

Bus Riders of Saskatoon
Meeting with City of Saskatoon Utility Services Department
February 11, 2015

4:00pm - 5:00pm

301 - 24th Street West, Saskatoon

Bus Riders of Saskatoon Members: Sarina, Diane, Lila

City of Saskatoon Representatives: Alysha Hille (Marketing Manager, Saskatoon Transit), Jason Wiebe (Operations Superintendent, Saskatoon Transit), Jonathan Derworiz (Long Range Planning)

1. Introductions

2. Update from City of Saskatoon

Changes in Saskatoon Transit

- Bob Howe has moved back to Access Transit. Trevor Bell, Manager of Saskatoon Light & Power will be the interim manager of Saskatoon Transit

3. Update on University Bridge Closures

Recommendations put forward by to the Standing Policy Committee on Transit by the project team on February 10, 2015.

- Recommendations approved
- Going to City Council this month
- Suggestions include:
 - Dedicated lane for transit use for University Bridge closure
 - There are many buses that cross the bridge, every bus won't cross bridge
 - West side routes to terminate at downtown terminal
 - East side routes terminating at university terminal
 - There will be a shuttle approximately every ten minutes connect the downtown and university terminals
 - Scheduled times and frequency of existing routes would be kept as close to existing schedules as possible
 - Buses would only cross University Bridge during the hours of 6am-8pm, Monday to Friday
 - Full closure of University Bridge on weekends
- Evenings would divert to other times – to be determined
 - Other bridge routes not decided yet
 - Transportation department would determine which route to take
 - Routes restricted to Broadway Bridge or Senator Sid Buckwold Bridge to provide good service – Would also be a shuttle service
 - Transportation engineering modeling for predicted traffic flow
 - Through Angela Gardiner – Transportation Department

4. Adopt a Stop (Jonathan)

New City of Saskatoon Program being proposed

- Looking for partners
- Works like Adopt-a-Highway program
- Citizens to adopt a shelter or bus stop
- Responsibilities include:
 - Minimum of once a week to carry out these tasks
 - Maintenance of site
 - Garbage collection
 - Window cleaning
 - Reporting any criminal or suspicious behavior
 - Snow removal in winter – to help maintain accessibility
 - Possibility for seniors to partner with the City for clearance
 - Materials would be provided (shovels, gloves, garbage bags, etc...)
 - Partners are on a volunteer basis
- Currently unfunded program
 - Either additional funds will need to be requested or shift existing funds
- Program idea started in New York
 - Saskatoon would be first City in Canada
 - Montana, Ohio, Michigan, other US States that have similar programs
- 1400 bus stops in Saskatoon
- There's a program coordinator who maintains database, keeps relationship between partners in this program
- Riversdale, Broadway, Mayfair BIDS could be a target partner group
 - Also target councilors – lead by example
 - Businesses downtown (sign upgrade possibly available)
 - School boards, particular schools (help create ownership in areas that there is difficulty in)
- City is working on possible beautification guidelines (e.g. plant flowers, decorate, things like that)
- Bus Riders of Saskatoon provided suggestion: potential partner for this program with Saskatchewan Housing Authority
- Purpose of the program is to:
 - Build community with volunteers
 - Restore civic pride within transit system
 - Encourage a safer environment (i.e. eyes on the street, also more inviting with flowers)
 - More aesthetically pleasing
- Reward for volunteers would be to affix sign on the shelters with the partners names
- Proposal to go to City Council
 - Not before April
 - The document will go through wither the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Development or the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation
- Currently two employees assigned to shelter maintenance and repair
 - A program like this assists in keeping and maintaining the sites
 - Not meaning to hand off responsibility but rather be partners with the community and build stewardship
 - Partners will work with program coordinator, open line of communication

- **Emphasis on partners**
- Social media and press releases associated with this
- Bring this program idea back to Bus Riders of Saskatoon to be potential partners or know someone who is interested
 - Be part of the launch
 - It would be welcome but not expected
 - Would like people on board during the launch to make it more successful
 - Bus Riders of Saskatoon could sponsor multiple shelters

5. Additional City of Saskatoon Updates

Saskatoon Transit no longer a partner in Ten Days of Transit

- The event team thought it was better to support the project but not be an official partner

