

ThreeRivers
COMMUNITY ACTION



People-focused, community-driven



Three Rivers Community Action, Inc. Hiawathaland Transit

Service Policy

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Introduction

Three Rivers Community Action, Inc. sponsors the transportation program Hiawathaland Transit. Throughout this publication services will be referred to as Hiawathaland Transit.

The ability to get from one place to another is essential for anyone who wants to work, take part in recreational activities, or enjoy a full social life. It is the mission of Hiawathaland Transit to provide efficient, effective, and quality bus service to the residents of Goodhue, Rice, and Wabasha Counties. Currently Hiawathaland Transit operates in the communities of Cannon Falls (Randolph), Faribault, Kenyon/Wanamingo, Lake City/Frontenac, Northfield, Pine Island, Plainview/Elgin, Red Wing, Wabasha/Kellogg, and Zumbrota/Mazeppa. Hiawathaland Transit has provided public transportation since 1998 and will continue to offer services providing enough public funding is available.

Description of Service

Hiawathaland Transit is a public transit system operating on a route deviation and demand response basis. Currently, we operate in Cannon Falls (Randolph), Faribault, Kenyon/Wanamingo, Lake City/Frontenac, Northfield, Pine Island, Plainview/Elgin, Red Wing, Wabasha/Kellogg, and Zumbrota/Mazeppa.

Route Deviation Service: Hiawathaland Transit operates a Deviated Route Service, meaning the buses can deviate off route to accommodate passenger requests. In communities with both Deviated Route and Demand Response (Dial-A-Ride) Service, there will be a .2-mile limit for all deviations (.2 off route, .2 back).

Demand Response Service: Demand Response Services, where available, operate on a first come, first served basis. Demand Response Service is reserved for individuals outside of the Route Deviation Service area. All ride requests on the Demand Response Service must be scheduled in advance through dispatch.

Hiawathaland Transit does not provide service on New Year's Day, Easter Sunday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Hiawathaland Transit reserves the right to take additional days preceding or following a holiday depending on when a holiday falls.

Hiawathaland Transit program reserves the right to change, adjust, add, or delete service hours and/or times.

Service Hours by Community – Dial-a-Ride ONLY Communities

Cannon Falls/Randolph

Leon/Stanton Townships

Demand Response

Monday – Friday

7:00am – 5:00pm

Kenyon/Wanamingo

Demand Response

Monday – Friday

7:30am – 4:30pm

Lake City/Frontenac

Demand Response

Monday – Friday

7:00am – 5:00pm

Plainview/Elgin

Demand Response

Monday – Friday

7:00am – 5:00pm

Pine Island

Demand Response

Monday – Friday

7:00am – 5:00pm

Wabasha/Kellogg

Demand Response

Monday – Friday

7:30am – 5:00pm

Zumbrota/Mazeppa

Demand Response

Monday – Friday

7:00am – 5:00pm

Service Hours by Community – Dial-a-Ride and/or Route Deviation Communities

Faribault

Demand Response

Monday - Friday

6:00am – 6:00pm

Saturday

12:00pm – 5:00pm

Route Deviation

Monday – Friday

6:00am – 6:00pm

Northfield

Demand Response

Monday – Friday

6:00am – 9:00pm

Saturday

7:00am – 5:00pm

Route Deviation (Regular Routes)

Monday – Friday

6:00am – 6:00pm

Route Deviation (Express Route)

Monday – Saturday (School Year Only)

3:00pm – 10:00pm

Northfield to Faribault Connect

Route Deviation

Monday – Friday

6:00am-6:00pm

Red Wing/Wacouta/Welch

Demand Response

Monday – Friday

4:30am – 9:00pm

Saturday and Sunday

7:00am – 5:00pm

Route Deviation

Monday – Friday

6:00am – 6:00pm

Dispatch Hours

Monday – Friday

5:30am – 6:00pm

Saturday

7:30am – 4:00pm

Sunday

Closed

Contact Information

Phone: 866-623-7505

Email: tdispatchers@threeriverscap.org

Fax: 507-534-9275

Mail

55049 241st Ave

Plainview, MN 55964

(Make an appointment to visit our transit office)

