Winnipeg

CITY OF WINNIPEG POLICY NO. TR-002

POLICY TITLE *Winnipeg Transit Plus (formerly Handi-Transit)*	**ADOPTED BY** *City Council*	**EFFECTIVE DATE** *January 30, 2020*
ORIGIN / AUTHORITY *Committee, City Council, Particular Report*	**CITY POLICY NO** **TR-002**	**MOST RECENT CONSOLIDATION**

1. Purpose:

To define the policies and established guidelines that govern the provision of the accessible transit service for Winnipeg Transit.

2. Definitions:

2.1 "**Applicant"** a person who has submitted a formal application for accessible transit services.

2.2 **"registrant or customer"** a person who has submitted a formal application for specialized transit services and has been found to be eligible under the existing eligibility criteria.

2.3 **"Eligibility criteria"** means conditions or characteristics that are used to assess functionality and access to the service.

3. Policies:

3.1 **Trip Priority System**

a) As a result of the nature of the Winnipeg Transit Plus service, this financial reality is reflected in a different fashion than is the case with regular transit service. When the demand for service exceeds the budgeted capacity, requests are accommodated according to the type of user and the type of trip.

b) The trip priority system assigns a higher priority based on the purpose of each trip. Priority 1 trips are guaranteed to be accommodated. All trip requests, regardless of when they are booked are scheduled based on the following priorities;

c) **Priority 1**
   (i) Work – paid employment
   (ii) Medical – medical doctor/dentist appointment and treatment (dialysis)
   (iii) Education – post secondary – certificate, diploma or degree
   (iv) Therapy – Administered / As prescribed by a Medical Professional (medical doctor, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, nurse)
   (v) Transportation terminal – airport / bus depot

d) Priority 2
   (i) Essential shopping – groceries, prescriptions

(ii) Support groups
(iii) Self-development courses
(iv) Personal business – bank, legal services
(v) Advance ticket events
(vi) Religious services
(vii) Other prescribed therapy
(viii) Volunteer

e) Priority 3
(i) Recreational activity – swimming, bowling, park outing, bingo, movie etc.
(ii) Grooming – hair care, manicure/pedicure etc.
(iii) Dining out
(iv) Shopping – non essential
(v) All other

3.2 **Eligibility Criteria**

a) Requires the use of a wheelchair or scooter
(i) On an ongoing basis – unlimited eligibility
(ii) Until a specific date – eligibility only until the expected date of recovery
(iii) As a result of a dialysis treatment – eligibility only for trips to and from dialysis treatment

b) Unable to walk 175 meters (575) feet outside:
(i) At all times – unlimited eligibility
(ii) During winter months only – eligibility restricted to the period to start no later than December 15 and to end no earlier than March 31, recognizing that "winter conditions" (accumulation of snow that stays on the ground for three or more days consecutively) can occur earlier or last longer than the defined period, the Manager of Client Services has the authority to adjust the beginning and end dates based on weather conditions and snow accumulation).
(iii) Until a specific date – eligibility only until the expected date of recovery
(iv) As a result of dialysis treatment – eligibility only for trips to and from dialysis treatment

c) Has 20/200 vision or less, or a visual field of less than 20 degrees in both eyes (legally blind) not corrected by lenses – unlimited eligibility

d) Has Alzheimer's Disease or Related Dementia (ADRD) which interferes with ability to use the regular fixed route transit system with an equivalent level of independence and safety (functional assessment of cognitive ability to use public transit required).

3.3 **Application Process**

a) All applications except for legally blind are to be completed by the applicant (with assistance, if required).

b) Applications under the legally blind criteria be authorized by way of a CNIB registration number, or by an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

c) All applications for service are submitted directly to the Winnipeg Transit Plus office, Transit Department, to determine eligibility.

d) All applicants be required to attend a functional assessment of transit abilities at the Winnipeg Transit Plus office to assess mobility impairment and cognitive transit skills (when applicable) to determine eligibility and if a mandatory attendant is required for safe travel on Winnipeg Transit Plus vehicles (notified by letter and given three weeks to book their appointment) unless;
   (i) The application is for short-term service and duration or eligibility can readily be determined and no cognitive impairment is identified, i.e. surgery date provided for a knee or hip replacement.
   (ii) The application is submitted under the legally blind criteria and no cognitive impairment is identified and the applicant does not use a wheelchair or scooter requiring an assessment of vehicle seating requirements.

e) That Winnipeg Transit Plus will require the applicant provide confirmation of impairment related to the eligibility criteria by a health care professional only when unable to determine their eligibility at the functional assessment of transit abilities.

