

**Snow Goose Transit**

# **ADA and Paratransit Policy**

Revision Date: 02/09/2024

## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

This policy outlines the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008, and the rights and obligations of Snow Goose Transit under federal and State of Washington Law.

Policy: In accordance with the ADA and ADAAA and federal and State of Washington Law, SCSC prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities and is committed to providing accommodations for those individuals with documented disabilities.

Snow Goose Transit is committed to providing equal access to its facilities, programs, and services for persons with disabilities. This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing Melissa Johnson at [mjohnson@lincolnhill-rc.org](mailto:mjohnson@lincolnhill-rc.org) or by calling 360-629-7403 ext. 101. People who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

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## Change log

<b>Date</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Description</b>
January 2024		New Guidance Document

## Acronyms and abbreviations

ADA      Americans with Disabilities Act

WLAD     Washington’s Law Against Discrimination

## Definitions

The following definitions from 49 CFR 37, the [National RTAP ADA Toolkit Glossary](#), and [FTA ADA Circular 4710.1](#) may be useful while using this policy:

- ***Commuter bus service:*** Fixed route bus service characterized by service predominantly in one direction during peak periods, limited stops, use of multi-ride tickets, and routes of extended length, usually between the central business district and outlying suburbs. Commuter bus service may also include other service, characterized by a limited route structure, limited stops, and a coordinated relationship to another mode of transportation.
- ***Disability:*** With respect to an individual, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment.
- ***Fixed Route Service:*** System of transporting individuals which operates along a prescribed route according to a fixed (regular) schedule.
- ***Mobility Device or Aid:*** A device designed to assist an individual with disabilities with locomotion. Examples include wheelchairs, canes, crutches, and walkers.
- ***Deviated Fixed Route Service:*** Transit service that operates along established routes that typically have designated stops. Between these stops, vehicles deviate (depart) from an established route to pick up or drop off riders within a defined off-route service area.
- ***Securement Area or Station:*** On a vehicle, a designated location for riders using wheelchairs, equipped with a securement system.
- ***Securement Device, Equipment or System:*** On a vehicle, equipment used for securing a wheelchair against uncontrolled movement during transport.
- ***Service Animal:*** Any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.
- ***Wheelchair:*** A mobility aid belonging to any class of three- or more- wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.

## ADA policy introduction

Snow Goose Transit is committed to compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law on July 26, 1990; and RCW 49.60, Washington's Law Against Discrimination (WLAD).

These civil rights legislations prohibit discrimination based on disability and require transportation service options be provided to persons with disabilities comparable to those available to people without disabilities.

It is the policy of Snow Goose Transit that, when viewed in its entirety, services, programs, facilities, and communications provided by Snow Goose Transit, directly or by a contracted service provider, are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities to the maximum extent possible.

New construction and facility alterations completed by Snow Goose Transit will be ADA compliant. If full ADA compliance is unfeasible due to structural impracticability, facility alterations will be ADA compliant to the maximum extent feasible. For information on upcoming projects and an opportunity to comment on plans, please visit our website at <https://snowgoosetransit.org>

Snow Goose Transit provides ADA related training to staff on a Quarterly and as-needed basis to ensure staff are trained to proficiency, as appropriate to their duties, so they operate vehicles and equipment safely and properly assist and treat people with disabilities in a respectful and courteous way.

### 1. Fares

Snow Goose Transit does not charge a fare for its transportation services.

### 2. Approved mobility devices

Snow Goose Transit can accommodate mobility devices that meet the following definitions and minimum standards:

- A wheelchair is a mobility aid belonging to any class of three- or more-wheeled devices; that is usable indoors; and is designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether manually or power operated.
- A mobility device is equipment designed or intended to assist people with mobility disabilities (i.e., walkers, canes, braces, crutches).
  - Snow Goose Transit may not be able to accommodate equipment that is not primarily designed for use by people with mobility impairments (i.e., shopping carts, skateboards).
  - Mobility devices must be stored out of the path of travel for other passengers.

