

# *Souhegan Valley Rides ~ Frequently Asked Questions*

The Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative and the Nashua Transit System are committed to making this a comfortable and reliable service. If you have ideas, suggestions, complaints or compliments, please let us know by calling us at 880-0100 extension 1. Thank you for riding with us!

## **What type of bus service is Souhegan Valley Rides?**

- Souhegan Valley Rides is a *dial-a-ride type service* where passengers call in advance to schedule a ride, are picked-up at the building entrance specified by them when the ride was scheduled, and are driven to their destinations in a handicapped accessible “mini” bus.
- The buses seat 12 to 14 passengers so rides are shared with other passengers.
- A low ramp allows all passengers to get on the bus without having to use any stairs or lifts.
- Please be prepared to meet the bus at the curb if you do not need assistance. If you do need assistance getting to the bus, and have told us so, please be ready at the building entrance that you specified while making your reservation.

## **Who can use the bus service?**

- Service is available to all residents of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis and Milford in need of transportation assistance.

## **When is the service available?**

- The bus operates between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM Monday through Friday including travel time to and from the garage in Nashua.

## **Where can I go on the bus?**

- Rides are provided within the four towns (Amherst, Brookline, Hollis and Milford) and to/from Nashua.
- Rides are provided for:
  - Healthcare appointments including doctor visits, outpatient services, counseling, pharmacies & dialysis
  - Social service appointments including SHARE, DHHS, SSA and the Adult Learning Center
  - Shopping on Mondays & Thursdays to 5 local plazas: Lorden Plaza/Shaw’s, Market Basket and Stop & Shop in Milford, Walmart in Amherst, and the Hannaford Supermarket on Coliseum Ave in Nashua
- Rides are also provided to:
  - Municipal offices in the participating towns including to Town Halls and local libraries
  - Local community dining locations sponsored by St Joseph Community Services
  - Local senior activity locations including the Milford Area Seniors, the Hollis Seniors, and the Brookline Seniors; the Parkhurst Place Community Room; and the Nashua Senior Activity Center and Nashua YMCA
- Shopping Rules: Each rider may have only 2 shopping bags; for safety and space reasons, no wheeled shopping carts are allowed on the bus; the bus driver cannot assist with your shopping bags; and a minimum of 1 hour is scheduled to complete shopping



### How does the service work?

- Riders must register in advance for the service. Please call the Nashua Transit System office at 880-0100 extension 1 to obtain an application or you can print an application from our website at [www.SouheganValleyRides.org](http://www.SouheganValleyRides.org) – look on the “Arranging A Ride” tab for a link to the form.
- Riders will be picked up by a handicapped accessible, step-less entry 14 seat passenger bus.
- Riders are asked to pay \$2.00 each way. Exact Fare Only – No change can be given.
- A free fare program is available for those in need. You may request a free fare when scheduling a ride.
- A rider may bring one guest if the guest pays their own fare. NTS must be notified about the guest when the ride is scheduled.
- Personal Care Attendants (PCA), medically necessary companions and children under age 5 ride free.
- Service animals are permitted.

### What information do I need to schedule my ride?

- Your full name
- Your telephone number
- The date of your trip
- The pick-up address
- The drop-off address
- Whether you use a mobility device
- The times you would like to arrive at and return from your destination
- Whether a personal attendant/PCA or companion will be riding with you

### How far in advance do I schedule my ride?

Please call 880-0100 extension 1 at least 48 hours (weekdays only) in advance to schedule your ride. Rides needed on Tuesdays must be scheduled by the previous Friday, rides for Wednesday must be scheduled by the previous Monday, and rides for Thursday must be scheduled by the previous Tuesday.

Riders can call up to two weeks in advance to schedule a ride to an appointment. For riders attending dialysis or other ongoing, regularly scheduled appointments, NTS’s dispatching staff will work with the individual rider on extended bookings.

### What if I no longer need a ride?

It is very important that you call NTS if you are not going to need a scheduled ride. *The sooner you can call to cancel or change the ride, the better!* This allows for more efficient scheduling of the bus drivers and other rides, and saves the extra costs of “last minute” cancelations. Please call at least 24 hours before your scheduled ride. NTS can only accept cancelations called in on weekdays. To cancel a ride, please call 880-0100 extension 1.

Riders with frequent late cancelations or no-shows jeopardize their privilege to use the bus service, add to the cost of operating the service, and disrupt the bus service’s efficiency. Please call to cancel any unneeded rides.



### **Riding the Bus**

Please be prepared to meet the vehicle at the curb if you do not need assistance. If you do need assistance getting to the vehicle, and have told us so, please be ready at the building entrance door that you specified while making your reservation. When boarding, please have EXACT FARE ready. For the comfort and safety of all passengers, eating, drinking, smoking and the use of other tobacco products are not permitted in the vehicles. Radios and cell phones are a distraction to the driver and other passengers, EARPHONES only, please. Please keep in mind that disruptive, discourteous or destructive behavior cannot be tolerated and could result in a passenger losing their privileges to use the bus service

### **Other Important How-To-Ride Tips!**

The vehicle may arrive anytime within a thirty (30) minute “window”, up to fifteen (15) minutes before and fifteen (15) minutes after your scheduled pick-up time.

For example, if your pick-up time is scheduled for 9:00 AM, the vehicle will arrive between 8:45AM and 9:15AM.

Once you are inside the vehicle, the driver will assist you with your seatbelt, if requested, and secure your wheelchair if you have one.

### **Who operates this community transportation service?**

- The Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC) is the group of community representatives from each of the participating towns that oversees the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service.
- The bus services and call center operations are purchased from the Nashua Transit System.

### **How is this bus service funded?**

- In order to participate, each community must share in the cost of providing the bus service.
- As of July 2011, the bus service will receive federal 5310 funding through the Federal Transit Administration, the State of New Hampshire and the Regional Coordinating Council for Community Transportation #7. This federal program requires 20% matching funds from local sources. The municipal funding raised for each community’s share of the operating costs will be used towards this match.
- Grants and private donations fund the administrative costs of the bus service.

**For more information, please contact us  
by email at [Info@SouheganValleyRides.org](mailto:Info@SouheganValleyRides.org) or call 673-8482.**

**The Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative’s mission is to provide affordable, wheelchair-accessible transportation for non-emergency healthcare appointments and other essential activities to the residents of our communities.**

**Sometimes there are scheduling conflicts when trying to help as many residents as possible. Rides for healthcare needs will be given priority when scheduling conflicts occur.**

**We greatly appreciate your flexibility and understanding when these situations arise!**