Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Fund Policy

1 August 2024

Auckland Transport
An Auckland Council Organisation

Policy Statement

The Total Mobility scheme (TMS) supports people who cannot use public transport to travel in Auckland.

Total Mobility HOP card holders can use taxis for door-to-door transport at a subsidised rate.

Some of those Total Mobility HOP card holders need to remain in their wheelchair while travelling and can only travel in wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV).

The TMS operates a grant subsidy to Total Mobility Taxi Operators to help purchase WAV and install wheelchair hoists and ramps.

Purpose

Policy Purpose

- The purpose of this policy is to identify the framework for WAV grant subsidy applications, scheme general conditions, the prioritisation criteria to target application selections and the payment and contractual arrangements.

Grant Subsidy Purpose

- Auckland Transport (AT) wishes to encourage and support the increase of WAVs across the Auckland TMS operator fleet, by providing a (NZTA) subsidy grant to purchase and install wheelchair hoists and ramps.
- Grants can also be utilised to support both the provision of wheelchair hoists and/or ramps and for vehicle modifications to enable a vehicle to safely load, transport and unload wheelchair users.

Grant Subsidy Funding

- Auckland Transport (AT) has available $200,000 for the FY25, for WAV grants funding, which enables a maximum grant subsidy of $25,000 per WAV application.
- If a grant round is not fully subscribed AT reserves the right to increase the amount of individual grants at its sole discretion.

Policy Principles

- **Funding Outcomes and Allocation Criteria**
    - With this funding AT aims to increase the number of WAV in the Auckland region Total Mobility taxi fleet.
    - Where grant applications exceed the annual budget, applications will be prioritised using the following criteria:

        1. Increases the total number of WAV TM vehicles operating in the Auckland Region (applicants can apply to replace a current vehicle but will have lower priority than an applicant introducing an additional vehicle into the Auckland WAV TM fleet).

2. Availability of the WAV e.g. days and hours for TMS use (applications where two drivers will routinely drive the vehicle will be preferred as this will increase the number of hours that the WAV is available to clients)
3. The age of the vehicle. New vehicles and newer second-hand vehicles will be preferred (these vehicles will provide greater long-term benefit to the Auckland WAV TM fleet).
4. The vehicle's primary area of operation will be in areas where there are few or no WAV TM vehicles operating relative to the population.
5. Will cover areas where the over 65 age population is expected to increase substantially and will therefore supplement the existing WAV fleet capacity.
6. The degree to which the application satisfies the 'preferred' aspects of TMS specifications (see Appendix 1).
7. The number of other government or rest home contracts an operator holds. As this funding is intended to increase the TM fleet preference will be given to operators who do not hold contracts with ACC, Te Whatu Ora, SESTA and rest homes.
8. The ability of the WAV to carry carer(s) and other passengers travelling with eligible TMS clients.
9. The number of successful applications made by an applicant in the preceding 5 years.

- **Applicants eligible to apply**
  - This funding is available to taxi operators who currently hold a contract for Total Mobility services with Auckland Transport (510-19-425-PT).
    - This funding is available to owner / drivers who currently provide Total Mobility services with taxi operators holding a contract for Total Mobility services with Auckland Transport (510-19-425-PT). Such owner / drivers must have their application supported by the taxi operator for whom they provide Total Mobility services.

- **General grant subsidy conditions**
  - To receive a WAV grant subsidy, an applicant must meet the following conditions:
    - Approved TMS provider
    - The mandatory requirements set out in Appendix 1 to this policy.
    - Funding can be used to support both the provision of the wheelchair hoist or ramp and for vehicle modifications to enable a vehicle to safely load, unload and transport Total Mobility clients in their wheelchairs.
    - Applications can be made to convert a currently operating taxi van to a WAV.
    - The wheelchair hoist and/or ramp has been inspected and certified for safe use, by a NZTA / Low Volume Vehicle Technical Association. (LVVTA) approved engineer of low volume vehicles, and a Low Volume Vehicle Plate or LVVTA electronic plate is attached to the vehicle, or a certificate carried in the vehicle.
    - The WAV has a Certificate of Fitness.

        - The WAV will enter service prior to the end of the current AT financial year.
    - Funding cannot be used to purchase a wheelchair accessible vehicle that is already operated for Total Mobility services within the Auckland Transport region.
    - Funding is not available retrospectively to support WAV vehicles already operating in the Auckland Total Mobility Fleet.
    - Funding is not available to transfer a pre-used or secondhand hoist from one vehicle to another.

Annual Grant Subsidy Application Evaluations

- WAV grant subsidy applications will be assessed and awarded through a contestable evaluation process annually.
    - Applicants will complete an online application and will be evaluated by the WAV Grants Subsidy Evaluation Panel.
    - The WAV Grants Subsidy Evaluation Panel will comprise of three subject matter expert evaluators, who will evaluate grant applications and determine any grant conditions if relevant.

