

**Greater Glens Falls Transit Plan for Compliance with
Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990**

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Section 1 – General Information

Name of System: Greater Glens Falls Transit System

Address: 495 Queensbury Avenue
Queensbury, NY 12804

Telephone: 518 792-1085
518 792-7952 (Fax)

System Contact: Scott E. Sopczyk, Transportation Director

General Information:

The City of Glens Falls is located on the Hudson River in the eastern part of upstate New York, approximately 45 miles north of the City of Albany. It is the central municipality of the Glens Falls urbanized area, which supports a population of approximately 65,000 persons. The City serves as the lead agency for the operation of the Greater Glens Falls Transit System (GGFT).

GGFT began operation in late 1983 and presently serves the City of Glens Falls, The Village and Town of Lake George and the Towns of Queensbury and Bolton Landing in Warren County; The Town and Village of Fort Edward and the Village of Hudson Falls in Washington County; and the Village of South Glens Falls and the Town of Moreau in Saratoga County. Local financial support for system operation is provided by each of these municipalities, based on the amount of service that each receives.

It is the policy of Greater Glens Falls Transit to operate a safe, reliable and accessible public transportation system. Passengers using public transportation are entitled to equal access, seating and treatment. Under Title II of the American's with Disabilities Act of 1990 (as amended) and related statutes, GGFT will ensure that no person shall, on the grounds of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, or service it administers. GGFT is committed to complying with the requirements of the American's with Disabilities in all of its programs, services, benefits and activities.

Section 2 – Description of Fixed Route System

The GGFT fixed route system operates with a mixed fleet of 18 buses (see attachment A)

Service currently operates over eleven (11) year-round routes Monday through Friday from 6:30 am to 7:00 pm and on Saturday from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm (see attachment B – service guide). During the summer tourist season (late June through Labor Day) the system also operates a fleet of seven trolley styles buses from 8:00am through 11:00pm seven days per week. All GGFT public transit vehicle are wheelchair accessible and ADA compliant. Total Ridership in 2012 was just under 343,000 unlinked passenger trips. Annual vehicle miles total roughly 300,000.

The base fare is \$1.00 with \$.50 transfers. Senior citizens aged 60 years and over and persons with a Medicare card or documented disability pay half fare at all times.

Section 3 – Existing Paratransit Services

Freedom and Mobility Express (FAME)

Fame is a demand responsive, complementary paratransit service operated directly by GGFT for ADA compliance. It is operated with two accessible small buses that can accommodate up to three (3) forward facing wheelchair tie-down positions. Other relevant information about this service is as follows:

- Service Area:** Same as year-round fixed route service area with a ¼ mile corridor around each route.
- Fare:** \$2.00 to \$3.00 one-way depending the trip. The FAME fare is calculated at 2X the comparable trip on a GGFT fixed route bus.
- Service Hours:** Monday through Saturday 6:30am-7:00 pm to match available fixed route Service
- Service Description:** Service is primarily curb-to-curb but drivers will provide door-to-door service when necessary to permit an individual to access and use the service.
- Eligibility:** Persons physically unable to use regular GGFT buses must file an application that requires certification by a doctor or other qualified professional capable of assessing the applicant's physical, mobility limitations.
- Trip Purpose:** No special consideration or prioritization is provided on the basis of trip purpose.
- Reservations:** Accepted 24 hours and up to 2 weeks before a desired travel date between 8:30am and 4:30 pm. Reservation requests may also be made over weekends on a telephone answering system (Saturdays for Monday trips)
- Capacity Res.:** History of the operation has shown that passengers and scheduler have always been able to successfully negotiate pick-up and drop-off times (within 1.0hrs before or after a passengers initially requested time). Trip denials to date have essentially been non-existent.
- Ridership:** Approximately 140 persons have been determined to be eligible to use the service. Of this figure, roughly 20-30 people are considered regular users. Annual ridership is approximately 2,400 passenger trips (CY 2015).

Community Workshops Inc. (CWI)

CWI (transportation dept. known as Transit Connection) is a private not-for-profit organization that transports developmentally disabled adults to and from sponsored programs daily throughout Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties. Additionally, CWI will provide transportation for private elderly and disabled individuals on a private-pay basis. CWI's vehicles are all lift equipped and are funded through the FTA 5310 program.

