

CITY OF WHITEHORSE COUNCIL POLICY

POLICY: Handy Bus

PURPOSE: To describe the manner in which Handy Bus transit service will be delivered

AUTHORITY: Council Resolution 2014-04-03 dated February 24, 2014

HANDY BUS POLICY

ENABLING LEGISLATION

Municipal Act: Part 6; Division 2; Section 265(k)

Yukon Human Rights Act: Sections 6, 7, & 8.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Handy Bus provides public transportation to individuals who meet the eligibility criteria described in this policy and whose permanent or temporary physical, mental, or medical condition prevents them from using the conventional public transit system.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide a safe, reliable, equitable, and cost-efficient transportation service for eligible persons who are temporarily or permanently unable to use the conventional public transit system; and
- Increase accessibility to, and knowledge of, the City of Whitehorse transit system.

DEFINITIONS

“Handy Bus system” means the specialized accessible system that only approved eligible riders can access.

“Conventional system” means the accessible conventional bus system that all citizens can access.

“Accessible Door” means the first exterior entrance designed for accommodating persons with physical disabilities and includes any entrance with level or approved ramp access, or any entrance the eligible rider is able to negotiate with minimal assistance from the driver.

“Attendant” means a person travelling with the eligible rider where the need has been identified on the Professional Medical Assessment Form.

“City Council” means the duly elected council for the City of Whitehorse.

“City Manager” means the City Manager for the City of Whitehorse, or a designated representative.

“Designated Location” means the location specified for pick up or drop-off of an eligible rider and includes the additional locations specified by the City of Whitehorse for non-residential locations.

“Director of Community and Recreation Services” means the Director of the Community and Recreation Services Division for the City of Whitehorse, or a designated representative.

“Disability” with respect to an individual means a physical, sensory or cognitive impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual, and includes a record of such an impairment or being regarded as having such an impairment.

“Driver” means a trained and qualified employee who, under the direction of the Transit Manager, operates the Handy Bus and/or conventional bus.

“Eligible Rider” means a person who has registered with Whitehorse Transit and has been approved under this policy.

“Guest” means a person, other than an attendant, travelling with an eligible rider and having the same origin and destination as the eligible rider.

“Handy Bus Pass” means a monthly pass that gives eligible riders the ability to ride on the Handy Bus or conventional City of Whitehorse transit system.

“Late Cancellation” means a trip cancelled by an eligible rider without valid reason, after 4:00 p.m. on the day before the scheduled trip.

“No-Show” means an eligible rider who does not present him/herself at the agreed pick up time or location without a valid reason, or who cancels a scheduled trip within two hours of the pick-up time.

“Registered Health Professional” means a registered health professional such as a medical doctor, registered nurse, physiotherapist, psychologist, or occupational therapist.

“Service Animal” means a certified guide dog assisting or being trained to assist a visually impaired, deaf, physically disabled, or otherwise disabled person.

“Short Notice Request” means a trip requested less than 24 hours in advance of the pick-up time.

“Transit Manager” means the Manager of Transit Services for the City of Whitehorse, or a designated representative.

“Valid Reason” means a sudden change in an eligible rider’s situation, beyond their control, that precludes him or her from travelling at their pre-arranged time.

“Visitor” means any person who resides outside of Yukon.

REGISTRATION OF ELIGIBLE RIDERS

1. It is the responsibility of the applicant to follow the application process as described in sections 3, 4, and if applicable, section 8 of this policy.
2. It is the responsibility of applicants or registered eligible riders to inform the Transit Manager of any changes regarding their status, including contact information and their ability to meet the eligibility criteria described in this policy.

Application Requirements

3. Applicants shall obtain and complete a valid and current pre-registration application in a form prescribed by the Transit Manager, and submit it to the Transit Manager for consideration and final review/verification.
4. Applicants are required to ensure that a registered health professional completes a valid and current Professional Medical Assessment in a form prescribed by the Transit Manager. This form must be submitted to the Transit Manager:
 - (1) By mail from the office of the Registered Health Professional; or
 - (2) By the applicant, provided that the form is in an unopened envelope sealed and stamped by the office of the Registered Health Professional.