f) That Winnipeg Transit Plus registrants be required to attend a functional assessment at the Winnipeg Transit Plus office every three years on the anniversary month of their original registration (notified by letter and given three weeks to book their appointment). Winnipeg Transit Plus registrants approved under criteria legally blind, ongoing use of wheelchair/scooter, or unable to walk 175 meters and ADRD requiring a mandatory attendant with “unlimited eligibility” whose physical disability is “permanent, progressive and non-reversible” will not have to re-register every three years.

g) That trips to day programs for persons with ADRD that have transportation services in place will not be provided by Winnipeg Transit Plus.

h) That any Winnipeg Transit Plus registrants who do not use the service for 18 consecutive months will automatically have their registration cancelled and will have to re-register if they require Winnipeg Transit Plus service in the future.

i) That June 1, 2006 all Winnipeg Transit Plus registrants with “unlimited eligibility” approved under criteria; requires the use of a wheelchair or scooter on an ongoing basis, is unable to walk 175 meters (575 feet) outside unassisted at all times. and legally blind showing a valid CNIB photo ID card or a Winnipeg Transit Plus photo ID pass (available to new registrants and current registrants once reregistered be entitled to use regular transit service without payment of a fare. Companions will be required to pay their regular transit fare. Regular fares for Winnipeg Transit Plus service continue to apply.

j) That any Winnipeg Transit Plus registrant with “unlimited eligibility” under criteria; requires the use of a wheelchair or scooter on an ongoing basis, is unable to walk 175 meters (575 feet) outside unassisted at all times. and legally blind choosing to obtain a Winnipeg Transit Plus photo ID pass to use regular transit service without payment of a fare is required to pay for the photo ID pass an amount equal to the amount charged to other regular transit users requiring photo ID for adjusted fares. The Winnipeg Transit Plus photo

ID pass will be valid up to the registration expiry date or three years for registrants not required to re-register.

3.4 **Fare Structure**

a) That all eligible seniors (individuals 65 years of age and over) be allowed to pay the senior reduced rate on Winnipeg Transit Plus and that conventional transit senior tickets and passes be accepted on Winnipeg Transit Plus.

b) That the regular transit post-secondary monthly pass discount (approximately 20%) be applied to the Winnipeg Transit Plus monthly pass for qualifying students.

c) That any future changes to regular transit fares be applied to Winnipeg Transit Plus fares.

d) That Winnipeg Transit Plus registrants be allowed to pay fares through an automated account system, and that deposits into the automated account system be accepted via;

(i) Electronic fund transfer from their bank account via internet or telephone banking.

(ii) Telephone credit card payment.

(iii) Mail in cheque or in person by cash, cheque, debit card or credit card payment at the Fort Rouge Transit Customer Service Centre at 414 Osborne Street.

(iv) Special arrangement made with employers or social service agencies for their employees or clients.

(v) That children under six (6) years of age ride free when travelling with a paying adult registrant.

(vi) That mandatory attendants, required for safe travel of a registrant on all trips and identified via Winnipeg Transit Plus application/functional assessment process, will ride free with the registrant they are providing assistance to, and that all other passengers (companions) are required to pay the regular adult full fare.

(vii) That companions who travel with a registrant and choose not to pay cash will have their fare deducted from the registrant's account (former ticket value).

(viii) That paper fare products (tickets and passes) will be phased out once automated fare payment has been fully implemented.

(ix) That cash fares will no longer be encouraged after the automated fare payment has been fully implemented except in the following situations;

(a) registrants with a short-term eligibility (three months or less)

(b) out of town users who need the service while visiting in the city

(c) registrants who are sporadic riders (once a month or less)

(d) attendants/companions

(x) That tokens (equivalent child or adult fares) used in the regular fixed route Transit service will be accepted as fare payment on Winnipeg Transit Plus vehicles by registrants.

(xi) Statements and/or receipts of confirmation of activity on account and for income tax purposes will be issued to registrants upon request.

3.5 **Pre-booking Required**

a) Pre-booking is required to make trip requests. Requests can be made up to seven (7) days in advance and until 11:00 am on the day prior to travel.
b) Registrants must confirm their trips any time after 3:00 pm the day before they plan to travel. Confirmations can be completed by calling;
   (i) The contact center or
   (ii) The automated phone line that is available 24 hours
c) Registrants are asked to cancel requested trips when not required as soon as possible so that other passengers can be served. Any trip cancellations within 30 minutes or less before the scheduled trip will be considered a no-show.

