

City of Saskatoon – Saskatoon Transit and Bus Riders of Saskatoon Meeting
Monday, April 18, 2016

4:00pm - 5:00pm
301 24th Street West

Saskatoon Transit: Corey Shrigley (Customer Support) and Mike Mollenback
(Saskatoon Transit – Operations Manager)
Bus Riders of Saskatoon: Sarina, Cam, Robert E.

AGENDA

1. Introductions

2. Questions and Discussions from Bus Riders of Saskatoon

- i. To alleviate any confusion, could Saskatoon Transit provide clarification on the intent of the “transit alerts” page? There has been no update since January even though there have been transit disruptions since (e.g. construction on Broadway Avenue).
 - They would be interactive and current
 - Website is still relatively new, and Colin and Corey are still new to their roles
 - The alerts are not really for the public (e.g. information that the carpets in the entry way are being changed)
 - They do not want to flood the site with too much information, to prevent an overload of information for users
 - Saskatoon Transit has a constraint in terms of human resources and capacity to update this
 - Bus Riders of Saskatoon thought the alerts page was a space for up-to-date information. A landing place for users to get updates on transit related information (e.g. detours or changes). But we could be under the wrong impression...
 - Saskatoon Transit response: We are not wrong.
 - Bus Riders of Saskatoon suggestion: Perhaps there should be a description of what you would find on the alerts page (e.g. long term detours, or semi permanent, but not delays of individual bus delays)
 - i.e. What to expect and what not to expect
 - **Corey to follow up with Colin for next meeting**
- ii. Follow up from March 21, 2016 meeting. The question was asked “Many cities have a bylaw, which allows buses the right of way in traffic. Saskatoon is not currently one of those cities. Could you provide clarification on why this is not a bylaw in Saskatoon? Is there any background on this topic?”
 - A challenge with bylaws is enforcement
 - Each bylaw needs a bylaw enforcement officer

- They are thinking a communications plan would be more effective (i.e. “Here’s what ‘Give a brake means””)
 - Most important thing is public information
 - Knowing the fact that you are sharing the road with buses would be more effective
 - Part of this Bus Riders of Saskatoon question is in signaling the importance of transit and that in prioritizing buses on the road makes transit a viable alternative
 - What happens when implementing high frequency routes? There will be problems if there are no teeth behind the new routes.
- iii. Pre-amble: In general, Jarrett Walker advocates for a transit network that consists of a limited number of absolutely essential, high-frequency, transit backbone lines, which are augmented by similar, perhaps mid-frequency lines, all of which are fully integrated in a mutually supportive, simple grid pattern. The main purpose of such a network is to facilitate anywhere-to-anywhere travel through one connection (transfer) at the intersection of any two suitable lines. Walker further emphasizes that the really essential transit lines in that grid pattern must be running at high frequency over a long span. Walker is quick to point out, however, that the definitions of “high-frequency”, “mid-frequency” and “long span” are not inherently fixed values. He suggests that all of these values should be locally defined, and that they are free to improve as the need arises. Walker is also quite clear that many other transit routes, including low-frequency and flex-routes based on the “coverage principle”, are quite welcome as long as they are properly integrated into the basic grid network. Finally Walker insists that a conversation and ultimately political decision is required to establish a fixed cost-split between “ridership” and “coverage”.
- Questions: Does Saskatoon Transit agree with Walker’s fundamental premises? Have long-term, annual transit budgets been set and has the ridership-coverage cost-split within that budget been set?
 - Yes, Saskatoon Transit share Jarrett Walker’s premises of coverage and frequency.
 - Jarrett Walker helped move the conversation forward in terms of Council and the public. He also helped with the wording.
 - No the budget has not been looked at in terms of what is coverage based and what is frequency based.
 - Moving forward, Council might ask those sorts of questions about the budget. But as such, the direction has not been provided yet.
 - Growing Forward will have this detailed more.
- iv. Pre-amble: Specific to Saskatoon, the public transit plan and the closely related active transportation plan, both of which are included in the Growth Plan, are envisioned for a City of half-a-million inhabitants, while Saskatoon only has about half that amount (quarter-million inhabitants) at present. It is also known that developers, before investing, require assurances of stability

and predictability in the transit network. This implies that at least the major transit lines should never be allowed to move, although they are of course quite free to evolve (through technological changes) and constantly improve (in frequency & span) as the city grows and ridership increases. Prudence thus implies that a fully laid out transit network that is closely aligned with the planned development of the city far into the future is required early on. Fiscal prudence on the other hand suggests that the full development of such a network must be carefully staged to fit the circumstances as they actually evolve. In order to keep the transit network easy to use and simple to understand by all riders while simultaneously instilling confidence in its permanence and stability, one would assume that an orderly progression in a carefully pre-planned and well-publicized network would work much better than a network evolution that requires a repeated series of disruptive reorganizations of existing lines.

