



Title:	ACCESSIBLE SPECIAL TRANSIT SERVICE FOR PERSONS WHO QUALIFY		
Reference:	Administrative Committee June 4, 2008	Policy Adopted by City Council: June 23, 2008	
Prepared by:	Public Services Committee	Supersedes:	

STATEMENT:

**THE CITY OF MEDICINE HAT PROVIDES
SPECIALIZED TRANSIT SERVICES
FOR PERSONS WHO ARE UNABLE TO USE
THE ACCESSIBLE FIXED ROUTE TRANSIT SYSTEM.**

PRINCIPLES:

The Mission of Transit Services is “to be responsive to the transportation needs of the residents of Medicine Hat through an accessible transit system.”

The City of Medicine Hat operates an accessible transit fleet for persons with all ability levels. Transit Services is committed to the accessibility of all bus shelters and bus stops in its accessible fixed route system.

Accessible specialized transit service (curb-to-curb) is available to those who are unable, based on a functional assessment, to utilize the fixed route accessible service.

Transit Services develops and maintains working relationships with agencies that provide services to persons with disabilities, working with them to facilitate/coordinate their clients’ transportation requirements. Some transportation of clients is also provided by these agencies.

ROLE OF COUNCIL:

Approves all City Transit policies

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1.0 **DEFINITIONS**

- 1.1. Accessible Specialized Transit Services – transit service for clients and their caregivers who qualify.
- 1.2. Special Needs Client – is an individual whose abilities restrict them from utilizing the accessible fixed route system as determined by a functional assessment, i.e. individual cannot function within the guidelines or requirements of the fixed accessible transit system. Examples:
 - 1.2.1. Cannot travel up to 400 metres to bus stops.
 - 1.2.2. Cannot board and disembark the transit bus in a timely fashion.
 - 1.2.3. Requires assistance or supervision immediately prior to, during and/or immediately after utilizing the bus by a qualified caregiver.
 - 1.2.4. Seasonal user - winter only when sidewalks/walkways maybe covered with snow and ice.
 - 1.2.5. Temporary user – recovering from a medical condition (e.g. hip replacement) as verified by a physician.
- 1.3. Qualified Caregiver – an individual who assists a special needs user in utilizing the accessible specialized transit service and the accessible fixed route system. Duties include:
 - 1.3.1. Providing medical attention if required.
 - 1.3.2. Carrying the packages of a client.
 - 1.3.3. Supervising the client, if required.
 - 1.3.4. Arranging for the user to be at the curb or leave the curb when required after they have reached their destination.
 - 1.3.5. Providing directions and/or assistance to the user in reaching their final destination.
 - 1.3.6. Providing assistance to clients as needed who have cognitive disabilities or are non verbal.
 - 1.3.7. Ensuring wheelchair seatbelts are secured while riding on the bus, except for medical reasons which must be verified, in writing, by a physician as per Provincial legislation.
- 1.4. Special Needs Client Subscription User - a special needs client who uses accessible specialized transit service on a regular basis for employment, education and/or medical appointments.

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- 1.5. Special Needs Client **Demand User** – a special needs client who uses the transit service on an occasional basis only:
 - 1.5.1. Who provides 24 hours notice for their booking.
 - 1.5.2. Who demands same day service without providing notice for booking and will be charged a surcharge.
- 1.6. Special Needs Client Charter Trips - excursions booked in advance for groups of special needs clients.
 - 1.6.1. In Medicine Hat
 - 1.6.2. Out of town

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1. General Manager of Community Development
 - 2.1.1. Oversees the implementation of this policy.
- 2.2. Manager of Transit Services
 - 2.2.1. Ensures implementation and adherence to the policy and procedures.
 - 2.2.2. Chairs the Eligibility Committee consisting of the Community Inclusion Coordinator, Senior Services Manager and a representative of a Persons with Disability Agency.
 - 2.2.3. Makes policy recommendations to the General Manager of Community Development.
 - 2.2.4. Halts the service in the event of extreme bad weather in consideration of user safety.
- 2.3. Transit Foreman
 - 2.3.1. Informs/advises transit operators w.r.t proper functioning of the overall systems, equipment and responsibilities as it relates to the Accessible Special Transit Service Policy.
 - 2.3.2. Coordinates/maintains/evaluates the day-to-day adherence of policies by drivers and users, e.g. response to complaints, advises the Manager of Transit Services of occurrences of deviation to policies, makes recommendations on policy change, completes preliminary investigations and provides information regarding eligibility of users.
 - 2.3.3. Implements operational efficiencies and integration scheduling options.
 - 2.3.4. Recommends transit policy updates and changes.

