

**Minutes for BRS-USSU-Transit online meeting  
Tuesday, 30 November 2021 @ 9:30-10:30am**

Location: Online meeting using Zoom

Present: Allison Gray, Cory Shrigley from Saskatoon Transit; Mandy Fehr (as an observer), Engagement Consultant, City of Saskatoon; and Robert Clipperton, Peter Gallén, Sherry Tarasoff, 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) USSU was not present at this meeting.

**TRANSIT INITIATIVES**

- 2) Service Standards:
  - a. In response to BRS's letter to the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation (SPCoT) meeting on 1 November 2021 Transit provided the following verbal response:
    - i. The purpose of the Service Standards document is to provide clarity regarding the minimum level of services that Transit is expected to provide.
    - ii. Transit noted that Councillor Gough asked several insightful questions at the SPCoT-meeting. These questions highlighted for Transit certain confusion regarding terminology used in the document; for example, the terminology used to describe current routes versus future routes was not clear enough.
    - iii. Transit noted that the Service Standard is a 'living' document and that their intent is to keep improving the document and change it as warranted.
    - iv. Transit also thanked BRS for their input to date and expressed a willingness to keep working with BRS on improvements to the document.
    - v. The Service Standards document as presented to SPCoT was unanimously approved and referred to Council for formal adoption.
    - vi. The Service Standards document and associated Transit Terms document were subsequently approved by Council and have been published on Transit's website at <https://transit.saskatoon.ca/about-us/our-performance> .
  - b. BRS reiterated that they support Transit's efforts to provide comprehensive, clear service standards in writing for everyone to see, while also providing the framework for Transit to initiate requests to Council to make changes to their services.

**BRS INITIATIVES**

- 3) Observations regarding comments on BRS's Facebook page:
  - a. Market Mall Transit Terminal:
    - i. Transit noted that the reconstruction of the Terminal was requested by Market Mall.
      1. Transit also noted that prior to these changes, they did not have a contract in place regarding snow removal and indemnity.

2. The new terminal is located near the old terminal, but its smaller footprint now prevents buses from turning around in the terminal. Consequently, some 'terminal stops' have now been relocated nearby onto Louis Street and Preston Avenue.
- ii. BRS observed that Market Mall Terminal has been under reconstruction for several months and noted that:
  1. Before, during and after reconstruction there was inadequate information provided to Riders regarding the purpose and outcome of the project.
  2. Information regarding temporary detours on site were also inadequate with bus stops scattered over adjacent streets, resulting in difficulties with transfers and knowing where to catch the bus for the return trip. A map of the temporary arrangements would have been appreciated.
  3. On-site signage was inadequate throughout the project, including the point in time when the new Terminal became operational.
  4. Although the new Terminal is apparently now open, there is still no map available on Transit's website showing how each bus stop is laid out.
  5. In summary, Transit seems to have been oblivious throughout this project to the fact that Terminals are major destinations plus places of transfers that require accurate and timely information for Riders.
- b. Recent schedule changes:
  - i. Transfer difficulties:
    1. BRS informed Transit that some Riders have experienced significantly longer total travel times because of increased transfer delays at the University Terminal after the frequency on routes 50 & 55 was reduced from 30 minutes to 40 minutes.
    2. Transit noted that traditional pulses are no longer in use at University Terminal to facilitate predictable transfers. Thus Riders need to carefully investigate the best route and transfer options for each particular trip.
  - ii. Congestion adjustments:
    1. Transit informed the meeting that the introduction of 10-minute longer trip times on the high-frequency routes 4/43/44/46 at peak periods was introduced because of rush-hour traffic congestion.
    2. BRS noted that such delays can be eliminated as soon as the dedicated Bus Rapid Transit lanes have been implemented along College Drive.
- c. Shelter vandalism and litter:
  - i. Transit has an agreement in place with their advertising agency to regularly pick up litter, clean the bus shelters and conduct any necessary repairs.
- d. Bypassing of Montgomery:
  - i. BRS informed Transit that Montgomery seems to be deliberately bypassed at some occasions thus having left Riders stranded at the bus stop.

- ii. Transit acknowledged that it had indeed happened a few times, but the issue was investigated and shouldn't happen again.
- e. Problems with Fare Boxes:
  - i. BRS noted that the old fare boxes seem to be out-of-order frequently, thus resulting in loss of fare income for Transit.
  - ii. Transit responded that they have made changes to operator procedures to minimize fare losses.
  - iii. Transit also noted that they intend to make a request to Council for new cash-fare boxes.
- f. Erroneous departure information:
  - i. Display Boards:
    - 1. BRS informed Transit that certain departure times on some display boards seem to include errors.
    - 2. Transit appreciates being informed of such errors, so that they can be corrected, but they need to know the exact details of the issue, such as where and what schedules.
  - ii. Transit-app:
    - 1. Riders who experience concerns with departure times in Transit-app were encouraged to notify Transit-app directly through the app.
- g. Needle pick-up procedure:
  - i. BRS informed Transit that a Rider had expressed concerns with the handling of a particular incidence where a needle/syringe was found on a bus.
  - ii. Transit noted that Utility staff are already trained to safely pick up and dispose of needles. Regarding 'on-the-road discoveries', Transit is working on procedures for supervisors to properly dispose of needles as well.
- h. On-board video:
  - i. Some Riders have expressed concerns with privacy because of on-board video surveillance being recorded in buses.
  - ii. Transit noted that each bus is clearly signed (see Fig-1) both outside prior to boarding and inside outlining Transit's authorization under *Section 24* of the *Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*<sup>1</sup>. The phone number to City Clerks Office (306-975-3240) is provided for inquiries.
  - iii. Video recordings are kept for two weeks before being erased.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*: <https://oipc.sk.ca/legislation-main/la-foip/>. *Section 24* of the Act states: "No local authority shall collect personal information unless the information is collected for a purpose that relates to an existing or proposed program or activity of the local authority."



Fig-1: Signs that alert to the presence of video surveillance in buses

- i. On-Demand:
    - i. In the New Year, on-demand service will be available from Monday to Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., except for trips to/from Brighton and Rosewood where service will be until 6:00 p.m.
    - ii. To improve availability of on-demand service, Riders need to note that if they are booking a trip from one stop to another along a fixed route they will be prompted to take fixed route.
    - iii. BRS noted that user-errors may be behind some problems and encouraged Transit to provide better instructions for Riders using clear examples of *how-to-do* and *how-not-to-do* things when using on-demand.
    - iv. BRS also encouraged Transit to set up a Focus Group consisting of frequent and knowledgeable users of the service. BRS expressed its willingness to facilitate the search for participants among its members if Transit is interested.
  - j. Cost of a Service Hour:
    - i. Transit informed the meeting that the current cost of one Service Hour is \$107:20 – *not* net of revenue; only expenses.
    - ii. Since time ran out to thoroughly discuss the make-up of that figure, further discussion will resume later.
- 4) Topics for the December meeting:
- a. Mandy Fehr, Engagement Consultant with the City, will discuss upcoming Engagement initiatives.

**NEXT MEETING:** Monday, 13 December 2021 @ 2:30am via Zoom (note time-of-day)