Ride Scheduling Procedures

Rides can be requested by calling our dispatch office at 866-623-7505, option 1, during regular business hours (Monday through Friday from 5:30am to 6:00pm, and Saturdays 7:30am – 4:00pm). Please note, for the safety of our drivers and passengers, changes to scheduled rides can ONLY be made through our dispatch center during regular business hours, drivers are NOT able to adjust times or destinations, please plan accordingly. Rides can also be requested using our online *Request a Ride Form*, which can be found at: <https://www.threeriverscap.org/hiawathaland-transit/request-a-ride/>

We encourage at least two hours advance notice and accept requests up to 6 days in advance. A 24-hour advance notice is recommended for passengers needing use of the lift, as space is limited.

When requesting a ride, passengers should tell the dispatcher the address of where they want a ride from (origin), the address of where they are going (destination), and at what time they would like to be picked up or dropped off. In towns where both Route Deviation and Demand Response (DAR) service exist, some limitations do apply to the Demand Response service – please see below for more information.

Any ride that falls within the route parameters is not eligible for Demand Response (DAR) service.

Rides will be scheduled based on availability, time, and capacity. All attempts will be made to provide a ride within 45 minutes of the time requested. If the time requested is not available, other times available will be offered to the passenger. Passengers have the right to refuse a ride if the time offered is not acceptable to them.

Subscriptions (Recurring Trips)

Same time, same origin/destination trips are eligible for a subscription, which is defined as scheduled recurring trips. Subscriptions will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. A waiting list will be created for those who are not able to schedule trips due to capacity limitations.

Passengers with subscriptions must take their scheduled rides at least 75% of the month or the subscription will be discontinued, and the time slot will be used for other passengers on the waiting list.

Cancellations are encouraged to be made by 4:00pm the day before the ride. Passengers who do not cancel and do not take their scheduled trip for two days in a row (considered no-call no-shows) will be removed from the schedule for future rides and will be placed at the end of the waiting list.

Fares

Each fare is applicable for a one-way trip. Passengers should have their fare ready upon boarding the bus and should deposit their payment into the fare box. They must use the exact fare; drivers are not able to make change or handle the fare for the passenger. Once the passenger de-boards the bus, or arrives at a destination, one trip is completed. When boarding the bus again, a new trip begins, and the passenger will need to pay a new fare.

The cost of a ride on Demand Response (DAR) buses is \$2.50; on route buses, the cost is \$2.00, if a deviation is requested and able to be performed there is an additional cost of \$0.50 for each deviation; Faribault-Northfield Connect the cost is \$5.00. Monthly unlimited passes are available for purchase by contacting the dispatch center. Tokens (Demand Response (DAR) & Route) are sold at City Halls, as well as many other locations in our service areas and are encouraged for ease of use. Please visit our website for additional information on where tokens can be purchased.

Note: as of January 1, 2018, Hiawathaland Transit discontinued the sale of Dial-a-Ride and Route punch passes. All existing punch passes will continue to be accepted.

Children ages 2 & under must be accompanied by an adult. There is a maximum of one free child (under the age of 2) per paying adult. An individual assisting or aiding a passenger with a disability ride for free. There is a maximum of one free assistant per paying passenger.

Passenger Assistance

Hiawathaland Transit provides curb to curb service; drivers do not help individuals into homes, apartment buildings or business. Drivers do not pull into driveways or parking lots unless absolutely necessary and approved by Transportation Director. Hiawathaland Transit Operators have been trained in passenger assistance techniques. They are to follow the passenger assistance guidelines listed below: I think this section will need several revisions with the new ADA requirements & reasonable accommodations.

- Drivers must offer assistance to passengers while they enter and exit the bus only if this does not pose a risk to the passenger or the driver. Drivers can offer limited assistance by lending a hand to help steady a passenger.
- Drivers do not assist passengers with packages. The number of packages shall be limited to what a passenger can independently carry on, and off, the bus in a single trip, and only those which can be properly and safely secured. Items brought onto the bus must remain with the passenger at all times and may not take up seats needed for additional passengers and may not block or obstruct the aisle(s) or area where wheelchairs are secured. All packages or parcels must be secured in such a way that no article would come loose and move about the cabin freely should the vehicle come to a sudden, unexpected stop.
- If a passenger needs assistance walking from their home to the curb, they must bring their

own assistant. Drivers cannot enter or cross the threshold of any dwelling. One assistant/companion may ride free when assisting a passenger with disabilities (see *companions'* section below).

