

Background

We are working to make Winnipeg Transit Plus easier to use, more reliable, and more accessible. Over the past few years, we have made many improvements and will continue to make more. We launched the Winnipeg Transit+ On-Request app to simplify trip bookings. We have also reduced call wait times and have fewer unaccommodated trips.

We are now recommending updates to three policies:

- Eligibility criteria
- No-show and late cancellation policy
- Carry-on bag policy

These updates are based on feedback from customers, caregivers, community partners, and the Winnipeg Transit Plus Policy Advisory Committee. We also looked at best practices from other cities, analyzed our service data, and worked with a consultant to assess our current service.

These recommended changes address the last recommendations from a 2019 Manitoba Ombudsman report. They also align with the *Winnipeg Transit Master Plan*. The changes will help prepare Transit Plus for the Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation, which comes into effect on January 1st, 2027.

Information sessions

In January 2026, we hosted five public information sessions. Customers, caregivers, and community partners were invited to learn about recommended policy changes and ask questions. A recording of the information session, along with an FAQ, is available on the Transit Plus website for those who could not attend.



Figure 1: Participants ask questions about the recommended policies at an information session

TRANSIT PLUS RECOMMENDED POLICY CHANGES

Public Information Summary



Table 1 below gives an overview of information sessions. **Table 2** provides details on how the information sessions were promoted.

Table 1: Information opportunities

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PARTICIPATION
 Virtual events	Three virtual events held: - January 28, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. - January 28, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. - January 30, 2026 at 11:30 a.m.	266 participants (455 registered)
 In-person sessions	Two in-person events were held: - January 29, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. - January 29, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.	97 participants (100 registered)

Table 2: Promotion of public engagement opportunities

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	REACH
 News release	City of Winnipeg news release issued on January 14, 2026.	1 news release
 Letters to customers	Letters mailed to Transit Plus customers with information about the sessions.	5,626 letters mailed
 On-hold message	Callers to Transit Plus heard a short message about the sessions and how to join.	11,459 calls

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ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	REACH
 Transit Plus newsletter	Newsletter sent on January 14 and 23, 2026, inviting subscribers to attend.	1,653 subscribers
 Messages via trip-booking system	Messages sent based on customer preferences via: • Automated phone call • Text • Email • Mobile app push notification	Over 6,000 messages sent
 Social media	12 posts shared between January 14 and February 2, 2026 on: • Transit X (11,200 followers) • Facebook (49,000 followers) • Instagram (21,000 followers) • LinkedIn (55,000 followers)	12 posts across 4 platforms

More than 350 people attended the information sessions and asked questions about the recommended policies. Participants' questions focused on:

Eligibility criteria

- Expanding current eligibility criteria
- Capacity to support expanded criteria
- How different eligibility categories will apply (unconditional, conditional, temporary)
- Reassessments
- Application process
- Timing of the new policy implementation

No-show and late cancellation policy

- How long drivers wait at the door before a ride is marked as a no-show
- Pick-up window issues (drivers early or late)
- Errors not caused by the customer
- How suspensions would apply for persons with medical conditions

TRANSIT PLUS RECOMMENDED POLICY CHANGES

Public Information Summary



- Late cancellations for medical appointments or other unavoidable situations
- Early morning cancellations
- Waitlists
- Appeal/review process

Carry-on bag policy

- Types and sizes of personal items allowed
- Rules about bringing pets

Other questions and concerns:

- Types of vehicles used by Transit Plus
- Input from Transit Plus drivers on recommended policies
- Ability to make changes to a trip booking
- Using On-Request services
- Types of mobility devices allowed
- Pick-up locations issues
- Travel time or route to destinations
- Changes to the Primary Transit Network (including fewer bus stops)
- Trip priority

A full question-and-answer transcript is in Appendix A.

Next steps

In summer 2026, Council will review the recommended policy changes. Members of the public may participate in a Council meeting by:

- Submitting written comments
- Appearing as a delegation (speaking at meeting of Council or its Committees)

The new policies will need Council approval before we can implement them. Transit Plus customers will be notified before the changes take effect.