Snow Goose transit will transport riders with their mobility devices, unless:

- Doing so is inconsistent with safety requirements in this policy or by the vehicle's manufacturer specifications (e.g., the combined weight of the wheelchair and occupant exceeds that of the vehicle's lift specifications).
- The use of the mobility devices poses a direct threat. For more information, see [11. Denial of service](#).

### 3. Mobility device securement

Operators will do the following when securing mobility devices:

- Use front and rear tie-downs.
- Secure mobility devices at the strongest parts of the device. However, the passenger can indicate the most optimal tie-down spot.
- Secure the mobility device front-facing unless the manufacturer specifications of the securement system requires otherwise or if otherwise requested by the passenger.
- Assist riders with securement systems, ramps, and seatbelts.

Snow Goose Transit does not require but recommends that riders apply brakes on their mobility devices when on a lift or in securement areas. For power chairs or scooters, Snow Goose Transit recommends riders turn the power switch to the "off" position on lifts or in securement areas. Operators cannot assist riders using power chairs or scooters with the operation of their equipment.

Mobility device securement is mandatory if it is safe and possible to do.

Snow Goose Transit will not refuse to transport someone whose mobility device cannot be satisfactorily restrained as long as the mobility device fits within the definitions in [2. Approved mobility devices](#).

### 4. Portable oxygen equipment

Snow Goose Transit allows riders to travel with respirators and portable oxygen supplies, consistent with applicable U.S. Department of Transportation rules on the transportation of hazardous materials in [49 CFR Subtitle B, Chapter 1, Subchapter C](#). Riders must secure portable oxygen equipment safely and the equipment must not obstruct the aisle.

### 5. Personal care attendants

A personal care attendant is someone who travels with and assists a rider with their personal needs due to a disability. Snow Goose Transit does not require personal care attendants. However, if used, customers must provide their own personal care attendant.

A personal care attendant differs from a companion or guest. A guest or companion is anyone who accompanies the rider who is not designated as their personal care attendant.

Operators are not required to provide attendant services, such as assisting a rider with use of oxygen, medical equipment, administering medication, or other personal needs. Riders who require attendant services should travel with a personal care attendant.

For information on fares for personal care attendants, guests, and companions, see [1. Fares](#). For information on scheduling ADA complementary paratransit rides with personal care attendants, guests, and companions, see [12. ADA complementary paratransit services](#).

### 6. Service animals

A service animal is any guide dog, signal dog, miniature horse, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. Snow allows service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all organization vehicles and facilities. Riders may use more than one service animal.

Snow Goose Transit does not charge a fare for service animals. If a service animal causes damage to Snow Goose vehicles or facilities, the user of the service animal may be charged for those damages.

To ride Snow Goose Transit services, service animals:

- Must be on a leash, tether, or harness unless use of such a device would interfere with the task the service animal performs, or the person's disability prevents use of such devices. In these cases, the handler must use voice, signal, or other effective means to maintain control of the service animal.
- Must not be aggressive toward or pose a direct threat to the health or safety of Snow Goose Transit staff, other riders, or other animals.
- Must be potty-trained.

Snow Goose Transit staff will not request written certification that a rider's animal is a service animal or request demonstration of service animal's task(s). However, Snow Goose Transit staff may ask users of service animals the following questions:

- Is your animal a service animal?
- Is the service animal required because of a disability?
- What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

Snow Goose Transit may deny a service animal service if the animal is out of control of the handler, posing a direct threat, not potty-trained, or if its handler refuses to answer the questions about the animal noted above.

If Snow Goose Transit denies the service animal service, the handler/person with a disability may still use Snow Goose Transit services. Snow Goose Transit staff will provide the handler/person with a disability information on how to appeal the service animal's service denial and, if applicable, options to remedy the situation so the service animal can be allowed to use Snow Goose Transit vehicles and facilities.

Snow Goose Transit staff will not take charge of riders' service animals. Riders are welcome to use a personal care attendant or companion to assist with caring for a service animal.