Verification of Eligibility

5. Verification of eligibility will be conducted by the City of Whitehorse with sensitivity, confidentiality, and in a manner that protects the dignity of the individual.
6. The Transit Manager will review applications and notify all applicants if their application has been approved within 15 business days of receipt.
7. The Transit Manager may seek an independent review from an independent registered health professional for further clarification of the applicant's eligibility.
8. The Transit Manager may request an in-person meeting with the applicant for further clarification of the applicant's eligibility outcomes.
9. If the review exceeds a period of 15 business days, the Transit Manager may issue temporary access to Handy Bus Conventional services for the period required to make a decision.
10. Authorization to use the Transit services will commence once the application has been approved and the Transit Manager has provided the applicant with the respective terms and conditions associated with the approval.

Eligibility Criteria

11. Applications will be assessed based on their ability to demonstrate that the applicant has a particular disability or medical condition that limits physical, sensory, or cognitive accessibility to the conventional transit system, including getting to and from the transit stop, waiting for a bus, and riding on the bus.
12. Physical accessibility relates to architectural, design, and environmental characteristics that allow a person to travel from place to place. In particular, assessments will consider:
 - (1) Differing abilities to walk, stand, or sit;
 - (2) Navigation of environmental barriers;
 - (3) Accommodation of mobility aids; and
 - (4) Any other factor that might affect physical accessibility to the conventional transit system.
13. Sensory accessibility relates to aspects of design and information sharing that allows a person to travel independently. In particular, assessments will consider:
 - (1) Differing abilities to hear and see;
 - (2) The need for special auditory, tactile, or visual information to make travel possible; and
 - (3) Any other factor that might affect sensory accessibility to the conventional transit system.
14. Cognitive accessibility relates to the ability of transportation-related directions, instructions, and signage to help individuals understand and learn. In particular, assessments will consider:
 - (1) Differing abilities to assess orientation, safety awareness, memory, learning skills, problem solving, and navigation;
 - (2) The need for specialized learning to enhance cognitive accessibility; and
 - (3) Any other factor that might affect cognitive accessibility to the conventional transit system.
15. Applicants will also be assessed based on their ability to ride the transit system safely and with dignity, even if the rationale does not fall specifically within one of the above accessibility categories.

Eligibility Outcomes

16. Approved applications will fall into one of four categories for access to Handy Bus services: Full Eligibility, Conditional Eligibility, Temporary Eligibility, and Visitor Eligibility.
17. Full Eligibility will be granted when it is not reasonable to use the conventional transit system under any circumstance, regardless of weather, environmental barriers, time of day, etc.
18. Conditional Eligibility will be granted when the individual can be reasonably expected to make some trips on the conventional service. For example:
 - (1) Variable path of travel limitations including snow, steep hills, etc.;
 - (2) Seasonal limitations including cold weather, daylight hours, etc.;
 - (3) A variable health condition where on some days it is possible to use the conventional system, other days not; or
 - (4) Where it is possible for the individual to learn to use the conventional system through travel-training programs, but access to Handy Bus services is required in the meantime before training can occur.
19. Temporary Eligibility will be granted to an individual whose medical condition or disability prevents them from using the conventional system for a limited period of time. An individual can be granted Full or Conditional Temporary Eligibility.
20. Visitor Eligibility will be granted to any person that provides the Transit Manager with proof of eligibility from another jurisdiction the visitor will be required to pay the appropriate fares.

Extension of Eligibility and Re-certification

21. Requests for eligibility extensions for temporary eligibility may be made to the Transit Manager including rationale affected by:
 - (1) Minor changes in status compared to the original information filed in the application; and
 - (2) Unanticipated variations in seasonal, environmental, or other factors affecting the ability of the eligible rider to use the conventional system.
22. An eligible rider is required to discuss any changes to his/her medical status with the Transit Manager annually, or once eligibility has expired.
23. Eligible riders are required to re-apply after their eligibility has expired.
24. The Transit Manager may require an eligible rider to either re-apply should major changes to his/her medical status become evident or participate in a travel-training program before reconsidering certification of conditional eligibility.

