

# Policy



<b>Title:</b> Adaptive Transportation Services		<b>Number:</b> 0185
<b>Reference:</b> Administrative Committee - July 23, 2025  Public Services Committee - August 25, 2025	<b>Adopted by City Council:</b> September 15, 2025	
	City Clerk	City Manager
<b>Supersedes:</b> 2008-0141		
<b>Prepared by:</b> Community Development Department, Public Services Division		

## STATEMENT

The City of Medicine Hat is committed to providing adaptive transportation services for eligible persons unable to use the accessible fixed route transit system.

## 1. AUTHORITY

- 1.1 Pursuant to Section 201 of the Municipal Government Act (Alberta), Council is responsible for developing and evaluating the policies of the City. Pursuant to Section 207 of the Municipal Government Act (Alberta), the City Manager is responsible for ensuring that the policies of the City are implemented.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Adaptive Transportation Service** means curb-to-curb transit service with service to/from an Unobstructed Door upon request for Clients, their Assistants and Companions.
- 2.2 **Agencies** means external community and non-profit groups that provide services to persons with disabilities.
- 2.3 **Assistant** means a person registered with Transit, and capable of assisting a Client utilizing Adaptive Transportation Service.
- 2.4 **City** means the municipal corporation of the City of Medicine Hat or the area contained within the municipal boundaries of the City of Medicine Hat as the context requires.
- 2.5 **City Manager** means the City's chief administrative officer, operating under the title of City Manager.
- 2.6 **Client** means an individual who as determined by a Functional Assessment, requires Adaptive Transportation Service to access public transportation, and who is approved to use this service.

- 2.7 **Companion** (as distinguished from an Assistant) means a person travelling with a registered Client, paying regular fare and travelling to/from the same locations; Companions are not expected to provide any assistance to the Client.
- 2.8 **Dialysis Patient** means a Client receiving regularly scheduled dialysis treatment at the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital.
- 2.9 **Fixed Route Service** means a transportation system that operates according to a predetermined route and schedule.
- 2.10 **Functional Assessment** means an evaluation done by a trained professional designated by the City to systematically determine if an individual can perform the physical and mental tasks required to use transit services.
- 2.11 **Occasional Trip** means a trip that is booked on an occasional basis by making a reservation up to 14 days in advance.
- 2.12 **Subscription Trip** means a trip that is booked for at the same time, at least two days per week for a period not less than two months.
- 2.13 **Unobstructed Door** means a door, no more than 15 metres away from and within sight of the transit vehicle, and which does not require the driver to assist clients in ascending or descending steps or ramps or move across snow and ice.

### 3. PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The mission of Transit Services is “to be responsive to the transportation needs of the residents of Medicine Hat through provision of an accessible transit system.”
- 3.2 Transit Services strives to maintain general consistency with best practices regarding transit system operation, and to monitor system effectiveness and efficiency based on generally accepted transit performance measures.
- 3.3 Transit Services provides an accessible Fixed Route Service, including buses, bus shelters and bus stops, to ensure that where reasonably possible, the Fixed Route Service is usable by everyone. Transit Services also operates an accessible Adaptive Transportation Service, supporting individuals of all abilities to use public transportation.
- 3.4 Adaptive Transportation Service is available to eligible and registered individuals who, based on a Functional Assessment, are unable to use the accessible Fixed Route Service.
- 3.5 Transit Services develops and maintains a working relationship with local Agencies, and Assistants, to facilitate and coordinate Clients’ transportation requirements.
- 3.6 Except for the priority given to Dialysis Patients, Transit Services will endeavor to balance the availability of Subscription Trips versus Occasional Trips, to ensure both types of trips are reasonably available for client booking, subject to short-term changes in demand.

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## 4. ROLE OF COUNCIL

- 4.1 Receive, review, and adopt this policy and any recommended amendments thereto.

## 5. ROLE OF CITY MANAGER

- 5.1 The City Manager is responsible for implementing this policy, which includes ensuring that appropriate procedures are established.

# Procedure



Medicine Hat

<b>Title:</b> Adaptive Transportation Services		<b>Number:</b> 0185
<b>Approved by the Administrative Committee:</b> July 23, 2025		<b>Supersedes:</b> Procedure 0141
City Clerk	City Manager	
<b>Prepared by:</b> Community Development Department, Public Services Division		

## 1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.01 All defined terms in Adaptive Transportation Services Policy 0185 apply to this procedure wherever used.
- 1.02 **Booking Agent** means an individual responsible for booking Occasional Trips and Subscription Trips.
- 1.03 **Occasional User** means a Client who books Occasional Trips.
- 1.04 **On Demand Service** means a service that is available by pre-booked appointment for pickup at a Fixed Route Service stop.
- 1.05 **Subscription User** means a Client who books Subscription Trips.
- 1.06 **Transit Operator** means City Transit Services staff licensed and qualified to drive a bus (Class 2 vehicle).
- 1.07 **Unstable Scooter** means a three or four-wheeled motorized vehicle with a high centre of gravity and prone to tipping (typically with a single post-seat).

