

City of Saskatoon – Saskatoon Transit and Bus Riders of Saskatoon Meeting  
January 18, 2016

4:00pm - 5:00pm  
301 24<sup>th</sup> Street West

Present:

City of Saskatoon: Jim McDonald (Director of Saskatoon Transit) and Colin Stinson (Marketing Consultant)

Bus Riders of Saskatoon: Curtis, Peter and Sarina

AGENDA

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1. Introductions

2. Questions and Discussions

- i. Could you provide more information about the strict purchasing for bus passes?
  - Question: Why can you only purchase a monthly bus pass after a certain date?
    - **Colin will follow up at next month's meeting**
  - Question: Why are monthly bus passes according to calendar months and not according to the date bought (like leisure passes)?
    - They are tied to the software that Saskatoon Transit uses. It would not necessarily be an issue to make changes to the software but there is concern about the additional cost.
    - The changes are tied to the fare boxes and that would be costly.
    - Additional costs would be from programming (time) and administration costs.
    - Opportunity cost and confusion cost with the vendors. Saskatoon Transit wants to have a good suite of product but they do not want to have too many different products to overload vendors.
      - Leisure services issues all the passes from in-house, not through vendors
      - Question: Is it possible to be flexible issuing fares downtown but not at the vendors?
        - a. It could be possible.
    - Saskatoon Transit are also looking at doing a month to month comparison of ridership and they would want to continue on a monthly basis for data purposes.
    - They would want to see statistical data showing successful results in ridership before changing the date range.

- Question: Why can you not purchase a year's worth of passes at any time?
      - **Colin will follow up next month's meeting**
  
- ii. In terms of the cost of passes, is it possible to have a flow chart or an easy to read graphic to help people determine which pass is best for them (and the associated cost)? This has been a theme in recent meetings as people have found this information challenging to find.
  - Question: Is there a communications strategy to help ensure they are getting the most affordable option available to them? Could there be a flowchart to help them determine their most affordable option?
  - The current fare changes are laid out a bit more cumbersome. Saskatoon Transit will probably update that.
  - They would consider looking into a graphic or visualization option to help people understand which fare option is best for them,
  - Suggestion to use a blog found on BRS website about [bus fare comparison calculator](#).
  
- iii. What was the resolution in regards to the mature student from Nutana Collegiate who requested a student rate for bus passes?
  - Still working on that. They do not have a final resolve.
  - Saskatoon Transit still needs to talk to the School Boards before a decision is made.
    - Questions to consider include: What is a classification of a full student? What are the ID requirements? Saskatoon Transit wants to know what this entails and that everyone is using the same data and definitions.
  - The U of S is responsible for administering their passes
  - High schools do not administer the same as the U of S.
    - Colin and Jim are not sure about the specifics of their process.
  - The school boards have been approached on a few occasions for a UPass like pass, but there was no interest at the time. It was considered too onerous to put in place.
  
- iv. There has been lots of discussion in the media lately about ridership numbers. Would you have any general comments in regards to why numbers are still plummeting?
  - 2014 was a bad year for Saskatoon Transit
    - Especially at the start of the school season with maintenance issues and the lockout
    - People want consistent, reliable and clean services and there were issues in all three of these areas.
    - That's the reason why Jim is here now.
    - Saskatoon Transit is working on reengaging with employees and the community (e.g. these meetings) through Colin.

- They are trying to engage with Council as much as possible.
  - Colin plays a great role and getting the information across.
- Do you know how many riders were lost?
  - No. They do not.
  - Fare box software and GPS software did not talk to one another for a while.
  - They lost the ability to count people on the bus for a period of time.
- Typically it takes 2-3 years to get back ridership after a lockout of strike.
  - They believe the conversation is changing a bit around transit. More positivity and comments coming through customer service.
- Question: Can you comment on why Leisure Services lowered their rates when they had lower numbers of people, but Saskatoon Transit increased their rates instead?
  - What Leisure Services did is considered a pilot.
  - Comparing Leisure Services to Saskatoon Transit is like comparing oranges to apples.
  - The reporting back date from Leisure Services has not been determined (the pilot was put in place in September 2015)
  - Saskatoon Transit cannot max out their services, whereas Leisure Services can.
    - If you have to rely on the bus you cannot choose to not take the bus but if you decide to not go swimming, that is okay.
- Question: What is the cost recovery ratio for Saskatoon Transit?
  - Approximately 65% mill rate; 35% fares for cost recovery.

v. Additional questions:

- We have some students looking to pursue discussions in regards to shelters at the U of S bus mall. Who at the City should we contact about setting up a possible meeting with the City and the University? Who would be the contact?
  - Colin would be the contact person
- Has Ideas on Tap progressed?
  - A plan is written
  - Waiting for all of the approval steps
  - Looking at launching 3 events in 2016
  - One most likely on 8<sup>th</sup> Street (how we came to the discussions and engagement)
    - Planning engagement currently. Starting to take place in February/March.
  - **Does BRS we have any suggestions on topics? Let Colin know.**

- Route planning is a common question BRS gets.
- Route changes happen in July, because it gives time for the route operating group to adjust to the schedule before September happens with a major influx of riders.

### 3. Additional Items

- Confidential item to bring up at the BRS monthly meeting.

### 4. Confirmation that meetings will be the third Monday of every month.

- Next meeting should be Monday, February 15, 2016 but this is a holiday.  
What works as an alternative?
  - Next meeting: Monday, February 22, 2016 at 4:00pm – 5:00pm

### 5. Adjournment