

The Changing Paradigm for Paratransit FACT SHEET #4

Paratransit Visions for the Future Research Topics

The purpose of public transportation is to provide efficient, coordinated, and accessible services to all people, including people with specialized mobility needs. Since tax dollars are allocated to provide transportation for everyone, no distinction should be made among riders who are ambulatory, who are non-ambulatory, who have cognitive disabilities or who are older adults—everyone has a right to access the transportation they need.

Key informants in this study identified the following topics for future research:

- **Can any of the most significant benefits of paratransit be quantified? Which benefits could be identified with a reasonable research effort?**
- **What can we learn from high-productivity paratransit services?**
Some operations achieve a much higher number of trips per hour than others. Targeted research could (a) examine how these operations are different, (b) identify the secret to their success, and (c) compare the cost-effectiveness of their services with those of operators with lower productivity.
- **What are the relative costs and benefits of using paratransit to encourage independent living?**
What is the cost of independent living versus the cost of nursing home admission? For what portion of the nursing home population is lack of transportation a key factor in their admission to nursing homes?
- **To what extent do inaccessible pedestrian facilities deter people with disabilities and older adults from using fixed route and rail service?**
- **What is the link between transportation and social integration?**
Researching this question could reveal additional benefits related to increased longevity for older adults and higher productivity in both volunteer and paid jobs.