Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – July 7, 2026

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – June 29, 2026

Item No. 1 Winnipeg Transit Plus Policy Updates 2027-2029

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works and submitted the following to Council:

1. That the updated Winnipeg Transit Plus Policy TR-002, attached as Appendix A, be approved.

2. That the funding for Phase 1 to 3 of the Winnipeg Transit Plus improvements described in this report, be referred to the 2027 Budget Update Process, namely:

	2027	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**
Total $	$632,198	$1,269,188	$2,056,523	$7,058,441	$7,892,355
Total FTEs	4.96	11.50	12.50	12.50	12.50

3. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – June 29, 2026

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Browaty

That Rule 10(3) of The Procedure By-law No. 50/2007 be suspended in order that the following item, which was received less than four business days preceding the committee meeting, be considered by Committee.

Carried

Moved by Councillor Lukes,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works be concurred in and forwarded to Council.

Carried

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On June 29, 2026, the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Winnipeg Transit Plus Policy Updates 2027-2029

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
T. Platt	G. Ewankiw	B. D'Avignon, acting for T. Graham	M. Dryburgh, acting for J. Dunford

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Service recommends updates to the Winnipeg Transit Plus Policy (Policy) regarding:

- Eligibility
- No-show and late cancellations
- Carry-on bags

In January 2026, Winnipeg Transit Plus held five public information sessions on the proposed changes. These updates respond to:

- The 2019 Ombudsman report
- The Winnipeg Transit Master Plan
- Customer and stakeholder feedback
- Best practices

Carry-on Bags
The current two-bag limit is too strict. The proposed update allows customers to bring what they need. Customers must still be able to manage all items in their seating area and keep the aisles clear.

No-Show and Late Cancellations
The proposed update will replace the previous fee-based system. It aims for a clearer and more supportive approach. It offers flexibility for unexpected situations and focuses on education rather than penalties. Service suspensions will only occur for repeated missed trips.

Eligibility
The current eligibility model relies on specific medical diagnoses. The proposed update changes this to a functional abilities approach. It will focus on what a person can or cannot do when using transit. People will now be assessed based on their actual abilities.

To handle this, Winnipeg Transit Plus will need:

- Extra administrative and customer service staff
- More travel trainers to help customers learn to use transit services
- More hours for contracted assessments

- New tools and equipment for functional assessments
- Upgraded technology

Phased Implementation
Some improvements to the Policy can be made right away at no cost. You can find these improvements in Appendix A.

Policy changes requiring additional resources to implement will be referred to the 2027 budget for consideration. This will be a phased-in, multi-year approach to support a smooth transition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the updated Winnipeg Transit Plus Policy TR-002, attached as Appendix A, be approved.

2. That the funding for Phase 1 to 3 of the Winnipeg Transit Plus improvements described in this report, be referred to the 2027 Budget Update Process, namely:

	2027	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**
Total $	$632,198	$1,269,188	$2,056,523	$7,058,441	$7,892,355
Total FTEs	4.96	11.50	12.50	12.50	12.50

3. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

Council approval is required to amend Winnipeg Transit Plus Policy TR-002. Furthermore, as there is currently no identified funding source within the adopted operating budget for the phased improvements outlined in this report, direction is required to refer these budget requirements to the 2027 Budget Update Process.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no immediate implications to the recommendations of this report.

If approved, the updated Winnipeg Transit Plus Policy TR-002 will replace the existing policy. Immediate changes can be implemented at no cost.

Budget implications of the unfunded improvements would be considered through the 2027 Budget Update Process.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

The City has made significant investments to make its public transit service more accessible and easier to use. Over the years, Winnipeg Transit has made improvements to accessibility on conventional transit through the implementation of a priority and courtesy seating policy,

low-floor buses with ramp access, automated audio announcements, visual display systems, adjustable seating, and designated mobility aid securement locations.

