

**Minutes for BRS-USSU-Transit online meeting  
Monday, 14 June 2021 @ 11:30am-12:30pm**

Location: Online meeting using Zoom

Present: Allison Gray, Cory Shrigley from Saskatoon Transit (ST); Abhineet Goswami (joining later) from the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU); Mandy Fehr (as an observer), Engagement Consultant, City of Saskatoon; and Peter Gallén, Robert Clipperton, Douglas Rudolph, Donna Moline from Bus Riders of Saskatoon (BRS).

**ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

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

**USSU INITIATIVES**

- 1) USSU noted that they are having regular, ongoing discussions directly with Saskatoon Transit and the City on many fronts, such as U-Passes, the new Mobile Ticketing system, Corridor Planning along College Drive, transit services to campus, and student surveys.

**TRANSIT INITIATIVES**

- 2) New Mobile Ticketing system:
  - a. ST noted that they are very excited about the official launch on June 15 (tomorrow) of the new Mobile Ticketing service from Masabi (with ties to Transit-app).
  - b. ST reminded that those utilizing rebated fares, such as high-school students and seniors, need to activate the 'entitlement' in their app-account by making their first mobile ticket purchase at the Customer Service Centre.
  - c. 'Entitlements' provided by Social Services to qualify for Discounted Transit Passes will be introduced in Phase 2 of the implementation.
  - d. It should be noted that all traditional tickets & passes continue to work as before and there has been no changes to fares; Mobile Ticketing is an enhancement to the system, not a replacement. ST will continue to accept cash as fare payment moving forward.
- 3) Shelter Art Project:
  - a. Transit noted that E.D. Feehan high school students undertook the annual Shelter Art Project this year and the results will be unveiled shortly.

**BRS INITIATIVES**

- 4) Service changes going live on June 27:
  - a. Frequency will be reduced from 30-minute to 40-minute headways (daytime) on each of the routes that make up high-frequency trunk (routes #4+) along the College-Attridge corridor to/from University and the Downtown. In addition, a new route #46 (replacing the old route #28) is introduced along the same corridor, which will provide access from Sutherland, Forest Grove & Erindale to much requested grocery stores and other shopping in University Heights.

- b. Daytime frequency will also be reduced from 30-minutes to 40-minutes on staggered routes 50 & 55 and 30 & 35. This means that the frequency along their common trunk-sections will be reduced from the current 15-minutes to 20-minutes.
    - i. One of the purposes of this change in frequency is to gain experience with the new 20-minute frequency.
    - ii. The intent is namely to introduce 20-minute headways as the new, typical frequency on most routes in the redesigned transit network that ST plans to implement in 2025 (i.e., thus a substantial improvement over the current 30-minute headways, which are typical on most routes today).
  - c. Overall, there will be no less service hours provided on a daily basis. Freed-up buses will be redeployed on other routes, such as enhanced On-Demand and elsewhere.
- 5) Service Standard's document
- a. Saskatoon Transit's first-ever, comprehensive Service Standards document was presented on June 7 to SPC-Transportation, who referred it to City Council.
  - b. BRS expressed disappointment that this important but still essentially internal draft document was published before the necessary final edits had been conducted.
- 6) Update on the On-Demand service:
- a. After expanding the service area on May 31 to encompass the entire city, On-Demand ridership has soared: ridership is now about 12-14 in the mornings, with a lull around 11:30, before picking up again in the afternoons to 26-28 total rides on the two buses.
  - b. The On-Demand system is proving to be an excellent method for ST to collect data to figure out where riders want to go from where they board. ST is in frequent contact with the system vendor, Pantonium, who collects/analyses the data.
  - c. The substantial number of operators that have moved to the expanded On-Demand system but are still learning its intricacies has caused glitches in the overall operation of the system, which is managed entirely by computer software. Other glitches have occurred when no-show riders forgot to cancel their trip; these no-shows are believed to occur when riders board a fixed-route bus while waiting for their On-Demand ride.
  - d. Travel-training specific to On-Demand is in the works.
  - e. ST is in the process of smoothly converting the on-demand pilot project into a permanent service. A Request-for-Proposals (RFP) for a permanent system vendor, whose solution will be integrated into the Transit-app, is in the works.
- 7) Info-systems on the buses:
- a. Electronic Display Panels:
    - i. BRS informed ST that the orange-tinted, dot-matrix text/numbers on the external and interior electronic display screens of the older (New Flyer) buses are difficult to read by people with reduced visibility.
    - ii. BRS also noted that the whitish/bluish-tinted text & numbers on the LED-displays in the newer (Nova) buses are much easier to read by people with reduced visibility.

- iii. ST noted that the older buses will not be retrofitted due to cost and approaching obsolescence and was pleased to receive BRS's more favourable impression of the newer LED displays.
- iv. BRS also brought to ST's attention the occasionally garbled information on the internal display screens.
  - 1. ST hoped that riders would inform the operator, or use the preferred method by reporting the incidence using the Customer Feed-back form. ST stressed that such customer feed-back is often the only realistic way for ST to detect and fix these glitches (provided that sufficiently detailed information is received to identify the bus and its location).
- b. Audio-announcements:
  - i. BRS wondered if the occasionally late 'next stop'-announcements might be caused by delays in the ITS-network.
  - ii. ST noted that no changes have been made to the long-established refresh rate of the GPS-locations.
- 8) Construction-related problems at bus stops:
  - a. BRS used the prolonged delay in fixing a particular bus stop on 33<sup>rd</sup> Street as an appalling example of other City departments repeatedly failing to restore bus stops to an acceptable standard after finishing their work.
  - b. In the case at hand, Riders continue to end up in soft mud every time it rains (as the deep footprints on site clearly indicate).
  - c. BRS further noted that riders should not have to report this kind of issue through a variety of the City's Feed-back Forms (as was the case here), and ST should not have to initiate action before the necessary repairs get done by the City department at fault. The well-known expression 'when doing the work, fix the mess' should apply every time.
- 9) Potential topics for future meetings:
  - a. Update on the BRT Project at the July meeting: confirmed
  - b. Since the topic is currently on Council's agenda, brainstorming about ST's potential role(s) in various emergencies/disasters might be beneficial, with the goal of ensuring that any good ideas reach Administration and Council in time to be considered.

**NEXT MEETING:** Monday, 12 July 2021 @ 2:30pm via Zoom (confirmed)