USING THE HANDY BUS

25. The Handy Bus serves the same area as the conventional system, plus outlying areas for eligible riders requiring transport to medical appointments only.

Handy Bus Pass

26. A Handy Bus pass allows a rider access to the Handy Bus, as well as the conventional transit system, at any time during regular operational hours.
27. Handy Bus passes are non-transferable.

Reservations

28. Reservations for Handy Bus services will only be accepted from eligible riders or their designate as indicated on the Pre-Registration application form.
29. Subscription trips are pre-booked as regularly scheduled trips that occur on the same days of the week and at the same time. In particular:
- (1) A subscription reservation is created with one call, and the reservation will continue until a change is requested;
 - (2) A maximum of one change over a three-month period is permitted for subscription reservations. Frequent changes will not be permitted;
 - (3) Upon implementation of this policy or at any time when the service may be reduced, existing subscription trips within the set hours of service will be honoured; and
 - (4) The Transit Manager will establish and adjust limits for subscription trips to ensure an equitable balance between, and capacity for, subscription and demand-service trips.
30. Demand Service trips require a separate booking for each trip, are dependent on service availability, and are accommodated on a first come, first served basis.
31. Open-return trips, or trips without a fixed return time, will only be accommodated in exceptional circumstances. Pre-scheduled trips will be given priority.
32. Eligible riders shall notify the dispatcher as far in advance as possible of changes regarding their pre-arranged pick-up or drop-off. Specifically:
- (1) Changes should be made between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, including changes to Saturday trips; and
 - (2) Drivers, at their discretion and in exceptional circumstances, may authorize changes requested outside of the above hours, but pre-scheduled trips will be given priority.

33. Eligible riders are requested to cancel unwanted trips as far in advance as possible, and before 4:00 p.m. on the preceding day, to ensure equitable access to Handy Bus services for other users.
34. Only one drop-off is permitted per trip. Drivers will not wait while eligible riders conduct their business at a drop-off location. A separate reservation is required.
35. Consistent late cancellations or no-shows may result in warnings or suspensions.

Riding the Handy Bus

36. Eligible riders are required to pay the appropriate fare or show their Handy Bus pass when boarding the Handy Bus.
37. Regular operating hours of the Handy Bus are 6:40 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 7:40 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Saturdays.
38. To ensure the safe and efficient operation of the Handy Bus, eligible riders shall:
 - (1) Treat Whitehorse staff and other passengers with courtesy and respect complying with the City's Respectful Workplace Policy;
 - (2) Plan and prepare their travel so as not to delay the service and ensure equitable access to the service for other users;
 - (3) Provide reasonable access to an external accessible door within sight of the Handy Bus at their scheduled locations. This includes arranging for such things as snow removal on steps or walkways, and assistance if required;
 - (4) Provide correct addresses for pick-up and drop-off locations;
 - (5) Be at their scheduled pick-up and drop-off locations and ready for transport by the scheduled trip time;
 - (6) Not use radios or other media devices on the Handy Bus without earphones;
 - (7) Not smoke on the Handy Bus;
 - (8) Not transport hazardous materials such as corrosive or flammable liquids and explosives;
 - (9) Inform the dispatcher at the time of reservation if the rider is to be travelling with an attendant, guest, portable oxygen unit, service animal, or a child that requires a child car seat;
 - (10) If travelling with a child, secure and remove the child car seat from the Handy Bus, or have the rider's attendant do so;

- (11) Lock and secure doors at their residence as necessary prior to departing on trip. Drivers are not authorized to do so and are not responsible for the failure of a rider to do so; and
 - (12) Not store parcels in the aisle or on empty seats.
39. Passengers riding in the Handy Bus seats are required to wear the seatbelts provided by the manufacturer or wear the Q-Strain safety equipment.
40. Wheelchairs, scooters and other mobility aids are permitted on the Handy Bus provided that:
- (1) They are in good working order with functioning brakes;
 - (2) The combined weight of the passenger and mobility aid does not exceed 600 pounds;
 - (3) They are secured in place before transport,
 - (4) All wheelchair riders wear lap belts; and
 - (5) They are secured using all available security devices. Eligible riders in wheelchairs or scooters must be secured using the Q-Strain belts provided.

