

**Minutes for BRS-USSU-Transit online meeting
Monday, 16 August 2021 @ 2:30-3:40pm**

Location: Online meeting using Zoom

Present: James McDonald, Allison Gray, Cory Shrigley, Linus Bryksa from Saskatoon Transit (Transit); Abhineet Goswami from the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU); Mandy Fehr (as an observer), Engagement Consultant, City of Saskatoon; and Robert Clipperton, Peter Gallén, Douglas Rudolph, Jennifer Ewles, Curtis McCoshen, James Wood from Bus Riders of Saskatoon (BRS).

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

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

USSU INITIATIVES

- 1) U-Pass:
 - a. In response to a previous question, USSU noted that University Students who want access to the U-Pass through Transit's newly introduced *TGo*-app on their smartphones, the procedure is described in detail at: <https://ussu.ca/main-page/services/u-pass/>.
 - b. For students that utilize the U-Pass in the traditional manner using their Student Card, the process is described at: <https://ussu.ca/main-page/services/u-pass/u-pass-faq/>.

TRANSIT INITIATIVES

- 2) Covid Vaccination clinics:
 - a. The second pop-up vaccination clinic will be set up tomorrow (August 17) in front of Transit's Customer Service Centre.
- 3) Upcoming Transit information events:
 - a. Back-to-School: Transit has been in contact with the two School Boards in Saskatoon to inform them how students can acquire rebated mobile Student Passes through Transit's new Masabi *Justride* ticketing system.
 - b. SIAST Polytechnic: Saskatoon Transit will be making a presentation during their virtual orientation program and providing information on Semester Passes for their website.
 - c. University of Saskatchewan Welcome Week and Campus Expo (Aug. 31): Because on-campus classes are resuming this Fall, Transit will again be on hand at this annual event on Campus to provide information on transit.
- 4) Subscriptions to Access Transit:
 - a. In response to BRS's previous question regarding 'standing orders' for regularly recurring trips to/from work using Access Transit, Transit responded that Customers can put in a request if they feel they could qualify for a subscription.
 - b. The request will then be reviewed by a Supervisor and if it fits in Access Transit's schedules they will add it. Schedules and other parameters such as type of request will be considered as Access Transit does *not* do leisure subscriptions.

- 5) New Statutory Holiday, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, on September 30:
 - a. In response to a previous question regarding whether the new statutory holiday will be Sunday service and Stat Holiday pay for staff this year, Transit noted that they are still awaiting instructions from the Provincial Government.

BRS INITIATIVES

- 6) Discussion with Transit Director James (Jim) McDonald:
 - a. 2-year City Budget 2022-2023:
 - i. Operating Budget:
 1. Transit is requesting the usual inflationary increase to its operating budget to accommodate the latest inflationary pressures.
 2. Loss of fare revenue from Covid-related lower ridership can be accommodated through lower than budgeted fuel expenses.
 3. Transit is also requesting an increase in service hours to introduce Level 1 service to two neighborhoods (Aspen Ridge and Kensington) plus two new Community Routes (Wanuskewin and Route 1010 - Spadina).
 4. BRS commended Transit on introducing a Service Standard and Transit noted that it will allow them to adjust service up and down as required.
 5. BRS wondered whether the upcoming Fare Review would affect the budget? Transit noted that the fare review will not take place until next year and that current fares remain in effect; they were open to hearing through the engagement process what residents want.
 - ii. Capital Budget:
 1. In its capital budget, Transit is asking for funding for 20 urgently needed new buses. Although Transit has put in a request for 10 diesel-electric hybrid buses for 2022 and five fully electric battery buses plus five hybrid buses for 2023, Transit is willing in this purchase to go either fully electric or fully diesel as well.
 2. It may be noted that electric buses have a much higher purchase cost but lower operating cost which results in lower overall life-time costs.
 3. The City has requested joint federal-provincial-municipal *ICIP-Transit* funding for new buses, but this funding has not yet become available.
 - b. Disasters/Emergencies:
 - i. BRS noted in a recent report to Council (May 31) that the Roadways Fleet and Support Department “does *not* have a formal Emergency Response Plan (ERP) in place for responding to extreme or unusual winter storms that result in major disruptions to mobility and safety concerns for the residents of Saskatoon”.
 - ii. With the November 2020 unusual snow event in mind and noting that transit Riders experienced disruptions and difficulties of various kinds as the situation evolved, BRS wondered what Emergency Response Plan Saskatoon Transit has in place for these kinds of disasters and other emergencies. BRS noted that

Transit should perhaps be the primary people mover throughout the City when mobility is jeopardized by a disaster/emergency.

- iii. Transit noted that they have learned from this snow event; especially as it relates to the need for better, timely information to the Riders.
- iv. Transit also noted that they have in the past been requested by the City's Emergency Response Team to provide support; for example to evacuees of various kinds requiring transportation within the city.
- v. Transit found less merit in BRS's suggestion to have advance plans in place for a skeleton or separate transit network during disaster situations.

c. Transit to University:

- i. Now that on-campus classes will resume this Fall, USSU wondered if Transit had plans to reroute more routes through the University Place Riel Transit Terminal?
 - 1. Transit noted that only routes that specifically serve or run through Campus will go through the Place Riel Terminal; all other routes will use the bus stops on College Drive.
- ii. USSU noted that riders with limited mobility are disadvantaged trying to access the bus stops on College.
 - 1. Transit noted that access to these stops, including snow clearing, is the responsibility of the University and other property owners.
 - 2. USSU acknowledged that they can lobby the University in this regard.
- iii. Regarding transit service to the University this Fall, Transit noted that they are basically guessing how ridership will develop and where it will be coming from:
 - 1. Transit also noted that their hands at the beginning of September will be tied to the current Driver Sign-ups, so only minor adjustments will be possible in the early Fall.
 - 2. However, Transit noted that they will be closely monitoring the ridership to the University and collecting data throughout the Fall to determine where exactly the actual demand is located.
 - 3. And now that Transit has also negotiated an additional Driver Sign-up opportunity with ATU on October 30, the data and this intermediate sign-up will allow Transit to make more extensive changes mid-term to better match supply with demand if required.

7) Work Zone Detour Bylaw:

- a. BRS expressed surprise that Transit was not mentioned in the report and proposed Bylaw on "Pedestrian and Cyclist Accommodation in Work Zones and Detours" that the City's Active Transportation Coordinator submitted to the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation (SPCoT) on August 9.
- b. Transit noted that they had no advance warning of this submission despite the existing mechanism for heads-ups and consultations with the Transportation Department.

8) Topics for next meeting:

- a. Update on the experience of the New Ticketing System to date.
- b. Discussion of the next implementation phases of the New Ticketing System.

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NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, 21 September 2021 @ 2:30pm via Zoom (note change of weekday)