

**Minutes for BRS-USSU-Transit online meeting
Monday, 8 March 2021 @ 2:30-3:30pm**

Location: Online meeting using Zoom

Present: Cory Shrigley, Allison Gray, Taha Najam from Transit; Jamie Bell from USSU; Peter Gallén, Robert Clipperton, Lila Wagner, Curt McCoshen, Scott Colville, Doug Rudolph 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) New bus stop 'Blades' at the Downtown Terminal:
 - a. The term "blade" refers to the Saskatoon Transit (ST) teardrop shaped bus stop sign. Transit informed BRS that the current tall blue pylon signage in the downtown terminal will be replaced with a regular pole and blade. These older pylon signs contain the route number and schedule boards for each bus stop and are now at end of life. Concerns include their deteriorating and rusting bases and potential for broken glass.
 - b. The new blade and signage will be similar to that of the University Terminal. Transit is looking at a smaller info board that will provide route and schedule information to the public as before.

BRS ITEMS

- 4) Transit's new Service Standards:
 - a. Service Levels in emerging neighbourhoods:
 - i. Transit was pleased with the issues raised by members of the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation on March 1 regarding Transit's submission of a Service Level document that addressed the introduction of transit service to new neighbourhoods and the improvement of such service as they grow.
 - ii. A follow-up on certain particulars will go to SPCoT later.
 - b. New Service Standards
 - i. Transit has been working for quite some time on a more comprehensive Service Standards document.
 - ii. A discussion took place regarding the ultimate purpose, scope, contents, and style of the first draft of this document:
 1. Transit expressed a desire to treat this document as an internal and technical document, for planning and documenting purposes.

- a. Thus, although they were interested in feedback, Transit has no immediate intent to make the document more customer facing, nor do they see a need to submit it to SPCoT.
 2. In contrast, BRS suggested that there is indeed a great need for this document (or more likely a re-written public version thereof suitable for lay people) to be submitted to Council and broadly distributed to the general public for the following purposes:
 - a. The public Service Standards could be used by a Councillor to advise a developer or an irate constituent why better transit service is not available in their emerging neighbourhood, or
 - b. The public Service Standards could be used by all riders as well as other citizens to figure out how the transit system works, what types of transit services exist, when transit is running, how often the bus is coming, and how performance is evaluated.
 - c. In addition, the Service Standards document could act as the reminder for potential future service enhancements and desired upgrades to the current standards that should be evaluated.
- 5) Pantonium On-Demand:
 - a. Update on Saskatoon's On-Demand Pilot:
 - i. While keeping operating hours unchanged, the on-demand service area was substantially increased on March 2 and now includes the Airport, the north-end Costco and the south-west part of the city, as shown on the map below.
 - ii. The intent is to extend the Pilot until the end of the year 2021.
 - iii. Statistics to date from the Pilot:
 1. 948 booked trips, of which 718 were completed successfully; 219 were cancelled (by operator or rider); and 11 were erroneous.
 - b. Request for Proposal (RFP)
 - i. A permanent On-Demand solution is in the works.
 - ii. Transit will be following the RFP process as per the City's guidelines in determining a permanent solution for On Demand. This process should be complete by the end of 2021.
 - iii. The intent is to find an on-demand platform that integrates seamlessly with Transit-App and better integration for riders with trip-planning on both conventional and on-demand transit, next-bus information, and on-demand ride bookings.

