

## **Minutes for BRS-Transit meeting on Friday, 18 August 2017 at 3:30-5:00PM**

Location: Mystic Java at 8<sup>th</sup> Street and McKercher Drive

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

- 1) Communications Consultant:
  - a. Transit's vacancy for the position of Communications Consultant has very recently been filled by Allison Gray.
  - b. Allison comes originally from La Ronge, Saskatchewan, but has lived in Saskatoon for a while. BRS was pleased to learn that she takes transit in the City and thus learns first-hand what it feels like to be a Transit-user.
- 2) Transit Planning: BRS asked for ways to interact with the City's recently hired transit consultant, HDR Corporation (HDRC).
  - a. Transit responded that Jim McDonald, Transit Director, and Corey Shrigley, Customer Support and Engagement Manager, are Transit's members on a City committee called Bus Rapid Transit Advisory Committee (BRTAC), which will interact with HDRC.
  - b. Transit also acknowledged that BRS is a part of the community that needs to be involved in early consultations with HDRC and indicated their support for us to participate.
- 3) Advertising: BRS has noticed with interest Transit's ads and pop-ups.
  - a. Transit responded that this is the soft launch of Transit's new brand that has been in the works for quite some time; thus these advertisements always include Transit's new logo and colours.
  - b. BRS hoped to see the new brand on prominent posters at each vendor, and also on a whole series of other useful messages over an extended period in order to keep positive Transit messages constantly in the public's mind.
- 4) Late-night service trial: BRS would like to propose an experiment to be conducted already this December in which Transit would provide late-night service on particular Friday-Saturday nights (i.e., about 8 nights in the upcoming heavy party season).
  - a. Transit replied that they already provide late night service on certain nights every year, but was interested in exploring this idea further.
  - b. BRS suggested that special night routes, perhaps becoming permanent in the not too distant future, could be designed to reach each corner of the City and that data be collected on their need and usefulness.
  - c. BRS also suggested that bar-tenders could be informed and provided with schedules and routes so that they could direct their clients to the appropriate night bus.

### **FOLLOW-UPS**

- 5) 2018 Budget: Is Transit or Council requesting/suggesting any changes to Transit fees in 2018?
  - a. Transit responded that the Fare Review has been completed, but has not yet been released to the public. Major changes to fares are not anticipated in this budget.
  - b. BRS mentioned that paying the currently high child's fares even for a few children will add substantially to a family's cost of taking Transit on a return trip, thus actually providing an incentive for families to purchase a motor vehicle; this is unfortunate,

because these children could so easily have become accustomed to Transit since childhood and then automatically transform into its future paying clients.

6) Website initiatives:

- a. Is the vendor list and vendor map now up-to-date?
  - i. Transit responded that the vendor list is up to date and the vendor map and list are linked to each other; the information is identical in both.
  - ii. BRS pointed out that in certain cases there is no way to access/see the vendor map from the vendor list. Transit responded that they already have a simple remedy in mind.
- b. In response to on-going hiccups, BRS would like to suggest Alerts, PSAs, News as the next topic.
  - i. Transit agreed that this item needs attention and has already initiated action. All supervisors (who are the people usually posting them) already have computers to do the postings, but some further staff training may be required; more importantly, the appropriate use of each particular category may require some clarification.
  - ii. BRS mentioned that an explanation of each type of message on Transit's website would be useful for the riders.
  - iii. BRS also pointed out that information regularly sent out by the Transportation Department only targets motorists and does not include detour advice for other participants in the transportation system like pedestrians, cyclists and transit users. BRS found this unacceptable. Finally BRS mentioned that if transit was mentioned in each PSA and News Release targeted to motorists, it would in effect act as free advertising of Transit and AT to motorists.

7) What is the status of the new Business Intelligence software, i.e., has it been purchased, is it up and running, is someone actively loading the necessary data, and can Transit already make queries with it?

- a. Transit clarified that the Business Intelligence software package (BI) is a huge undertaking by the City's Corporate Performance Department and involves all City departments. The new software will, when fully implemented, act as a 'Dashboard' to all City data. BI is probably at least 6 months in the future.
- b. However, Transit has already been cleaning up its own databases in anticipation of BI, and is also in the middle of upgrading its own software, Trapeze, from Version 13 to Version 16.

8) Lost&Found Policy and Procedures were found wanting at our last meeting: remedy time-line?

- a. Transit acknowledged the need to update the policy, procedures and website information for Lost & Found.
- b. Consideration will be given to assigning this item to the newly appointed Communications Consultant.

- 9) Downtown Terminal: Please provide Transit's view on BRS's suggestions at July-meeting.
  - a. Transit has not yet considered this item.
- 10) BRS remains interested in ball-park transit-service costs:
  - c. How many ticket-paying passengers per hour per bus are required for break-even?
    - i. Transit responded that they currently use \$93 as the cost to provide one unsubsidized service hour on one bus.
    - ii. In order to provide a very rough estimate, BRS suggested dividing the '\$93 cost per service hour' with the '\$2.50 cost of one adult standard ticket' to calculate that every bus on a route needs to board about 37 paying, unsubsidized, new riders every hour in order to break even.
  - d. What is the break-down of hourly costs to run a bus: fleet, driver, maintenance, fuel?
    - i. Transit will attempt to provide the information if readily available.
- 11) Train-the-Trainer: current status
  - a. Transit informed us that they have already run a successful training session with the Acquired Brain Injury Association, where staff has now acquired some skills to provide transit training for their own clients.
  - b. An extended family of New Canadians with children has signed up for another session, where an additional challenge for the trainers will be the clients' total lack of English, so a translator will be involved in the two-way conversations.
  - c. Transit invited members of BRS to sign up and participate as well.

**NEXT MEETING:** Friday, 29 September 2017 at 4:00 pm (tentative date & time, to be confirmed later)