

Bus Riders of Saskatoon Meeting  
December 6, 2015  
1:30pm – 3:30pm  
Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre  
Facilitators: Marianne and Cameron

#### Meeting Open

- Acknowledgement of National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women
- Acknowledgement of International Volunteer Day
- Read mission, visions, group norms
- Group introductions

#### Conversation with Kent Smith-Windsor and Tony Van Burgsteden - Chamber of Commerce

- Met BRS representatives at Planning for Growth event - both interested stakeholders, which led to this meeting invitation
- Question to the Chamber: What are your visions for the transit system and what do you want to improve?
  - With a city of Saskatoon's size and one with such potential for growth, it is important to have a functioning and viable transit system
  - Viable transit system is important for people to access
  - 1900 members within business community are a part of the Chamber
  - Members have a vested interest that their employees can get to work through a viable, efficient system
  - Members in the north end struggle with using the transit system – getting employees to and from work
  - Transit has to be affordable for all citizens (i.e. tax payers)
    - They could be at risk if the taxes go up significantly to fund transit. It needs to be a balance between users and taxpayers. They do not want people to leave Saskatoon to go to a place with cheaper taxes.
- There is a concern with the Growing Forward project, as it tries to mimic behaviors of other communities
  - Saskatoon's built form is different than other benchmark communities they are using
    - University and downtown are magnets of transit system
    - Edmonton and Winnipeg might not be the same built form, so it's tough to base plans on there
    - We believe the next 30 years will not look like the past 30 years.
      - Thebuy.com; Uber; ridewithVIA.com (out of New York) are all new technologies that might become more prominent

- Do not want to overcommit to a system that will not be the same
    - I.e. our university (20,000 people employed steadily), downtown (residential has not increased much), north industrial (huge expansion, from 20,000-40,000 and needs a built form spread out based on its industry)
    - Encouraged the City to try to be open to future changes. The means by which we move around will change from what is the status quo now.
    - Balance accessibility and affordability with coverage – has not been able to cost recover capital since 1970's.
- Question to the Chamber: Are you against the BRT?
  - No, not against but would rather tiptoe in, rather than putting both feet in
- General discussion on the north industrial for transit use, private versus public investment, cost of transit
  - Would prefer to not have subsidies (for anything, including businesses – the market is complex enough)
  - They have suggested doing more work in the southwest (i.e. Riversdale area)
    - How to intensify the use of transit in the core areas. But the likelihood of being able to service the north end effectively today.
    - The consequences are the costs going to burst
- Question to the Chamber: What would the Chamber of Commerce community's capacity be to rally pressure for their members to provide encouragement to take the bus (i.e. employee incentives)? Or to encourage Saskatoon Transit to change?
  - The current service is seen as "vanilla" – i.e. "here is our service and here is how to deliver it"
  - We need to put more options on the table rather than intensifying current options. In the past (1970's), there was intense service from the electric trolley, but when the City shifted to a coverage model, the service became just mediocre (good service got a little less good, and poor service got a little better)
- Question to the Chamber: What are your thoughts on the alternatives that you are suggesting and taking transit out from the public sector? The worry is that when transit moves from public to private, the concern for the rider might diminish. That the choices that are more profitable might overrule the need for access, reliability, affordability, recognizing that the current service needs improvement. What happens to funding for transit?

- It does not seem that any of us can predict what the private sector would do
  - Uber will probably come here
  - VIA.com is probably on the way, but may 5 years behind Uber
  - If a service is demanded by the individuals who will pay for it, it should come here or be put in place
  - BRS comment: We might not even have to predict what will happen. There are case studies (I.e. Uber) where they do not have a mandate of accessibility (that taxi's do). They limit access for the community. In addition, you need a smart phone to even access this system, which is a barrier.
- In terms of the status quo, BRS would like that to change. We are definitely not against innovation.
- Question to the Chamber: How does the time loss, from an inefficient system effect members of the Chamber? I.e. An employee misses their bus and the cost of a taxi makes it more logical to take a sick day
    - Abstinteeism is not a big factor for most small business
    - Not a significant enough problem when it comes to employees for overall
- Question to the Chamber: What is Saskatoon's reach for the Chamber of Commerce?
    - Martinsville has a Chamber of Commerce.
    - Warman has a Chamber of Commerce.
    - There is not a lot of reach for Saskatoon's Chamber in these communities as there is concern about investing in another city that is driving business away (or elsewhere)
- Chamber sees the theme of the conversation: increase ridership. If we do not increase ridership, the recoveries will slowly drop even further. The effects the chances of getting an enhanced, non-eroded system. We think we need to increase ridership on the current system before we expect the City to increase funds to transit.
- Question to the Chamber: Would you be willing to share any of your research with us?
    - Kent would be happy to share this information that he gathered
    - **Follow-up: Marianne to follow up with Chamber to get information we talked about today.**