## 2. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.01 Administrative Committee
  - (a) Receive, review and adopt this procedure and any recommended amendments hereto to ensure that the procedure aligns with the Policy 0185 approved by City Council.
- 2.02 Director of Community Development
  - (a) Ensure the appropriate implementation and awareness of Policy 0185 and this procedure.
- 2.03 Manager of Transit Services
  - (a) Implement and ensure that Policy 0185 and this procedure are applied and followed correctly.

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- (b) Engage with Clients, Agencies and the public to understand community need for Adaptive Transportation Services and facilitate updates to Policy 0185 and this procedure.
- (c) Manage contract for functional assessment of new applicants.
- (d) Receive and review appeals related to no-shows, suspensions and eligibility assessments.

**2.04 Superintendent of Transit Operations (Adaptive Transportation Services)**

- (a) Inform and advise Transit Operators regarding the proper functioning of overall Adaptive Transportation Services systems, equipment, and responsibilities.
- (b) Ensure proper training and supervision of Transit Operators including instruction on how to provide appropriate Client assistance and customer service, operate lifts, ramps, wheelchair securement systems and seat belts.
- (c) Coordinate and evaluate day-to-day adherence to policy, procedure, protocols and other guiding documents.

**2.05 Booking Agents**

- (a) Utilize computerized scheduling software to enter trip reservation requests for Subscription Trips and Occasional Trips.

**2.06 Transit Services Administrative Staff**

- (a) Ensure Adaptive Transportation Services information is readily available to applicants and Clients.
- (b) Provide registration information to applicants and Clients.
- (c) Respond to questions from Clients, Assistants and the public about Adaptive Transportation Services.
- (d) Arrange for transportation to and from a Functional Assessment, without charge, via Adaptive Transportation Services.

**2.07 Transit Operators**

- (a) Safe, timely and professional operation of Adaptive Transportation Services buses.
- (b) Assist Clients as required to safely enter and exit the bus, including securing and unfastening wheelchairs and vehicle seat belts as necessary, except in the instances when an Assistant is required.
- (c) Upon request, assist Clients between the bus and an exterior Unobstructed Door subject to the following conditions:
  - (i) Assistance required is not more than 15 metres away from the parked bus.
  - (ii) Assistance does not require the Transit Operator to leave sight of the bus.
  - (iii) Assistance is not required for a Client to climb or descend any steps or ramps.
  - (iv) The area between the bus and exterior location door has been properly maintained to permit safe passage (snow and ice removal, sand application).
- (d) Collection of fare(s).

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## 2.08 Clients and/or Assistants

### (a) Clients:

- (i) are expected to use the Fixed Route Service whenever possible.
- (ii) when requested, must be available to attend training sessions held by Transit Services for Clients/Assistants and agencies to develop skills and knowledge for use of the Fixed Route Service.
- (iii) must consent to a Functional Assessment.
- (iv) must ensure that booking and/or cancellation procedures are followed.
- (v) must ensure that pickup areas are safe for both the Transit Operator and Client
- (vi) must be ready for departure according to booking schedule up to 20 minutes before or 20 minutes after the schedule pick up time, depending on trip type.
- (vii) must be available for boarding the bus within 3 minutes of bus arrival at the pick-up location.

### (b) Clients are required to be accompanied by an Assistant if they are/may be needed to:

- (i) provide medical attention to the Client.
- (ii) communicate on behalf of the Client.
- (iii) carry packages (maximum of two per person, held on person during transport).
- (iv) assist the Client to enter/exit the vehicle, if the combined weight of passenger and manual wheelchair is greater than 160 kg.
- (v) provide directions and/or assistance to the Client in reaching their destinations.
- (vi) 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.
- (vii) provide support or assistance as deemed necessary by the Functional Assessment or Transit management.

### (c) Assistants:

- (i) may complete the Adaptive Transit Service application form on behalf of, or at the request of the potential Client.
- (ii) may travel with the Client at no charge if the Client requires accompaniment.
- (iii) must start and end their trip at the same stop as their Client.

## 3. PROCEDURES / SERVICE DELIVERY

### 3.01 Eligibility and Registration

- (a) Individuals wishing to use Adaptive Transportation Services must complete a registration form and qualify for the service based on a Functional Assessment. Forms are made available on the City of Medicine Hat website and at the Transit Services office. The Functional Assessment will be conducted on behalf of the City by a third-party contractor as determined by the City.

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- (b) Transit Services will provide free transportation to the assessment centre for the Functional Assessment appointment. Information on booking the appointment and related transportation is provided on the application form.
- (c) Individuals currently registered for comparable adaptive transit services where they live are eligible for Adaptive Transportation Service when visiting Medicine Hat for up to one month when showing proof of their registration.
- (d) Transit Services shall seek to make eligibility determinations within two weeks of the Functional Assessment being completed.
- (e) An appeals process is available for Clients determined to be conditionally eligible or ineligible for Adaptive Transportation Services. All appeals must be received in writing by the Manager of Transit Services within 30 days of receiving an eligibility decision.
- (f) Applicants deemed ineligible can reapply again after six months.

