

Minutes for BRS-USSU-Transit meeting using 'Lync'
Monday, 30 March 2020 @ 2:30-3:30pm

Location: Online meeting using Lync (Skype for Business)

Participants: Cory Shrigley, Allison Gray from Transit; Jamie Bell from USSU; Peter Gallén, Robert Clipperton, Bob Eaton, Melanie Hoffman from BRS.

MEETING ADMINISTRATION

- 1) Allison was appointed Chair/Moderator of this meeting, while Peter will provide the minutes.

ITEMS

At the request of BRS, the main agenda item for this meeting was an update on Transit's responses to the Corona-virus/Covid 19 pandemic.

2) Summary of responses to concerns from BRS's FB-page :

- a. Transit is installing signs on the seats of buses to encourage physical distancing between riders on the buses.
- b. There is *no* '9 Passenger Rule' on buses. Buses can carry more people so long as appropriate physical distancing can be maintained.
- c. Transit App has been updated with the recent service changes and it displays service alerts on routes affected by the closure of University campus and Place Riel Terminal.
- d. The changes to routes 1, 6 and 8 have been implemented as planned as of March 29th.
- e. Buses are disinfected nightly. This involves wiping down 'common touch spots' and misting the soft surfaces with disinfectant. Riders should not judge if a bus has been cleaned/disinfected by observing gravel on the floor or stains on seats.
- f. Additional teams of cleaners will be assigned to the Downtown Terminal during the day. Passengers will be asked to vacate the bus while this rapid cleaning takes place.
- g. The barriers that separate Operators from Riders are put up by maintenance.
- h. To address the problem of 'joy-riders' Supervisors have been riding buses more often and do approach riders to determine their ultimate destination. Community Support Officers and Saskatoon Police have been maintaining a greater presence at the Downtown Terminal to minimize problems and help promote transit for necessary travel only.
- i. Since Transit does not monitor BRS's FB-page, Riders are encouraged to keep filing all kudos/complaints/comments using Transit's official Feed-back Form.

3) General notes on the management of the pandemic:

- a. The Provincial Government continues to react to the pandemic as necessary and changes rules, regulations and instructions as required.
- b. In the case of the pandemic, Provincial legislation mandates the City Manager (not Council) to take local action as required. Although Council approval was not required, Administration did report to Council on 19 March 2020 on a number of actions, including those related to Transit operations. For example:

- i. The City expects Transit to keep providing (reduced) service, while adhering to Provincial and City edicts.
- ii. The City has authorized Transit to waive transit fares due to rear-door boarding.

4) Transit's report on actions to date:

- a. Management of the pandemic at Transit:
 - i. Transit monitors and reacts to changes in instructions from the Provincial Government and City Administration.
 - ii. Transit Management and the Transit Union meet regularly to discuss concerns and take appropriate action.
 - iii. Updates to Transit employees are provided daily (or every second day) regarding the situation and changes in procedures.
 - iv. An emergency sign-up was conducted before implementing the reduction in service.
- b. Actions to protect Transit employees from infection:
 - i. The Customer Service Centre at the Downtown Terminal was physically closed to patrons, but is otherwise fully operational .
 - ii. Rear-door boarding of riders was mandated, with the exception of wheel-chairs and riders that absolutely require kneeling or the ramp; wheel-chairs are asked to use the rear-facing seats when possible and to buckle up themselves.
 - iii. Bus Operators are separated from riders by a barrier, which is installed by Transit Maintenance.
 - iv. The Operator space is disinfected daily and Operators are asked to wear their driving gloves.
- c. Actions to protect Transit Riders from infection:
 - i. Currently Transit is:
 - a. asking all non-essential riders to stay home!
 - b. transporting first-line responders and essential staff to work.
 - c. continuing to transport all (hopefully) non-symptomatic riders to essential services like health care, groceries and the like.
 - ii. In all cases:
 - a. Riders must adhere to physical distancing as stipulated by the Province (see attached poster below).
 - b. The number of onboard passengers is limited to what will maintain the stipulated physical distancing.
 - iii. Disinfection of buses:
 - a. Every day/night at the Depot, 'common touch spots' are wiped down and soft surfaces are misted with disinfectant.
- d. Effect on Ridership:
 - iii. Fixed Route transit has experienced ~85% reduction in ridership.
 - iv. Access Transit has experienced ~85% reduction in ridership.