Winnipeg Transit Plus has made several significant accessibility enhancements over the past five years, including:

- Eliminating the trip priority system, ensuring more equitable access to service for all users.
- Implementing a new scheduling software system to enhance service reliability and efficiency.
- Expanding self-service options, including a mobile app, web-based tools, automated phone lines, real-time notifications, and online applications for service.

Enhancing access to transportation through accessible service design, age-friendly mobility, and resource planning is increasingly critical as the population ages. Equitable access to the community supports independence, social connection, and quality of life for older adults, persons with disabilities, and the broader public is essential when building a transit system that meets the needs of all residents.

The proposed changes reflect several converging drivers: outstanding recommendations from the 2019 Manitoba Ombudsman report, alignment with applicable human rights legislation, recognized best practices, and direction from the Winnipeg Transit Master Plan. Together, these drivers require Winnipeg Transit to modernize policies, service standards, and operational practices to ensure equitable and accessible transit services for persons impacted by barriers.

In 2019, there were several recommendations from a Manitoba Ombudsman report that reflected customer concerns and the need for change. The changes to service for eligibility, no-show and late cancellation, and carry-on bags are the final policy items to address from that report.

In the spring of 2025, consulting firm Left Turn, Right Turn (LTRT) reviewed the Winnipeg Transit Plus service, including current policies, completing jurisdictional scans, and providing recommendations. Over several months, LTRT engaged with stakeholders to gain valuable feedback on the current service and areas for improvement. Based on their review and jurisdictional analysis, the consultant identified several areas to enhance. A report was provided (Appendix B) with the following recommendations:

- Update no-show and late cancellation and eligibility policies
- Expand travel training program
- Develop service standards
- Implement First-Mile Last-Mile option
- Enhance customer communications.
- Explore service gaps
- Provide assessment services through an impartial third party

The consultant provided a roadmap for the next steps, including presenting the recommendations to customers.

In January 2026, Winnipeg Transit Plus hosted a series of in-person and online information sessions with customers, stakeholders and community organizations to review proposed updates to the eligibility, no-show and cancellation and carry-on bag policies.

These sessions were well attended and positively received. The input gathered offered Winnipeg Transit Plus insight into customer priorities and concerns, and highlighted areas to address within the policies and in service delivery more broadly.

The following updates to policies were presented:

Carry-on Bags
The current carry-on bag policy limits customers to two bags. Service may be denied if this limit is exceeded. This approach has proven overly rigid and does not reflect how customers reasonably need to travel with their personal belongings.
The proposed updates introduce greater flexibility by allowing customers to bring the items they need, provided those items can be safely managed within their own seating area – on their lap or at their feet – while keeping aisles and mobility aid securement spaces clear.

As with the current policy, customers remain responsible for managing their own belongings, as operators must focus on assisting with walking/wheeling support and attending to other customers. Service may still be declined if policy expectations are not followed. There are no additional resources/budget required for this new policy. The proposed revised policy is attached in Appendix A.

No-Show and Late Cancellations
Winnipeg Transit Plus conducted public engagements in the summer of 2023, proposing a new no-show and late cancellation policy. A robust and customer-friendly no-show and late cancellation policy is key to ensuring fair and responsible usage of paratransit resources.

What we heard from customers was that the overall Transit Plus system needed significant improvements before addressing this policy. At that time, Winnipeg Transit Plus experienced several challenges with the previous software vendor, including inefficient scheduling/routing and poor system performance. This led to increased Contact Centre wait times and vendor software development delays, resulting in the inability to charge for no-shows and cancellations beginning in 2020.

With that, focus shifted to obtaining and implementing a new trip-booking software system, which launched on June 18, 2024. Significant service improvements were realized, including increased fleet utilization and passenger pooling, on-time performance, and administrative efficiencies. Contact Centre wait times were also reduced and new self-service tools, including a mobile and web app, were introduced. With continued improvements driven by AI/Machine Learning and increased operational familiarity, attention has appropriately returned to this policy.