Appendix A: In-person and virtual event question & answer transcripts

The in-person and virtual events included a short presentation and a question-and-answer session. People could ask questions in the Zoom chat or by speaking. The questions and answers from these sessions are listed below.

In-person event #1

Location: Bill & Helen Norrie Library

Date: January 29, 2026

Attendees: 42

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Question: If my appointment ends earlier or later than expected, can I change my pick-up time?

Answer: Yes. You can call the Winnipeg Transit Plus Contact Centre to request a new pick-up time. As we are a shared ride pre-booked service, we may not always be able to accommodate same-day requests for changes.

Question: If my vehicle is still within the one-hour pick-up window but I need to cancel late, will it affect my service?

Answer: A late cancellation will only affect your service if you have more late cancellations than the proposed limit. If you stay below the proposed limit, there will be no change to your service.

Question: If someone can't use regular transit because of a medical emergency, can they apply for Transit Plus?

Answer: For a medical emergency, it is always best to call 911. Winnipeg Transit is a public service and does not provide individualized medical transportation.

Question: How do I know if I can apply for Winnipeg Transit Plus?

If you cannot use regular Winnipeg Transit some or all of the time, and you meet the eligibility criteria, you can apply for Transit Plus. You will need to complete the application and may need to attend an assessment at 414 Osborne Street, so they can review your needs and decide if you qualify.

Question: How does the proposed policy differ from the current policy? What changes will affect new and current applicants in the future?

Answer: The proposed eligibility is similar to current practices. Assessments will continue to be made on a case-by-case basis, focusing on a person's ability to use regular Winnipeg Transit. The proposed policy puts less focus on medical diagnoses and more focus on what the person can do (and what Transit services they are able to access). This helps Transit Plus make service decisions that better fit each person's needs. All are encouraged to apply so their situation can be reviewed.

Question: Will the proposed policy include someone with a cognitive disability? For example, a person who is neurodivergent or has a sensory disability. What does Transit Plus consider when deciding if someone is eligible?

Answer: Yes. The proposed policy will include people with cognitive disabilities if their disability makes it hard to use regular Winnipeg Transit. This is an expansion of the current criteria.

Question: Will vehicle assessments be part of the application process for Transit Plus?

Answer: Yes. Under the proposed criteria, the assessments will continue to look at vehicle access. Staff will check which Transit Plus vehicles a person can get into safely. This helps keep riders safe during the trip.

Question: What should applicants expect ahead of a Transit Plus assessment?

Answer: Applicants will be contacted for an in-person appointment. They will meet with an Occupational Therapist. The assessment looks at how well the person can use regular Winnipeg Transit. It also looks at the barriers they face. They may do a short walk outside to a parked bus. This helps staff see real-life access needs. Transit Plus is for people who cannot use regular transit some or all of the time. The assessment may be updated to look at more needs and barriers when needed.

In-person event #2

Location: Bill & Helen Norrie Library

Date: January 29, 2026

Attendees: 55

Time: 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Question: Does the proposed policy set a bag size limit, or do bags simply need to fit within the rider's space?

Answer: Customers can bring as many items as they can safely manage if the items fit within their seat space (such as on their lap and near their feet). Items cannot take up another rider's

seat or space. Items also cannot create a safety or access problem. Transit Plus will provide more guidance when the policy is implemented.

Question: In terms of the bag policy, how will Transit Plus ensure all riders have the same amount of assigned space? Will riders using a mobility device be given more space than those using normal seats?

Answer: The proposed approach is based on safety and access. Customers can bring as many items as they can safely manage within their own seat space. Items cannot take up another customer's space. Items cannot block the wheelchair securement area or equipment. The main goal is to ensure safe, accessible trips for all riders.

Question: Can a customer's bags be placed in the vehicle trunk or cargo area if space is available?