Digital Site Update –Alysha

- Working on upgrades last year, specifically to Click & Go
- New service will be more user friendly – similar to Google Transit
 - Easier to find stop, geolocate yourself on the phone
- Real-time information is the biggest feature
- Feedback used from December beta
 - Some changes made based on those comments
- Release within the next ten days
 - It will be a soft-launch
 - Not every scenario can be tested for
 - Asking for feedback from riders
 - Full launch at the beginning of March
 - Launch of the new transit website same time
 - City website launched already
 - Transit website is currently interim content
 - Mobile friendly
 - Dedicated for transit – do not have to filter through City website
 - Easier to give feedback and comments to Saskatoon Transit
 - Currently no full time person to monitor feedback
 - This will change in the future
 - But this will make it easier to provide comments
 - Focus on feedback and letting people know it is being used
 - Real-time will make it more reliable
- Saskatoon Transit will launch a promotional campaign
 - Online advertising
 - Targeted to return visitors
 - Targeted to digital and mobile
 - Prizes include competition for specialty designed t-shirt and large prize packs
 - Competition will run for a month – weekly draws
 - Support local designer and artist
 - Trying to connect to university students
 - It will run through social media to try and get entries

- Will have information cards provided through customer service centre
- Transit ambassadors riding buses to help
- Social media and media (news releases) available
- How can Bus Riders of Saskatoon help?
 - City of Saskatoon can provide social media messages through screen shots and leaflets
 - They are creating tutorial videos to highlight new information
 - Alysha will send Bus Riders of Saskatoon the digital files to put on our website, Google Group and Facebook group
 - Lila mentioned that seniors are may not be online as much. What is there for them with this new upgrade?
 - Top tasks that people use are at the forefront of the website so its easy to navigate
 - Website is fully accessible (font, can be used with screen readers)
 - Phone and Go is the next phase for upgrading for the users who aren't on a smart phone
 - Not same functionality but it will be more modern and easier to use
 - Quicker and easier information
 - Including real-time information

In response to our concerns of Route #1 and distributing information that was not up to date

- Saskatoon Transit has addressed our concerns in the following way:
 - City put up signage to notify riders of the changes on the route
 - Saskatoon Transit working with Charlie Clark and the residents to service the neighbourhood and get an idea of how the bus is being used

6. Questions from Bus Riders of Saskatoon

Clarification on routes changing along 24th Street

- Impossible to get on 24th from the bridge
- The spot is an accident waiting to happen
- Saskatoon Transit understands it is a meaningful stop
- They hoped 25th Street would work but realize it is further to get to
 - Saskatoon Transit believes 25th Street is the only way to travel
- Walking guidelines: 450m is considered an acceptable distance to be within a bus stop
 - 95% of city is within this
 - North Industrial is a difficult area
 - Bus Riders of Saskatoon suggestion: to look at areas based on high density for bus stops for walking distances

Saskatoon Transit looks at solutions from larger centres (Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa) to see how they handle similar problems. They are have similar problems just on a larger scale.

Can you provide an update on Access Transit?

- There is an aging population in Saskatoon and it will definitely grow
- Some funding from provincial government available
- Seniors pass is \$27 –not all of the cost is recovered
- Bus Riders of Saskatoon Question: Has there been any pressure on the federal government for dedicated transit funding?
 - Building Canada fund – a certain portion set aside for transit capital projects
 - Nothing announced in regards to dedicated Access Transit funds
- Government provides capitol funding (buying buses, building civic centres)
- Operating costs is where Saskatoon Transit feel pressure
- Discussion to have a community shuttle or smaller busses to hit the higher population areas of seniors to loop
 - An idea being thrown around
 - Customer care person allocated to Access Transit – work with people who are able to take the bus to use a regular transit bus
 - Lots of people default to Access Transit, who could use Saskatoon Transit
 - Brenda, with Saskatoon Transit works with the bus buddy program on the Council of Aging

Update on Transportation Committee

- Transit Advisory Committee overrode the committee that Alysha was previously suggesting
- Provides recommendation to City Council not administration
- Saskatoon Transit will not have a say in this committee
- The make-up of the committee depends on how Council asks City Clerk to set it up
 - There will be a report back on the previous committee and why it was disbanded
 - Council is asking for a report
 - It will come from the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation
 - Council has asked to reserve a spot for an operator
 - Saskatoon Transit has found the discussion is not as free flowing as it could be, especially if the operator drives the route of other committee members
 - Operator feedback is valuable but may need be the best forum for it

7. Adjournment