Current policy
A “no-show” occurs when a customer is not present for pickup, cancels at the door, or service cannot be provided for some other reason (e.g. mobility equipment cannot be safely secured, too many bags).

- A “late cancellation” occurs when a trip is cancelled less than **30 minutes** before the pick-up window and is treated in the same way as a no-show.
- A fee-based system was used, with escalating penalties reaching a threshold of service suspension.

In 2025, Transit Plus delivered more than 300,000 trips, demonstrating sustained demand for paratransit service. At the same time, the system experienced over 98,000 trip cancellations, with approximately 30 percent occurring within two hours of the scheduled pick-up window. These short-notice cancellations create significant scheduling inefficiencies and limit the ability to reassign trips to other customers, whose trip requests may be on a waitlist.

Additionally, the service recorded more than 10,000 no-shows, which directly reduces capacity and impacts service reliability. No-shows and at-the-door cancellations continue to have the greatest operational impact, as vehicles and drivers are already dispatched and unable to be reassigned effectively. Together, these patterns highlight the need for clearer, more supportive policies that improve system reliability while maintaining flexibility for customers.

Proposed policy

- No-shows and cancellations at-the-door will continue to be tracked together. However, fees will be eliminated and replaced with monthly limits.
    - Educational notifications will be sent to customers until a service suspension is considered at four or more occurrences.
- Late cancellations will be considered as trips cancelled in under **two (2) hours** before the pick-up window.
    - Educational notifications will be sent to customers until a service suspension is considered at six or more occurrences.
- Monthly limits provide customers with built-in “life happens” buffer for unexpected situations and are not counted when an occurrence takes place because of Transit Plus (e.g. a significantly delayed vehicle).

To help address customer concerns about potential impacts of the proposed policy, 2025 service data was reviewed. The analysis showed that if the proposed approach had been in place, 84 percent of customers would have had fewer than three no-shows per month, meaning the vast majority would experience no change under the proposed new policy. This demonstrates that the built-in “life happens” flexibility functions effectively for most customers. Only about three percent of customers would have reached a suspension threshold, indicating that the proposed process is both fair and targeted, focusing only on repeated patterns of missed trips rather than isolated or unavoidable events.

The proposed changes simplify and clarify expectations around no-shows and late cancellations, replacing the existing fee-based system with an approach centered on education and fair use of the service. Transitioning from financial penalties to the potential for service suspension establishes a much stronger, more effective deterrent against preventable missed trips. Furthermore, by shifting to a two-hour late cancellation window, the policy specifically targets the 30 percent of short-notice cancellations that currently impact system capacity. This change provides the trip-booking system sufficient lead time to re-optimize resources, offer reclaimed trips to waitlisted customers, and improve overall efficiency. Finally, the revised model introduces built-in flexibility to accommodate unplanned events. This not only improves the customer experience, but significantly reduces the administrative burden associated with fee-based disputes.

Winnipeg Transit Plus needs operational staff to support these policy changes, including

- **0.5 FTE Clerk C** to investigate no-shows, provide customer support, and address contractor service deficiencies.

- **One (1.0) FTE Operations Coordinator** will oversee the operationalization of the proposed policies, ensuring consistent interpretation across all business units and contracted service providers, while supporting increasing service demand driven by eligibility policy changes and other factors.

In concert with the required staffing, Winnipeg Transit Plus requires enhancement of its software platform with a Customer Relationship and Complaints Management module. This would allow AI-powered workflows to be leveraged to increase the efficiency of no-show investigations and reviews by automatically triaging cases, analyzing data, preparing customer responses, and allowing customers to receive updates in their preferred method of communication – including text messaging and email.

This enhancement further supports continued enhancements efforts made to respond to recommendations from the Manitoba Ombudsman's 2019 report on the service, including ensuring customers are aware of the outcomes of complaint investigations.