### 3.02 Operations

- (a) Transit Services provides Adaptive Transportation Service to and from points within the urban areas of the City.
- (b) At times when On Demand Service is replacing a Fixed Route Service, Adaptive Transportation Services may transport Clients on buses being used for On Demand Service.
- (c) Adaptive Transportation Services may substitute taxi or sedan services for Clients who are able to enter and exit the bus without assistance, to meet trip requests.
- (d) The maximum travel time goal for Adaptive Transportation Service trips shall be equivalent to the time the same trip would take on fixed route, plus half the standard frequency between buses. Best efforts will be made to ensure Clients arrive at their destination no more than 20 minutes in advance of their booked arrival time.

### 3.03 Reservations

- (a) There shall be no prioritization of trips based on the need for travel; all Client trips shall have equal priority.
- (b) Clients making reservations may be offered trips within one hour before or after their requested reservation time.
- (c) A maximum of 50% of the available capacity in any one-hour period may be dedicated to Subscription Trips.
- (d) Registered Dialysis patients are exempt from the 50% Subscription Trip cap, during those periods where no dedicated Dialysis service is available.
- (e) If there is no space available for a new Subscription Trip, Transit Services will keep a waitlist.

- (f) Clients must notify Transit Services of any changes to a Subscription Trip by 4:00 pm, on the day preceding the scheduled trip or it will count as a late cancellation or no-show.
- (g) Reservations will be accepted from 14 days before the trip until noon the day before the scheduled trip.
- (h) Dialysis Patients at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital may book trips to the Dialysis Centre up to 21 days in advance.
- (i) Clients will have the option of using a computer-based reservation system either online or using a smartphone application.

### 3.04 Mobility Devices

- (a) Transit Services will transport Clients in wheelchairs with a maximum combined weight that does not exceed the capacity of the vehicle or ramp (currently rated at 270 kg maximum load).
- (b) Transit Operator assistance to enter or exit via the ramp will be limited to Client and wheelchair combinations that do not exceed 160 kg, for Operator safety. Clients whose combined weight and wheelchair exceed this limit must be assisted by an Assistant.
- (c) Clients and wheelchairs will be accommodated on Adaptive Transportation Service buses if the length does not exceed the maximum design capacity of the ramp and bus, as specified in the User Guide for Clients.
- (d) Wheelchairs must meet the WC18 or WC19 standard, and must be equipped with footrests, working brakes, seatbelts, and rear wheels to prevent tipping; handles must be available for Transit Operator use when assisting the Client.
- (e) Clients on Unstable Scooters are required to transfer to a seat on the bus.
- (f) Clients with walkers are not permitted to sit on walkers while bus is motion. The Transit Operator must secure walkers, or the Clients must hold on to walkers, whenever the bus is in motion.

### 3.05 Companions

- (a) Clients may be accompanied by a single companion in addition to an Assistant.
- (b) Booking Agents must be notified in advance if a Client will be accompanied by a companion.
- (c) The companion must pay the applicable fare.
- (d) The companion must enter or exit the bus at the same stop as the Client.

### 3.06 Service Animals

- (a) Certified service animals are allowed to ride.
- (b) Clients must advise Transit Services at the time the reservation is made that a service animal will be accompanying the Client and be able to provide photo ID for certification if the information is not already on file.



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- (c) Certified service animals must be under the Client/Assistant's control with a leash, tether, or harness during travel.
- (d) Emotional support animals and pets may be carried onboard enclosed in a kennel to be held on the lap of the Client or Assistant.

### 3.07 Fare Structure

- (a) Adaptive Transportation Service shall have the same fare structure and fares as Fixed Route Service and On Demand Service.

### 3.08 No Shows and Late Cancellations

- (a) Cancellations for Occasional Trips must be received at least two (2) hours before the scheduled trip.
- (b) Clients who do not cancel an Occasional Trip at least two (2) hours in advance or do not show up within three (3) minutes of the arrival of the bus will be considered a no-show.
- (c) For no-show trips, Occasional or Subscription, the return trip will be automatically cancelled; return trip booking requests will be accepted based on availability.
- (d) All no-shows will be tracked and reviewed monthly and graduated sanctions will be applied based on the proportion of no-shows to the total number of trips booked by the Client.
- (e) Clients may appeal a no-show finding to the Manager of Transit Services within five (5) business days of receiving a suspension letter.
- (f) Clients may file a written appeal to the Manager of Transit Services to request a review of a suspension within ten (10) business days of receiving the suspension letters

### 3.09 Appeal Process

- (a) Written appeals of no-shows, suspensions or eligibility determinations must include:
  - (i) Date
  - (ii) Name
  - (iii) Address
  - (iv) Contact number
  - (v) The reason given for the no-show / suspension / denial of service
  - (vi) The grounds on which the decision is being appealed
  - (vii) Date of no-show /suspension / denial
  - (viii) Signature
- (b) An existing Client will retain eligibility until their appeal is adjudicated and a determination is made to sustain or overrule the determination.

### 3.10 APPENDICES

None