

Minutes for BRS-Transit meeting

Monday, 20 August 2018 @ 3:30-4:40PM

Location: Committee Room B at City Hall

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

FOLLOW-UPS

- 1) Update on early bus departures (see minutes from 25 June 2018):
 - a. Transit's stated policy is that "a scheduled departure should never be early".
 - b. Transit informed us that they had not noted any problems with the system time that Transit's ITS-system broadcasts to the Operator display and Rider display in the buses. However, since the ITS-software does not visually flag the correct moment of departure to the Operator, Operators must rely on their 'Paddle' (the binder of printed driving instructions) to determine each correct departure time.
 - c. It should be noted that the Transit-app always uses up-to-date schedules and shows the next bus. Since online pdf-schedules are also tweaked frequently, it is the responsibility of Riders to access the latest version of these schedules (more on this topic below).
 - d. In summary, it was noted that when early departures do take place, they occur at the discretion of individual Operators. This means that Riders cannot rely too heavily on published schedules and are forced to arrive 'sufficiently early' at the bus stop.

- 2) Update on the latest (July 1) transit network changes:
 - a. Transit emphasized that feedback from the ridership is very important in identifying deficiencies. For example, as a direct result of ridership feedback on the route changes in Sutherland, Transit intends to insert additional buses on route #26 during the 7-9am morning rush.
 - b. Transit also noted that schedule tweaks are constantly implemented as issues arise:
 - i. Any schedule changes as a result of such tweaks are immediately available in the Transit App.

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- ii. Corrections are also made in the online pdf-schedules, although this fact is not easily detectable in several long lists of posted schedules. Moreover, these unpredictable and irregularly occurring tweaks of the pdf-schedules have been extremely difficult to detect even by a seasoned rider, because the date shown in small print below the title block of each schedule was not in the past always updated every time a line item was changed in the schedule! Apparently, this oversight is no longer occurring, and the date printed on the pdf/paper-schedule (and name of the electronic file) is now always updated every time a change is made to a particular schedule.
- c. Since schedule tweaks are ongoing but not applicable to every route, BRS urged Transit to find ways to more visibly flag a tweaked schedule both in the Transit App and in the multiple long lists of downloadable route maps/schedules on Transit's website. A consistent sequence of colours used in the printed schedules might also alert riders to such tweaks.

3) Update on the BRT project:

- a. Regarding the myths and misinformation about Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) that seem to be circulating in the community, it was agreed that BRS should submit its compiled list of such myths to Transit so that the actual facts could be clearly established.

NEW ITEMS

4) Request for Info/Data/Statistics:

- a. BRS reiterated our ongoing request for statistics and other information in order to bring clarity , for example:
 - i. BRS continues to hear persistent rumours in the community that buses on the Frequent Transit Service routes are running essentially empty and thus denying service on more deserving routes elsewhere. Our anecdotal experience does not support that notion as we typically see 8-15 riders on the 8th Street FTS, but we have no way of statistically asserting that ridership.

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- ii. BRS is working on a detailed description of Transit's "Low-income" and "Discounted" bus pass programs and would like to be able to establish the ridership numbers in each age category (namely adult, student and child).
 - b. Since Transit's response was not very encouraging, BRS hopes that sincere efforts are made to provide more detailed statistics to the general public in the not too distant future. In particular BRS noted that the summary information provided to Council in Transit's annual reports is not detailed enough.
 - c. BRS reiterated that we remain interested in the Background Report that was compiled early on in HDR's contract.
- 5) Transit's pamphlet "Transit 101: How to use your new favourite public transportation app":
 - a. BRS wondered what ridership segment the pamphlet is targeted towards?
 - i. In our opinion, the pamphlet is not suitable in its current form for mildly tech-savvy riders. Although familiar with cell-phones and apps, these typically middle-aged riders do not find apps intuitive and require more explicit instructions.
 - ii. On the other hand, if the pamphlet is targeted towards the highly tech-savvy university and high-school students and younger members of the work force, BRS suggested that the pamphlet might be superfluous, because this segment of the population gets its information online.
 - b. BRS expressed a willingness to provide a dedicated collaborator and a few guinea pigs to assist Transit in their development of a more suitable pamphlet for the less tech-savvy segment of the ridership. If these riders get sufficient help to convert from paper-based schedules/maps to app-based electronic trip planning, the old paper-based schedules might be eliminated sooner rather than later.

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HEADS-UP

- 6) Transit detours (see minutes from January 22 and May 28, 2018):
 - a. BRS informed Transit that Jay Magus, Acting Director of Transportation, has delegated this file to Cory Funk, who is in charge of detour arrangements.
 - b. BRS intends to contact Mr. Funk shortly to follow up on the issue.

NOTICES/CONCERNS/SUGGESTIONS FROM TRANSIT

- 7) Bus shelters:
 - a. Transit gave advance notice of an upcoming announcement (on August 23) regarding the #BusStop BluesYXE program, where Transit solicits assistance from the ridership in identifying bus stops that require improvements.
 - b. BRS promised to post the item on our FB-page.

TRANSIT FARES & FARE COLLECTION SYSTEMS DISCUSSION

- 8) On-going documentation of Current Transit Fares:
 - a. BRS is making progress on a document describing Transit's existing Low-income and Discounted Bus Pass Programs.
 - b. BRS will contact Transit shortly to clarify some details about these two programs.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 24 September 2018, 3:30 – 4:30 pm (tentative date)