## Committee Updates

- Steering Committee – no update
- Online Committee
  - Draft page with committee information online. Should we list committee names on website? They are in the PDF already.
  - Recommendation to list committee member names, and people can ask to be removed.
  - **The default for listing committee members name: put names on website and people can ask to have their names removed if they feel so.**
  - Discussion on Facebook page
    - We will do more research on the page versus group. Group is a great place for an exchange of ideas.
- External Committee – no update
- Internal Committee
  - Outreach has not progressed since last meeting
  - **First week of January, a deadline for committee members to follow-up in regards to stakeholder engagement. Follow-up with those who received an email and let them know the next meeting date and offer to come provide information to their group on BRS (i.e. outreach presentations)**
- Finance Committee
  - No financial changes since last meeting
  - **Motion: If the domain needs to be renewed for the website before our January 10, 2016 meeting, we authorize up to \$50 to be spent on the renewal.**
    - **Unanimous approval**

## Discussion and future activities

- Twitter: BetterTransitYXE Parameters
  - Emailed Brian – asked him what he sees for it without stepping on his toes
  - Just wants to be clear before we proceed
  - Then it is a matter of capacity of Tweeting
    - Stephan would get it rolling until capacity expands
  - Is there anything in our purview or things we do not want in our Twitter-sphere?
    - Keep it focused on public transit in Saskatoon or other sectors
    - Quick tweet update about our meetings. This is what happened.

- Just be conscious of framing questions and being able to answer discussions or framed questions
  - **What we would tweet on BetterTransitYXE**
    - **Innovation in transit**
    - **Interesting transit stories**
    - **Local transit events**
    - **Occurrences within our meetings**
  - Send any relevant info to Marianne and Stephan for Twitter
- Sub-committee on sexual assault
  - Update since last meeting: the person has been sentenced. The victim in this situation, who is also on the subcommittee, has felt satisfied with that verdict.
  - In January, aim to hold a meeting of potential partners in a public event so that we could get the ball rolling on that, and aim to hold the event in February or March 2016.
  - In the stage of needing to outreach to those partners
  - TransLink in BC has a big public campaign in a similar matter. Take a look for reference/resources.
- City of Saskatoon Meeting
  - Update from last meeting.
    - Do we want to pursue another 10 Days for Transit in 2016?
    - Who would be the planning committee? Would Bus Riders take the lead?
    - What about engaging businesses who have an incentive for transit?
    - **Recommendation to postpone this discussion as a separate discussion item for the January 10, 2016 meeting.**
  - What would we like to ask at the December 16, 2015 from 4:00pm – 5:00pm meeting?
    - Lila sent an email about signage
    - Follow up on the recommendation from Council about a transit advisory group to Council? What’s happening with it? The new report, Transportation Demand Management Strategic Plan Implementation Progress, says “establish a transit user group to identify current issues and introduce improvements” has been marked as complete.
      - Clarification on why the user group is “complete”?
      - Is Transit seeing our relationship and monthly meeting as taking place of the advisory group? We do not think so.
  - North industrial plans seem to have a discrepancy

- We were under the impression it would be an on demand and based on the meeting with the Chamber of Commerce and we seems to have different ideas of what's happening
    - What are their expectations for the North Industrial in Growing Forward?
    - Important for clarification
  - **A further meeting: discussion on VIA.com, or services that are alternative to transit. Probably a future discussion for meetings.**
    - Ask the City where they are at on it? Is there a danger to have this discussion?
  - Attendees: Sarina, Tracey, Lila
  - Who is responsible for checking city agendas for relevant transit info?
- Financial Update
  - Discussed in committee updates
- Possible partnership on Innovation Sask grant regarding GHGs
  - Saskatoon Cycles received this email as well
  - From Scott Bell, with the University of Saskatchewan
  - Call for proposals from Innovation Saskatchewan
  - Funding to do a study on Active Transportation
  - Hoping Saskatoon Cycles and Bus Riders of Saskatoon, as well as the City Councillors would want to take part/partner
  - Proposing: 3 phases – detailed information not included in notes in recognition of sensitive information being submitted for funding
  - Deadline for proposals: December 9, 2015
  - Would we want to write a letter of support for this project saying we are open to possible partnership?
    - Concerned about time-commitment. Would this take someone out of ranks for a while?
    - Is this our priority?
    - We can write a letter of general support. We follow up with an email asking for expectations and take that back to the Steering Committee.
    - **Motion: We support this project as a concept and are willing to offer a preliminary letter of support, without providing details or specifications on expectation of commitment.**
      - **Unanimous support**

Summary for follow-up meetings:

- Does BRS want to take an opinion on coverage versus frequency
- Discussion on subsidies (i.e. roads are subsidized, what about transit?)
  - How much is the City spending per capita on roads? Transit? Infrastructure? Anyone want to do follow up research?

- Can we ask a Councilor to request this report? Council has the capacity to do this? Are there any people on campus who can do this?
- Follow up research on privatization or public funding for Transit?

Determine next meeting facilitators

- **Marianne to follow up with Troy Davies to come to the January 10, 2016 meeting**
  - **Donauer if Davies is not able to attend**
- Facilitators – Michael and Cameron
- Note taker - Tracey

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, January 10, 2015 at 1:30pm – 3:30pm