Answer: No. Under the current and proposed policies, bags cannot go in the trunk or cargo area. This space is reserved for mobility devices and equipment to support safe, accessible service. It also aligns with new accessibility legislation starting January 1, 2027.

Question: Under the proposed policy, are Transit Plus drivers supposed to load/unload bags?

Answer: No. Under the current and proposed policies, drivers do not carry or move customer bags or other personal items. Drivers can only provide light assistance for safe boarding and exiting. Drivers must stay as close as possible to their vehicle to watch for safety and help if needed.

Question: What happens if a trip is cancelled late for reasons the customer cannot control?

Answer: If the late cancellation is not the customer's fault, it will not count toward their late-cancel limits.

Question: If Transit Plus does not offer same-day trips, why do customers need to cancel at least two hours ahead?

Answer: When demand is high, some trips go on a waitlist. Since the 2024 trip-booking system upgrades, the system can re-check and re-schedule trips about once each minute. If customers cancel earlier, the system has more time to reassign that trip. This can help move waitlisted trips onto the schedule and improve service.

Question: Previous session notes mentioned 98,000 no-shows. Other materials noted 100,000. Can administration confirm the correct number and explain why the numbers are different?

Answer:

Question: How will the new policy track suspensions from no-shows and late cancellations?

Answer: A suspension review would be initiated after about 6 to 8 late cancellations in a 30-day period. Suspensions are tracked over a rolling 365-day cycle to determine length of disruption. If there are multiple suspensions in the past year, each additional suspension will increase in length.

Question: Under the new policy, how many late cancellations will lead to a service suspension?

Answer: A suspension review will be initiated after 6 or more late cancellations in a given calendar month. Each case will be reviewed, and customers have the option to appeal a service suspension before it goes into effect.

Question: Currently, if the vehicle is late beyond the pick-up window, and the customer decides not to travel, it may not count as a no-show/late cancellation. Under the new approach, will this policy change? Does the customer still need to call to cancel?

Answer: If Transit Plus is running late, the trip usually stays active in the system. We then continue working to schedule the ride. If the customer no longer needs the ride, they must cancel. They can call dispatch or use the app. This frees up space for other riders. If the no-show happened because of a Transit Plus delay, it is no-fault and will not count against the customer.

Question: Does Transit Plus have the resources to support the proposed expansion?

Answer: Expanding eligibility will likely increase demand. Administration plans to request additional resources to support the change. This request will be in a report to Council in Spring 2026.

Question: Are the new eligibility rules meant to include more people with non-physical disabilities? Will this include people who would not be eligible now?

Answer: Yes. The new criteria aims to include more disability types. They focus on what a person can do, and what barriers they face on regular transit. Some people who were not approved before may be approved under the new criteria.

Question: Under the proposed policy, will customers need to reapply every three years?

Answer: Yes. The three-year re-registration is to confirm that they are still eligible. It also provides a chance to review the customer's contact information, any additional supports, and equipment.

Question: How can the changes to Transit Plus assist people with cognitive disabilities?

Answer: People with cognitive disabilities and neurodivergent conditions will be included in the new, function-based criteria. These criteria look at the barriers a person faces when using regular transit. Administration plans to bring this update to City Council in Spring 2026. The goal is to make Transit Plus more inclusive. All changes will depend on Council approval and the required policies and laws.

Virtual event #1

Location: Zoom

Date: January 28, 2026

Attendees: 35

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

**Question: Under the proposed bag policy, is a pet or animal counted as a bag or item?
Are pets or animals permitted to ride on Transit Plus vehicles?**

Answer: Customers can bring pets/companion animals on board. The animal must be in a closed, secure carrier. The Customer must be able to control it safely. The carrier counts as an item under the bag policy. It must stay in the customer's own space. It cannot take up another passenger's space. It must not block the aisle or securement areas.

Question: Are no-shows and late cancellations counted as one total? Or are they counted separately?

Answer: They are tracked separately. Example: If someone has two no-shows and two late cancellations in the same month, they would not be at risk of suspension under the proposed limits. Notifications will be sent to warn riders early. This gives an opportunity to address the concerns early.