- Questions: Are you envisioning any changes to your current planning and implementation practices? Has Transit already begun the planning of a comprehensive, predictable, stable and simple basic network that can evolve in a staged, pre-planned fashion as the actual need arises?
 - Saskatoon Transit wants to move forward and advance planning and put into practise the ideas coming forward (e.g. based on Growth Plan)
 - Lots of things are contingent on the approval of the Growth Plan, and waiting until approval happens. They are at a bit of a stand still until then.
 - They would like to implement things as fast as possible.
 - Some things are not being discussed right away (e.g. downtown plan) but are still within the plan for moving forward.
 - There is a lot of moving pieces to the puzzle.
 - To lay out the one year or two year plan, that would be most logical.
 - The changes are a matter of patience and things happening in the right order.
 - Saskatoon Transit has the next four years planned pretty well (Y1: 8th St, Y2: West end, Y3: College Drive)
 - The preparatory work is being done but resources are still limited.
 - Focus on 8th Street this year
 - Next few years are fundamental changes that will lead into the Growth Plan.
 - **BRS will follow up if we want elaboration**
 - BRS question: Is the planning that is being done now in line with the Growing Forward plan? (On the premise that you cannot change on the fly once we have grown to 500,000 people)
 - Saskatoon Transit is trying to prepare themselves within current resources to align with the Growth Plan, but once

- more funding or resources are allocated, then they will be able to implement more of the plan.
 - Yes, they are moving in the direction of the Growth Plan.
 - This is something that is progressed into, and cannot be a light switch that is just turned on.
- v. At the March 11, 2014 meeting, Bus Riders of Saskatoon asked about annual reports that used to be published (the last one being 2012). These reports offer the opportunity for relevant information on ridership, financial statements and such so reasonably accurate year over year comparisons can be made In 2014 it sounded like the annual reports were not going to continue. Is this the case?
 - <http://busridersofsaskatoon.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/CoS-Meeting-6-Minutes-March-11-2015.pdf>
 - Yes, another report will be published.
 - In the coming months there will be one for 2013/2014 to the SPC on Transportation.
 - The information will continued to be reported on, but it might not always be through the avenue of the annual report. Many city departments are using the dashboards on the City website.
 - Annual reports are a dated way to provide this information.
- vi. Is Saskatoon Transit considering revising their route maps so that they clearly demonstrate frequency? We noticed the colour coded map attached to the 8th street initiative report to the SPC on Transportation to easily convey frequency. We realize this would mean an increase in printing costs, but is the incremental cost something attainable within existing resources? Or would this require additional resources?
 - Yes, Saskatoon Transit is considering it.
 - The delivery is not decided yet (e.g. online, printed materials, signage in the bus mall).
 - Frequency map is a useful tool to depict the whole network.
- vii. We are curious about the proposed purchase of an accessible supervisor van. It is not that we disagree, but rather are interested in the intended purpose(s) and how deploying this type of vehicle will improve service.
 - Supervisor vans are used to pick up users that are not able to use the bus (e.g. both wheelchair spaces are being used). The current supervisor vans are not wheelchair accessible, and these ones are.
 - Saskatoon Transit has a goal of a fully accessible fleet, but is not there yet.
 - By 2018 fully accessible.
 - By 2019 fully air conditioned.
 - These dates need to be confirmed.
 - Based on the 10 new buses annually.
 - It also provides safety relief for some users.
- viii. Council authorized the purchase of 10 new buses in the fall of 2014 (to take advantage of an open tender that was about to close). Those were the buses

delivered spring/early summer 2015. If memory serves well, council authorized the purchase of another 10 last year (spring-ish), when did tender go out for those and when is the expected delivery?

- The tender went out for 2015 buses already.
 - Not sure of the 2015 bus delivery. Probably late summer/early fall.
 - **Mike will follow up with Paul about the timeline.**
 - There was a new tender bus out in 2016 for 2017.
 - It is a one year build cycle (i.e. after receiving funding for buses, the process for ordering, building the bus and receiving it takes about one year).
- ix. Given the length of the agendas for the SPC on Transportation (or any other SPC and Council), would Saskatoon Transit consider posting any transit related reports etc. on their website as stand-alone documents? This could be done after the full agendas are posted, but before the meeting.
- Potentially. They need to figure out logistics of what can go on the website.
 - **Mike and Corey will follow up next meeting with Colin.**
 - This question comes from an accessibility, ease of access and transparency perspective for users.

3. Update on #YXE Let's Talk

- Saskatoon Transit thanks Bus Riders of Saskatoon for our work in this event.
- Saskatoon Transit is open and excited to see what is coming forward from this process.
- Public input received through this process is different than City consultations.
- It is appreciated that Bus Riders of Saskatoon put this work in.
- Next step: #YXE Let's Talk Committee is meeting with the consultants tomorrow and will follow up to meet to discuss further details.
 - **Cameron will follow up after the committee meeting with Colin**
 - To clarify what Bus Riders of Saskatoon's expectations are in terms of delivery data and following up.

4. Update on new Bus Riders of Saskatoon contact for Saskatoon Transit meetings

- Cameron will replace Sarina as the designated monthly person with Saskatoon Transit meetings
- **Sarina will officially connect Cameron and Colin through email.**

5. Additional items

- In the process of having someone take over the Twitter account for Saskatoon Transit. Tom Simpson used to run the Twitter account.
 - Tony Vogalson has replaced Tom Simpson.
- Saskatoon Transit likes the table style of discussion in these meetings. Questions (agenda) in advance are appreciated.

6. Next meeting:

- Change time to: Friday, May 20, 2016 at 4:00pm – 5:00pm
- **Cameron will confirm Colin via email.**

7. Adjournment