3.6 **Service Hours**

a) Pick-ups will be scheduled between the following times;
   (i) Weekdays 06:00 to 24:00
   (ii) Saturdays 07:00 to 24:00
   (iii) Sundays & Holidays 08:00 to 22:00
b) These hours apply throughout the Winnipeg Transit Plus service area regardless of the variation in service hours provided by conventional transit.
c) If there is a general modification in the hours of service for the regular transit system as a whole, the Winnipeg Transit Plus system service hours may be modified in an equivalent fashion.
d) For special events, Winnipeg Transit Plus service hours will be consistent with service hours of conventional transit.

3.7 **Service Area**

a) The Winnipeg Transit Plus service area is defined as the same geographic area of the City of Winnipeg that is served by conventional transit service, or within 500 meters (measured as the “crow flies”) from an established fixed service bus routes.

3.8 **Nature of Service**

a) Winnipeg Transit Plus provides door-to-door service with light assistance provided by the operator from the outer most ground floor doorway at the pick-up and drop-off locations. Transferring from one vehicle to another is acceptable where required.
b) Pick-ups occur from the front street and drivers will assist customers to and from the vehicle to the outer most accessible door (ground level) at the pick-up and drop off location. Any exemptions will require a service review.
c) In order to make the service cost effective, indirect route patterns are commonplace. No registrant will remain on a vehicle longer than 90 minutes for a one-way trip.
d) Out of consideration for other passengers, a Winnipeg Transit Plus vehicle will not wait more than five minutes beyond the scheduled pick-up time or five minutes beyond its arrival time during the "pick-up window".

e) Action will be taken if registrants are found to be abusing the system for such matters as "no-shows" and nonpayment of fares.
f) If a pick-up is missed due to an error on the part of Winnipeg Transit Plus, the system will do all things necessary to accommodate registrants if advised of the error in a timely fashion.
g) If a pick-up is missed through no fault of Winnipeg Transit Plus, the system will attempt to assist in securing transportation for registrants.
h) Transportation for persons with physical disabilities must be an integrated part of Winnipeg's transit service and must be reasonably equivalent to the service provided to nondisabled persons.
i) The definition of reasonably equivalent service must take into account the fact that many persons with disabilities are physically more vulnerable and react with greater discomfort to unfavourable travel conditions than non-disabled persons.
j) Protecting the privacy of the user is a very important consideration in implementing any system required to ration service.
k) Monetary considerations associated with the delivery of service are a valid consideration, but must not be a barrier to the provision of a reasonably equivalent transit service for eligible persons.
l) Contractors must meet standards established by the City of Winnipeg, and compliance must be monitored.

3.9 **Complaints and Appeals**

a) All complaints must be documented and resolved by formal procedures.
b) That Council designate a hearing body to hear appeals from applicants determined to be ineligible for Winnipeg Transit Plus service.
c) That the hearing body be comprised of a medical doctor retained by the City, a person designated by the Director of Transit, an external member who was not part of the original eligibility decision and preferably a member of the disability community and the Manager of Client Services division in a consultative role to the appeal panel members.

3.10 **No-show Policy**

a) A no-show is defined as customer responsibility when a person sets an appointed pick-up time with Winnipeg Transit Plus, confirms that time, and then refuses the ride when it arrives or is not present, without legitimate cause. A cancellation prior to 30 minutes of the scheduled pick-up is not considered a no-show.
b) All current no-show situations, i.e., not at pick-up location, walk/steps covered in snow, parcels in excess of two small bags, etc. continue to be recorded as a no-show and fees applied as outlined in the policy.
c) Winnipeg Transit Plus will advise the customer by letter that a no-show has occurred and will be recorded on their file. A copy of the “no-show” policy will be attached, and the customer will be invited to contact Winnipeg Transit Plus to discuss any special circumstances that may have accounted for the “no-

show." If the customer contacts Winnipeg Transit Plus, the no-show may be excused, if it is determined to be beyond the control of the customer.