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- 2.3.5. Provides training and supervision of transit operators.
- 2.3.6. Reviews special transit routes/scheduling as required.
- 2.4. Transit Administrative Staff
 - 2.4.1. Provides registration information to applicants and registered special transit users.
 - 2.4.2. Ensures that special transit policy information is readily available to applicants and registered users.
- 2.5. Transit Dispatcher
 - 2.5.1. Receives and books clients through the computerized system.
 - 2.5.2. Implements the accessible specialized transit policies and advises of improvements with regards to the policy or a client.
- 2.6. Transit Operators on the Specialized System
 - 2.6.1. Assists special transit users as required from the curb to the bus and from the bus to the curb for boarding/disembarking; secures/unsecures wheelchairs and safely transports the users.
 - 2.6.2. Implements and ensures policy adherence.
- 2.7. Clients and/or Care Givers
 - 2.7.1. Qualified Caregiver is required if a client needs support to:
 - 2.7.1.1. Provide medical attention.
 - 2.7.1.2. Carry their packages.
 - 2.7.1.3. Communicate on their behalf.
 - 2.7.1.4. Supervise disorderly client if required.
 - 2.7.1.5. Provide assistance in getting to the curb prior to boarding and to assist them leaving the curb after disembarking.
 - 2.7.1.6. Provide directions and/or assistance to the client in reaching their destination, as needed.
 - 2.7.1.7. Provide assistance to clients with cognitive disabilities or non verbal.
 - 2.7.1.8. Ensure wheelchair seatbelts are secured and remain secured while riding on the bus. As per legislation, the only exception is for medical reasons which must be verified, in writing, by a physician.

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- 2.7.2.** Clients who require the above assistance (2.7.1.1. to 2.7.1.8.) must have a qualified care giver with them when using Medicine Hat Transit.
- 2.7.3.** Caregivers may complete the application forms on behalf of and at the request of the potential client and consent to a functional assessment through health professionals as identified in the registration form, e.g. doctor (physician or surgeon), occupational therapist, physical therapist, chiropractor and optometrist.
- 2.7.4.** Bookings and/or cancellations procedures are followed as developed by Transit Services.
- 2.7.5.** Use the accessible regular transit system whenever possible.
- 2.7.6.** Attends training sessions held by Transit Services for clients/caregivers and agencies to develop skills and knowledge for using the regular accessible transit system.
- 2.7.7.** Ensure that pick up areas are safe (cleared of snow and provide a smooth surface) and meet the required proper slope for the safety of the driver and the client.
- 2.7.8.** Ensure that wheelchairs have foot rests, seat belts and proper brakes and that they are kept in good repair. Hand grips must also be secured.
- 2.7.9.** Utilizes a mobility aid which is designed for indoor use (mobility aids designed for predominately outdoor uses exceed the bus designs of door openings and aisle turning radius).
- 2.7.10.** Special transit clients who require assistance and cannot be left unattended at the disembarking point:
 - 2.7.10.1.** must arrange to be met by an adult at or in the immediate vicinity of the client's disembarking point (i.e. a neighbour's house).
 - 2.7.10.2.** Written verification must be given to Transit Services detailing with whom to transfer the client until the care giver/ parents/guardian returns.
- 2.7.11.** Pay designated fare. Fares may be waived for a transit approved qualified care giver who provides assistance to a special needs client.
- 2.7.12.** Be ready for departure according to booking/schedule within 10 minutes of the scheduled time.

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3.0 POLICY ADHERENCE

3.1. Eligibility

3.1.1. Persons wishing to use this service must complete a registration form and qualify for the service. These forms are available from the Transit Services office. Qualification will be determined through a functional assessment. Medical Assessments may also be required.

3.1.2. Persons currently registered for comparable service in other Alberta cities are eligible for service when visiting Medicine Hat for up to one month.

3.2. Operational

3.2.1. Special Transit provides a curb-to-curb service in the transporting area within the vicinity of the accessible fixed route system. If clients require additional services they may be provided through previous arrangements and be subject to additional costs.

3.2.2. Transit Services primary function is to transport individuals in a safe, timely and efficient manner.

3.2.3. Accessible specialized transit service operates on a strict time schedule in order to transport as many clients as possible. Administration will meet individually with clients/caregivers to discuss issues regarding excessive delays due to boarding, disembarking, and care giving on route, no shows or curb-to-curb concerns.

3.3. Schedules

3.3.1. Order of priority for service is:

3.3.1.1. Employment and school.

3.3.1.2. Therapy, medical appointment, transfers to and from hospital or nursing home.

3.3.1.3. Shopping/social and other functions.

3.3.2. Special Transit services are provided as follows:

3.3.2.1. (i) Monday to Saturday 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

3.3.2.2. (ii) Limited Sundays and Statutory holidays except Christmas Day and Easter 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (effective September 1st, 2009).

3.3.3. Special Transit Scheduling

3.3.3.1. Peak Service 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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- 3.3.3.2. A schedule for client subscription users is established and adjustments to the schedule are made, as required.
 - 3.3.3.3. Client users are accommodated in accordance with the priorities outlined in 3.3.1 above, and the reservation system outlined in 3.3.5.
 - 3.3.4. Scheduling parameters - in setting the schedule, every attempt will be made to ensure that:
 - 3.3.4.1. one-way trips do not exceed 45 minutes.
 - 3.3.4.2. clients arrive at their destination 15 minutes or less, in advance of their appointment.
 - 3.3.4.3. clients are picked up within 30 minutes after the scheduled completion of their appointment.
 - 3.3.5. Reservations (for Demand Client only)
 - 3.3.5.1. Reservations for bookings for employment/school and therapy, medical appointment, transfers to and from hospital or nursing home will be accepted up to 12:00 noon for appointments on the following day, available booking time permitting.
 - 3.3.5.2. Reservations for priority shopping/social and other functions require at least 24 hours notice. Please note: Given the volume of priority service, demand service is not normally available during peak operation hours.
 - 3.3.5.3. Clients requiring same day transportation as booking will be assessed an additional surcharge.