

**Minutes for BRS-USSU-Transit online meeting  
Monday, 7 December 2020 @ 2:30-3:45pm**

Location: Online meeting using Zoom

Present: Jim McDonald, Cory Shrigley, Allison Gray from Transit; Jamie Bell from USSU; Peter Gallén, Robert Clipperton, Curt McCoshen, Scott Colville, Doug Rudolph, Bob Eaton from BRS.

**MEETING ADMINISTRATION**

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

**USSU ITEMS**

- 2) Nothing to report

**TRANSIT ITEMS**

- 3) Nothing to report besides the Transit Director's comments below.

**BRS ITEMS**

The entire meeting was dedicated to Transit Director Jim McDonald's comments on the agenda items.

- 4) Observations on the Civic Election
  - a. When BRS wondered why the free transit that was provided on election day(s) required a special pass, Transit noted that it was based on a past Council Decision; the issue might be ripe for a review.
  - b. It was noted that the re-election of all incumbent Councillors (plus one new Councillor) should bode well for the continued implementation of the Bus Rapid Transit project, which had been an election issue.
  - c. It was also noted that one of the re-elected Councillors, Sarina Gersher, is a member and upcoming Board Chair of the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA), while the Transit Director, Jim McDonald, is 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and upcoming President of CUTA's Executive Committee. Their intent is to raise the awareness and influence of CUTA.
- 5) Update on the Service Standards document:
  - a. The much awaited Service Standards document is on hold; instead a shorter report pertaining to Councillor Gersher's specific inquiry would be forthcoming shortly.
  - b. BRS informed the Transit Director that they would like to see a range of potential transit improvements (such as improved transit on Sundays or late-night transit service three nights a week, etc.) costed out in advance and presented to Council at budget time, so that Council could pick one or two if they happened to find the additional funds.
    - i. This idea originated from the unexpected approval of additional funds in the 2020 City Budget for improved transit to Rosewood, which was not on BRS's list of preferred service improvements.

- ii. In his response, the Transit Director noted that the approved funds were very specific to Rosewood and would not have been available otherwise.
    - c. The Transit Director noted that the Service Standards document Transit was working on would be emphasising CUTA's industry standards and the City's Growth Plan:
      - i. As an example, he noted that the recommended industry standard for the introduction or potential cancellation of conventional transit service is an expectation of at least 30 boardings per hour.
      - ii. He also highlighted Section 3.5.2: 'Service Plan' (pp. 20-24) in the City's *Growth Plan Technical Report, Part 3: Transit* (dated February 2016), that would be guiding their Service Standards.
- 6) Access to Transit Data/Statistics/Information
  - a. In response to BRS's previous inquiry about the distribution of service hours throughout the day and week in various seasons, Transit noted that their current data did not readily provide that particular detail. Transit also noted that they would be interested in that same information, but the idea will have to await the availability of staff time.
- 7) Update on the BRT-project and the New Transit Network:
  - a. The main concern for the BRT project was that ICIP-funding had not yet been approved by the Province. While waiting, the BRT Project Team was concentrating their effort on preparations, but they could not undertake any activities covered by the ICIP-funding.
  - b. The Transit Director also noted that the item of highest importance in the ICIP-funding was money for new buses; Transit has not received new buses for almost two years and without the ICIP-funding Transit's fleet renewal strategy would again fall badly behind!
- 8) Transit in an emergency, such as the recent snow-dump:
  - a. The Transit Director noted that they were still concentrating on restoring normal service and had had not yet analyzed the events of the snow-dump.
  - b. BRS pointed out that riders understood quite well that service curtailment was required. However, they had been upset about the significant time lag between the curtailment and subsequent restoration of any particular route and the provision of sufficiently detailed information about exactly what changes had occurred and when; riders found themselves stranded on bus stops they thought were in service based on the available information.
- 9) Fare Review and new Ticketing System:
  - a. The original intent had been to conclude the Fare Review in time for the implementation of the new Ticketing System in the summer of 2021.
  - b. The new Ticketing System (from Masabi) is still expected to go live in the summer of 2021. The only outstanding issue is the cash-boxes:
    - i. The current cash-boxes, which are expected to count the cash but malfunction frequently, have moving parts that can no longer be repaired or replaced.
    - ii. A modern, sophisticated cash-box costs 10,000-15,000 dollars, but Transit's cash receipts are only about \$6,000 per day, so very expensive cash-boxes are hardly warranted. Transit is currently investigating very simple drop-in cash-boxes like the see-through 'cylinders' familiar to transit riders of the past.

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- c. Due to Covid, the Fare Review cannot occur, since face-to-face engagement with citizens are required but currently prohibited.
    - i. When undertaken, the Fare Review is expected to take 8 months; the starting date will be back-calculated from the desired implementation date.
- 10) Covid-19 update:
- a. After the Transit Director had had to leave the meeting, BRS pointed out that the level of mask-use officially reported by Transit versus observed by riders and others seemed to deviate substantially. Discussion of this item was left for the next meeting.

**NEXT MEETING:** Monday, 11 January 2021, 2:00 – 3:00 pm on Zoom (date & time already confirmed).