

Background

Winnipeg Transit Plus provides door-to-door transportation for people who cannot regularly use the City's fixed-route transit service. Each year, we provide nearly 300,000 trips to about 5,000 customers. We also manage about 100,000 no-shows and trip cancellations every year.

Transit Plus is changing how it manages no-shows and late cancellations, targeting those with the most impact to our service. When a no-show or late cancellation occurs, a vehicle goes unused, and a trip is wasted. That means fewer customers can take trips. The goal of the proposed Transit Plus No-show and Late Cancellation Policy is to improve service for customers.

Engagement

In June 2022, Transit Plus shared the proposed No-show and Late Cancellation Policy with the Transit Plus Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) to gather feedback and make improvements.

With the PAC's feedback incorporated, we took the proposed policy to the broader Transit Plus community for their input. From June to July 2023, we invited customers, their family members or caregivers, and service providers to share feedback on the proposed policy. People were asked to share their thoughts on several parts of the policy, including:

- How a points system would work
- The cancellation window (how much notice customers must give)
- How strikes and suspensions would be applied
- Overall support for the proposed policy

Key findings



Overall concern

Overall, more than half of participants (53 percent) did not support the proposed policy. Many still agreed that changes are needed to reduce no-shows and late cancellations (36 percent agreed, 11 percent were neutral).



4-hour cancellation window strongly opposed

Nearly 2 out of 3 participants (64 percent) did not support the four-hour cancellation window. This was the most criticized part of the proposed policy.

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Concerns about the proposed suspensions

Just over half of participants (54 percent) did not support the suspension system as proposed in the policy.



Policy generally understood

Over half of participants (55 percent) said the proposed policy was easy to understand. This suggests that the proposed policy information was straightforward and the feedback was based on a clear understanding.



Fix current issues first

Participants want existing Transit Plus service challenges addressed before a new policy is implemented.

Table 1 below gives an overview of public engagement opportunities. **Table 2** provides details on how public engagement opportunities were promoted.

Table 1: Public engagement opportunities

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PARTICIPATION
	Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Met in June 2022 to review and update the draft policy. We stayed in touch with members throughout the engagement and after.	8 committee members
	Survey Available from June 14 to July 14, 2023. Self-selected participation (not representative of all Winnipeggers). See full results in Appendix B and C.	387 respondents
	Virtual events Two virtual events held on June 28, 2023 (10 a.m. and 7 p.m.). Question-and-answer transcripts are in Appendix D.	43 participants

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ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PARTICIPATION
 Community event	We joined CNIB's Friday Morning Coffee Group on June 23, 2023 to share the proposed policy and answer questions.	22 attendees
 Email and phone calls	We received and responded to emails and phone calls throughout the engagement. A summary of this feedback, as well as letters from Manitoba Possible and the Kidney Foundation of Canada – Manitoba Branch, are in Appendix E.	10 emails 25 phone calls

Table 2: Promotion of public engagement opportunities

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	REACH
 Project webpage	Online hub for all project information. Unique visits are from June 14 to July 14, 2023. winnipeg.ca/noshowpolicy	1,367 unique visits
 News release	City of Winnipeg news release issued on June 14, 2023 to announce the project and invite participation.	1 news release
 Direct emails	Two emails were sent to a distribution list of 990 customers and stakeholder organizations.	1,980 emails sent

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ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	REACH
 On-hold message	Callers to the Transit Plus Contact Centre heard a short message about the project and how to take part.	16,189 calls to the Contact Centre
 Public engagement newsletter	Project featured in the City of Winnipeg public engagement newsletter on June 14 and June 29, 2023.	5,277 subscribers
 Information card	Information cards handed out in Transit Plus vehicles and at Customer Service Centres. Included project information and ways to get involved.	200 info cards handed out
 Social media	Seven posts shared from Winnipeg Transit's X account (11,400 followers) between June 14 and June 30, 2023.	7 posts

See Appendix A for promotional materials.

Who we heard from

We received 387 responses to the online survey. Participation was self-selected and the results do not represent the views of all Transit Plus customers or the general public.

- Almost two-thirds of respondents identified as Transit Plus customers (64 percent). Among customers:
 - Weekly use was most common year-round (about four in ten customers)
 - Daily use increased in colder months (from about 28 percent in warm months to about 31 percent in cold months)
 - About a quarter of customers used Transit Plus monthly or less

- Some respondents identified as family members or caregivers (17 percent), service providers (7 percent), or selected “other,” which included friends of customers, medical professionals, and residents (people could choose more than one option).
- Survey respondents were from neighbourhoods across Winnipeg (see map in Appendix F).

What we heard

We heard that some people agree it’s important to reduce late cancellations and no-shows. However, many said the proposed policy needs changes and should wait until the service works better.

The survey results show differences between customers and people who are not customers (family members and caregivers, service providers, other stakeholders, and interested residents). The open-ended comments, emails, and phone calls add important context about lived experiences of participants.

The views about the proposed policy are summarized below. Full survey results can be found in Appendix B and Appendix C. A summary of phone and email feedback can be found in Appendix E.