- **Support for applicants**
    - AT procurement staff will be available to provide advice to applicants and to answer any questions regarding eligibility or criteria.
    - Appendix 2 sets out some high-level information on the current TMS and expected future client growth.

- **Grant subsidy obligations & Payment**
    - Successful applicants will be required to:
        - Sign an AT funding agreement which will identify the approved grant subsidy value, conditions and the length of service obligation.
        - Operate the WAV within the terms imposed by the Term Service Agreement – Total Mobility Transport Operator Agreement (510-19-425 PT).
        - Provide invoice and the evidence that the WAV meets grant subsidy requirements.
        - Seek approval from AT for any potential changes to the equipment prior to spend.
        - Physically present the WAV to AT for inspection. by AT staff before it enters service, before the grant payment is released.
        - Have the vehicle that this funding has supported enter service prior to the end of the current AT financial year on 30 June.
        - Awarded grants will be paid directly to the Total Mobility operator company rather than the individual
        - Operators are also reminded about the insurance obligations contained in the main Total Mobility Transport Operator Agreement already entered by AT and the operator.
        - Awarded grants will be paid directly to the Total Mobility operator company rather than the individual

- **Length of service obligation**
  - Applicants receiving funding are expected to ensure that the funded vehicle / hoist remain in service for at least the following period:
    - New vehicles:
      - Enter a contractual obligation to provide a minimum of 8 years Total Mobility service.
    - Second hand vehicles
      - Enter a contractual obligation to provide a minimum of 5 years Total Mobility service.
  - This length of service obligation will be secured by a security interest in the Personal Property Securities Register.
  - Should the applicant wish to dispose of the vehicle / hoist prior to the expiry of the length of service obligation the funding provided:
    - Will be required to be re-paid on a pro-rata basis reflecting the unexpired length of service obligation, or
    - If the vehicle is disposed of to another Total Mobility operator and will remain operating in the Auckland region the remaining length of service obligation can be transferred to the new vehicle owner, subject to the following conditions:
      - The new vehicle owner will be required to sign an amended funding agreement imposing the remaining length of service obligation.
      - The security interest in the Personal Property Securities Register will be updated to reflect the changed vehicle ownership.

Definitions

AT	Auckland Transport
NZTA	Waka Kotahi - New Zealand Transport Agency
Primary area of operation	This is defined as the area where most of a WAV's trips are expected to be undertaken.
TMS	Total Mobility Scheme
WAV	A wheelchair accessible vehicle, where the wheelchair occupant can be transferred in and out of the vehicle in his/her wheelchair and travels in the wheelchair.
Wheelchair hoist	A powered platform which lifts the wheelchair and its occupant into and out of the vehicle.
Wheelchair ramp	A ramp that extends out of the rear of the vehicle and allows the wheelchair and occupant to be transferred in and out of the vehicle.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
All Employees and Representatives	• Adherence and compliance with this policy and related procedures.
AT Procurement Team	• Support the operation and implementation of the WAV grants process.
Director Public Transport and Active Modes.	• Approves the policy
Service Operations Manager	• Oversees the procedures in accordance with the policy
On Demand and Mobility Manager	• Manage the Grant scheme process. Forms part of the Grant Subsidy Evaluation Panel.
On Demand and Mobility Team	• Forms part of the Grant Subsidy Evaluation Panel which reviews, assesses and selects the best applications based on the policy criteria.

AT reserves the right to review, amend or add to this policy at any time upon reasonable notice to employees and operators.

Related Documents

- Term Service Agreement – Total Mobility Transport Operator Agreement (510-19-425 PT).

Related Legislation

- Land Transport Management Act 2003
- Land Transport Rule, Passenger Service Vehicles 1999.

Approval & Review

Owner	Executive General Manager Public Transport
Stakeholders for Consultation:	Group Manager Public Transport Operations Service Operations Manager Procurement Advisor (PT and Customer)

	Contract Manager – Ferry, TM & OD PT Contracts Finance Business Partner
Authorised by:	Group Manager Public Transport Operations DocuSigned by: 3196585B6AD2438...
Issue date	1/08/24
Review date	30/07/25
Approved by: **Date:**	Director Public Transport and Active Modes DocuSigned by: 059631037D23435...

APPENDIX 1 Technical specifications for vehicles, wheelchair hoists and ramps.

Auckland Transport's preference is for wheelchair hoist equipped vehicles as it believes these provide greater utility for clients and operators.