- Drivers cannot take wheelchairs up or down steps for any reason.
- Drivers reserve the right to refuse loading or unloading at a location that they consider unsafe.
- Buses cannot wait for passengers at the bank, post office, etc.

Please refer to the ADA Policy for further information on reasonable accommodations.

Bus Waiting Policy (10-minute window)

Passengers whose rides are scheduled on Demand Response/Dial-A-Ride buses should be ready 10 minutes before their scheduled pick-up time. The bus may arrive up to 10 minutes before the scheduled time due to changes in the route, road conditions, etc. We also request that passengers allow 10 minutes to pass beyond their scheduled pick-up time before calling dispatch to ask about their ride – the bus may be delayed due to road conditions, trains/traffic, changes to the route, etc. Once the bus has arrived, the driver will wait until the originally scheduled ride time and then a maximum of one additional (1) minute before marking the passenger as a no-show. After one (1) minute the bus will leave and will not return; passengers can call to re-schedule their ride but will be responsible for paying for the missed ride (see *cancellations/no show policy* below).

Passengers riding Deviated Route buses should be at the scheduled stop at the stop time; buses will not leave the stop before the scheduled time. The bus will pull up to the stop, open the passenger doors, and if no passengers board the bus at this time, the bus will leave. Buses do not wait for a specified length of time at bus stops; passengers looking to board the bus should step towards the curb at the stop, making their intention to ride known.

Cancellations/No Show Policy

This policy is intended to address passengers who habitually fail to show up for their scheduled trips or do not cancel in adequate time per this Hiawathaland Transit policy. A no show is defined as a trip where the passenger is not available for pick-up, and the passenger has not notified a customer service specialist at least 2 hours prior to the trip to cancel.

Passengers who have scheduled three or more trips in a 30-day period and have no-showed 25% or more of the scheduled trips during that time will be subject to the progressive correction plan. If a passenger no shows a trip and has a return trip scheduled later in the day, the return trip will be cancelled unless the passenger calls a customer service specialist to inform them the ride is still needed.

The progressive correction plan is as follows:

- First violation in a rolling 12-month period: Verbal warning
- Second violation in a rolling 12-month period: Final warning letter
- Third violation in a rolling 12-month period: 7-day suspension
- Fourth violation in a rolling 12-month period: 14-day suspension
- Fifth violation in a rolling 12-month period: 21-day suspension
- Sixth and subsequent violations in a 12-month period: 30-day suspension

All penalties imposed under this policy are first subject to an appeals process (see Suspension Appeals Process). Before any suspension, the potentially affected individual will receive written notice that transportation service will be suspended beginning fourteen (14) days from the date of notice and all suspensions will begin on a Monday. The individual will receive a copy of the appeals process that detail passenger rights in this situation. The written notice of suspension will contain instructions and materials necessary to challenge or appeal the suspension decision.

Hiawathaland Transit will continue to service passengers appealing pending suspension until all appeals have been settled. For passengers who do not choose to appeal, suspensions will commence on the date specified in the written notice. Subscriptions may be denied upon a second suspension in any consecutive 12-month period. Privileges may be reinstated without guarantee of the original subscription.

Personal Care Attendant (PCA)

A PCA may travel with a passenger in need of assistance. Passengers who are unable to get to or from the bus independently should have a personal care attendant there to assist them. Hiawathaland Transit encourages those with a documented medical or behavioral condition to bring a personal care attendant or companion along when using the bus, especially if the passenger could pose an unsafe situation for either the driver or any of the other passengers. One companion may ride free when assisting a passenger with disabilities. Companions must board and de-board the bus at the same locations as the passenger they are assisting.

Multi-Family Dwellings

Due to limited driving and turning space - as well as the safety concerns for pedestrians, passengers, the bus driver, and the transit bus - Hiawathaland Transit buses will not enter mobile home/trailer parks, apartment complexes or other multi-use/multi-family dwellings, unless approved by Transportation Director. Passengers will be dropped off at the entrance, at a shelter, or at the main office whenever possible, keeping in mind that our buses may be unable to make a close drop-off in some locations.

