

**Bus Riders of Saskatoon**  
**Meeting with City of Saskatoon Utility Services Department**  
**December 10, 2014**

4:00pm - 5:00pm

301 - 24th Street West, Saskatoon

Bus Riders of Saskatoon Members: Sarina, Cameron, Samuel

City of Saskatoon Representatives: Alysha Hille, Bob Howe, Cal McPhail

Minutes taken by: Samuel

**Questions from Bus Riders of Saskatoon (On Agenda)**

1. Can you clarify the strategy for bus shelters? (Answered by Alysha and Bob.)

- Capital cost for standard (non-heated) shelter is approximately \$15-20,000. Of this, \$10,000 is for the shelter; the rest depends on excavation and foundation requirements.
- The department is investigating heated shelters, and has been in communication with transit departments in other cities. Examples given: Winnipeg recently finished a study on heated shelters. Quebec City has a funding partnership with a university to provide heated shelters.
- There is a dedicated capital funding plan which can only be used for bus shelters. The amount is \$200,000 per year for 3 years. This allocation is re-evaluated by Council each year.
- There are also "advertising shelters" and "advertising benches" which are constructed and operated by a third party, and generate extra revenue for transit.
- The total number of bus shelters in Saskatoon is currently 167, plus 39 "advertising shelters".
- The total number of bus stops in the city is approximately 1300.
- Construction of new shelters will begin in the spring.
- Vandalism is a problem, particularly for glass shelters. The city is beginning to replace some glass with perforated aluminum, which maintains visibility while resisting breakage and graffiti.
- The construction of shelters also depends on available space at a bus stop. Will not usually be placed on private land.

2. Can you clarify what happens to the data when someone submits a comment online with such things as individual complaints about particular routes and schedules? (Answered by Alysha.)

- The "contact us" form does come to transit directly. Comments and complaints are forward to the appropriate department, and the policy is to reply within 48 hours.
- Changes to routes often cannot be made quickly. Usually must wait till July 1 to make any annual major changes. However, slight adjustments are made continually to adapt to trends in ridership.

3. Please provide specific bylaw reference with respect to the prohibition of distributing flyers.  
(Answered by Alysha.)

- This is covered by the "Street Use By-Law," which is #2954 ([link](#)), enacted in 1946.
- A bus is not a public place, and no groups are permitted to distribute flyers or engage in solicitation in a bus. This rule will be enforced.
- Technically, the downtown bus mall is also not a public place, and so similar rules apply. However, transit usually does not enforce this rule, so long as activities are not a nuisance to passengers.

4. Is the taxi policy made public? I.E. if a bus is not accessible and cannot accommodate a rider?  
(Answered by Alysha)

- The policy is not made public on the website. It is rarely required. In cases when a taxi must be called for a rider, a transit supervisor will come and ensure that the person has been picked up, or that another bus is sent.
- The taxi policy does not apply to strollers.
- A driver cannot order a rider to make way for someone in a wheelchair.
- Drivers will often get out of a bus and help strollers on, if they can safely do so, and so long as there is sufficient room in the bus.

**Other Questions (not on agenda):**

5. Any intention to begin a marketing campaign to attract more ridership? Example of Edmonton Transit's branding campaign - "The Every Day Way." (Answered by Alysha.)

- It was important to improve and clarify internal communications and operation before beginning on an external marketing campaign. It must be possible to deliver on promises before working on branding.
- Transit is moving in this direction. Alysha's position of Marketing Manager did not exist until two years ago. An external campaign is planned to begin next year.

6. Use of benches only vs. added cost of shelters? (Answered by Bob.)

- Both are being considered. There are other possible designs, such as unenclosed 'windbreak' shelters.
- Some people complain about being unable to use benches in inclement weather. Designing them to shed water and snow is critical.

## Further Discussion:

### 7. Clarification on Routes and Transfer Times (Bob):

- Routes are calculated based on transfer times of 3 minutes. Normally, this is enough. It is difficult to balance and ensure that riders are not waiting too long to transfer.
- Routes are calculated based on a 20 km/h drive speed. Operators should not have to speed in order to arrive on time.

### 8. Clarification on Complaints (Alysha and Bob):

- All complaints are received and evaluated. However, many complaints are found to be "one-offs," based on a particular person's needs. It is impossible to satisfy all riders, and route convenience must be based on majority satisfaction.
- Example given: if it is not easily possible for a rider to walk a few blocks to reach a stop, they should consider using Access Transit. Complete neighbourhood coverage is not possible.

### 9. Clarification on managing change/improvement (Bob):

- The department uses a colour-coded screen map to monitor bus status. They are able to see which buses are currently early, on time, or late.
- Breakdowns happen often during hard winters, and there is often a backlog on ordering replacement parts, due to many different cities requiring them at the same time.
- On the day of a snowfall, transit officials often drive the routes early to spot problem areas ahead of time.
- Buses easily get stuck when pulling into stops in snow. This is why they sometimes must avoid pulling in to a bus stop.

### 10. Clarification on Future Strategies (Bob)

- Primary reason for late buses is that they are stuck in traffic.
- Only real solution is dedicated bus lanes. This will require a paradigm shift, and strong political leadership.
- The Growing Forward plan will go before council right before the next municipal election. This will force candidates to take a position.
- Bus Riders of Saskatoon has an important opportunity to influence public and political opinion before that time. It is important to clarify the reasons why improved transit is beneficial to everyone, including car owners.
- The Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA - [link](#)) is a good resource. Saskatoon Transit references their "Canada 2040" plan as a reference.