Eligibility

Current policy
Under the current eligibility framework, customers may qualify for Winnipeg Transit Plus service based on the following specific medical or physical criteria:

- Unable to walk 175 metres (575 feet) outdoors
- Requiring the use of a wheelchair or scooter
- Having 20/200 vision or less, or a visual field under 20 degrees
- Having Alzheimer's Disease or Related Dementia (ADRD) that limits the ability to use fixed-route conventional transit safely and independently

Levels of eligibility falls into three categories when determining the support a customer may require:

- **Unconditional** – a person with a disability that prevents them from using conventional service all of the time.
- **Temporary** – a person with a temporary disability that prevents them from using conventional service for a limited amount of time.
- **Conditional** – a person with a disability that prevents their ability to use conventional services some of the time.

Proposed policy
The proposed revised criteria shifts from a primarily medical diagnosis-based model to a functional abilities model. This approach focuses on an individual's physical, cognitive, or sensory abilities to use transit services, rather than relying on a specific diagnosis. The expanded eligibility criteria will allow individuals, who previously did not meet the outdated criteria, to apply. This ensures assessments for service are consistent and equitable. Eligibility continues to be individualized, emphasizing the person's functional capacity and the conditions in which they can or cannot reasonably use conventional transit; some or none of the time. The goal of the revised criteria is to better match a customer's abilities with accessing transit options. To support the Client Services Division with the revised eligibility criteria and other policies:

- **One (1.0) FTE Clerk C** is required to provide administrative, operational, and logistical support.

- $70,000 in one-time consulting fees is required for development of the new application, assessment and related processes.

Current industry trends, as detailed in the consultant report and the Winnipeg Transit Master Plan, show a strategic shift toward integrated mobility services and functional eligibility models across North American transit systems, with extensive benefits:

1. Enhanced Access and Independence
Shifting eligibility from a strictly medical model to a functional-based model means that eligibility is determined by a person's actual ability to use conventional transit, not just by diagnosis or age.

- **Benefit:** This approach recognizes that disabilities and barriers are not always visible or permanent. It allows people who may be able to use conventional transit some of the time, but not always, to access paratransit when needed. This increases independence and flexibility for users.
  Example: The functional model accommodates variability for customers whose abilities may change over time or be impacted by environmental factors.

2. Greater Inclusion and Equity
The Family of Services (FOS) mobility model integrates Winnipeg Transit Plus with conventional transit and On-Request services, including first-mile and last-mile trips, allowing eligible users to combine transportation modes.

- **Benefit:** This model ensures that as many people as possible can use the conventional system and accessible features, reserving specialized paratransit services for those who truly need them. It also supports spontaneous travel, with same-day and real-time access.
  Example: A user might take a Winnipeg Transit Plus vehicle to a bus stop, transfer to a frequent bus line, and then use a feeder route to reach their destination – all planned as a single, seamless trip.

3. Improved Service Efficiency and Capacity
By more accurately matching service to need, resources are used more efficiently. People who can use conventional transit for part of their journey are encouraged and supported to do so, freeing up paratransit capacity for those with the greatest need.

- **Benefit:** This reduces unaccommodated trips and single-person rides, improving overall system efficiency and allowing more people to be served without increasing costs.
- **Example:** Co-mingled trips (paratransit and conventional riders sharing vehicles) and travel training programs help users transition to using conventional transit. Winnipeg Transit Plus has taken steps toward true co-mingling by offering curb-to-curb conventional On-Request service to registered paratransit customers.

4. Better User Experience and Flexibility
The integrated FOS mobility model supports seamless transfers, points, and real-time trip planning across all services.

- **Benefit:** Users experience more freedom, spontaneity, and flexibility in their travel, with less need for advance booking and more options for spontaneous trips.

- **Example:** A mobile app allows users to plan and book combined paratransit and conventional transit trips with real-time information.

5. Alignment with Best Practices and Legislation
Functional-based eligibility and integrated FOS mobility models support accessibility investments in Winnipeg Transit, *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act,* and recommendations from the Manitoba Ombudsman, ensuring compliance and modern service standards.

