



6 Differences Between Side and Rear Entry Vehicles

Questions to Ask Yourself

There are a lot of different options when it comes to choosing a wheelchair accessible vehicle. Choosing between a side and rear entry vehicle is one of the biggest decisions you'll make. To figure out which conversion will work best for you, we made this guide. Together, we will answer questions like these:



“Will the wheelchair user be driving?”

“Where is the wheelchair riding?”

“Will a caregiver sit by the wheelchair user?”

“What are your must-haves in this vehicle?”

Entry

You will use your vehicle any time you travel, and your experience should be as smooth as possible. A side entry vehicle allows wheelchair users to enter in the mid-ship area and roll to the front or middle of the vehicle. In a rear entry vehicle, wheelchair users roll in from the back and stay in the back or middle of the vehicle.

Side Entry

Wheelchair users can enter and exit safely on the curbside away from traffic.

Ramps can be in-floor or fold up.



Rear Entry

Side passenger doors are not blocked by a ramp.

Ramp can be manual, automatic or fold flat.



Parking

Parking can be frustrating if you don't have the right vehicle to fit your needs. Both the side and rear entry conversions offer different types of benefits when it comes to parking.

Side Entry

This vehicle offers more room for parallel parking.

You do need to be careful when parking. If another vehicle parks right next to you, you will not be able to access your ramp.

The side entry van is a great fit if you live and travel to areas with plenty of accessible or parallel parking spaces.



Rear Entry

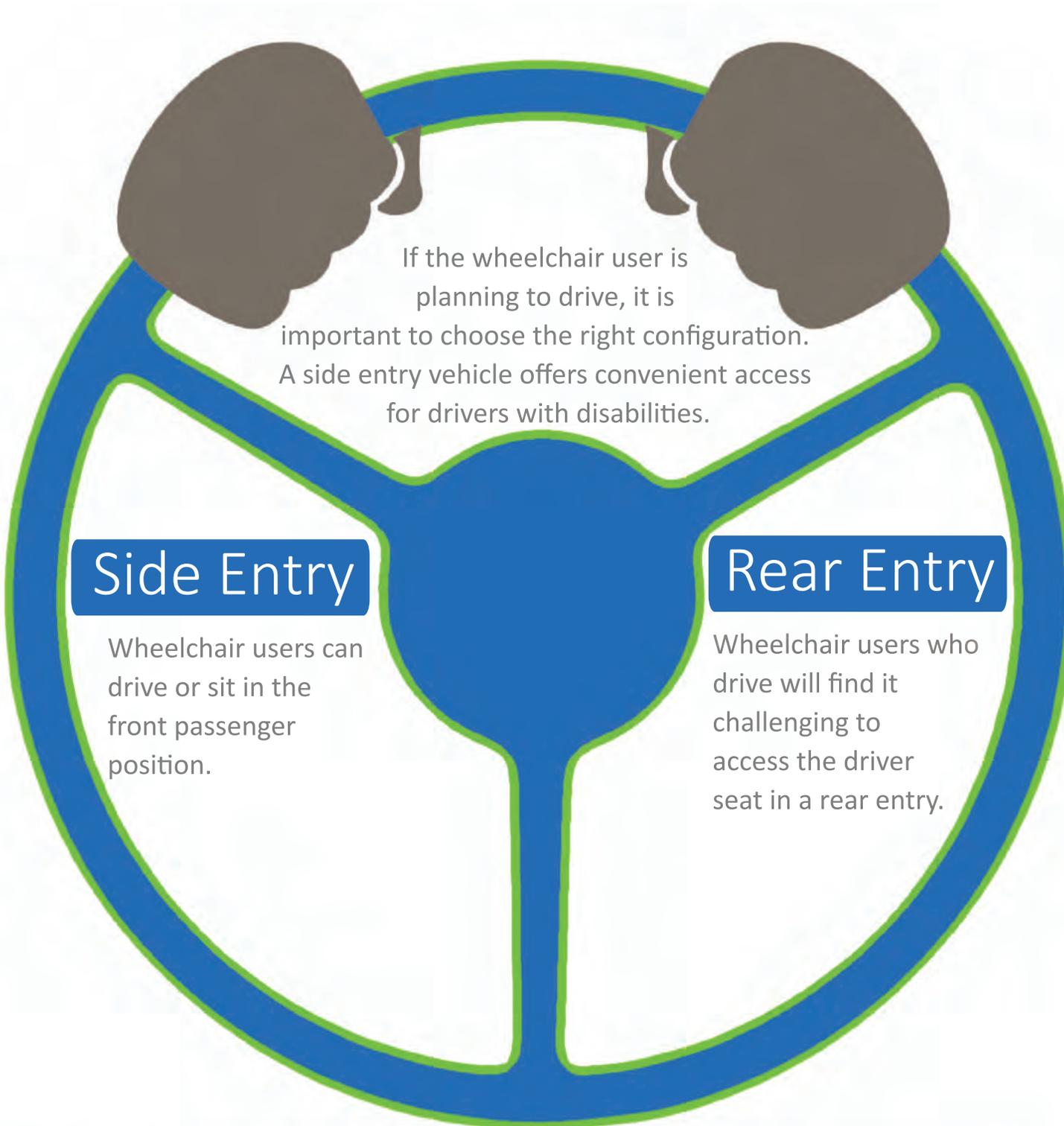
No extra room is required for the ramp so you can park anywhere except parallel parking spaces.