Question: How does the late-cancel and no-show rule work if the customer was waitlisted for a trip?

Answer: If a trip remains waitlisted, the late cancellation/no-show policy will not apply. This is because the trip was not formally reserved. If a customer receives a notice in error, they are encouraged to contact Transit Plus. Staff will review the trip record and the file as appropriate.

Question: How would early-morning cancellations be treated? For example, a trip is scheduled for a 6:08 a.m. pick-up that is cancelled at 5:30 a.m.? Would the customer be penalized?

Answer: Under the proposed policy, cancelling at 5:30 a.m. for a 6:08 a.m. pick-up is considered a late cancellation because it falls within the two-hour window. The proposed policy allows for unexpected situations. A customer may have up to three late cancellations in a month without concern. Four events will trigger a warning, while six or more events will trigger a suspension. Therefore, one late cancellation would not lead to any penalty.

Question: If a customer with a physical disability is sometimes able to use regular transit, would they lose full Transit Plus service under the newly proposed system? They use mobility aids and cannot walk far. The current medical model feels clear. Will the new system be less clear?

Answer: Eligibility is based on individual assessment. This is true today and under the proposed tiered model. We look at what the customer can do in real life. We do not decide only based on a medical diagnosis. Eligibility can change over time based on the person's abilities or service changes. This can happen during the three-year re-registration. Under the proposed model, a customer's service level could stay the same or change at re-registration. This depends on their abilities, travel needs, and situation. The goal is to match service to their ability to use regular transit safely and reliably.

Virtual event #2

Location: Zoom

Date: January 28, 2026

Attendees: 150

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Question: The seats on the vans and buses are very small. Where are customers expected to store their bags with the already limited seat space and leg room.

Answer: The vehicles in our fleet have the largest seats offered by the manufacturer. The proposed policy moves away from a strict two-bag limit. It would allow more bags or items if

the customer can manage them. The bags must fit in the customer's seat space. The customer must be able to manage the bags on their own.

Question: Can extra bags be stored on a walker while it is assembled?

Answer: Bags can be stored on a person's lap or in their personal space, such as around their legs, as long as they do not block anyone else. Bags on mobility equipment cannot prevent the equipment from being safely secured. If a bag makes securement difficult, it is not allowed. Small items or medical devices, like oxygen, are allowed on mobility equipment.

Question: Can a rider use Transit Plus to get to the airport with an airline approved suitcase and carry on?

Answer: Transit Plus does provide trips to the airport. However, large items or bags that take up too much space may not be allowed. Trips may not be provided if the item is over the size or bag limit. The new policy will allow small luggage that fits the rules. For example, items that can be held on the lap or placed at the feet can be brought on board.

Question: With the proposed policy changes, will there be any changes to the driver's wait times before they are permitted to mark a trip as No-Show? It would be beneficial to riders if wait time was extended.

Answer: Drivers wait 5 minutes before reporting a trip as a no-show, and this practice will remain under the proposed new policy. A 5-minute period is a common industry practice and helps ensure our vehicles remain on time for other customers. We ask customers to be ready for their full 30-minute pickup window. Notifications help estimate when the vehicle might arrive. But, the vehicle can come at any time during the window.

Question: Under the proposed policy, will drivers have to give a clear reason when they mark a rider as a no-show?

Answer: When reviewing a driver's no-show report, staff look at several factors. They check where the vehicle was at the pick-up time. They also speak with the driver. This helps confirm that the driver has made every effort to locate the rider.

Question: Why are customers asked to cancel within two hours before the trip when a lot of times the rides are late? In many cases the customer gets picked up later than their initial 30 minute window.

Answer: Transit Plus works hard to maintain on-time performance. Sometimes trips are late for reasons we cannot control. We ask customers to cancel at least two hours before pick-up so that vehicle resources can be used to provide trips to other customers who may be on our

waitlist for a ride. We know this is not always possible. A suspension would only be considered after 6 late cancellations in one calendar month.