d) No fare or charge will be assessed for the first no-show.
e) In cases where the customer does not show for the first part of a return trip, the return portion of the trip will be cancelled unless the customer has called Winnipeg Transit Plus to confirm the return portion will be required.
f) Each successive no-show in any rolling six-month period will be assessed an additional charge, which will increase by the value of one cash fare for each no-show:
    (i) First no-show, no fee
    (ii) Second no-show, the equivalent of one adult fare
    (iii) Third no-show, the equivalent of two adult fares
    (iv) Fourth no-show, the equivalent of three adult fares
    (v) Fifth and further no-shows, $15.00
g) After four no-shows in a rolling six-month period, each subsequent no-show will result in a $15 charge (approximately the cost to the City of providing a trip).
h) If the customer's no-show "bill" exceeds $30.00, the customer will be suspended from further Winnipeg Transit Plus service until such time as the customer's "bill" has been eliminated. The customer will be notified by phone, with a mail follow-up, regarding his/her suspension, which will be effective 10 days from the date of mailing. The suspension will remain in effect until such "bill" owing has been paid, or six months, whichever is earlier.
i) The appeal process for a no-show is as follows;
    (i) The customer can contact the Supervisor of Winnipeg Transit Plus by phone, or in writing, to appeal a no-show.
    (ii) If the customer feels that the appeal request has not been resolved in a satisfactory manner, the customer can appeal to the Manager of Winnipeg Transit Plus in writing, providing his/her rationale for the appeal. The Manager will respond in writing within two weeks of receiving the appeal.
    (iii) A rolling six-month period is the six months following the first no-show on the record. Any no-show automatically is expunged from the record one day after six months of it having occurred.

3.11 **Accessibility to Conventional Transit**

a) A goal for the conventional system is to be completely accessible.
b) New transit facilities such as terminals, bus stop areas, shelters and rapid transit stations should be accessible. The clearing of snow from bus stop platforms, and sidewalks approaching bus stops, will become more critical as the conventional system becomes fully accessible.
c) Where possible, these accessible buses should also incorporate features designed to accommodate persons with other physical disabilities.

3.12 **Carry-on Bag Policy**

a) The purpose of the carry-on bag policy is to define guidelines and rules for customers who bring carry-on items when travelling on Winnipeg Transit Plus service.
b) Due to space limitations, passengers can carry only limited articles that can be managed on their lap. Passengers are expected to carry their own packages on and off the vehicle; operators are not required to handle a customer's carry-on items.
c) Allowable bags or backpacks and other bags attached to mobility devices cannot interfered with wheelchair/equipment securements or the use of seat belts.
d) If equipment cannot be properly secured or the vehicle cannot accommodate excess carry-ons, the trip will be considered a no-show.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 **Registrant or Customer**

a) Winnipeg Transit Plus registrants/customers have some responsibilities in order to make operation of their service efficient and convenient. Some of the responsibilities include;
   (i) Registrants/customers must book and confirm their trips.
   (ii) Registrants/customers must notify the Winnipeg Transit Plus office as soon as practical of any trip cancellations.
   (iii) Registrants/customers must be waiting at the designated ground floor doorway of the building at the time scheduled for their pick-up (five minutes before the pick-up time would be desirable).
   (iv) It is the responsibility of registrants/customers requiring assistance beyond the ground floor doorway at their destination to make their own arrangements for additional assistance.
   (v) If the Winnipeg Transit Plus vehicle is late for a pick-up, registrants should contact the Winnipeg Transit Plus office in order to ensure that there has not been any miscommunication.
   (vi) Registrants with parcels are entitled to board with what a person can reasonably accommodate on their lap.
   (vii) All wheelchairs must be secured in a manner that conforms with all government securement requirements. This includes a "4 point" wheelchair securement system. If the design of a wheelchair does not allow for the securement of the chair in accordance with these standards, the user of this wheelchair will not be allowed to travel on Winnipeg Transit Plus.
   (viii) Persons using a wheelchair are encouraged to have a seatbelt attached to their chair.
   (ix) Registrants having special needs are responsible for making their own arrangements.
   (x) Registrant companions are responsible for payment of fares.
   (xi) Scooter users must transfer to a regular seat for safety reasons.

4.2 **Director of Transit**

a) Periodic updates to the policy as required to be submitted to Council.

4.3 **Manager of Client Services**:

a) Periodic updates and review of the policy, as required.

5. Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)

5.1 The PAC is Chaired by the Manager of Client Services.

5.2 The PAC consist of the following, who will be appointed for three-year terms:

a) Two members appointed by the Manitoba League for Persons with Disabilities, and
b) Two members appointed by the Canadian Paraplegic Association, and
c) One member appointed by the Canadian Institute for the Blind, and
d) Two members appointed by organizations representing seniors; such as Age and Opportunity, the Manitoba Society of Seniors, or the Seniors Directorate, and
e) One Winnipeg Transit Plus registrant, appointed by the Director of Transit who is a wheelchair user, and
f) One Winnipeg Transit Plus registrant, appointed by the Director of Transit who is ambulant.

5.3 The PAC meet at the call of the Chair with a mandate to review and provide input/advice to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works on matters regarding service policies and accessibility issues related to public transportation service for persons with physical disabilities being recommended by the Transit administration.