Other Services

A referral list has been compiled of other providers of specialized transportation in the Greater Glens Fall area. For the most part, these providers are primarily engaged in other businesses and program

activities and offer transportation on a limited basis to specific groups of people for specific purposes. Many provide the service using volunteers or program staff. These services are as follows:

Volunteer Based

American Cancer Society – Transports cancer patients to treatment. Uses private cars.

Glens Falls Senior Citizens Center – Provides transportation to senior citizens to/from medical appointments in the city of Glens Falls. No fare is charged, service operated Monday through Friday. Uses a van and private cars.

North Country Volunteers (RSVP)– Transports those in need to/from medical appointments. Service is provided throughout region. Uses private cars.

Regularly Scheduled Services:

Warren-Hamilton County Community Action Agency - Operates Monday through Friday, 8:30 am - 3:00 pm using two vans. Service is open to the general public, but is limited to trips for medical appointments. A 24 hour advance reservation is required, service is free, wheelchair lift is not available.

Washington County Community Action Agency - Operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm using agency cars. Eligibility is subject to income restrictions; the elderly are qualified by age. Service is provided for any purpose with 2-3 days advance reservation. Service is free.

Warren County Office for Aging & Local Municipalities

Towns throughout the service area sponsor transportation for their senior citizen residents for shopping and medical appointments. Frequencies of service in each town vary from one day per month to two days per week. Provisions of these services is accomplished through contracts with private carriers. No provisions are generally made for wheelchair users.

Section 4 – ADA/FAME Complementary Paratransit Service Compliance

FAME Complementary Paratransit

Based on GGFT’s near 0 trip denial rate and lack of any service complaints for its FAME program, GGFT has determined that area ADA complementary paratransit demand is being fully satisfied. Paratransit buses are well maintained and replaced on a 5-year cycle.

Fixed Route:

All of GGFT’s fixed route buses fully meet ADA accessibility requirements, and all new vehicles are specified to be fully ADA compliant.

Drivers announce major schedule time points (and other requested locations) and stops along each route using the public address system.

Over the last 5 years GGFT’s fixed route buses have experienced growth in its use by passengers with personal mobility devices. This growth is believed to have caused some reduction in the use of the FAME paratransit service.

Five Year Capital and Operating Budgets

Capital:

2012	\$120,000 Purchase of two (2) replacement paratransit buses.
2013	
2014	
2015	
2016	
2017	\$140,000 Purchase two (2) replacement paratransit buses

Operating (direct costs):

2012	\$120,052
2013	125,000
2014	127,250
2015	130,000
2016	132,650
2017	135,300

Section 5 – Eligibility Determination Process

Application:

In Appendix A are copies of application materials that are used as the basis for eligibility determination, one is the basic application and the other is an eligibility verification for use by health care and other appropriate professionals.

Applications will be made available through the GGFT offices and local agencies that serve disabled persons. Taped formats will be available describing accessible GGFT services to the visually impaired upon request directly from GGFT and at the Glens Falls Association for the Blind.

Processing:

All completed applications are required to be returned to GGFT offices, where they are date stamped upon receipt. Receipt of an initial application is followed up with GGFT sending a professional verification form to the person/practice identified by the applicant with instructions for its return to GGFT. When all application materials are received by GGFT the application is then reviewed and either approved or denied within 21 days of receipt of a fully completed application. Incomplete applications will be returned to the sender with appropriate instructions. Very few complete applications are denied by GGFT.

Review of application materials is performed by GGFT staff that have been instructed in ADA eligibility guidelines. As indicated, referrals may be sent to qualified professionals to verify a person's functional abilities and/or disabilities. Such referrals are done within five days of an applications receipt. The final decision on approval/denial of an application will be made by the GGFT Transportation Director, or his

designee, once all necessary information has been received GGFT reserves the right to deny an application if requested referrals have not been returned by the end of the 21 day review period.

Persons determined to be ADA eligible are notified by mail and provided with documentation (ID card) that describes their eligibility. Depending on the functional disability involved, a person may be given either "full" or "conditional" eligibility. Complete descriptions of an individual's eligibility classification are provided. In practice, the majority of applicants are found to have "Conditional" ADA paratransit eligibility.

Visitors and Persons new to the area that can provide documentation of their eligibility as determination by another transit system will be given "presumptive" eligibility and use of the GGFT accessible services. Presumptive eligibility is granted for periods of up to 30 days. Individuals that wish to use GGFT service for a periods longer than that will be required to complete GGFT's application procedure.