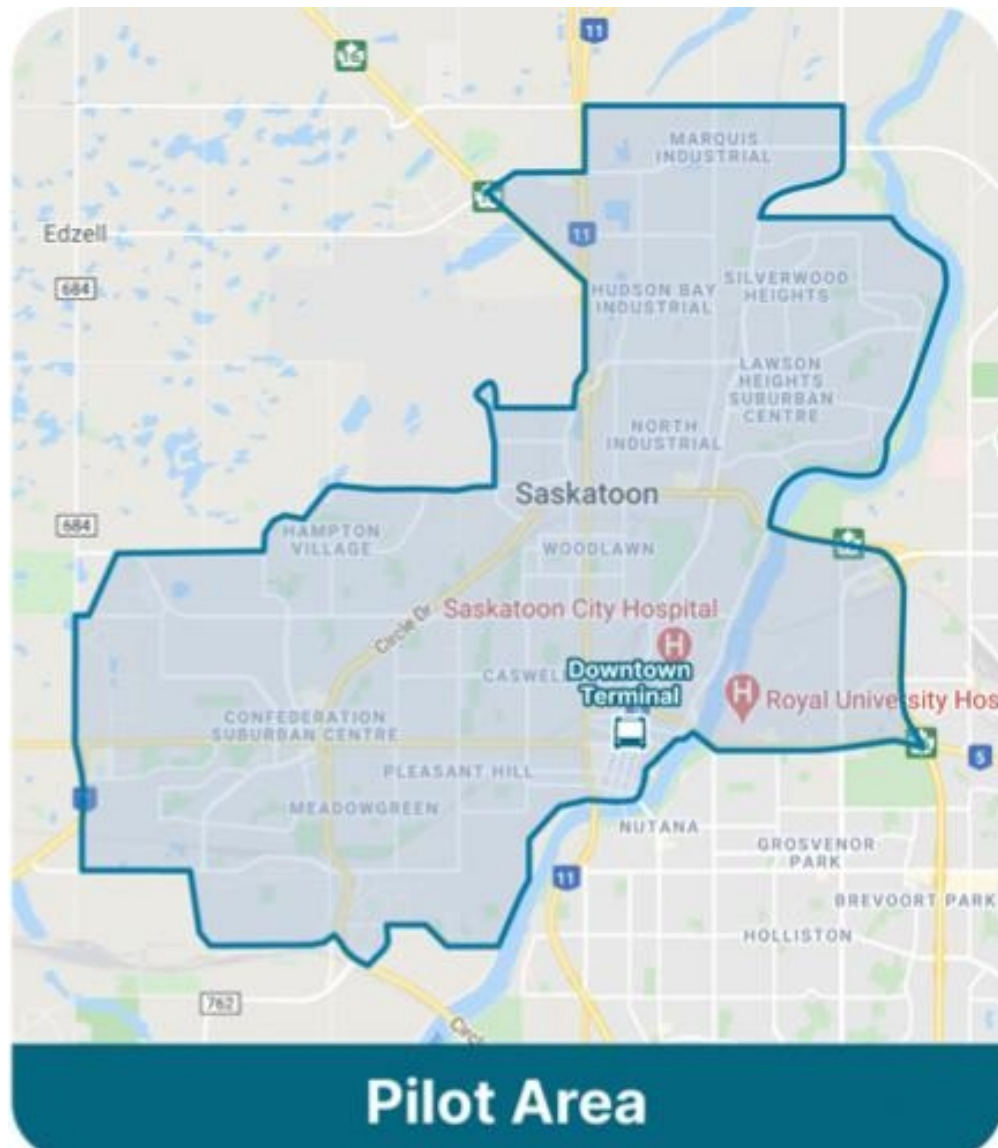


Fig. 1: Expanded service area for the On-Demand pilot project in Saskatoon

- c. BRS commented on the following use of On-Demand Transit as a route planning tool and encouraged Transit to take note.
 - i. An insightful interview includes Transit Director Paul Buck in Belleville, Ontario, that was broadcast through a webinar by Transit Action Alliance of Guelph (TAAG). Paul Buck related the following experience:
 1. Belleville has been using Pantonium On-Demand for quite some time as a successful supplement to their sparse fixed-route transit network.
 2. Some time ago, two long, winding, low-performing fixed routes were eliminated and replaced with On-Demand. To their surprise, ridership immediately increased from about 6 riders to over 20 riders per hour from the areas that lost the fixed routes.

3. When analyzing trip bookings (boardings and deboardings), they found that the target for many riders was a destination that previously had been difficult to reach. In fact, their transit planners had been totally unaware of the latent attraction of this destination.
4. The surprising outcome of this on-demand implementation was that Belleville Transit is now installing a new fixed route to that destination in order to cut down on having so many on-demand buses heading for the same destination. The on-demand buses will instead be deployed elsewhere where they are more useful.
5. Paul Buck thus wanted to highlight the unintended use of on-demand as an effective planning tool for ridership needs and for identifying a much needed fixed-route service that had gone undetected for years.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 19 April 2021, 2:30 – 3:30 pm on Zoom (date to be confirmed)