- e. Chronological list of changes already in effect:
 - i. Transit maintained regular service until the last day of school, March 19, when the Provincial Government shut down the schools . The University of Saskatchewan shut its doors on March 24.
 - ii. On March 19 Transit's Customer Service Centre closed its doors to the public:
 - 1. A full complement of Customer Service staff is still available, however, to answer inquiries by telephone, email and social media and to monitor and respond to Customer Feed-back.
 - 2. On March 20 when rear-door boarding was implemented, Transit began waiving fares. Thus until further notice, neither cash nor GoPasses are required nor do passes need to be reloaded. However:
 - a. The City will be determining how to compensate those with passes affected by this; those details will be provided soon.
 - b. Transit is not using the wording 'free transit' as a marketing tool to increase ridership; when used, the expression simply means that fares are waived due to the rear-boarding of buses.
 - iii. Service Changes:
 - 1. On March 23, Transit reduced the morning book-out of buses from 102 to 84:
 - a. This reduction in service triggered an Emergency Sign-up of Operators.
 - b. Transit then began the process of reducing the service as shown in the attached 'Service Changes'- poster.
 - c. Despite drastically reduced ridership it was challenging in this first week to maintain the prescribed physical distancing; close monitoring of the stabilized ridership has now resulted in better allocation of buses where needed.
 - d. Access Transit has seen drastically reduced demand and service but experiences no denials.
 - 2. On March 29, Transit further reduced the morning book-out of buses from 84 to 78:
 - a. The reduced service will cover most of the city with non-peak service based on a 'modified' Saturday schedule.
 - b. Updating of schedules:
 - i. The reduction in service on the Frequent Transit Corridors (FTCs) affected the schedules for routes 8/81, 8/82, 8/83, 8/84 and 8/86; 4/43, 4/44 and 4/45; and 60, 61, 62 and 63. This change in service necessitated updates in several distinct published schedules:
 - 1. Alerts were immediately implemented in Transit-App as required.

2. As of Sunday morning, March 29, when the reduced service went into effect on the FTCs, all affected schedules in Transit-App had been updated to reflect the reduced service.
 3. Online PDF-schedules on Transit's website were updated a few days later.
 4. Updated, printed paper-schedules were delivered to Customer Service before April 3.
 - ii. Other than the eleven (11) FTC-routes described above, the schedules of Transit's other regular routes (about 30 in total) have remained unaffected by the reduction in service; and thus require no changes in the information provided to Riders.
 3. On March 29, the previously announced re-routing of FTC-routes 8+ across the Broadway Bridge and routes 1 and 6 across the Sid Buckwold Bridge (also serving the west end of 8th Street) went into effect as well.
 - iv. Feed-back to Transit:
 1. BRS noted that sufficient physical distancing has not been possible or maintained on all buses at all times.
 2. BRS noted that since detailed schedule information by route was not immediately available, Riders had to rely on the (sometimes spotty) 'next bus feature' in Transit-App as their sole source of information.
 3. Riders without access to Transit-App or a cell-phone had much less up-to-date information available to them.
 - v. Other measures:
 1. In order to monitor ridership, improve physical distancing and eliminate joy-riding on buses, Supervisors have been riding buses more often.
 2. In order to minimize problems and help promote transit for necessary travel only, Community Support Officers (CSOs) and Saskatoon Police have been maintaining a greater presence at the Downtown Terminal.
 - f. Refusal to work:
 - i. When the severity of the situation became clear, the Transit union local (ATU 615) launched seven (7) specific instances of refusal to work with the employer (Saskatoon Transit). As usual, these cases went before Saskatchewan Labour Standards Board, whose rulings are as follows:
 1. 3 cases have already been resolved in favour of the employer.
 2. 4 cases were still before the Board awaiting a ruling.

5) Actions planned for the immediate future:

- a. Additional Service Changes:
 - i. Although information was not presented at the meeting it became public knowledge on the following day that:

1. Place Riel Terminal at the University would close on very short notice on Thursday, April 2, by refusing all bus entries to Campus.
 2. Routes previously serving Place Riel Terminal would have to make adjustments to accommodate transfers on College Drive instead.
- ii. In order to allow riders to maintain sufficient spatial distancing, Transit continues to closely monitor ridership on individual routes/buses with an attempt (if possible) to provide an extra bus as required.
- b. Additional measures:
- a. Improved Bus Disinfection: On March 31 crews of Transit and facilities staff will start rapid disinfections of every bus that arrives at the Downtown Terminal. Riders **must** disembark for this procedure and then re-board to continue their trips.
 - b. Signs are being installed on the buses to help encourage physical distancing.

6) Non-Covid issues:

- a. Bus Stop obstacles:
- a. BRS informed Transit about FB-complaints where buses at certain stops end up with the rear-door obstructed by a tree, bush or bus shelter. Particular locations include Broadway Avenue, 8th Street, and 25th Street below University Bridge.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 27 April 2020, 2:30 – 3:30 pm by Lync (not yet confirmed; note earlier start).

#flattenthecurve

Practice
PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Help us keep the Transit system and our operators safe.

Please stay two metres back from the operator and use the rear door to enter and exit.

COVID-19 RESPONSE FOR SASKATOON RESIDENTS **SASKATOON transit**

SERVICE CHANGES

Service may be added when possible to routes experiencing full buses and service may be removed from routes with empty buses, based on operational need.

	HFC High Frequency Corridors 8 / 80 / 60 / 4 / 40 FREQUENCY	All Other Routes FREQUENCY
MON-FRI	Before 7PM	15 min / 30 min
	After 7PM	30 min / 60 min
SATURDAY	Before 7PM	30 min / 30 min
	After 7PM	30 min / 60 min
SUNDAY	All Day	30 min / 60 min

> NO University Extras > NO High School Extras

COVID-19 RESPONSE FOR SASKATOON RESIDENTS **SASKATOON transit**