Factor	Explanation
Vehicle – general	
No funding will be available for any vehicle older than five years unless it has either an ANCAP 5-star rating or Rightcar or an UCSR (Used Car Safety Rating) 5-star Rating.	The TM Contract clause 1.b **Vehicle Age:** requires that vehicles must be no older than 15 years from date of manufacture (i.e. up to 14 years, 364 days). No Vehicle used for the provision of the TM Services may be older than 5 years old at the time it is first used to provide a TM Service. Vehicle age will be calculated from the date of manufacture or of first registration anywhere in the world, as recorded on the Certificate of Registration (or from date of manufacture if date of first registration is unknown). Vehicle age, however, is only a proxy for safety. The introduction of ANCAP, Rightcar and UCSR safety rating better assesses safety of older vehicles. Older vehicles which have ANCAP, Rightcar or UCSR 5-star ratings can be funded.
Hoist / ramp installation must comply with the requirements of the Term Service Agreement: Total Mobility Transport Operator Agreement 510-19-425-PT	The TM Contract clause 1.d **Vehicle Standards and Safety** All wheelchair hoists (and/or ramps) must be inspected and certified as safe for use, by an NZTA approved engineer of low volume vehicles, and the hoists (and/or ramps) in Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles must comply with the applicable specifications or safely regulations issued by the NZTA at all times. A Low Volume Vehicle (LVV Plate or LVV Electronic Data Plate) must be attached to the vehicle or a Certificate carried in the vehicle.
All vehicles must comply with the relevant parts of the Land Transport Rules applicable to small passenger service vehicles set out in the Land Transport Rule Passenger Service Vehicles 1999 Rule, section 8 Safety Requirements for Special Equipment.	Statutory requirement for vehicle design.

Factor	Explanation
Vehicle – design specifics	
Mandatory requirements	
Vehicles must be designed to carry a a wheelchair and occupant combined weight of at least 350kg per wheelchair the vehicle can carry.	The increasing number of power wheelchairs in use means that the combined weight of occupant and wheelchair is increasing.
Seatbelt anchorages – appropriate for the number of wheelchairs the vehicle is designed to accommodate and to cater for a wide range of wheelchair designs and types.	TM contract clause 1.e **Vehicle Standards and Safety** All clients that are transported in a wheelchair in a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle must be appropriately restrained with either a: • harness and lap belt (note a harness is not a certified restraint), or • lap and diagonal belt; as defined in the Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 10542:2009 (Parts 1 and 2). These restraints must be connected to floor-mounted anchor fittings at the front and rear of the wheelchair to restrict any forward, rearward or lateral motion of the Client.
Wheelchair tie down anchorages – appropriate for the number of wheelchairs the vehicle is designed to accommodate and to cater for a wide range of wheelchair designs and types.	Enough to allow the designated maximum number of wheelchairs (three is the maximum ever allowed) to be carried securely and for wheelchairs of a variety of sizes and styles to be accommodated, meeting manufacturer's specifications and the requirements of AS/NZS 10542.1:2015.
Wheelchair tie downs and occupant-restraint systems to comply with AS/NZS 10542.1:2015 and to be rated appropriately for the heaviest weight wheelchair carried. All tie downs are to have a minimum rating of 150kg (independently certified).	Caters for the increased weight of occupants and wheelchairs.
Seat belts for all vehicle occupants (including wheelchair occupants).	Safety of occupants in vehicle.
Head restraints for any vehicle fitted with rear seats for carer support.	Increased safety for carers travelling with TM clients.
Side doors - If only one sliding door is provided an emergency break glass exit is required on the other side of the vehicle.	Emergency exit in case of accident
Break Glass Hammer and seat belt cutter.	Assists with emergency evacuation of passenger compartment in emergency.
Preferred requirements	
Battery electric, phev or hybrid vehicle.	Supports AT's objective of de-carbonising the public transport fleet.
ANCAP Rating, Rightcar rating or UCSR Rating– Preferably a 5-star rating.	Increases the survivability for vehicle occupants in the event of an accident.