ADA eligible persons are allowed to schedule trips for companions that they may wish to accompany them on a trip. GGFT accommodates these requests on a space available basis. Further, companions are required to pay the same fare as the ADA eligible person and must have the same pick-up and drop-off locations. People requiring the use of a personal care attendant (PCA) are accommodated at no charge to the attendant provided that the ADA eligible person indicates the need for an attendant during their application process (or any subsequent updates).

Appeal Process: Anyone that is determined not to be ADA eligible will be told so in writing. This communication will also describe the GGFT appeal procedure if they choose to contest this decision. All appeals must be initiated within 60 days of the date that eligibility is denied. Appeals will be considered and decided by members of the GGFT ADA Advisory Committee, excluding members of the GGFT staff that are involved in making the initial determination. This committee is composed of five non-GGFT staff members. The participation of at least three (3) of these people will be required to act on an appeal decision. To date GGFT very seldom finds it necessary to deny an application and has never had an eligibility decision appealed.

Section 6 – Public Participation Process

On November 27, 1991, a notice describing the GGFT ADA service requirement, its planning process and public meeting dates (Appendix B) was mailed to wide ranging list of local media, public service agencies and individuals (Appendix C). In addition to this notice, a similar legal notice about the planning process and meeting dates was published in the local daily newspaper (The Post-Star) on December 2, 1991.

Public meetings were held by GGFT on December 17, 1991 and January 8, 1992 at the Glens Falls Association for the Blind offices. The purpose of these meeting, as was explained to those in attendance, was to fully describe the ADA requirements for GGFT and to obtain public comment and input into the plan as it was being developed.

The 12/17 meeting was attended by six persons, three private citizens and three staff from the Glens Falls Independent living Center. Service and eligibility requirements were thoroughly described. Comments and input focused on clarification of ADA requirements; support for existing FAME service; housing availability for the disabled in and around Glens Falls; the need to have more than one wheelchair securement location on fixed route buses; and a desire for FAME to operate later in the afternoon than at present. All comments were duly noted and attendants were reminded of the next public meeting date set for January 8, 1992.

The 1/8 meeting was attended by four persons. Its primary focus was to describe GGFT draft plan for service compliance with ADA and get feedback. Attendees raised points for clarification on details and were sportive of the draft approach and time table for implementation. This meeting was attended by a reporter from the Post-Star who ran an article detailing the proposed plan the following day

Over the same time period, an "ADA Advisory Committee" was established to review specific requirements and help develop a plan for GGFT compliance. This committee is composed of two disabled users of current FAME service, the Director of the Glens Falls Independent Living Center and two representatives from the Greater Glens Falls Advisory Committee (a standing policy advisory group made up of representatives of each municipality served by GGFT). Meetings of this group were held each of the following dates: 12/13, 12/27, 1/6 and 1/16. All aspects of the plan were discussed in great detail as the plan was developed.

On January 23, 1992, the draft plan was presented to the full Greater Glens Falls Advisory Committee. This group gave unanimous approval to the draft final plan. With this approval, the thirty day public comment period was officially begun on Friday, January 24th. Notification of the comment period was made through a distribution of a public notice to each agency/organization on the mailing list in Appendix B; through a legal notice published in the Glens Falls Post Star and aboard FAME buses. A public hearing on the plan was held on February 14, 1992 at the Glens Falls Association for the Blind offices. No additional public comments were received

The final plan was presented to the City of Glens Fall Common Council at their regularly scheduled meeting of Thursday, March 5, 1992. The Common Council approved the plan, as did the Glens Falls Urban Area Transportation Council (local MPO) at its meeting on January 30, 1992. These approvals along with the plan was forwarded to the FTA.

Section 7 – Complaint Procedure

Any person who believes that he or she has been excluded from participation in, been denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to unlawful discrimination under and GGFT service or activity, and believes the discrimination is based solely upon disability, may file a formal complaint with the GGFT Transportation Director. Any such complaint should be filed as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after the alleged discrimination incident occurred. Any

complaint must describe the relevant fact including the date(s), time and location of the alleged incident together with a description of how the incident occurred. Any person submitting a complaint must include his or her name, address and telephone number or e-mail (if available).