It is a violation of Washington state law to knowingly misrepresent an animal as a service animal to secure that animal the rights afforded to service animals ([RCW 49.60.214](#)). Such violations may result in civil/monetary penalties."

- For more information about service animal requirements, see the [U.S. Department of Justice FAQs about Service Animals and the ADA](#); [49 CFR 37.167\(d\)](#); [49 CFR 37 Appendix E, Examples](#); [28 CFR 35.136](#); [28 CFR 35 Appendix A, Subpart B](#); FTA Circular 4710.1, chapter [2.6](#); [RCW 49.60.040\(25\)](#); and [Washington State Human Rights Commission Guide to Service Animals and the Washington Law Against Discrimination](#)

## 7. Boarding assistance

Snow Goose Transit operators will position the vehicle to make boarding and disembarking as easy as possible for everyone, minimize the slope of the ramp, and use the vehicle's kneeling option as needed. Operators will allow riders with disabilities adequate time to board and disembark the vehicle.

Operators will use vehicle accessibility equipment to assist customers (i.e., vehicle lifts/ramps). For information on procedures when vehicle accessibility equipment is not functioning, see [8. Maintenance of lifts or ramps](#).

When necessary or upon request, operators will provide riders assistance using lifts, ramps, and securement systems. Upon request by the rider, operators may assist riders using manual wheelchairs up vehicle ramps if doing so does not constitute a direct threat to the health or safety of the operator. For more information, see [11. Denial of service](#).

Riders using wheelchairs may board the vehicle lift separately from their wheelchair. Riders may use the vehicle lift facing toward or away from the vehicle. Snow Goose Transit does not require operators to assume the controls of a power wheelchair or assist a passenger in/out of their wheelchair. Riders are welcome to ride with a personal care attendant to accomplish these tasks. For more information, see [5. Personal care attendants](#).

## **8. Maintenance of lifts or ramps**

Snow Goose Transit will use and maintain vehicle and facility accessibility features and repair malfunctioning features promptly.

When an operator discovers a vehicle's lift/ramp is out of order, the operator will report it immediately to the manager or dispatcher.

Snow Goose Transit will take the following steps for services with malfunctioning features:

- Snow Goose Transit will remove fixed route vehicles with inoperable lifts/ramps from service as soon as possible and no later than before the vehicle's next service day. If a fixed route vehicle is operating with an inoperable lift/ramp and a rider requires the lift/ramp and if the next vehicle on the route is not scheduled to arrive at the stop for over 30 minutes, Snow Goose Transit will dispatch alternative transportation immediately to transport that rider.
- Demand responsive service vehicles with an inoperable lift/ramp may remain in service for the remainder of the day if Snow Goose Transit can assign riders requiring this accessibility equipment to another vehicle.
- All vehicles found to have an inoperable lift/ramp will not be returned to service until the lift/ramp is repaired, with the FTA-permitted exception of the following: if Snow Goose Transit does not have a spare vehicle to replace the vehicle with an inoperable lift/ramp, Snow Goose Transit may return the vehicle to service temporarily, for a maximum of 5 days while making preparations to repair the lift/ramp.

Snow Goose Transit will work with riders who require reasonable modifications due to an accessibility feature being out of order. See the [14. Reasonable modification](#) for information on making these requests.

## **9. Priority/reserved seating**

All Snow Goose Transit fixed route vehicles contain signage designating priority/reserved seating at the front of the vehicle for older adults and people with disabilities and at all wheelchair securement locations. The signage instructs riders to comply with the bus operator's request to make these seats available to older adults and people with disabilities who prefer to use them.

Snow Goose Transit drivers will allow riders using mobility aids to board if securement areas are not otherwise occupied by a mobility device, regardless of the number of riders on the vehicle. Operators will ask other riders sitting in priority and reserved seating areas to move to other available seats or stand. Vehicle operators may ask ambulatory people with a disability to vacate a wheelchair securement site seat. Operators are not required to enforce the priority and reserved seating designation beyond making the request.

