

Minutes for BRS-Transit meeting
Monday, 24 September 2018 @ 3:30-4:40PM

Location: Committee Room B at City Hall

Present: Cory Shrigley, Allison Gray from Transit; Peter Gallén, Curtis McCoshen, Lila Wagner from BRS.

FOLLOW-UPS

- 1) Persistent problems with Routes 11 & 12:
 - a. BRS reiterated the three main concerns we had heard from our members:
 - i. Missed transfers due to bus arriving late (mainly at the Downtown Terminal).
 - ii. Employees at Cosmo Industries now have a much longer wait at quitting time and the bus arrives significantly later than indicated in the schedule.
 - iii. Riders from the NE-sector of Saskatoon that work in Mayfair have significantly increased total travel time in each direction compared to the old routes (#40/45 to Downtown plus the old #4/#12 on the west side).
 - b. Transit responded by noting that the new route #11 has stayed on schedule each morning, but increasing deterioration in service has occurred throughout the day especially after each operator change.
 - c. Transit informed us that two changes will be made shortly: the Airport departure will be tweaked and the route will move from 2nd to 3rd Avenue during week-day rush hour.
 - d. BRS observed that now that operational problems seem to get resolved, service levels to and from work in the areas covered by routes #11 and #12 still require attention.
- 2) HDR-project:
 - a. Myths: BRS will get responses to our questions shortly from the Growth Plan Team.
 - b. Consultations & Schedule:
 - i. BIDS will meet with the Growth Plan Team on September 28, 2018 to confirm that City administration understands their questions in order to ensure that they will be answered.

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- ii. Pop-up consultations with other stakeholders will take place in mid-October; stay tuned for more information.
- iii. The Governance and Priorities Committee will be informed on October 15, 2018.
- iv. Community engagement will take place throughout October/November.
- v. The issues will go to Council for final decision in January 2019.

NEW ITEMS

3) Overfull Buses:

a. Definitions used here:

- i. A bus is crowded when there is standing room only.
- ii. A bus is full when there is no more room on the bus and standing riders extend all the way to the yellow line located immediately behind the operator.
- iii. A bus is packed when standing riders extend past the yellow line located immediately behind the operator; it is illegal to drive when this is the case.
- iv. A bus is overcrowded when riders are prevented from boarding a full bus and are left stranded on a bus stop.

b. Crowded and overcrowded buses:

- i. Annual event: Every year when high-schools, university and other post-secondary institutions begin their fall term in early September Transit riders are faced with crowded and even overcrowded buses. Although fully anticipating and carefully preparing for this annual event the remedy is not simple because the initial pattern of overcrowding is different from year to year!
- ii. The real concern: It is important for riders to be aware that crowded buses are the norm on many popular routes especially during morning and afternoon rush-hours. Economic realities dictate that even full buses are to be expected at certain times, while packed buses are not allowed

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by law. However, although crowding is regrettable, real concerns only emerge when a bus is overcrowded!

- iii. Choice of remedies: Transit has considered three methods to handle over-crowding, namely running a more frequent, regular scheduled service; providing a larger bus; and strategically inserting an additional, so-called overflow bus.
 - 1. Frequent Regular Service: The method preferred by Transit to deal with crowded, full and overcrowded buses on high-volume routes is to provide sufficiently frequent service. While standard bus intervals are currently 30 minutes, typical headways on these higher-frequency routes are 15, 10 or occasionally 7.5 minutes, which significantly shortens the wait time for the next available bus. Frequent service is also better able to handle swings in ridership, where a particular bus may be overcrowded one day, but the preceding, subsequent or entirely different bus runs full or overcrowded on the next day.
 - 2. Articulated bus: By observing actual traffic patterns, Transit redeploys their articulated buses as needed. This is a viable method to handle overcrowding on particular low-frequency routes.
 - 3. Overflow Bus: It should be noted that Transit has no extra buses sitting idle in rush-hour to be used as overflow buses; all available buses are already in scheduled use and would have to be cancelled from one route in order to act as overflow on another.

- iv. Future remedies:
 - 1. Intelligent Transportation Management System (ITMS):
 - a. Trapeze Transit Master was recently purchased to become the new ITMS for Transit. The software and management console have now been installed and training on the new system is underway. The first 5 buses will receive the new system in October, and the rest of the fleet (excluding the very oldest buses) will be equipped in November of this year.

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b. Improved features of the new ITMS are for example that an operator can notify traffic control by the press of a button that the bus is full, which automatically provides a record of route, exact location, direction of travel and time-of-day. Traffic control will also have increased capabilities to redirect buses as needed to avoid congestion, traffic accidents and other irregularities. When the new ITMS is fully implemented across the fleet, there might be realistic opportunities to 'surgically' insert an overflow bus when and where needed.

2. Automated Door Counters (ATC):

a. All new buses will be equipped with Automated Door Counters, which keep track of passengers entering and exiting the bus. The result is much more accurate passenger counts plus the exact location and time-of-day that they occur. This information can then be used to determine precisely when and where buses tend to become full and where the excess load eases.

v. Overcrowded routes:

1. BRS expressed a desire for some route-specific information about 'potential' problems to be available for riders ahead of time, so that individual riders might have the opportunity to at least be aware of a potential delay, or even avoid the overcrowded route all together. As the former transportation commissioner in New York City, 'Gridlock Sam' Schwartz, has observed, relevant information is the most critical service that transit riders require to make their daily travel decisions.

4) Bus Stops:

- a. The long-awaited bus stop inventory has now been completed.
- b. Attridge/Rever: the cross-walk will be painted and sidewalks to both shelters will be installed this fall (construction to start October 12); snow-clearing has been arranged for this winter.

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- c. The new stop on 8th Street in front of Co-op Hardware is muddy; Transit will look into it.
 - d. BRS wondered why routes 60+ and 4+ outbound to University from the Downtown Terminal depart from different stops, which makes it difficult for riders to determine which bus will leave next (especially critical when buses are crowded).
- 5) Transit App:
- a. BRS informed Transit that riders have experienced a variety of difficulties with the recently introduced Version 5 of the third-party app called “Transit”, which Saskatoon Transit promotes.
 - b. Transit has not noted any inherent problems with the new version and attributed most of the difficulties to user error (e.g., incorrect personal settings). BRS reiterated our frustration that good help is not readily available for Transit-app (online or otherwise).
 - c. Transit also informed us that the recent lack of next-bus-information in the Transit-app, which coincided with the introduction of the new app version, was caused by Saskatoon Transit’s internal data feed problems.
- 6) Paper/pdf-schedules:
- a. BRS noted that a master list of route schedules/maps has now been created on Transit’s website, which makes it easier for riders to get an overall sense of all available routes.

HEADS-UP

- 7) Detours: no response yet from Cory Funk, COS Transportation Department

NOTICES/CONCERNS/SUGGESTIONS FROM TRANSIT

- 8) Bus shelters:
 - a. Public announcement will appear on Wednesday, September 26, 2018, regarding the student-designed, laser-cut, Metis-themed new shelter on Clarence Avenue in front of Aden Bowman Collegiate.

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- b. BRS promised to post on our FB-page the new shelter on 22nd/Ave. C, which was built by Transit with excellent cooperation from the land owner.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 22 October 2018, 3:30 – 4:30 pm at City Hall