Attendants, Guests, and Service Animals

41. Eligible riders may be accompanied by one attendant if the need for an attendant is identified on the Medical Professional Assessment Form and if assistance with any of the following is required:
- (1) Carrying parcels;
 - (2) Accessing, embarking, and disembarking from the Handy Bus;
 - (3) Entering the residence of the eligible rider; or
 - (4) Any other additional assistance beyond what the driver can provide.
42. Attendants accompanying an eligible rider:
- (1) Ride free of charge;
 - (2) Must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as the eligible rider;
 - (3) Cannot be registered Handy Bus users; and
 - (4) Must be made known to the dispatcher at the time of booking.
43. Eligible riders may be accompanied by a guest provided that:
- (1) Guests pay the regular fare;
 - (2) The guest is picked up and dropped off at the same locations as the eligible rider; and

- (3) The guest is made known to the dispatcher at the time of booking.
44. Service animals accompanying eligible riders travel free of charge provided that the service animal information is included on the Medical Professional Assessment Form and the dispatcher is advised at the time of booking that a service animal will be present.

Driver Authority and Responsibility

45. To ensure the safe and efficient operation of the Handy Bus, drivers shall:
 - (1) Deny service to any passenger who is not in compliance with this policy;
 - (2) Provide a safe and comfortable ride;
 - (3) Give priority to the approved schedule and pre-scheduled trips, but allow flexibility with respect to trip changes where possible;
 - (4) Treat passengers with courtesy and respect;
 - (5) Keep the Handy Bus vehicle in sight at all times;
 - (6) Upon request, escort eligible riders to and from the nearest accessible door that remains within sight of the Handy Bus vehicle;
 - (7) Ensure the eligible rider is safely through the accessible door;
 - (8) Not enter the residence of an eligible rider except in the case of an emergency;
 - (9) Adhere to the established schedule within the limits of safety and road conditions;
 - (10) Wait at the designated stop up to a maximum of 10 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time;
 - (11) Park the vehicle in a safe location at all times, including alternative pick-up or drop-off points should designated locations be deemed unsafe;
 - (12) Ensure eligible riders and their mobility aids are secured, using all available and required security devices; and
 - (13) On Saturdays only, contact eligible riders prior to pre-scheduled pick up times to ensure the eligible rider is ready for pick-up.

WARNINGS AND SUSPENSIONS

46. A record shall be kept of an eligible rider's no-shows and late cancellations, together with any reasons provided by the rider.
47. Warning letters will be issued for repeated no-shows and late cancellations. The letters will:
 - (1) Inform the eligible rider of the no-show and late cancellation policy;

- (2) Warn of possible suspension of service; and
 - (3) Request the eligible rider to discuss the situation with the Transit Manager.
48. A warning letter will be issued if an eligible rider has three or more no-shows, or six or more late cancellations without valid reasons in one calendar month. Additionally:
- (1) A second warning letter within a six-month period will result in a two-day service suspension and cancellation of the rider's subscription trip;
 - (2) A third warning letter within a 12-month period will result in a seven-day service suspension;
 - (3) A fourth warning letter within a 12-month period will result in service suspension until such time as the eligible rider has met with the Transit Manager to discuss the situation. Resumption of service will only occur once the Transit Manager is satisfied that the situation has been resolved in accordance with this policy.
49. For the safety and well-being of passengers, drivers, and the general public, Whitehorse Transit will not tolerate disruptive behaviour. Specifically:
- (1) Disruptive behaviour refers to any violent, illegal or disorderly behaviour that endangers passengers or drivers. It includes but is not limited to derogatory behaviour, verbal abuse, insults and harassment as prohibited in the City's *Harassment and Respectful Workplace Policy*;
 - (2) For serious disruptive behaviour, service will be suspended immediately until the eligible rider can demonstrate that the behaviour is not likely to recur;
 - (3) For less serious disruptive behaviour, a written warning will be issued to the eligible rider stating the offence and the potential for suspension of service if repeated disruptive behaviour continues; and
 - (4) Where disruptive behaviour is a consequence of an eligible rider's cognitive disabilities, an attendant must accompany the eligible rider until the behavioural problem has been resolved.
50. The following sanctions apply to repeated instances of disruptive behaviour:
- (1) First Sanction: Written Notice
 - (2) Second Sanction: 30-day suspension
 - (3) Third Sanction: 60-day suspension
 - (4) Fourth Sanction: Permanent suspension