## **10. Stop announcements**

Snow Goose Transit's fixed route services will make on-board announcements at stops at major intersections, destination points, transfer points with other fixed routes, and at sufficient intervals along the route for our vision impaired riders. Operators will announce other stops upon request.

## **11. Denial of service**

Snow Goose Transit may deny, suspend, or exclude any rider from its facilities and/or services for engaging in conduct that is violent, seriously disruptive, illegal, considered a "direct threat" to others, or for other behaviors/actions as described in this policy, Snow Goose Transit [rider guide, rider code of conduct, etc.], and [RCW 9.91.025, Unlawful transit conduct](#).

A direct threat is a significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by a reasonable modification to Snow Goose Transit policies, practices, procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aides or services, such as traveling with a personal care attendant. A direct threat does not occur when a person's disability results in an appearance or involuntary behavior that may offend, annoy, or inconvenience others.

Riders suspended or excluded from Snow Goose Transit property and/or services may request an appeal of this decision by contacting Snow Goose Transit. See [13. Complaint process](#) for Snow Goose Transit's contact information.

## **12. ADA complementary paratransit services**

Snow Goose Transit offers complimentary, fixed route service to the general public with deviations for individuals with mobility issues, disabilities, the elderly, and our rural community members.

### **12.1. Eligibility requirements**

People with a disability or disabling health condition that prevents them from using Snow Goose Transit fixed route buses some or all the time may access Snow Goose Transit through deviations.

Snow Goose Transit will, upon request of deviation, conduct a site evaluation to ensure that the pick-up location is within a 15-minute return timeframe to our fixed route, safe for our buses to get to, has room to deploy a lift if required, and spacious enough for the bus to turn around or pull through safely. Site evaluations will be completed within 48 hours of the request.

Snow Goose Transit will notify applicants by phone once a determination is made. If the applicant does not receive an eligibility answer within 21 days of submitting a completed application, Snow Goose Transit will treat the applicant as eligible and provide paratransit