This vehicle is a great choice for people who live in areas with less accessible parking spaces. If you have a narrow garage this vehicle may be a good fit for you.

You can still access your vehicle if others park right next to you.



Driving



If the wheelchair user is planning to drive, it is important to choose the right configuration. A side entry vehicle offers convenient access for drivers with disabilities.

Side Entry

Wheelchair users can drive or sit in the front passenger position.

Rear Entry

Wheelchair users who drive will find it challenging to access the driver seat in a rear entry.

Vehicle Layout

For the best ride possible, you'll want a layout that fits your family's lifestyle. Side and rear entry vehicles offer different setups depending on your needs.



Side Entry

Wheelchair users can drive or sit in the front or middle of the vehicle.

Side entry vehicles have more space for the wheelchair.

At least part of the floor is lowered so there is more space to move around.

The rear storage space is maintained.

Easy access for a driver or front passenger to attend to wheelchair in mid-ship.



Rear Entry

Wheelchair users ride in the second row or rear of the vehicle.

Ambulatory passengers can exit the side easily as ramp is in the rear.

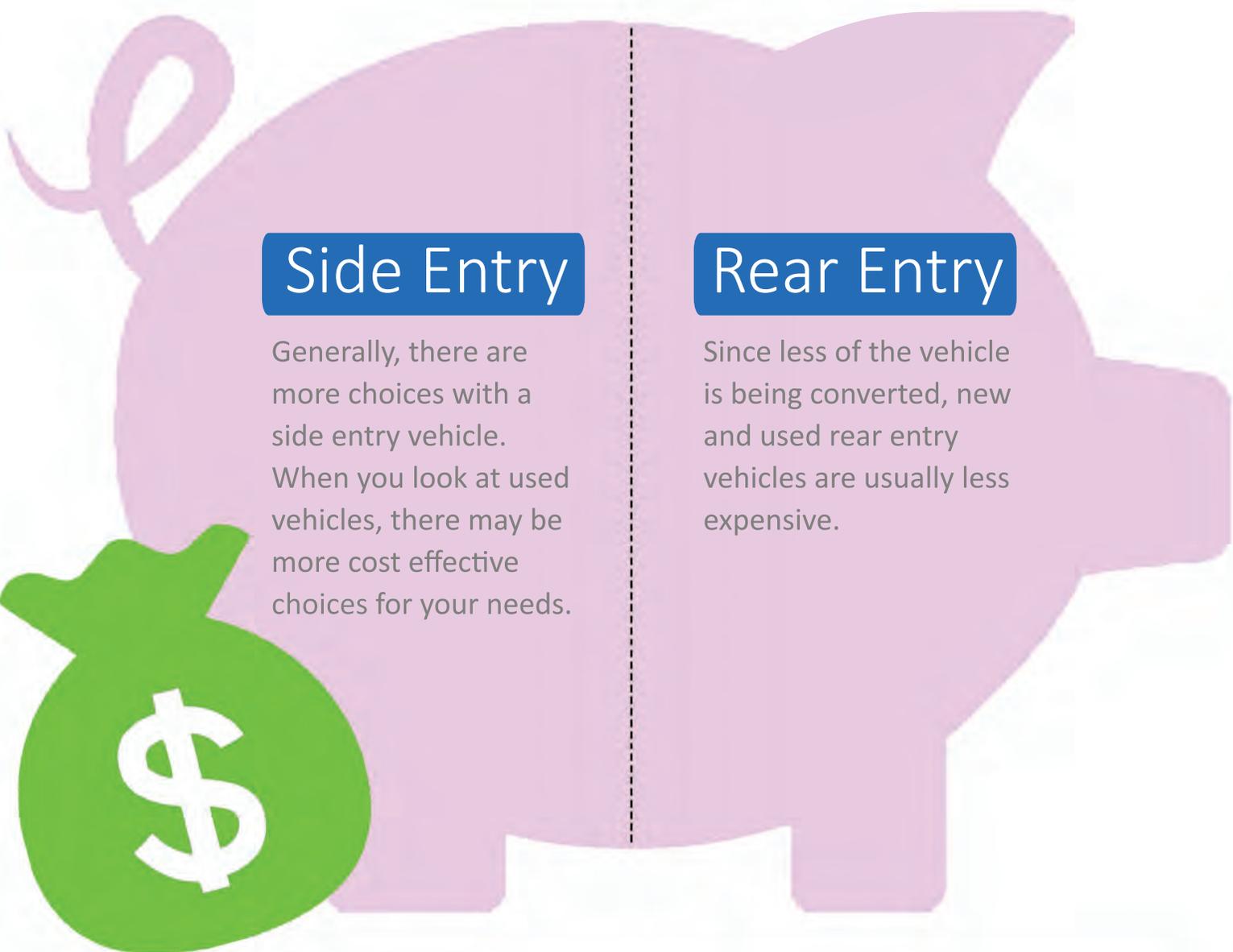
Mid-passenger seats can be mounted next to the wheelchair.