APPEAL PROCESS

51. Eligible riders have the right to appeal any sanctions or suspensions. An appeal process is established as follows:

First Stage Appeals

First Stage appeals shall:

- (1) Be made by telephone to the Transit Manager within 7 days of the date of the warning letter or letter imposing sanction;
- (2) Apply to a first or second warning letter, or a first sanction; and
- (3) Consider the finding of the Transit Manager as final and the matter not eligible for further appeal.
- (4) Warning letters beyond the second letter, and sanctions beyond the second, third, and fourth sanctions, may proceed to second and third stage appeal process.

Second Stage Appeals

Second Stage appeals shall:

- (1) Be made in writing to the Director of Community and Recreation Services within 7 days of the date of determination of the first stage appeal;
- (2) Ensure the Director of Community and Recreation Services reviews the matter and render a decision in writing within 14 days;
- (3) Allow an eligible rider who believes that a decision of the Transit Manager on a First Stage appeal, or a decision of the Director of Community and Recreation Services on a Second Stage appeal, or an eligibility determination by Whitehorse Transit is discriminatory, or has not adequately addressed an issue of discrimination or harassment, to require the Transit Manager to refer the matter to independent complaints and resolution process. Such request must be in writing; and
- (4) Allow the Transit Manager to refer the matter directly to the independent complaints and resolution process if they consider that matter can be more appropriately dealt with by the independent complaints and resolution process than through the first and second stage appeal process.

Third Stage Appeals

- (1) Third Stage appeals shall be made in writing to the City Manager within seven days of the date indicated on the written decision of the Director of Community and Recreation Services.
- (2) The City Manager will convene a hearing within 14 days to hear the matter and will render a decision in writing within seven days.
- (3) The findings of the City Manager shall be final.

52. Late requests for appeals will not be accepted.

FORMS

- Form "A" Handy Bus Pre-Registration Application Form
Form "B" Medical Professional Assessment Form

Handy Bus Pre-Registration Application

Applicant Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

- Check if you have had a Professional Verification Assessment completed by a registered health professional, as defined in the Handy Bus Policy.
- Check if you are applying for an extension or re-certification of eligibility.

Emergency Contact Information:

#1 Name: _____ **Relationship:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

- Check if this person will be making Handy Bus reservations on your behalf
- Check if this address will serve as an alternate drop off location (only used in cases when no one is home at you residence and you cannot be left alone)

#2 Name: _____ **Relationship:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

- Check if this person will be making Handy Bus reservations on your behalf
- Check if this address will serve as an alternate drop off location (only used in cases when no one is home at you residence and you cannot be left alone)

Professional Medical Assessment Form

This form is to be completed by one of the following registered health professionals: medical doctor, registered nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, or psychologist.

This form will be used by the City of Whitehorse to determine whether the applicant in question qualifies for access to the Whitehorse Transit Handy Bus Services. It is requested that you be as specific and detailed as necessary to ensure an informed decision is made.

If at any time, additional information or clarification is needed, the City of Whitehorse may seek an independent review to determine eligibility.

The Handy Bus is a special curb-to-curb service for eligible persons who are unable to use the conventional public transit system with safety and dignity due to a temporary or permanent physical and/or cognitive disability.

