

## Minutes for BRS-Transit meeting on Friday, 29 September 2017 at 3:30-5:00PM

Location: Committee Room B at City Hall

Present: Corey Shrigley and Allison Gray from Transit; Peter Gallén from BRS.

BRS regretted that their contingent was smaller than usual; other potential participants having concurrent engagements and work obligations. This spurred a short discussion about BRS's membership. BRS consists of three distinct groups of members: i) very small group of quite active members, who show up to our working groups and monthly meeting, act as media representatives, web administrators, meeting convenors, contacts to Saskatoon Transit and other functions generally performed by an Executive (which we deliberately do not have); ii) 845 approved and registered members on our Facebook page, which in conjunction with our website acts as our main form of communication and general discussion; and iii) a significant number of members who actively comment on our Fb-page, but despite invitations to do so, otherwise do not join in our ongoing activities. BRS assured Transit that our intent is still to provide one permanent convenor and two rotating members at these meetings with Transit, which we value very much. BRS indicated that early confirmation of the date and time of the next meeting might allow more of our busiest members to make arrangements to attend.

### FOLLOW-UPS

- 1) Inter-modal Transit Terminal: BRS is interested in Transit's view of a common Intermodal Transit Terminal for local, regional and inter-city transit services – the current situation; the concept; feasibility & leadership; location & features; potential timelines:
  - a. BRS indicated that the closing of STC's intra-provincial bus services and depots and the subsequently complicated access to still existing and new intra-provincial and inter-provincial bus services has been the focus of considerable attention on our FB-page.
  - b. Current situation:
    - i. STC's Bus Depot on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street closes at the end of this month and has been put up for sale. Transit indicated that their Director, in response to Councillor inquiries, provided a statement to the media. Transit also reiterated that they have no use for the STC building nor the site. BRS concurred that the STC depot was quite distant from good transit connections.
    - ii. It was noted at the meeting that existing Transit routes might already provide a connection to the widely dispersed pick-up/drop-off points of the current intra-provincial and inter-provincial private bus services. BRS pointed out that this fact is not well known and that the Transit routes that provide such connections might be clearly identified and perhaps advertised.
  - c. Concept, leadership, location & timelines:
    - i. Transit is interested in the concept, but is not at this time initiating a centrally located, Transit-operated Intermodal Terminal. The proposed Transit Villages, which are currently being designed by a consultant, might act as such terminals, especially towards nearby commuter communities.
    - ii. Transit indicated that they are particularly interested in solutions pertaining to what is called the first/last mile issue, especially with regard to the north-end

industrial area. BRS pointed out that for any Saskatoon resident or visitor without a car, Saskatoon Transit as a whole is an absolutely crucial 'first/last mile provider' for those traveling outside the city.

- d. Features & amenities: some amenities have been featured in previous minutes.
- 2) HDR Corporation (HDRC) design contract.
    - a. Update on the project:
      - i. The City has formed several project groups and appointed a project manager while HDRC has a project manager that visits Saskatoon regularly with pertinent people from their office. BRS expressed an interest in the key people involved in the project; Transit promised to facilitate a list of participants by email.
      - ii. HDRC has already employed their own data collection systems onboard a Transit bus operated by a regular driver along the 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street corridors in rush-hour and outside rush-hour.
      - iii. Transit has provided HDRC with bus stop locations and ridership statistics.
    - b. HDRC's mandate: BRS was pleased to receive from Transit the Request For Proposal (RFP) for the detailed design of the Bus Rapid Transit and Regular Transit Networks.
    - c. Engagement:
      - i. Engagement with the public is part of the BRT and Transit Network Planning project. Initiatives in this regard for the general public are to be expected in October.
      - ii. BRS is grateful to Transit for recommending us to be consulted on this project. Our team is looking forward to a lively discussion with HDRC and City staff and await notice by email from Transit when that might take place.
  - 3) Late-night service trial:
    - a. Transit has not yet pursued our idea – first expressed at the August meeting – about providing a late night Transit trial service on a few Friday and Saturday nights in December during peak Christmas party season in order to reduce drunk driving.
    - b. Transit is now in a position to conduct preliminary costing of any new bus route using their licensed access to the online Remix-application. However, before any route can be contemplated, funding must also be identified and approved.
    - c. Transit indicated that they will receive funding as usual from SGI for the late-night so-called 'Ding-Ding' service on New Year's Eve.
  - 4) Budget: BRS was interested in receiving notice from Transit when and where the Transit-portion of the 2018 (preliminary) budget will be publicly available for the first time.
  - 5) Update on Lost & Found policy and procedures:
    - a. The update is completed, but not yet implemented.
    - b. BRS expressed an interest in reviewing the text before it appears on Transit's website.
  - 6) Update on Website initiatives: Alerts, PSAs, News:
    - a. The update is essentially completed, but Transit noted that not all policies and procedures are released to the public.
    - b. BRS clarified that we were interested in reviewing the published explanations as they will appear on Transit's website and/or elsewhere. BRS is particularly interested in

ensuring that ordinary transit riders will be able to understand what differentiates each type of message and how each type of message will be distributed to the public. We also noted that a large portion of the ridership is not yet conversant in social media.