Question: When will the new eligibility guidelines take effect?

Answer: Several steps must happen before these policies can change. City Council must review and approve them. First, we will finish the information sessions. Then we will review customer feedback. Next, Administration will write a report with the proposed changes. We plan to bring this report to City Council in Spring 2026. If Council approves the changes, we will still need time to create the new applications and assessments. We will also need time to inform customers. We do not have an exact start date yet.

Question: Can passengers get reassessed? What if an existing riders' abilities change and they may need more service?

Answer: Individuals can be reassessed at any time. Customers are encouraged to call the Transit Plus contact center, and they will be seen within two weeks.

Virtual event #3

Location: Zoom

Date: January 30, 2026

Attendees: 81

Time: 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Question: How many bags can I travel with on Transit Plus?

Answer: Under the proposed new policy, a person may bring as many bags as they can manage. Bags must fit in the person's seat space and immediate area. Bags must not take up space needed to store mobility equipment and cannot present a safety risk by blocking aisles or other areas of the vehicle.

Question: If a specialist appointment is cancelled with only one hour of notice, how will this affect riders as it relates to the proposed no-show policy?

Answer: The proposed new no-show and late cancellation policy allows for situations like this. A rider may have up to five late cancellations within the current calendar month without a penalty.

Question: If customers turn on location sharing, will drivers see them on the way to the pickup spot? Will this allow the driver to wait more than five minutes?

Answer: The location-sharing feature of the Winnipeg Transit+ On-Request app lets the customer and driver see each other's location. It does not change how long the driver will wait. This waiting time starts only if the driver arrives within the 30-minute pickup window given at booking.

Question: If a Transit Plus vehicle is late and the customer must cancel, will the customer be penalized?

Answer: No. If a late cancellation or no-show happens because of an issue with Winnipeg Transit Plus, it will not count toward the rider's policy threshold. This includes cases where the vehicle arrives much later than expected and the rider makes other travel plans.

Question: What happens if Transit Plus is late and a medical office charges a no-show fee?

Answer: Winnipeg Transit Plus cannot guarantee that every trip will arrive on time. It is a shared public transit service. As such, Winnipeg Transit Plus does not reimburse third-party fees, such as medical no-show charges. If the trip is late because of Winnipeg Transit Plus, it will not count against the rider's policy limit.

Question: When a Transit Plus vehicle is late, will operators offer other travel options?

Answer: If Transit Plus is unable to complete a trip, the contact centre will try to find another ride on our service. Customers are encouraged to call the Winnipeg Transit Plus Contact Centre to determine if other travel options are available.

Question: Often times, the app says the driver is outside, but they often arrive 2-3 minutes later. Does that count as part of the 5-minute wait time?

Answer: The app will send a notification when the vehicle is nearby and expected to arrive soon. However, the five-minute wait time starts only when the driver marks that they have arrived.

Question: Can the no-show rule be like Toronto's policy? If the Transit Plus vehicle is more than 20 minutes late and the customer cancels, will it not count as a late cancellation?

Answer: If a late cancellation happens because of an issue with Winnipeg Transit Plus, such as significant lateness which requires a rider to find alternative transportation, it will not count toward the rider's no-show or late cancellation limit.

Question: What if I am at my appointment and I cancel my trip because I found another way home?

Answer: If the trip is cancelled less than two hours before pickup, it is a late cancellation. Late cancellations count toward the rider's policy threshold. Under the proposed policy, up to six late cancellations may occur before a suspension is considered.

Question: Can a pickup time be changed without cancelling the trip?

Answer: Yes. Customers can call the contact Centr the same day to request a time change. A change may not be possible depending on service demand, but staff will try to find another pick-up time.

Question: Is it mandatory for all users to be re-evaluated? I worry that someone with unconditional access could be changed to conditional access.

Answer: All customers must renew their registration every three years. This policy will not change. The reassessment process will continue to be similar to today. Under the proposed policy, the assessment would also consider more situations and abilities.