- **Benefit:** Barriers are removed, reducing discrimination, supporting human rights, and ensuring Winnipeg is keeping pace with national and international accessibility standards.
- **Example:** Historically, paratransit eligibility often favoured physical disabilities. A functional model ensures that customers facing other barriers can access service.

To effectively offer integrated service delivery, such as First-Mile, Last-Mile (FMLM), a multimodal trip-planning enhancement to the Winnipeg Transit Plus software platform is required. This would enable customers to seamlessly plan and manage complete trips using multiple service modalities – conventional fixed-route, On-Request, and Winnipeg Transit Plus – in one connected journey.

As trip demand and contracted service costs continue to rise, the FMLM model supports more efficient use of transit resources while maintaining essential paratransit access for customers with no other viable transit option.

Applications
As part of the efforts to modernize and simplify access to Winnipeg Transit Plus, a digitization project is underway to convert paper customer files into electronic records. An online application process is now available.

To prepare for and manage the anticipated increase in applications resulting from the proposed policy changes, additional staffing is required. This includes:

- **Three (3.0) FTE Administrative Clerks** to support data entry and scanning of new applications, completing associated application processing, and corresponding with customers.

By enhancing the Winnipeg Transit Plus software platform with an additional AI eligibility module, administrative processing burden can be reduced, allowing the software to automatically convert paper-based customer applications into digital records and providing internal staff with AI-generated case file summaries. This technology will speed up the application process for customers and assist in reducing the number of additional staff required to manage the rise in new applications.

Assessments
The Registration & Assessment (R&A) process relies on a team of contracted occupational therapists and physiotherapists (Assessors) to complete functional assessments that determine eligibility for Winnipeg Transit Plus. As identified by the consultant and supported by industry best practices, a contracted service delivery model for assessments mitigates risks related to procedural fairness, consistency, and transparency. This shift also supports the expansion of the functional assessor model by broadening the collective skillsets to include physiotherapists, enabling effective implementation of the expanded eligibility criteria.

Increased contracted Assessor hours will be required to ensure continuity of service and readiness for the transition and to support additional assessments resulting from the implementation of revised eligibility criteria.

An additional 808 annual contracted Assessor hours above the current baseline of 4,040 are estimated to be required to manage the additional demand, beginning in September of 2028 (see Table 1 – Contracted Assessor Hours Forecast). To support the application process of the revised eligibility criteria, $20,000 in annual funding for partnerships with organizations specializing in services such as CNIB's orientation and mobility training, is required.

Table 1 – Contracted Assessor Hours Forecast

Year	Additional Hours Required	Annual Costs
Phase 2 (2028)	269	$ 27,965
Phase 3 (2029)	808	$ 87,256
2030 Forward	808	$ 90,746

Appeals
Customers will continue to have the option to appeal eligibility decisions. The current panel consists of a medical physician, a representative from Winnipeg Transit, a community representative, and the Manager of Client Services as a non-voting member, to help speak to policies and answer service questions. To ensure procedural fairness and consistency, the consultant recommended the configuration of the appeal panel be revised to change the contracted physician with a member specialized in functional assessments (e.g., occupational therapist), and that the contracted physician remain available for consultation.

Travel Training Program
As noted by the consultant and identified as a short-term goal of the Winnipeg Transit Master Plan, expanding the Travel Training Program is essential to supporting customers with new eligibility and service models. Travel training helps customers develop the skills, confidence, and knowledge needed to safely and independently use accessible conventional transit where appropriate, including navigating routes and stops, making transfers, paying fares, and using accessibility features.

As eligibility shifts toward a functional abilities-based model and greater use of FMLM and co-mingled services, demand for individualized travel training is expected to increase. Additional staff are needed, including:

- **One (1.0) FTE Travel Trainer Coordinator**
- **Three (3.0) FTE Travel Trainers**

Expanding this program supports customer independence, promotes more integrated use of the transit network, and helps ensure specialized Winnipeg Transit Plus resources are used efficiently and sustainably.