Points system

Many participants felt that seven points per month is too few. This concern was slightly more common among customers (40 percent) than non-customers (37 percent). People who felt seven points is not enough talked about medical appointments or other circumstances outside their control. They worried these situations could make them lose points and leave them without enough for the month.

About one-quarter of people said seven points is the right amount, and another quarter were unsure. Some comments said the points system should be simpler, and some people said they were confused about how it works.

Cancellation window

Overall, most people (64 percent) strongly or somewhat disapproved of the four-hour cancellation window. About one quarter (24 percent) approved, and 12 percent were neutral. Customers were more likely to say the window is too long (as most schedule changes happen closer to their scheduled pick-up time), noting reasons like medical appointments, sudden illness, or early morning trips. Non-customers were more mixed in their views.

Key themes

- Four hours is unrealistic: Respondents said they often cannot know four hours ahead if they need to cancel
- Medical delays: Appointments often run late, and customers said this is outside their control
- Sudden illness: People may not know they are too sick to travel until close to pick-up time

- Shorter window preferred: Many suggested 30 minutes, one hour, 1.5 hours, or two hours
- Need flexibility: Some suggested allowing re-booking without penalty when appointments run late



“I think that the cancelation window needs to be narrower... Sometimes truly unpreventable things happen at the last minute.”

Suspension of service

Participants had mixed views about suspending service for repeat no-shows or late cancellations. Overall, more than half (54 percent) strongly or somewhat disapproved of the proposed suspension rules. About one-third (32 percent) approved, and 13 percent were neutral.

Customers and non-customers had similar views about how strict the suspensions are and how long they should last. Just over half of each group (51 percent) said the suspensions are too strict. When asked about the length of suspensions, most respondents also said they are too long (53 percent).

Key themes

- Support with conditions: Some respondents said consequences may be needed for repeated no-shows or late cancellations, but suspensions should be used sparingly and only after clear communication and education
- Too strict for people with health needs: Many worried that the rules do not account for unpredictable health issues, long medical appointments, winter conditions, or communication challenges
- Fear of unfair loss of service: People were concerned about losing essential transportation because of factors outside their control
- Length of suspensions: Many said the proposed durations are too long for a service people rely on for daily needs
- Need for a fair review process: Respondents asked for a simple way to explain extenuating circumstances, request a review, or have decisions reconsidered before a suspension starts



“This is the wrong time to introduce such measures when there are so many faults with the system... I suggest a great deal of improvement is needed before you start penalizing clients.”

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Overall support

Customers and non-customers felt similarly. Just over half of respondents (53 percent) strongly or somewhat disapproved of the proposed policy. About one-third (36 percent) approved, and 11 percent were neutral.

Figure 1 below shows how respondents felt about the overall policy, the four-hour cancellation window, and suspension of service. It includes all survey respondents.

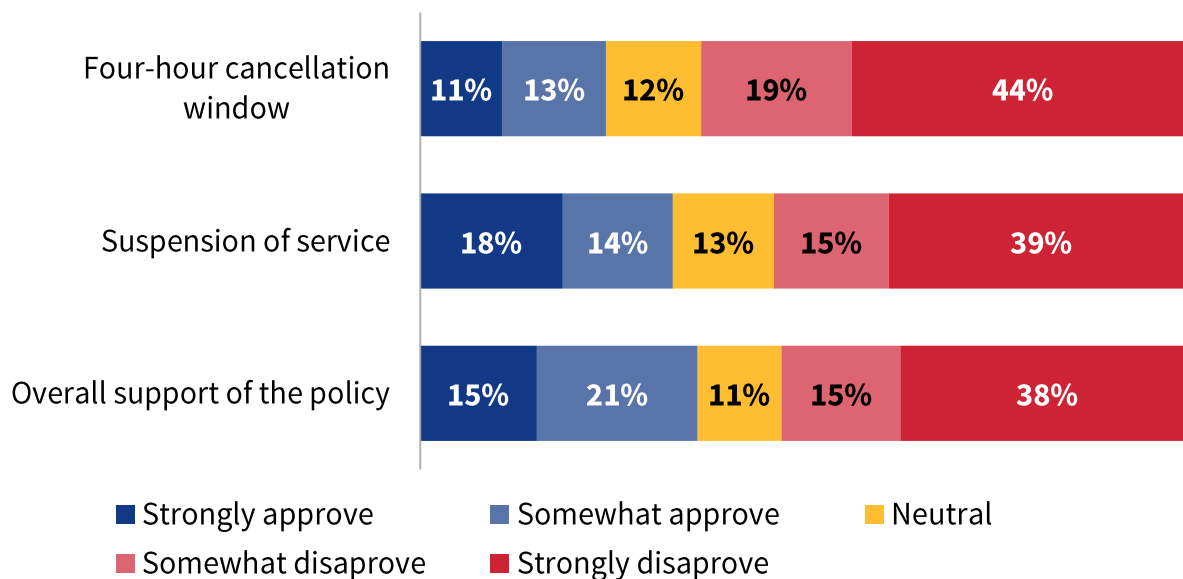


Figure 1: Support for the proposed Transit No-Show and Late Cancellation Policy

Note: Number of respondents varied slightly for each category. Four-hour cancellation window: 350 responses (37 skipped), Suspension of service: 337 responses (50 skipped), Overall support of the policy 332 (55 skipped).

