

**Minutes for BRS-USSU-Transit online meeting  
Monday, 19 April 2021 @ 2:30-3:30pm**

Location: Online meeting using Zoom

Present: Corey Shrigley & Allison Gray from Saskatoon Transit (ST); Jamie Bell & Abhineet Goswami from the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU); Jay Magus, Director of Transportation for the City of Saskatoon; Warrick Baijius from Walking Saskatoon (WS); and Peter Gallén, Robert Clipperton, Scott Colville & Donna Molin from Bus Riders of Saskatoon (BRS).

**ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

- For this meeting: Allison was appointed chair and Peter will prepare the minutes.

**USSU INITIATIVES**

- 1) Personnel change:
  - a. Jamie Bell has reached the end of his term as VP of Operations & Finance for USSU and will be replaced by Abhineet Goswami on May 1, 2021.
- 2) New Ticketing System:
  - a. USSU is collaborating with the University of Saskatchewan ICT team to create and maintain the UPass-portion (university students) of the rider database in Saskatoon Transit's new Masabi *Justride* ticketing system – TGo.

**TRANSIT INITIATIVES**

- 3) New Masabi *Justride* ticketing system (TGo)
  - a. Phase 1 of the new mobile ticketing system is now expected to go live in mid-June.

**BRS INITIATIVES**

- 4) This was a joint meeting with Walking Saskatoon to engage with Jay Magus, Director of Transportation for the City of Saskatoon:
  - a. In response to the following pre-submitted questions, Jay provided a thorough Power Point presentation, which was followed by additional observations from participants:
    - i. Q1: What do you see as the role of the Transportation Department in serving bus riders and pedestrians? How will the department work to provide greater support for these modes of transportation?
    - ii. Q2: How can Transportation adapt its designs and standards to meet changing needs?
    - iii. Q3: What can the Transportation Department do to improve access to the City's buses and make streets, sidewalks and multi-use pathways more walkable for all?
  - b. Observations by the participants may be summarized as follows:
    - i. BRS brought up examples of 'silos' where construction activities initiated by various City departments did not take into account the effect on transit riders.

1. BRS emphasized that when such instances are brought to the City's attention, the intent is not just to resolve the instance at hand but to achieve a general improvement in all such future instances.
- ii. WS noted as an example that pedestrians frequently get splashed by motorists. WS further noted that much of the environment for walking is unhealthy, unpleasant and not sufficiently safe – attributes of 'ambience' that are often of more importance to pedestrians than the purely transportation aspect of 'getting from A to B'.
  1. It was suggested that current manuals and traditional designs seldom pay attention to this 'ambience' in the transportation environment.
- iii. It was also pointed out that it is nearly impossible for active transportation and transit to double their mode shares – as requested by the Growth Plan – when driving remains so convenient and economical through cheap gas, excessive parking, no congestion and the continuing preferential treatment of motorists over other transportation modes and other participants in the public space.
- iv. The following specific concerns were noted:
  1. Transportation planning in Saskatoon still seems to be conducted from the point of view of motor traffic.
    - a. Although dedicated infrastructure for active transportation (AT) is now being included and much appreciated, this AT-infrastructure is often simply attached to a route network that in essence is planned for motorists – *not* in ways that would favour the preferences, desires and innate behaviours of pedestrians, cyclists, roller-bladers, mobility scooters, transit riders and many other AT-users.
    - b. Moreover, proven concepts such as a 'low-car city' ("autoluw" in Dutch) have not been brought to the attention of Council or the general public in Saskatoon.
  2. Most taxpayer funding for transportation is still directed towards driving, although children/youth and many adults are *not* allowed to drive and many citizens choose *not* to drive, thus perpetuating and sanctioning this serious mobility inequity.
  3. Perhaps even more importantly, most of the local street space – which constitutes a substantial portion of the overall public realm in the city – is still dedicated to the 'efficient movement of motor traffic' instead of being looked upon as 'common space that should be safely shared by all citizens' – whether they are motorists, AT-users or simply children playing on the street or visiting their friends across the street.
    - a. For example, although 'lower speed limits on local streets' are currently being contemplated, internationally proven concepts such as 'shared/naked streets' ("woonerf" in Dutch) have not been introduced to Council or the general public in Saskatoon.

4. And finally specific observations on AT-users and safety:
  - a. Current practise and traffic legislation assigns AT-users and motorists equal rights in the traffic environment, although available data clearly shows that vulnerable users – such as pedestrians & cyclists – are much more prone to death and serious injury in case of a collision with a motor vehicle. The underlying concept of ‘equality’ in this relationship is misplaced and grossly unjustified. The relationship should instead be based on ‘equity’, which is an entirely different and much more just concept.
  - b. Current practise and traffic legislation also assigns the same responsibilities to AT-users and motorists, thus failing to take adequate note of the fact that many participants in the public space are children and the elderly. Such vulnerable users should not be expected to possess the same level of competence (or agility) in the traffic environment as adult drivers in their prime.
  - c. In summary, it may be noted that motorists, who are comfortably ensconced within their fortified vehicles, fail to appreciate the real and justified terror of AT-users who are the undeserving targets of these same deadly vehicles.
- c. In conclusion, BRS and WS were very pleased to have this opportunity to hear from and talk to the Director of Transportation. They also appreciated Jay’s willingness to have himself or his staff meet with them in the future.

5) Approved topics for the next meeting:

- a. Discussion of BRS’s participation in the Corridor Planning Project.
- b. Update by Paul Bracken, ST’s Maintenance Manager, on the Electric Bus Pilot.
- c. Discussion of bus shortage and service change rumours.

**NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday, 25 May 2021 @ 2:30pm via Zoom (confirmed)