Factor	Explanation
Side doors - Preferably 'cargo' sliding doors on both sides of vehicle.	Ease of access for emergency evacuation of passengers in case of accident N.B. If side doors on both sides of vehicle, then a break glass hammer isn't required.
Rear door. Preferably barn doors at the rear.	Ease of access for loading and emergency egress.
Provision for upper seat belt anchorages for wheelchair occupants.	Allows clients to be secured in three-point seat belts. This may require support poles or can't rail to be fitted into the tracking.
Three-point seat belts for wheelchair occupants	Increases safety for clients in case of accident.
Spares availability for the hoist / ramp equipment for the maximum life span of the vehicle in the TM fleet.	Improves ability to maintain the safety of the wheelchair hoist / ramp and associated restraint systems.
First aid box.	All TM drivers are required to hold two first aid certificates. A first aid box will provide them with equipment to support that training.
Fire Extinguisher and fire blankets.	Assists with response in case of accident or emergency. Fire extinguisher to be suitable for both fuel and electrical fires.
Hoist / ramp requirements	
Mandatory requirements	
Compliance with LVVS 45-60(02) – Disability Transportation Systems, with the following enhancements:	
Wheelchair occupant weight 120KG, not 80KG in standard (Design for at least 350kg load occupant and wheelchair).	This reflects the reality that the average weight of New Zealanders is increasing. The current standard's occupant weight amount is inadequate, given the client base.
Hoist or ramp capacity to be at least 350kg.	This reflects both the increase in average client weight and the increasing prevalence of powered wheelchairs.
Wheelchair platform (for hoists) should be minimum 800 x 1280 for PSV use.	This reflects the increased size of some powered wheelchairs.
Hoist / ramp controls to be located so that the operator stands on the left-hand side of the vehicle (away from passing traffic).	This keeps the operator as far as possible from passing traffic.
Hoist handle mounted hoist control.	Must be fitted with either an interlock to the main hoist controls or a safety cover, to prevent a client accidently operating the hoist.
WAV vans - Floor track attachment system for wheelchair restraints.	The increased flexibility of attachment points over 'dome' or 'hook' attachment systems makes it easier to securely restrain differing makes, models and sizes of wheelchairs.

Factor	Explanation
WAV non van (e.g, Caddy type vehicle) – floor track or 'hook' tiedown attachment points.	System must adequately restrain a range of wheelchair designs and be easy for the driver to apply to restrain the wheelchair / occupant in the event of an incident.
Preferred requirements	
Manual mechanism (hoist pump) located on the left side rear of the Total Mobility Vehicle and access to the manual mechanism preferably to be from outside the vehicle.	This will make it easier to operate the hoist / ramp in the event of motor failure.
Winch for vehicles fitted with a wheelchair ramp.	Makes it easier to control heavier wheelchair / client combinations during loading and unloading.
Hoist capacity of 500kg or more and hoist platform designed to accommodate bariatric wheelchairs	Client and wheelchair weights continue to increase.

APPENDIX 2 Total Mobility Background Information

Auckland Transport operates its Total Mobility scheme within overarching guidance provided by Waka Kotahi (NZTA).

The scheme operates within the Auckland Council boundaries. Eligibility for the scheme is dependent on an applicant residing within the Auckland region and living with an impairment that prevents them from undertaking any one or more of the following five components of a journey unaccompanied, on a bus, train or ferry in a safe and dignified manner.

- Getting to the place from where the transport departs
- Getting onto the transport
- Riding securely
- Getting off the transport
- Getting to the destination

There are approximately 35,000 clients in the Auckland Total Mobility scheme, with some 6,000 who travel in their wheelchairs and this number is expected to increase substantially in the next decade.

Total mobility clients, range in age from intermediate school age up to 100 years plus.

A high proportion of Total Mobility clients are aged 65 plus. Auckland Transport expects a large growth in this sector of the population over the next 10 years with consequential increase in demand for wheelchair accessible vehicles in the Total Mobility scheme.

Based on the 2018 census and growth projections Auckland Transport expects to see potential client growth in the following local board areas:

*Updated estimated will not be available until early 2025

Local Board Area	**2018 Census**	**2033 projection**
Albert – Eden	9,942	19,000
Aotea Great Barrier	225	340
Devonport - Takapuna	9,426	14,500

Local Board Area	2018 Census	2033 projection
Franklin	11,295	22,800
Henderson - Massey	12,333	25,100
Hibiscus and Bays	18,357	31,600
Howick	19,086	36,400
Kaipātiki	10,143	16,500
Manurewa	7,836	15,200
Māngere – Ōtāhuhu	6,645	12,500
Maungakiekie – Tāmaki	8,115	15,500
Ōrākei	13,338	22,600
Ōtara – Papatoetoe	6,951	12,100
Papakura	6,063	11,300
Puketāpapa	7,014	12,400
Rodney	11,094	20,800
Upper Harbour	7,602	17,800
Waitematā	6,543	15,600
Whau	9,624	16,400
Waiheke	1,896	3,200
Waitākere	5,388	11,700

Appendix 3 Area of operation

Auckland Transport believes that it is unfeasible for a single WAV to service the entire Auckland region. To make assessment of applications more transparent it has loosely divided the Auckland region into the following areas:

- Warkworth
- Hibiscus Coast
- Helensville
- North Shore
- Central
- West Auckland
- East Auckland
- South Auckland
- Pukekohe
- Waiheke

Applicants will be invited to identify their primary area of operation from amongst this list. Auckland Transport expects that while a WAV may be based in one area it is probable that it will also service to a more limited extent adjacent areas.

For example, a WAV based on the North Shore will probably also service Hibiscus Coast and Central areas of Auckland, but it is unlikely that it would travel to Pukekohe for a fare.