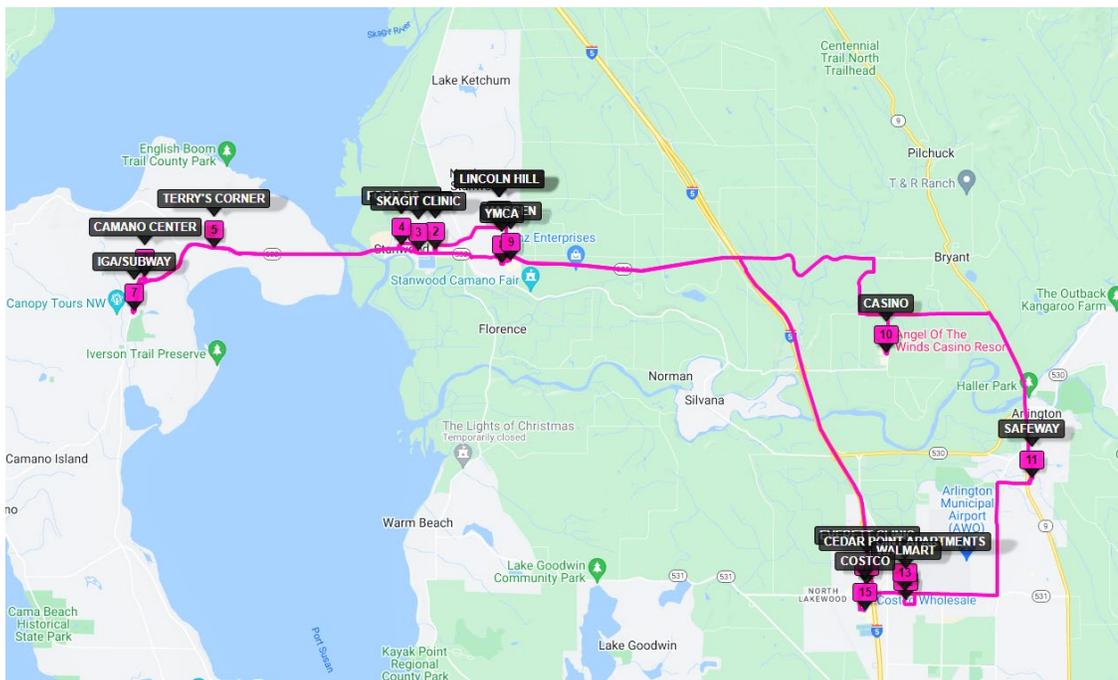
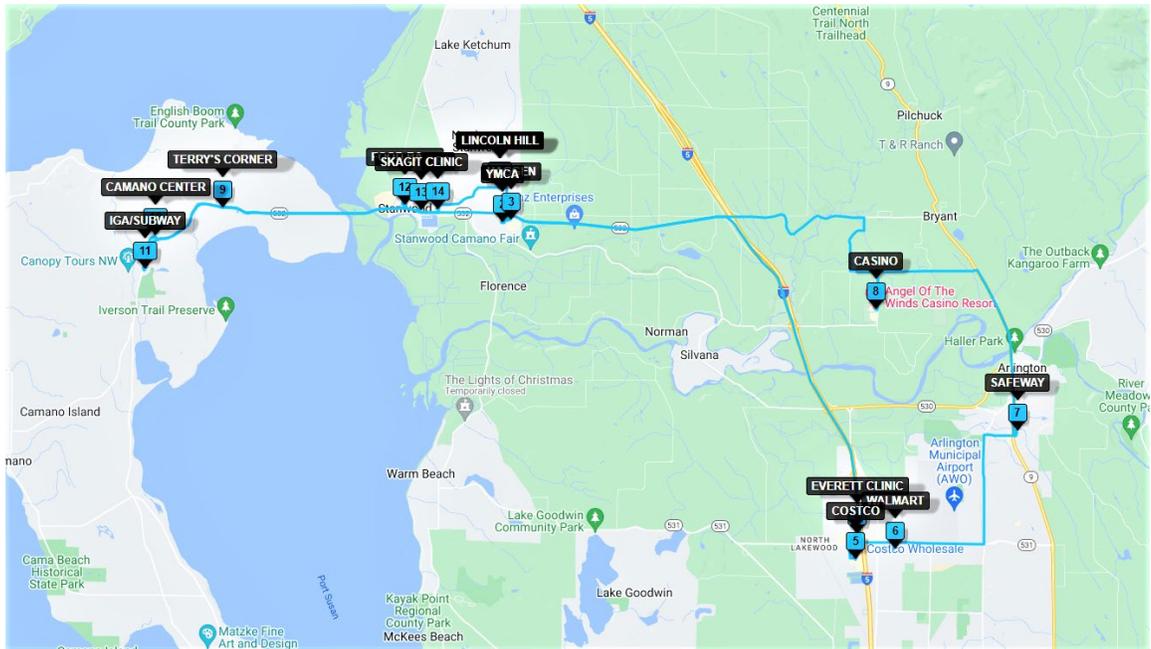
services until the organization makes a final eligibility determination.