Customer Service
The expansion of eligibility criteria and the implementation of updated no-show and late cancellation policies are expected to result in increased customer inquiries, particularly during the transition period. As customers seek clarification on new eligibility requirements, policy changes, and how these updates affect their service, providing needed customer service

through existing and new communication channels is a key factor in success. In support of this, **one (1.0) FTE Clerk B** will be required.

Expanding alternate channel response capability – such as email – will improve accessibility for customers, manage call wait times, and support more efficient handling of complex or detailed inquiries.

AI-enabled tools will be used to improve administrative efficiency and mitigate the potential for additional customer inquiries to delay response times and degrade service experience. Further, the introduction of **one (1.0) FTE Transit Customer Experience Specialist** to monitor and evaluate Winnipeg Transit operations will assist in optimizing customer interactions, workflows, and overall satisfaction.

Service Gaps

Winnipeg Transit Plus service has been challenged and criticized in its limitations to meet the expectations of customers that go beyond providing public transit services. This includes customers who:

- Require flexibility to change trips spontaneously
- Need access to medical support during their trip
- Have needs beyond the capabilities of public transit vehicles and operators

Many of these customers require access to services that provide Non-Emergency Medical Transport (NEMT).

As the consultant noted, there is a need to clearly define the role of public transportation services, clarify eligibility boundaries, and explicitly state that Winnipeg Transit Plus does not duplicate transportation services provided by other government agencies, while strengthening customer communications to support understanding of available services and appropriate alternatives.

It is recommended that Winnipeg Transit Plus strengthen public education on the scope of its services and collaborate with other service providers to identify gaps in NEMT, including supporting appropriate customer referrals.

Winnipeg Transit Plus Service Resources

Data sourced by peer-research and from the consultant suggests that agencies which modernized their eligibility policies, like that being proposed for Winnipeg Transit Plus, saw ridership increases of up to 20 percent following implementation. To accommodate this increase in ridership – along with year-over-year organic increases due to continued post-pandemic return to travel and Winnipeg's aging population – an increase in contracted service hours is required.

It is estimated that Winnipeg Transit Plus may see demand as high as 485,704 annual trips by the second year following implementation of the proposed new eligibility criteria, up from 312,228 trips in 2025. To manage this demand while maintaining current service levels, a corresponding increase of contracted service hours, above the current baseline of 267,500, would be required. Detailed estimates are shown below in Table 2 – Paratransit Service Forecasts. Additionally, **one (1) FTE Data Analyst** will provide data-driven service forecasting, performance analysis, and evidence-based insights to anticipate demand, assess operational impacts, and adjust resources.

Table 2 – Paratransit Service Forecasts

Year	Estimated Trip Demand	Additional Hours Required	Annual Costs
Year 1 Launch (Phase 3- 2029)	442,653	8,221	$ 616,498
Year 2 Post-Launch (2030)	463,679	73,407	$ 5,614,926
Year 3 Post-Launch (2031)	485,704	84,310	$ 6,448,840

Because ridership increases resulting from eligibility criteria modernization generally result in an increased ambulatory customer demand, the paratransit service forecasts shown are based on estimates for contracts which specify accessible bus and micro-transit vehicle types.

These vehicles offer the greatest flexibility to accommodate most customers with various needs and disabilities by offering low-floor/low-step ramp access, capabilities to secure both ambulatory and non-ambulatory equipment, as well as higher passenger carrying capacity compared to smaller, light passenger-style vehicles such as SUVs.

Higher passenger-carrying capacity vehicles will also assist the City in meeting the statutory requirements of the Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation (ATSR), coming into force January 1, 2027, which obligates the City to provide paratransit services to a larger group of customers, including support persons, additional companions, and children of customers who are travelling.

