

**Minutes for BRS-USSU-Transit online meeting
Monday, 24 August 2020 @ 2:30-3:30pm**

Location: Online meeting using Zoom

Present: Cory Shrigley, Allison Gray from Transit; Rob Duduak, Liz Hoffman from the BRT Project Team; Peter Gallén, Robert Clipperton, Bob Eaton, Curt McCoshen, Lila Wagner from BRS.

MEETING ADMINISTRATION

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

USSU ITEMS

- 2) N/A, since USSU was not present.



TRANSIT ITEMS

- 3) Covid-19 update:
 - a. This meeting was preceded by BRS making a presentation on mandatory mask use on buses to City Council's Standing Policy Committee on Governance and Priorities.
 - b. If mandatory masks are subsequently approved by Council on August 31, Transit intends to increase capacity by allowing approximately 40 passengers per bus (i.e., all seats filled in a regular 40-foot bus).

BRS ITEMS

- 4) Conflicts between transit routes and cycling routes
 - a. At the July-meeting, the BRT Project Team noted that there will be no conflicts between the proposed Separated Cycle Track and the BRT Stations along 19th Street (between 1st Avenue and Broadway Bridge).
 - b. At that same meeting BRS requested an explanation on how conflicts will be avoided elsewhere between the (current and new) Conventional Transit Network and Cycling Infrastructure/Routes. The BRT-team promised to find out from the Active Transportation Group:
 - i. In response to their inquiry, the BRT-team noted that the issue had not been previously raised and appreciated being alerted to the potential conflicts.
 - ii. BRS observed that prudent planning should try to avoid locating (large numbers of) cyclists on the same streets as major transit routes, and should pay close attention to potential conflicts where this is unavoidable. For example:
 1. BRS noted that some Cities have provided dedicated lanes to be shared by transit and cyclists in order to conserve space. BRS noted that such arrangements typically frustrate both cyclists (who are forced to stop behind buses at bus stops, and feel 'pushed' by buses running late) and transit operators (who remain perpetually stuck behind slow cyclists).

2. BRS pointed out that bus stops require sufficient space and careful design when located adjacent to a separated cycle track. BRS further observed that certain existing bus stop designs (in other cities) had been challenged by the accessibility community.
- 5) Update on BRT Engagement:
- a. Liz from the BRT-team noted that any engagement involving City Administration is prohibited between September 22 and November 10 due to the 'black-out' mandated by the Civic Election. For example, the Nutana Stakeholder Committee for the BRT Project will thus not meet before the election.
 - b. The following update on the BRT Project was provided:



BUS RAPID TRANSIT UPDATE - AUGUST 2020

Thank you for your continued interest in the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. These have been unusual and challenging times. The pandemic has more than ever emphasized how important public transit is to the functioning of a city, transporting essential workers to and from jobs and acting as a support for economic stability and social equity. BRT remains a crucial part of the City of Saskatoon's growth plans and we are happy to provide you with an update on the progress of the project.

Project planning has continued according to projected timelines. The following developments have occurred, moving us ever closer to the launch of Bus Rapid Transit:

- On March 29th, existing high frequency transit service (routes 8, 81, 82, 83, 84 and 86) was rerouted from the Sid Buckwold Bridge to Broadway Avenue. Routes 1 and 6 were rerouted from Broadway Avenue, to the Sid Buckwold Bridge, to maintain transit service along 8th Street west of Broadway Avenue.
- Technical drawings have been received for each BRT station location, including design of the operational components.
- Plans are being developed to build a pilot station to test the physical and technical requirements of each BRT station, to ensure they work well in all seasons. The testing phase will start upon installation and will be observed by a technical team including transit operators and staff.
- Coordination between software companies continues to evolve to ensure the traffic signals and transit software systems will work together to provide Traffic Signal Priority (TSP). Three intersections will be used as test sites.

We will continue to update you regularly as the project moves forward. Feel free to pass this newsletter along to anyone else you may feel would be interested.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Bus Rapid Transit project, please email us at prt@saskatoon.ca.

6) On-Demand Pilot Project:

c. The project:

- i. Transit noted that Saskatoon is the largest transit property using the On-Demand app-based service designed by the Toronto-based software company, Pantonium. Pantonium and Transit staff are closely involved with each other.
- ii. The soft launch (since late July) of the pilot project remains in effect until a public launch takes place later in September.
- iii. 10-12 trips per day have been achieved so far.
- iv. Quite unexpectedly, groups of older adult riders from downtown residences have been using the service and their experience has been positive. More work will be done to engage these groups.

d. To date the emphasis has been on Operator training:

- i. It has taken some time for Operators to learn the procedures and on-board app-software.
- ii. Better results have been achieved when employing the same daily operator, which indicates that familiarity with procedures and the software is crucial.

e. Next steps:

- i. BRS wondered if the purpose of the pilot project is to test first/last-mile connectivity, or act as an alternate service that competes with regular transit.
 1. Transit noted that they have *not* made that distinction in the pilot. The current service area permits both kinds of trips and it will be retained for now with the emphasis placed on debugging the operation.
- ii. Regina Transit is expected to start their pilot project shortly; Regina intends to convert the evening/night service on a regular route to on-demand service.
- iii. In Saskatoon, analysis of ridership statistics and departures/destinations will intensify over time.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 21 September 2020, 2:30 – 3:30 pm on Zoom (date confirmed).