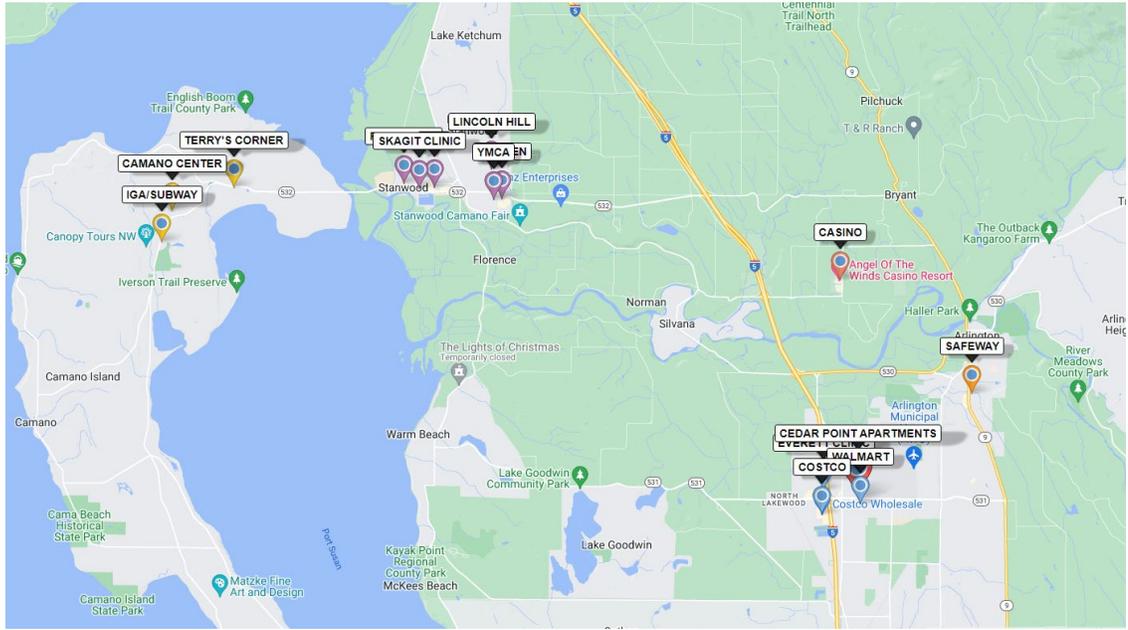
## 12.2. Eligibility application process

To request a deviation, applicants can contact Snow Goose Transit at 360-629-7403 ext.101 or stop by our office located at 7430 276<sup>th</sup> St. NW Stanwood, WA 98292 to request a site evaluation. Please provide 48 hours' notice from the date you wish to take your ride.

## 12.3. Service area

Snow Goose Transit provides deviated service within 15 minutes round trip of fixed route service. Our current schedule can be found online at [snowgoosetransit.org](http://snowgoosetransit.org).





#### 12.4. Origin-to-destination service

Deviated trips are “origin-to-destination” service. They can take one of three forms, described in the table below:

Trip type	Descriptions
Curb to curb	Service takes rider from curb of pickup location to curb of destination.
Door to door	Service takes rider from door of pickup location to door of destination.
Door through door	Service takes rider from door of pickup location into the door of the destination.

Snow Goose Transit provides curb-to-curb service. If a rider requires door-to-door service, the rider must request this service at the time of reservation.

Snow Goose Transit will review requests on a case-by-case basis.

If a rider makes a curb-to-curb reservation, but at the time of service an otherwise unknown barrier is discovered and the rider requires additional assistance, the rider may request door-to-door assistance from the driver.

Snow Goose Transit cannot take actions that would fundamentally alter the nature of its service or create undue burdens.

For more information, [5. Personal care attendants](#), [7. Boarding assistance](#), and [14. Reasonable modification](#).

## **12.5. Days and hours of operation**

Snow Goose Transit Deviations are available on the same days and hours as Snow Goose Transit's fixed route services. Holiday operating days and hours for deviated services are the same as fixed route service. Our current hours of operation are Monday through Friday 6:30 am to 6 pm. Our office hours are Monday through Friday 9 am to 5 pm. For inclement weather, we follow the lead of the local school district. If the schools are closed, so are we. For more information regarding holidays and closures, you can visit our website at [snowgoosetransit.org](http://snowgoosetransit.org)

## **12.6. Trip purpose**

Snow Goose Transit provides deviated service for trips of any purpose and does not prioritize or deny specific types of trips.

## **12.7. Trip scheduling**

Riders may request a deviated trip by calling our dispatchers within 24 hours of the requested pick-up time (given that a site evaluation has already been performed and approved see section [12.1. Eligibility Requirements](#))

Riders may schedule trips during Snow Goose Transit's administrative office hours on all days preceding a service day. administrative office hours: 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday. If you would like to schedule a trip outside of our office hours, please leave a message and dispatch will return your call during business hours to help accommodate and confirm your ride. Snow Goose Transit accommodates same-day trips if possible.

