

# Sun Van Recommendations FAQ

## Eligibility

**Q: What changes are being proposed to the Sun Van eligibility process?**

A: We are proposing to simplify the medical verification form and require applicants to submit this form along with their Sun Van eligibility application. This aims to streamline the application process and reduce processing times for Sun Van staff. This is similar to the process for receiving a disabled parking placard.

Currently, Sun Van staff needs to send the medical verification form to your medical provider which takes additional time for processing compared to the applicant completing the form in advance. We are also proposing to use a simplified form which is easier for the medical provider to complete.

**Q: How will the new eligibility process affect me?**

A: If you are applying for Sun Van services or recertifying your eligibility, you will need to submit the simplified medical verification form with your application. This should make the process quicker and more straightforward.

## Reservations

**Q: What are the proposed changes to the reservation process?**

A: Several changes are being proposed:

- **Negotiated Trip Times:** If you request a ride during peak travel times, an alternative time may be suggested to improve on-time performance.
- **Pick-Up Windows:** Pick-up window times will be provided to the minute instead of rounding to every five minutes, which can help reduce delays and improve on-time performance.
- **Reservation Limits:** Calls will be limited to no more than four reservations per call to reduce hold times.
- **Automated Updates:** Implementing voice response and/or texting options to receive updates on the status of your ride.

**Q: How will negotiated trip times work?**

A: If you request a ride during a busy period, the reservationist may suggest an alternative time to help ensure that rides are on time and the system runs more smoothly.

**Example:** If you request to be picked-up at 8:00 AM, which is one of the most requested times, the reservationist might offer 7:45 AM or 8:15 AM instead to avoid delays and ensure you reach your destination on time. You can still request to be dropped-off at a specific time, but the time you are picked-up may change from day to day based on other client rides.

### Q: Why are pick-up windows being changed to the minute?

A: Providing pick-up windows to the minute rather than rounding to every five minutes can help reduce cumulative delays throughout the day, improving overall service punctuality. By making sure clients are ready fifteen minutes before the pick-up time, the service can avoid delays.

**Example:** Instead of being told your pick-up window will be 7:45 AM to 8:15 AM for a trip scheduled at 8:03 AM, you will get an a pick-up window of 7:48 AM to 8:18 AM, which helps the system run more precisely and reduces waiting times.

### Q: What is the benefit of limiting reservations to four per call?

A: Limiting the number of reservations per call helps reduce call hold times, making it easier for everyone to get through to a reservationist during peak times. Some social service agencies currently reserve rides for multiple people over multiple days, which can tie-up a reservationist for up to 30 minutes. Sun Van will work with these agencies to identify a better process for handling large numbers of reservations such as email or calling during off-peak hours.

### Q: How will adding automated voice response and/or texting improve the service?

A: Automated voice response and texting options will allow you to receive real-time updates on your ride status without needing to talk to reservation staff, which allows them to handle other calls and improve overall efficiency. You will still have the option of talking to reservations staff if needed.

**Example:** When you call to check on the status of a ride, you will receive an automated voice response letting you know how many minutes the vehicle is away.

## Operations

### Q: What operational changes are being recommended?

A: Key operational changes include:

- **Automated Call-Outs:** Implementing voice response and/or texting options for five-minute call-outs before your ride arrives.

- **On-Board Time Standards:** Setting specific goals to ensure that less than 5% of trips take longer than their equivalent Sun Tran bus trip plus 25 minutes.
- **Temporary Service Adjustments:** Temporarily narrowing Sun Van “Optional” service to non-peak times until on-time performance and on-board time meet standards.

### Q: How will automated call-outs work?

A: You will receive an automated call or text message five minutes before your ride arrives, which will help dispatchers focus on monitoring the service.

**Example:** Instead of a dispatcher calling you personally, you will get an automated message saying, “Your ride will arrive in five minutes,” ensuring you are ready and reducing dispatcher workload.

### Q: What are the new on-board time standards?

A: The goal is to ensure that less than 5% of Sun Van trips take longer than their equivalent Sun Tran trip plus 25 minutes, improving the overall efficiency and reliability of the service. This allows for Sun Van to pick-up and drop-off other clients on the way to your destination, but makes sure that the overall trip length is within federal requirements.

**Example:** If a Sun Tran bus trip takes 30 minutes, your Sun Van trip should not take more than 55 minutes from pick-up to drop-off (30 minutes + 25 minutes), ensuring trips are timely and efficient.

### Q: Why is the optional service being temporarily adjusted?

A: Temporarily narrowing the optional service to non-peak times will help improve on-time performance and reduce delays for required ADA paratransit trips. Optional trips are same-day trips, trips provided outside of the fixed-route service area, and trips provided when the Sun Van is not in operation.

**Example:** Optional services will be available before 7:00 AM, between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM, and after 7:00 PM on weekdays, ensuring that peak times are reserved for essential ADA trips.

## New Mobility Choices Program

### Q: What is the Mobility Choices Program?

A: This pilot program would allow Sun Van clients to take same-day trips using a Transportation Network Company (such as Uber or Lyft) or with an accessible transportation provider. The program aims to offer more flexibility and convenience for clients.

### Q: What are the fare options for the New Mobility Choices Program?

A: Sun Van is considering two fare options:

- \$15 fare for trips of any length or
- \$12 fare for trips up to eight miles

Since these trips are not required to be provided and additional funding has not been identified, the fares attempt to recover the actual cost of providing the trips.

## General Questions

### Q: How can I provide feedback on these recommendations?

A: You can provide feedback by completing the Sun Van COA Draft Recommendations Survey. Your input is valuable and will help shape the final recommendations.

### Q: What happens next?

A: The final recommendations will be presented to the Tucson City Council for consideration, likely in late summer/early fall 2025.