Technology

The software platform enhancements to support the changes discussed throughout this report are based on an estimate of acquiring all modules (AI-enabled eligibility, Customer Relationship and Complaints Management, multimodal trip planning) as a package, offering one-time setup and year-over-year operating savings. These enhancements will provide the foundational technical infrastructure necessary to enable the delivery of the phased improvements. The enhancements require $135,768 in annual hosting and maintenance costs, and $95,038 in one-time setup fees.

Implementation Timelines

The improvements to Winnipeg Transit Plus will be implemented through a phased, multi-year road map designed to balance operational readiness, risk management, and customer support. This phased approach ensures a manageable transition for both customers and staff by delivering early improvements while providing sufficient time for technical deployment, training, and communication. Furthermore, it embeds continuous evaluation into the rollout, utilizing data monitoring and stakeholder feedback to ensure the service remains responsive, accessible, and aligned with evolving customer needs.

Immediate

This report recommends implementing zero-cost improvements immediately. These improvements are reflected in the updated Policy attached as Appendix A to this report. They include:

- updates to the carry-on bag provisions and composition of the appeal panel
- clarifying eligibility based on residency

- updating outdated processes to reflect current practice
- general administrative edits to correct errors and improve overall readability and consistency.

- **Phase 1: Technology & No-Show/Late Cancellation Policy (2027)**
  The technology required to support the improvements will be implemented, and the revised no-show and late cancellation policy will be launched. Simultaneously, additional preparatory steps to support phases 2 and 3 will begin, including strengthening the Travel Training Program, hiring and consulting on initial steps for the revised eligibility criteria. A total of 8.50 FTE (net 2027 impact of 4.96 FTE prorated from June) would be introduced to support this phase.
- **Phase 2: Eligibility Criteria Preparation & First-Mile/Last-Mile Pilot (2028)**
  Work to finalize the revised eligibility criteria will be performed, including preparing processes and customer communications. Necessary resources – such as increased contracted assessor and paratransit service hours – will be scaled up in preparation of the launch of the new criteria. A pilot of the First-Mile/Last-Mile service delivery will be conducted. A total of 3 FTE would be introduced to support this phase.
- **Phase 3: Eligibility Criteria Launch (2029)**
  The revised eligibility criteria will be launched. Extensive customer communication and service analysis will take place, focusing on optimization and sustainability. A total of 1 FTE would be introduced to support this phase.

  The current adopted 2026 budget for the Transit Plus service is $13.3 million and includes 46 dedicated FTEs.

Key determinants for a successful launch include managing procurement timelines for additional contracted paratransit service hours, supporting technical, human and other resources, and appropriate timing within the year. Launch activities are ideally aligned with spring and summer periods, when service demand is lower, creating optimal conditions for an increased number of applications, customer assessments, and travel training sessions.

Risks
Deferring or delaying the recommended improvements introduces several challenges to the long-term sustainability of the service:

- Sustainable, inclusive eligibility and transit service delivery is critical to meeting the statutory requirements of accessibility legislation, human rights, and aligning with transit agency best practices.
- Without additional funding for contracted paratransit service hours, rising demand will increase the number of unaccommodated trips and place significant pressure on the long-term sustainability of paratransit services.
- Increased service demand without corresponding resources is expected to negatively impact Winnipeg Transit Plus rider experience, including reduced on-time performance and longer on-vehicle ride times.
- Reduced transit accessibility undermines independence, social connection, and quality of life for older adults, persons with disabilities, and other residents.

Recommendations
It is recommended that zero-cost improvements outlined in this report be approved in 2026, and that unfunded improvements be referred to the 2027 Multi-Year Budget Review Process.

This report outlines a clear path forward for modernizing Winnipeg Transit and Transit Plus to better meet the needs of customers today and into the future. The proposed updates to the eligibility criteria, no-show and late cancellation, and carry-on bag policies respond directly to customer feedback, outstanding Manitoba Ombudsman recommendations, legislative requirements, and industry best practices. Together, these changes aim to improve fairness, reliability, and accessibility, while making better use of transit resources.

Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation (ATSR)
Included in a separate report are the operational and resource impacts resulting from the Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation (ATSR), which comes into effect on January 1, 2027. A few examples include:

- **14-Day Eligibility Decisions**
  Requires paratransit providers to make eligibility decisions within 14 days following the completion of the application process, and to grant temporary eligibility if that decision timeline is exceeded until a final determination is made.
- **Support Person Program**
  Requires transit providers to permit a person disabled by a barrier to travel with at least one support person and prohibit charging a fare for that support person when accompanying the individual.
- **Increased Service Hours**
  Requires paratransit service hours to be comparable to the hours of operation of conventional transit service, which may necessitate expanding Winnipeg Transit Plus operating hours.
- **Same-Day Service**
  Requires paratransit providers to make reasonable efforts to accommodate same-day trip requests, subject to available capacity and operational constraints.

A report is forthcoming that will outline the full statutory requirements of the Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation and associated funding requirements for Winnipeg Transit to comply with, removing barriers for customers.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: April 27, 2026

Project Name:
Winnipeg Transit Plus Policy Updates

First Year of Program **2027**

	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Capital					
Capital Expenditures Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Funding Sources:					
Debt - Internal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Debt - External	-	-	-	-	-
Grants (Enter Description Here)	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves, Equity, Surplus	-	-	-	-	-
Other - Enter Description Here	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -				
Total Additional Debt Required	$ -				
Current Expenditures/Revenues					
Direct Costs	$ 632,198	$ 1,269,188	$ 2,056,523	$ 7,058,441	$ 7,892,355
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery	-	-	-	-	-
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ 632,198	$ 1,269,188	$ 2,056,523	$ 7,058,441	$ 7,892,355
Less: Existing Budget Amounts	-	-	-	-	-
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ 632,198	$ 1,269,188	$ 2,056,523	$ 7,058,441	$ 7,892,355

Additional Comments: The direct costs are the net change in operating expenses from the recommended policy changes described in this report. The majority of the direct costs are attributed to salary and benefits from added FTEs, additional Transit Plus contractor hours and technology enhancements. The costing reflects the proposed phased-in approach for the policy changes and are fully detailed in Appendix D.

The net budget adjustment required is recommended to be referred to the 2027 budget process.

Laurie Fisher April 27, 2026
Laurie Fisher, CPA, CA
Manager of Finance and Administration

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Legal Services

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

Goal: Environmental Resilience

Objective 2 - Prioritize sustainable transportation as the mobility options of choice.

Transition to a sustainable transportation system that safely and efficiently moves people, goods and services, increases access to a variety of affordable mobility choices, encourages less reliance on personal vehicle travel, reduces travel time, mitigates congestion and related greenhouse gas emissions, and supports the development of denser, better-connected, healthy and complete communities.

Winnipeg Transit Master Plan (2021)
Section 4.1 – Transit Vision – Network Goals

1. Enhance Customer Experience
2. Improve Ridership
3. Improve Downtown Mobility
4. Complement Land Use Development
5. Improve Multi-Modal Mobility
6. Ensure Transit is Inclusive
7. Continuously Innovate
8. Empower Healthy Communities
9. Balance Investment with Affordability

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Strategic Opportunity #3
Advancing Sustainable Transportation – Increasing Mobility Options and Shift to Zero Emission Vehicles

Key Direction 3.1
Increase Use and Efficiency of Public Transit Systems

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

Goal 5 – Transportation System Equity is Enhanced
Objective A – The affordability and accessibility of transportation and transit service is increased.

SUBMITTED BY

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Attachments:
Appendix A, Updated Winnipeg Transit Plus Policy TR-002
Appendix B, Left-Turn, Right-Turn Consultant Report
Appendix C, Transit Plus Proposed Policy Changes, Public Information Summary
Appendix D, Budget Detail Sheet: Phase 1 to 3 Improvements