

**Minutes for BRS-USSU-Transit online meeting
Monday, 12 July 2021 @ 2:30-3:30pm**

Location: Online meeting using Zoom

Present: Allison Gray, Cory Shrigley from Saskatoon Transit (ST); Abhineet Goswami from the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU); Rob Dudiak, BRT Project Manager, City of Saskatoon; Mandy Fehr (as an observer), Engagement Consultant, City of Saskatoon; and Peter Gallén, Robert Clipperton, Shirley Koob, Timothy Miller from Bus Riders of Saskatoon (BRS).

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

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

USSU INITIATIVES

- 1) Student and City Connection Committee:
 - a. Abhineet has proposed a new committee for the City of Saskatoon which will act as a connection point for students and the City on various projects and initiatives.
 - b. This committee's policy is drafted in collaboration with Mandy and Allison from the City of Saskatoon.
- 2) Engagement
 - a. To engage students and get their opinion Saskatoon Transit will be collaborating with USSU to promote surveys. These surveys will help Transit to get student opinions on current surveys.

TRANSIT INITIATIVES

- 3) Discounted Bus Passes:
 - a. In response to a previous inquiry, Saskatoon Transit noted that they are not expecting any disruption in issuing Discounted Bus Passes when Social Services discontinues their SAP and TEA designations in August and replaces them with the SIS designation instead.

BRS INITIATIVES

- 4) Construction-related problems at bus stops:
 - a. BRS noted that the bus stop at 33rd Street and Quebec Avenue will receive a concrete pad to remedy the muddy conditions because of adjacent sidewalk construction.
 - b. Saskatoon Transit has strengthened its communication and networking relationship with the Transportation Department over the past few years. This will allow Transit to be more involved in Transportation projects.
 - c. Transit noted they have requested closer cooperation with Transportation to avoid similar hick-ups in the future.
- 5) On-Demand:
 - a. BRS requested background information from Saskatoon Transit on their experience with OnDemand to date that could be used by BRS to submit a contribution to a white paper on micro-transit that is being developed by the Keep Transit Moving Coalition.
 - i. Saskatoon Transit will provide some OnDemand information for BRS.

- b. BRS noted that service glitches and strange routing patterns in On-Demand have been reported on their Facebook-page:
 - i. Transit noted that they have seen a significant jump in overall bookings for On-Demand and that potential solutions are being investigated.
 - 1. Requests for trips close to the end of the daily service have posed difficulties and service refusals have increased as a result.
 - ii. Transit emphasized that booked trips on On-Demand will always be served, and that booking requests will be refused when a trip cannot be accommodated.
 - iii. BRS informed Transit that the 'trip cancellation' function in the On-Demand user-app is obscure; it was suggested that this may be a contributing factor to so many trips being 'no-shows'. Saskatoon Transit acknowledged that this function could be more intuitive to the user.
- 2) Operation of Air-conditioning & Heating systems on buses:
- a. BRS inquired what technical capabilities the bus Operator has in adjusting the heating or air-conditioning (AC) in the buses.
 - i. Transit noted that the Operator can control the driver heat only; the rest of the AC/heating-system has set control points and is automatically adjusted based on ambient air temperature for heat and AC.
 - ii. There are still 10 buses on the road without AC.
 - b. Considering a recent incident at the Downtown Terminal, where passengers were left behind closed doors in a sweltering bus during the recent heat wave, BRS wondered what the policy was:
 - i. Transit replied that 'closed doors when operator absent' is the current policy.
 - ii. BRS suggested that better accommodation of passengers is required – especially with poor air-conditioning during an extreme heat wave.
 - 1. For example, the Operator might ask the Riders left on the bus if they prefer to wait outside while the operator steps out for a while; or a Supervisor might monitor the bus with the doors left open; or some other such arrangement.
- 3) Quarterly update on the Bus Rapid Transit Project:
- a. Rob Dudiak, BRT Project Manager for the City, provided the following update:
 - i. BRS Station Pilot Project at the Civic Operations Centre (COC):
 - 1. The concrete curb and the concrete-surfaced portion of the station Pad were poured recently.
 - 2. To test the suitability, durability, appearance and maintenance of different surfacing materials, other parts of the station Pad will be surfaced with paving stones and tactile strip.
 - 3. A Request for Proposals (RFP) will go out shortly for the station Shelter and information display (pylon).
 - a. These RFPs will include the hardware in the shelter: heater, information screen, CCTV, etc. The purpose is then to stress

these components until failure occurs to select durable solutions for the 85+ shelters on the BRT itself.

ii. CCTV for the Station Shelters:

1. Rob noted that traditional closed-circuit monitoring of the CCTV-system is typically implemented first. This could mean either that recorded video is reviewed after the fact upon receipt of a complaint, or that staff is actively monitoring each video feed (at least some hours of the day).
2. BRS noted that since round-the-clock staff monitoring of multiple (85+) CCTV cameras will be exceedingly costly and cumbersome, they wondered if suitable automated monitoring software has been found.
3. Furthermore, BRS noted that other sites in the City benefiting from CCTV monitoring, such as particularly troublesome walkway tunnels, could perhaps be piggybacked on the BRT monitoring system.
4. Rob noted that he has taken up the issue with multiple parties in the City Administration. Some of the concerns identified so far are that traditional, limited, closed-circuit CCTV-monitoring is already widely accepted, while much broader and more general monitoring using computers operated by artificial intelligence and perhaps including face recognition may pose legal or ethical privacy problems.
5. In conclusion, Rob noted that the issue continues to be actively pursued until a technically, ethically and financially suitable solution is found.

iii. ICIP-funding:

1. Unfortunately, there is no indication whatsoever yet from the Provincial Government regarding their willingness to approve any portion (or none) of the BRT-project.

6) Potential topics for future meetings:

- c. 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, 16 August 2021 @ 2:30pm via Zoom (confirmed)