Key themes

- Clear rules are helpful, but flexibility is essential: Many respondents said they support having clear expectations, but only if the policy accounts for unpredictable health needs, delays at medical appointments, and winter conditions
- High reliance on Transit Plus: People emphasized that the service is essential for daily activities including work, medical care, and community participation
- System challenges affect fairness: Respondents noted issues such as long wait times on the phone, early or late pick-ups, inconsistent communication, and being marked as a no-show by mistake
- Better communication needed: People asked for clearer notifications, improved phone support, and more reliable updates when drivers are running behind



“To sum up, this new penalty system seems to be a reasonable idea, but the current booking and scheduling computer system... is far too rigid for both clients and drivers to reasonably follow. Improvements to this current system are necessary to reduce no shows and late cancellations.”

How feedback was considered

We updated the 2023 proposed policy using your feedback, data analysis, and a review of how other cities handle no-shows. The revised policy is not final and will be presented to Council for approval in spring 2026.

Table 3 below shows the key feedback and how it shaped the revised policy. You can also see a [comparison of the existing, 2023 proposed, and revised policies](#) to understand the differences between each version.

Table 3: What we heard and how it was considered

Feature	What we heard	How it was considered
Points system	Participants had concerns about the 2023 proposed points system. They said seven points per month might not be enough for medical appointments or other situations outside their control. Some found the system confusing or hard to track.	The revised policy would replace the points system with a simpler system that tracks no-shows separately from late cancellations. The revised policy recognizes that “life happens”. Customers are not penalized for occasional no-shows or late cancellations. Customers will be able to check their status in a number of ways: • Call or email Transit Plus to check their status • Receive automated notifications • Use self-service tools (more options are being explored)

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Feature	What we heard	How it was considered
Cancellation window	The 4-hour window in the 2023 proposal was too long for many participants. Customers said it didn't fit medical appointments, sudden illness, or early trips. They wanted a shorter, more flexible window.	We shortened the cancellation window to 2 hours while keeping late cancellations and no-shows separate. This balances flexibility with clear expectations. Nearly one-third (29 percent) of cancellations happen less than two hours prior to the pick-up window.
Suspension of service	Many said the proposed suspension rules were too strict or too long. Participants asked for clear rules, support, and flexibility for unpredictable circumstances.	We removed strikes and replaced them with clearer suspension rules. Customers will receive notifications, education, and support before a suspension. In a single month, a suspension occurs if a customer: • No-shows or cancels at the door four or more times OR • Late cancels six or more times The first suspension in a year is seven days. Suspensions get longer if they happen more than once in a year. Suspensions start at the next booking window, not right away. If the policy was in place over the last year, about three percent of customers would have had their service temporarily suspended.
Suspension reviews and appeals	Participants wanted a simple, fair way to explain unforeseen events before a suspension starts.	Customers have the right to request a review of suspensions longer than 7 days. Appeals are heard before enforcement begins.

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Feature	What we heard	How it was considered
Overall support and timing	Over half of respondents strongly or somewhat disapproved of the proposed policy. Many participants felt this was the wrong time to introduce new penalties while the system had issues such as long phone waits, inconsistent communication, and being marked as a no-show by mistake. They also stressed that Transit Plus is essential for daily life, so any policy changes must be fair and supported by reliable service.	Since 2023, major improvements have been made, including a new trip booking system launched in June 2024. These upgrades improved customer service and reliability: • Customer satisfaction rose to 90 percent • App satisfaction is 88 percent • On-time performance is 95 percent • Scheduling became more efficient • Communication with customers improved • Fewer unaccommodated trips (0.0082 percent%) and complaints A new review process is also in place to reduce trips being marked as a no-show by mistake. Together, these improvements help support the implementation of the revised policy.

Next steps

In early 2026, we will invite Transit Plus customers and stakeholders to learn more about proposed updates. Through in-person and virtual information sessions, we will explain the revised No-show and Late Cancellation Policy.

In spring 2026, we will recommend the revised No-Show and Late Cancellation Policy to the Standing Committee on Public Works. The Executive Policy Committee will then consider it before it goes to Council for final consideration. As part of that process, there will be an opportunity for the public to participate in

meetings of Council and committees of Council by submitting their comments in writing, or by appearing in delegation.

If approved by Council, the new policy is expected to be in place in 2026, and customers will be notified prior to implementation.

Appendices

Appendix A – Promotion materials

Appendix B – Survey results

Appendix C – Open-ended survey analysis

Appendix D – Virtual event question & answer transcripts

Appendix E – Phone and email feedback summary

Appendix F – Map of survey respondents