- 7) Fare Review: Transit informed us that the Fare Review report is complete and will be presented to Council in November.

#### **NEW ITEMS**

- 8) Silverspring/Evergreen service – Route 28 interaction with routes 40/45 and 4:
  - a. BRS noted that transfer from #28 to #40 at Berini Drive no longer seems to work in the 2017 schedule and that a longish wait for #45 is required, which has shown up as a concern on our Fb-page. As an example of the effect on riders in Silverspring, BRS noted that it is now faster to ride #40 from Rever/Fairbrother all around Evergreen to the Downtown in order to make a meeting at 3:00 pm than to take #28 for a transfer to #40/45 at Berini.
  - b. BRS noted that #28 takes an alternate route in the afternoons along Attridge Drive, Central Avenue and 115<sup>th</sup> Street to Berini; however, there seems to be no provision for transfers to/from #4 at Reid/Rossmo (Customer Service has indicated that #28 makes no stops along this detour).
  - c. BRS noted that the #28 schedule-map indicates a ‘Future Route’ along Fedoruk Drive. BRS was pleased to find out that Transit intends to reroute #28 along this ‘future route’ as soon as this portion of road is opened to traffic. Hopefully that route change will alleviate some of the concerns expressed here.
  - d. BRS also took the opportunity to use the #28 schedule and map as an example to make a few suggestions that might make ALL paper schedules more user-friendly:
    - i. BRS suggested that the insertion of bus stop numbers (which are clearly visible on the map-portion of the schedule) into the schedule columns (which currently only list street intersections) might make the entire document more readable.
    - ii. BRS pointed out that some street names mentioned in the schedule were not visible on the map.
    - iii. BRS suggested as a general rule that intersections where transfers might be possible should always be listed in the schedules; these same locations could also be highlighted, perhaps with a black dot, on the maps for improved visibility (e.g., in regard to routes #28/40/45/4, the transfer-points at Rossmo/Central and Berini also need to be highlighted – in addition to Manek). In order to improve the opportunities for transfer, these same locations might also be particularly suited for time adjustments on the routes.
  - e. Transit indicated that all these issues would be referred to staff for consideration.
- 9) Bus stops: 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 promised to investigate.

10) High-school students (Grade 9-12) on transit:

- a. BRS indicated that a lot of concern were expressed this fall on our Fb-page with regard to the so-called High-School Routes. Transit took this opportunity to clarify a number of issues related to these routes and high-school students on transit in general.
- b. First, Transit assured that the 'High-School Routes' are treated as regular routes in that they are open to ALL TRANSIT RIDERS and that ordinary FARES apply all around. Like other 'specials', such as University Routes and various Direct Routes, the sole purpose of them is to provide additional capacity and shorter travel times to their destinations.
- c. As shown on Transit's website, High-School Students (like Post-Secondary Students, Seniors and Child-Elementary School Students) enjoy rebates in their fares. The steep rebates on High-School-Student fares have had the unfortunate side-effect that riders not entitled to these particular rebates make frequent attempts to access them anyway.
- d. All riders should be aware that none of the Student-categories (e.g., High-School, Post-Secondary, University) that enjoy rebated transit fares is dependent on the student's age – obtaining the rebate is solely dependent on the student i) being properly registered as a legitimate Student in an approved educational institution, and ii) the student therefore being issued a Student-ID. It should be noted that these seasonally validated Student photo-IDs are issued by the educational institution – not Transit.
- e. Due to the frequent misuse of rebated fares for High-School-Students, Transit has been forced to ALWAYS require proper Student-ID from all legitimate High-School Students who want to claim the rebated fare. The enforcement of this rule takes two forms: i) Student-ID is required when purchasing/reloading a Student GoPass, and ii) Student-ID is required, together with the Student GoPass or rebated cash ticket, when boarding the bus. Transit regrets this inconvenience to legitimate riders.
- f. Transit is aware of the difficulties High-School Students have in obtaining Student-ID at the beginning of the semester and is working with the school boards to find a remedy for the situation.
- g. Finally, Transit made it clear that any rider is welcome on all transit routes upon payment of valid ADULT fare (cash or GoPass) – typically no questions asked, unless exhibiting unacceptable behaviour. Students, seniors, children and others that are unable to show valid Photo-ID upon boarding and might thus be refused a discounted fare by the operator can always ride the transit bus by paying the adult fare.

- 11) Frequency & Span: Better week-end and evening service remain a priority with Transit, but substantially increased funds from Council will be required to implement such improvements. Transit also recognizes that Council is under severe fiscal pressure in the upcoming budget.

**NEXT MEETING:** Friday, 20 October 2017, 3:30 – 4:30 pm.