Safety

Once on the bus, we request that all passengers promptly seat themselves. We encourage the use of seat belts. All passengers in wheelchairs are to be safely secured by the driver. A lap/shoulder belt is available for passengers in wheelchairs and use is encouraged. For safety reasons, passengers using a 3-wheeled electric scooter will be encouraged to transfer to a bus seat if possible.

Passengers who use the lift will be assisted onto and off the lift by the driver. Drivers will always operate the lift, keeping an eye on the passenger as well as one hand on the passenger's mobility device while the lift is operating.

Health

In the event of a public health emergency, or similar, we will follow guidelines provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (<https://www.cdc.gov/>), the Minnesota Department of Health (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/>) and appropriate local public health officials. This may include, but is not limited to, the following: implementing additional safety measures necessary to protect both drivers and passengers; changing routes and/or other services; eliminating stops at locations/facilities where specific risk has been identified and confirmed; requiring or encouraging ill individuals to not ride the bus; requiring or encouraging drivers and passengers to wear appropriate personal protective equipment; and refusing rides when such ride may risk the safety or health of the driver and/or passengers. Additional information related to a specific public health emergency may be obtained from Hiawathaland Transit.

Inclement Weather Procedures

Hiawathaland Transit will not operate if road conditions are considered unsafe. Announcements will be made on the local radio stations, local cable access channel, Hiawathaland Transit's Facebook page, and on Three Rivers Community Action, Inc. web site. The decision to cancel service will be made by the Transportation Director, or other designee appointed by the Transportation Director.

Emergency Procedures

The driver is in command of the bus. Passengers must follow his/her instructions, especially in the case of an emergency. The driver will assess unsafe conditions and make the decision to load/unload at an alternate location, or to seek shelter during severe weather.

In the event of an accident or on-vehicle emergency, passengers will be asked to:

- Follow the driver's instruction.

- Remain calm.
- Make an orderly evacuation of the bus if needed, staying off the roadway in a safe location until further notice.

If a passenger becomes ill, injured, or distressed while on the bus, passengers should notify the driver that assistance is needed.

Passenger Conduct and Responsibility

All passengers are expected to behave in a polite manner with the driver and fellow passengers. No tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, eating, drinking, or open containers of food or beverages are allowed on the bus. Passengers are not allowed to possess any hazardous material while riding the bus. Inappropriate language, bothering other passengers, horseplay, fighting, carrying of weapons, or possession of illegal drugs will not be allowed on the bus.

Passengers must secure all personal items and belongings while riding the bus. For safety passengers may board only with bags that can be carried in a single trip and take up only space in their lap and under their seat. Hiawathaland Transit is not responsible for items left on buses.

Drivers have the ability to remove a disorderly passenger and/or a passenger that poses a safety threat to the driver or other passengers. Hiawathaland Transit reserves the right to refuse service to anyone who violates any of the standards.

Failure to obey the above policies may result in the following:

- First Offense: Verbal warning from the driver, dispatcher, Operations Transportation Coordinator, or Transportation Director.
- Second Offense: Written warning from the Transportation Director
- Third Offense: The passenger will be prohibited from using the transit system for a designated period of time, based upon the severity of the violation determined by the Transportation Director.

Passenger Comments and Complaint Procedures

Hiawathaland Transit is committed to providing safe, cost-effective transportation services. If for any reason you would like to make a comment or file a written complaint you may do so by addressing your concern to the following address:

Transportation Director
Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.
Hiawathaland Transit
55049 241st Ave
Plainview, MN 55964
Phone: 1-866-623-7505

Non-Discrimination

Hiawathaland Transit prohibits discrimination against any individual, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability (including pregnancy), age, marital status, familial status, membership or activity in a local human rights commission, or status with regard to public assistance.

Additionally, Hiawathaland Transit operates its programs without regard to race, color, or national origin, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Our Title VI notification can be found on all our buses, as well as on our website:

<https://threeriverscap.org/wp-content/uploads/TitleXCIXPlanX2024.pdf>