

Minutes for BRS-Transit meeting

Date: Friday, October 20, 2017 at 3:30-4:50PM
Location: Committee Room B at City Hall
Present: Corey Shrigley, Allison Gray from Transit; Peter Gallén, Robert Clipperton, Stephan Simon from BRS.

FOLLOW-UPS

- 1) HDR Corporation (HDR) design contract.
 - a) Transit informed us that HDR's design project is divided into two parts: this year is spent on the BRT, while the design of the entire transit network will occur next year.
 - b) Engagement on the project will start with an announcement on Monday, October 23.
 - c) BRS and Transit agreed that organizations within the City's Active Transportation Advisory Group (ATAG) might provide a suitable group for consultation with HDR on the new transit network; BRS provided Transit with ATAG's contact information.
 - d) BRS emphasized that their participants in the consultation with HDR would be particularly interested in discussing transit concepts and 'big picture' issues as well as evolution of the new transit network over time within a financially realistic framework.
 - e) BRS expressed a continued interest in the key people involved in the design project; Transit promised to facilitate a list (name, department, position; committee) by email.
- 2) Budget:
 - a) It was noted that the preliminary 2018 City Budget was published this month.
 - b) Transit indicated that they had severely restricted their requests for additional funding:
 - i) Increases in the Operating Budget would be entirely financed through internal savings, which contrary to previous practise Transit was now allowed to keep.

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- ii) Additional funding was only asked for Capital Projects that have already been approved for PTIF funding from the Federal Government.
- 3) Update on Lost & Found policy and procedures:
- a) BRS received a draft of the new policy; any comments to be provided directly to Allison.
- 4) Update on Website initiatives: Alerts, PSAs, News:
- a) BRS was pleased to hear that Transit is exploring opportunities to be included in general Alerts/PSAs from the City.
 - b) BRS noted that the City's online map on 'Road Restrictions and Construction' might provide an additional platform for some Transit Alerts; the interactive map is available at: <http://apps2.saskatoon.ca/app/aRRCP/>.
- 5) Silverspring/Evergreen service – Route 28 interaction with routes 40/45 and 4:
- a) BRS hoped that shorter travel times through better transfers could be obtained from this part of the City when Fedoruk Drive opens to traffic (see item 8 in the September minutes for details). Transit promised to refer the issue to staff for consideration.
- 6) High-school students (Grade 9-12) on transit:
- a) In response to previous concerns from BRS, Transit has done extensive upgrades to information pertaining to Students and others in the Fare-section of their website.
- 7) Bus stops: Last meeting BRS provided Transit with an example where there might be a discrepancy between the bus stop numbers shown in Google Transit and those shown on the stops themselves. Transit indicated that they were aware of instances where two bus stops with different numbers are located very close together. Transit also indicated that a lot of Open Data had been cleaned up earlier in the year. Transit promised to mention the issue to staff.

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NEW ITEMS

1) Our Concerns:

- a) Transit services to Civic and Public Buildings such as schools, hospitals, museums, libraries, leisure centres, etc.
 - i) BRS indicated that this is one of the topics we would like to take up with HDR.
 - ii) BRS suggested that as a general principle Transit should provide the required access to all civic and public buildings by replacing the current practise of dedicated school buses, hospital shuttles, mall shuttles, and other single-purpose services with higher frequencies on the impacted regular transit routes if necessary; regular routes may also need better routing in order to provide adequate service, especially for riders with special needs.
 - iii) BRS suggested that route #15 (in addition to route #1) might be useful in accessing Western Development Museum (WDM), and that WDM should be included in the website section on 'Popular Destinations'.
- b) Bus idling:
 - i) BRS provided Transit with a copy of a new City initiative to reduce idling.
 - ii) BRS indicated that the noise level and air quality as a result of idling buses at the Downtown Terminal is offensive and detrimental to health and that other jurisdictions have had no problem in implementing severe idling restrictions.
 - iii) BRS also suggested that Transit might want to take advantage of implementing their own actions well before being mandated by others to do so.

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2) Initiatives undertaken by Transit:

c) Tourism Saskatoon:

- i) Transit has been in contact with Tourism Saskatoon to make them aware of opportunities to use Transit for travel to a variety of attractions in Saskatoon.
- ii) BRS suggested that Tourism staff might benefit from a Train-the-Trainer session.
- iii) The 'Popular Destinations'-section on Transit's website is most helpful, although it was noted that the information is currently incomplete and not up-to-date.
- iv) BRS mentioned that information on Transit connections to inter-city travel providers would be most helpful in the 'Popular Destinations'-section; Transit noted, however, that keeping track of who these service providers are, how to contact them and knowing where they provide passenger pick-ups/drop-offs is challenging since they change so frequently without any warning.

d) Train-the-Rider and Train-the-Trainer programs:

- i) BRS received a report on the pilot program undertaken this Fall; the program will continue next Spring.
- ii) Four sessions were successfully completed out of eight originally offered; 23 trainees attended with some sessions using the assistance of an interpreter for non-English speaking attendees; community organizations providing ordinary riders as well as future trainers for the sessions included ABI Outreach, SCOA and Open Door Society.
- iii) It was observed that the training of riders should be kept relatively short and should be tailored to the individual needs of each participant; Trip Planning was a very important part of the program and proved to be more time-consuming than initially anticipated; the materials used were good, but may include more visuals in the future.
- iv) BRS was encouraged by Transit to approach Saskatoon Public Library regarding the subject of providing Training-the-Rider services at the library.

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- e) Ongoing Website-review:
 - i) Numerous updates to website texts have already been done and continue to be done on an ongoing basis; any comments should go directly to Allison.
 - ii) Structural changes to the website are also in the works, but they are more time-consuming.

- 3) Suggestions from Transit to BRS:
 - f) Transit was interested in recruiting volunteers from the BRS membership to become Trainers or Companions for insecure or first-time riders. Training and background checks would be provided by Transit. BRS promised to advertise the request on our Facebook page.

- 4) Best Practices:
 - g) BRS is aware that Transit has embarked on a series of 'Best Practices' initiatives and expressed an interest in examining each initiative in more detail with Transit at our future meetings. The CUTA-document 'Integrated Mobility: Implementation Toolbox', which is available for download from their website, could guide such discussions.
 - h) BRS expressed a concern that the current bus shelters might not accommodate wheel chairs and wondered if there are any Best Practices designs for them. BRS also wondered why each city seems to design their bus shelters from scratch. Transit responded that not just bus shelters but the typological design of entire bus stops were part of HDR's mandate.

- 5) Terminology:
 - i) BRS expressed an interest in the dictionary of terms, definitions and acronyms that Transit uses.
 - j) Transit indicated that they do not really have one but agreed that a common dictionary would be helpful. Some examples were mentioned and it was immediately noted that a variety of perspectives will come into play. It was suggested that a list of terms from CUTA might be a good starting point.

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6) Workshops:

- k) BRS wondered if Transit would be willing to engage small groups of BRS members, say twice a year, in a series of 'workshops' where transit staff would explore topics of mutual interest that require more time than our regular monthly meetings; perhaps such sessions would be beneficial for a variety of Transit and City staff?

NEXT MEETING: Friday, 24 November 2017, 3:30 – 4:30 pm (date, time and place to be confirmed later)