## **12.8. Companions and personal care attendants on ADA complementary paratransit services**

When arranging for a trip on ADA complementary paratransit services, riders should notify the Snow Goose Transit scheduler if they are traveling with a personal care attendant.

Additionally, Snow Goose Transit will accommodate one non-personal care attendant companion in addition to a personal care attendant if the rider notifies the scheduler of the companion when arranging the trip. Snow Goose Transit will accommodate additional non-personal care attendant companions on a space-available basis.

## **12.9. Visitor certification**

Visitors are people with disabilities who live outside the Snow Goose Transit service area and would like to use Snow Goose Transit ADA complementary paratransit. Visitors are eligible for a total of 21 days of paratransit service in a 365-day period beginning the first

day the visitor uses the service. For additional days of service, visitors must apply for ADA complementary paratransit service with Snow Goose Transit.

Snow Goose Transit will certify a visitor using the following process: Snow Goose Transit will follow the same guidelines outlined in [12.1 Eligibility requirements](#) and [12.2 eligibility application process](#)

### **12.10. Trip denials**

Snow Goose Transit will try to meet all requests for ADA complementary paratransit service.

If Snow Goose Transit cannot schedule or negotiate a requested trip within one hour of the requested trip, this constitutes a trip denial, even if the rider accepts a trip that is beyond the negotiated window.

Snow Goose Transit will monitor trip denials and missed trips to ensure ADA complementary paratransit service capacity is adequate.

## **13. Complaint process**

Snow Goose Transit is committed to providing safe, reliable, and accessible transportation services and welcomes customer feedback. ADA complaints and questions about Snow Goose Transit's ADA complaint process may be submitted to Snow Goose Transit's ADA Coordinator, Melissa Johnson, using the following methods:

- Email: [mjohnson@lincolnhill-rc.org](mailto:mjohnson@lincolnhill-rc.org)
- Call: 360-629-7403 ext. 105
- Send mail to: Snow Goose Transit C/O Melissa Johnson 7430 276<sup>th</sup> St NW Stanwood WA 98292
- Fill out the comment/complaint form available on all of our buses
- Stop into the office and request a complaint form

Snow Goose Transit will respond promptly to all complaints that have valid contact information.

Snow Goose Transit will retain copies of complaints, investigation and resolution documentation, and Snow Goose Transit's response to the complainant in accordance with the complaint record retention requirements of the ADA, Washington State Archives Office, and Washington State Department of Transportation Consolidated Grant Program.

To share information about its ADA complaint process, Snow Goose Transit will use the same means it uses to inform the general public about its policies and procedures. This includes through the organization's website.

## 14. Reasonable modification

Requests for modifications of Snow Goose Transit policies, practices, or procedures to accommodate a person with a disability may be made either in advance or at the time of service. Snow Goose Transit is best able to address and accommodate requests when made in advance.

Advance requests for reasonable modifications may be made to Snow Goose Transit by emailing [mjohnson@lincolnhill-rc.org](mailto:mjohnson@lincolnhill-rc.org) or calling 360-629-7403 ext. 101. The request should contain an explanation of the modification needed.

For requests at the time of service, Snow Goose Transit dispatchers will determine if the modification can be provided. Dispatchers may consult with Snow Goose Transit management before deciding to grant or deny the request.

Snow Goose Transit will only deny requests based on one or more of the following:

- Granting the request would fundamentally alter the nature of Snow Goose Transit's services, programs, or activities.
- Granting the request would create a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
- Without the requested modification, the person with a disability can fully use Snow Goose Transit's services, programs, or activities for their intended purpose.

When Snow Goose Transit denies a request for a reasonable modification, the organization will take other actions to ensure that the person with a disability receives the services provided by Snow Goose Transit, to the maximum extent possible.

Snow Goose Transit commits to sharing information with the public about its ADA reasonable modification request procedures using the same means used to inform the public about other organization policies and procedures, including on the organization's website.