed laws, rules, policies, and procedures.

- 1) The cost per one-way trip for paratransit service should never be higher than the one-way adult fare for fixed route bus service (ADA allows the fare per paratransit trip to be up to double the fixed route bus fare).
- 2) Paratransit fares should only be raised annually and in small increments to avoid having a large impact on people living on fixed incomes.
- 3) Subsidies should be provided to those who qualify as extremely low income.
- 4) To incentivize the use of fixed route bus service by paratransit users, the fare to use the fixed route bus service (for paratransit users only) should be lower than the fare for paratransit service.
- 5) Preferred methods to address the increasing demand for paratransit service and on time performance metrics include, but are not limited to: fleet expansion, taxi subsidy programs, higher fares for paratransit trips that exceed the time or distance requirements under the ADA (same operating hours as fixed route and within 3/4 mile corridor of fixed route), higher fares for subscription service and agency trips, and grants for agencies to purchase vehicles to transport their own clients. Fare increases should be the last method used to decrease the demand for paratransit service and to achieve on time performance.
- 6) If a farebox recovery policy is established for paratransit service, it should not be linked to the farebox recovery policy for fixed route bus service. This is because fixed route bus users have multiple options; such as monthly and annual passes, and Medicare and youth fares; which paratransit users do not have. Therefore, linking any paratransit service farebox recovery policy to that of the fixed route bus service would be incongruous and misguided.
- 7) A public entity should not provide paratransit service to persons other than individuals who are paratransit eligible under the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) definition if the provision of service to such persons would cause a public entity to deny, delay or otherwise prevent the provision of paratransit service to ADA paratransit eligible individuals.

- 8) A person's body odor should not be used as a reason to deny service on public transit or paratransit service unless it poses a health or safety risk to transit personnel or patrons.
- 9) Paratransit eligibility should be determined by County personnel or an entity under contract with the County to ensure the application of uniform eligibility standards by objective health care professionals.

Adopted by the Board at its General Meeting on May 16, 2019.

Revised by the Board at its General Meeting on September 19, 2019.