

Minutes for BRS-Transit meeting
Friday, 28 January 2019 @ 8:30-9:45am

Location: Committee Room B at City Hall

Present: Cory Shrigley, Allison Gray from Transit; Brent Kobes from USSU; Peter Gallén, Douglas Rudolph from BRS.

MEETING ADMINISTRATION

- 1) Brent was appointed Chair of this meeting, while Peter will provide the minutes.
- 2) BRS expressed a wish that requests in an Agenda for written documentation would be fulfilled (when feasible) prior to the meeting in order to speed up the attention to the item.

USSU ITEMS

- 3) U-Pass:
 - a. USSU was pleased to announce that the pilot-project for an enhanced Student Pass had been successfully concluded and that full roll-out of the enhanced services embedded in the magnetic strip on the card would commence incoming July with roll-out to all undergraduate students taking place at the commencement of the Fall-semester.
 - b. The embedded service of particular interest here is the U-Pass, where the sticker used to date will be eliminated.
- 4) Potential strike by Cupe 1975:
 - a. USSU notified the attendees that contract negotiation between Cupe 1975 and University Administration had failed. In the case of a strike, this may have implications for bus riders and for transit.
 - b. Since Cupe 1975-members working for USSU signed a separate contract last summer, their services would not be affected by a potential strike.

BRS ITEMS

- 5) Clinkskill Manor petition regarding bus stop: This petition has not been received by Transit
- 6) Accessibility Audit regarding kneeling of buses:
 - a. Transit informed us that when required Riders are encouraged to request the bus be knelt; automatic kneeling is not provided because it unnecessarily slows down the trip for the other passengers.
 - b. The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), dated 7 January 2019, specifies that kneeling is only allowed when the ambient temperature is above -20°C. During colder weather, Operators are to follow instructions issued by Transit's ITS. Ramps can and will still be deployed in all weather.
 - c. BRS was disappointed that Saskatoon Transit still prohibits kneeling in temperatures below -20°C. This is unfortunate since Regina Transit (to the best of our knowledge) always kneels every bus at their Downtown Terminal regardless of weather; the contradictory practice is particularly puzzling since the two fleets are almost identical.

- 7) Member inquiries about Routes, Schedules & Bus Stops:
 - a. Consternation regarding certain schedules in January 2019:
 - i. The advance posting of clearly high-lighted, online schedules that were slated to take effect on 6 January 2019 were very much appreciated by our members.
 - ii. However, the new schedules for routes #5, #14 and #25 caused consternation because no visible changes could be detected either to the schedule or the map; our members became concerned that they had missed something significant.
 - iii. Transit replied that:
 1. Route #5 had certain time-points changed.
 2. Routes #14 and #25 had the words 'mon-fri' added to transfer points.
 - b. FTC-routes:
 - iv. BRS lamented the recent elimination of distinct BRT-schedules for routes 8+¹, 60+ and 4+. The opportunity to really highlight the very high frequency of the BRT/FTC² is thus lost. The same problem exists in Transit App as well.
 - v. Transit promised to consider the matter.
 - c. Route #4 bus stops at University:
 - a. In response to a member question regarding the close proximity of bus stops at College/Cumberland (#4165) and St. Thomas More (#4442), Transit replied that they serve different needs: riders heading for University often choose to disembark at College/Cumberland, while riders heading to RUH disembark at St. Thomas More. Riders heading downtown might want to board at St. Thomas More in order to have a choice between both the #4 and the #60+ at this stop.
 - d. Routes not serving staff needs had the following questions and replies:
 - a. Transit acknowledged that the SaskTel Centre Special does not serve staff well; additional service hours would be required to provide earlier and later service.
 - i. Transit is looking into making these Specials visible in the TransitApp.
 - b. Transit acknowledged that current service hours on Route #11 do not cover the full span of Airport operating hours; not even all departures/arrivals are served.
- 8) Website/Twitter information:
 - a. BRS had noticed that the highly visible announcement on Transit's website about the Jingle-Bell Express (a short-term Christmas service) contained no link to the schedule, although the schedule had apparently been posted in Twitter; in the future, it would be much appreciated if all relevant info was accessible from the same notice.
- 9) End-of-day Bus Procedures at the COC (carried over from the previous meeting):
 - a. Transit provided the following detailed explanation:

¹ The Route #8 outbound schedule at the Downtown Terminal and inbound schedule at Centre Mall Terminal lists all departures in chronological order on one schedule and clearly shows the particular route number for each departure (i.e., #81/82/84/86) in a separate column. This arrangement is very helpful for those using only the BRT-portion (on 10-minute frequency) and also for those continuing on a suburban loop (on ½-hour frequency).

² BRT= Bus Rapid Transit; FTC= Frequent Transit Corridor is a 'very light' version of a full BRT, because only the frequency-aspect has been addressed (while leaving out schedule reliability and rider comfort improvements).

- i. Once a run is complete and the bus returns to the COC, the bus enters the building, runs over a chassis wash to clean the undercarriage of debris, drops the fare box if it's the end of the day, and is given a location to park in storage.
 - ii. The operator lets the bus placar know of defects, the decision at that time is made to either line it up to go back out, or it is parked out of service for a mechanic to look at. Out of service conditions include safety items like brakes, steering, and suspension, although these usually warrant a changeover on the road and are brought back before the end of a run.
 - iii. By about 5:30-6 in the evening, the utility staff begin the process of cleaning and fueling the 102+ buses that were out that day:
 1. The buses are taken from storage, driven to the fuel line where they are fueled, fluids checked, swept out and stanchions and drivers compartment wiped down, the floor is also flushed out at this time.
 2. From here, the buses go through the wash (except when temperatures dip below -20°C) and are staged in indoor storage (+5°C, which allows the snow to melt off in cold weather) for the next day's morning runs.
 - iv. About every 5 months every bus goes through a thorough cleaning where everything is washed, seats are cleaned, and everything is sanitized front to back.
- b. BRS appreciated the detailed explanation. We also provided a few observations:
- i. Although Operators conduct a quick daily check of the interior of the bus and report anything obviously out of the ordinary, Riders have been observed to experience difficulties lifting/lowering the foldable benches near the front of the (New Flyer) bus. Similarly, Riders/Operators are sometimes faced with poorly functioning wheel-chair restraint systems. BRS noted that these particular items might warrant specific attention every time the bus is checked by the Operator.
 - ii. Riders have observed that Transit's posters are sometimes out of date and irrelevant paper-schedules have been provided in the bus. BRS noted that these informational items are important to Riders and also warrant due attention.

10) Request for written information:

- e. BRS reiterated our request for information about the Eco-Pass and the U-Pass, which are next in line for our review of history, procedures, administration and fares.

TRANSIT ITEMS

- 11) At the meeting Transit requested volunteers from our membership for two videos on Seniors using transit to be filmed on February 14th. The positions have now been filled.
- 12) A façade upgrade of the Customer Service Centre is imminent.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 25 February 2019, 3:30 – 4:30 pm at City Hall