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## SMART Transit Shuttle Service between Albert Lea and Austin, Minnesota

### Frequently Asked Questions:

**What is this new service?** SMART Transit is offering an extension of an existing route that travels between Austin and Albert Lea. This service provides non-emergency medical transport for patients receiving dialysis at the Health Reach facility. It is being expanded to add stops at the campuses of Mayo Clinic Health System – Albert Lea and Austin for patients, visitors and other people wishing to travel between Austin and Albert Lea.

**Why is this new service being offered?** SMART Transit applied for and received a grant from MNDOT to expand existing service after anticipating more travel needs between Albert Lea and Austin with the relocation of certain in-patient medical services to Austin, in addition to existing passenger requests to travel in-between the two cities for college and retail purposes.

**When will it start?** January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

**How much does it cost?** \$3 per person per trip ... children 5 and under may ride for free with a paid adult

**How can it be so inexpensive?** SMART Transit operates through grants from local agencies and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. This means that operating costs are subsidized considerably by these grant dollars, which makes it possible for us to keep costs low for our passengers.

**When can I get a ride?** Shuttles have been scheduled roughly between 8am and 5pm each weekday according to the schedule below.

Departure Time from Austin	Arrive Albert Lea	Departure Time from Albert Lea	Arrive Austin
<b>Monday/Wednesday/Friday</b>			
8:45 AM	9:15 AM	9:30 AM	10:00 AM
10:00 AM*	11:15 AM*	3:15 PM	4:00 PM
4:15 PM	4:45 PM	5:00 PM	5:30 PM
<b>Tuesdays &amp; Thursdays</b>			
8:15 AM	8:45 AM	9:00 AM	9:30 AM
9:45 AM	10:15 AM	10:30 AM	11:00 AM
11:15 AM	11:45 AM	<i>no trip during noon hour</i>	
<i>no trip during noon hour</i>		1:15 PM	1:45 PM
2:00 PM	2:30 PM	2:45 PM	3:15 PM
3:30 PM	4:00 PM	4:15 PM	4:45 PM

**Can the shuttle bus accommodate a wheelchair?** Yes, all SMART Transit vehicles are fully handicap accessible including wheelchair lifts and tie down positions. In the event that all wheelchair positions are filled and no wheelchair passengers are able to alight to an ambulatory seat, SMART will have to postpone the ride for additional wheelchair passengers until the next trip.

**Are there any times that the service is NOT available?** The service will not be available during a Snow Emergency and will be closed for all major holidays. Service announcements will be made on SMART Transit's Facebook page, website, and via local radio stations.

**Where can I park my car?** Long term parking is available at both campuses of MCHS – Albert Lea and Austin.

**Can I bring a car seat on the shuttle?** Car seats are not required on public transit vehicles and are not provided by SMART Transit however, you may bring your own if you are more comfortable.

**Can the shuttle bus accommodate someone that is on oxygen?** Yes.

**What if I miss the last shuttle for the day?** We are very sorry, but SMART Transit cannot guarantee rides and cannot wait for passengers who are running late. If you miss the last shuttle for the day, other transportation arrangements with a different provider must be found.

**Are reservations required to ride the shuttle bus?** Absolutely not! Reservations are encouraged by calling our dispatch office at 1-855-762-7821 as far in advance as you are aware of your transportation needs, but they are not required. Feel free to hop on the bus when it arrives at the hospital and pay the \$3 fare to the driver when you need a ride.

**Are there age restrictions?** Not necessarily however, a young child that requires supervision may not be allowed to ride alone on future trips at the discretion of the driver.

**Will there be free transfers to the local SMART bus route or demand response bus?** At this time there are no free transfers between services unless you have the unlimited monthly route pass. The unlimited monthly route pass is accepted in any of our 4 SMART Transit cities (Albert Lea, Austin, Owatonna, and Waseca) on the deviated routes.

**Why aren't there more trips?** Unfortunately, SMART Transit has only received enough funding for 2019 to provide these expansions to our existing Austin/Albert Lea shuttle trips. We are excited to begin meeting these needs with these service options and will continually analyze the usage and requests in order to expand in 2020 if needed and if more funding is secured.

**Will the service be expanded?** If the shuttle is well utilized, SMART Transit may seek additional funding from the state to expand the shuttle days and hours. This initial schedule is based on availability of current buses and is intended to be a starting point to meet and analyze existing and future needs.

**Can I donate to this great program?** Donations are always welcome and appreciated! SMART Transit is a division of Cedar Valley Services, Inc., which is a 501c3 non-profit.

Additional questions, comments or concerns about any of our services may be directed through our dispatch office at 1-855-SMART-B1 (1-855-762-7821) or [SmartService@CedarValleyServices.org](mailto:SmartService@CedarValleyServices.org) See you on the bus!