The vehicle is slightly more elevated offering more ground clearance and space for longer chairs.



Cost Efficiency

Cost is always a significant factor when it's time to purchase an accessible vehicle. MobilityWorks wants to make your vehicle perfect for your needs and your budget. Side and rear entry vehicles may differ in price, which is important to consider.



Side Entry

Generally, there are more choices with a side entry vehicle. When you look at used vehicles, there may be more cost effective choices for your needs.

Rear Entry

Since less of the vehicle is being converted, new and used rear entry vehicles are usually less expensive.

Limitations

While there are many benefits to owning an accessible vehicle, each conversion has some limitations. These restrictions may be the deciding factor when choosing between a side and rear entry vehicle.

Side Entry

The side entry vehicle requires an accessible parking space and extra room for ramp deployment.

Some driveways may not be wide enough to accommodate a side entry van.

Rear Entry

Wheelchair users must exit and enter in traffic.

Driving from the wheelchair or having the wheelchair in the front passenger position is not possible.

Less storage space is available and there is more cabin noise.

Is the Side Entry a Good Fit For Me?

A side entry vehicle may be a great fit for you and your family whether the wheelchair user plans to drive or ride along.

“If the wheelchair user wants to drive or ride in the front passenger position, a side entry vehicle is a good choice. Customers can choose between a fully automatic, manual or partial power conversion with power ramp and manual door.” -Mary Murphy, Certified Mobility Consultant

Side Entry is Convenient For:

Caregivers sitting near wheelchair users



Wheelchair users planning to drive



Families looking for flexibility



Front seat passengers



[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SIDE ENTRY VANS](#)

Is the Rear Entry a Good Fit For Me?

A rear entry vehicle may be a good option for you and your family if you have several loved ones in wheelchairs or you're on a tight budget.

"The rear entry vehicle is great if the wheelchair user does not plan to drive. If an assistant or nurse needs to ride next to the wheelchair user, the Toyota or Honda conversions have the most space in the middle row. Many of my customers enjoy the cost effectiveness of the rear entry vehicle." - Mary Murphy, Certified Mobility Consultant

Rear Entry is Convenient For:

Caregivers who want to sit next to wheelchair user



Wheelchair users not looking to drive



Families on a budget



Families with 2 wheelchair users



[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT REAR ENTRY VANS](#)

Will Side or Rear Entry Work For Me?

During your free needs analysis, our Certified Mobility Consultants will determine which configuration will be the perfect fit. Contact us today to see if a side or rear entry vehicle will work best for you!

“Parking or price tends to be the deciding factor for my customers. We’d love to discuss the different options with you!” -Mary Murphy, Certified Mobility Consultant



“We selected a manual side entry ramp for less maintenance needs and convenience. It is much easier to transport our daughter to doctor’s appointments and do everyday tasks!” -Audrey

“Our original van was a rear entry and we thought we should try the side entry. However, the rear entry is a better fit for us. Just having a safe and reliable van takes a load off our shoulders!” -Julie



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