It is important to note that the entire fleet of conventional buses consists of fully accessible, low-floor buses. As Handy Bus resources are limited, this service is available only to those who must depend on it for transportation.

Name of Applicant: _____

1. Is the applicant diagnosed with a permanent or temporary medical condition that may prevent him/her from traveling on the conventional public transit system?

- Yes, permanent condition
- Yes, temporary condition
- No
- Not applicable to my area of expertise

If yes, please specify (If this is a temporary disability, include approximate dates for which the service is required):

2. Does the Applicant have a temporary or permanent physical disability that may prevent him/her from traveling on the conventional public transit system?

- Yes, permanent physical disability
- Yes, temporary physical disability
- No
- Not applicable to my area of expertise

If yes, please specify (If this is a temporary disability, include approximate dates for which the service is required):

3. Does the Applicant have a temporary or permanent cognitive disability that may prevent him/her from traveling on the conventional public transit system?

- Yes, permanent cognitive disability
- Yes, temporary cognitive disability
- No
- Not applicable to my area of expertise

If yes, please specify (If this is a temporary disability, include approximate dates for which the service is required):

4. Does the applicant use a:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a) Wheelchair? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know |
| b) 3-wheeled scooter? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know |
| c) Walker? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know |
| d) Cane? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know |
| e) Crutch? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know |
| f) Service Animal? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know |
| g) Other? Please specify: | _____ | | |

5. When traveling to and from a transit stop is the applicant able to:

a) Navigate to and from a transit stop over a variety of surfaces and around physical and environmental barriers, such as curbs, trash cans, mail boxes, snow, ice, etc, (a distance of about 175m)?

Yes No Do not know

b) Negotiate ramps?

Yes No Do not know

c) Use street signs or other directional cues to get to the transit stop?

Yes No Do not know

d) Understand and remember transit system information?

Yes No Do not know

e) Find, reach and use push buttons for walk signals?

Yes No Do not know

f) Cross intersections without the need for accessible pedestrian signals (devices that communicate pedestrian information in non-visual formats)?

Yes No Do not know

Please elaborate any of the above points as necessary:

6. At the transit stop, is the applicant able to:

a) Wait at the transit stop for up to 10 minutes?

Yes No Do not know

b) Board the bus and pay the fare?

Yes No Do not know

c) Identify the appropriate bus?

Yes No Do not know

d) Identify required transit information on signs without large lettering, braille, or auditory cues?

- Yes No Do not know

e) Feel comfortable and safe while waiting?

- Yes No Do not know

f) Travel to and wait at the transit stop in poorly lit areas or at night time?

- Yes No Do not know

g) Does the applicant require adequate seating at the transit stop?

- Yes No Do not know

Please elaborate any of the above points as necessary:

7. On the transit vehicle, is the applicant able to:

a) Recognize the destination and signal for the bus to stop?

- Yes No Do not know

b) Feel comfortable and safe while riding the bus?

- Yes No Do not know

c) Navigate safely, and with dignity, to and from any seat on the bus?

- Yes No Do not know

Please elaborate any of the above points as necessary:

8. Drivers, upon request, will assist eligible riders at their pick-up and drop-off locations to and from the nearest exterior accessible entrance within sight of the Handy Bus in a safe parking position. If the applicant requires additional assistance beyond what the driver can provide, or cannot be left alone on the bus to care for him or herself while in transit, an attendant **is** required. Do you feel that the applicant requires an attendant?

Yes No Do not know

If yes, please specify why:

I confirm that the above information is accurate and based solely on my professional assessment.

Signature of Registered Medical Professional Date

Printed Name: _____ Position: _____

Organization: _____

Telephone: _____ Address: _____

Please return the completed form in a sealed and stamped envelope **marked confidential** to:

Whitehorse Transit Department
2121 Second Avenue
Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 1C2

OR Fax the form to 867-668-8653

OR Provide the completed form to the applicant for submission, provided that:

- It is in a sealed and stamped envelope **marked confidential**; and
- The envelope is from your office and clearly labeled with your return address.

Opened envelopes may not be considered for determination of eligibility.