

**Minutes for BRS-USSU-Transit online meeting
Monday, 17 January 2022 @ 2:30-3:30pm**

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, James Wood, Sherry Tarasoff, Curt McCoshen, Bob Eaton from Bus Riders of Saskatoon (BRS).

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

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

USSU INITIATIVES

- 1) USSU was not present at this meeting.

TRANSIT INITIATIVES

- 2) Mandy Fehr, Engagement Consultant with the City, provided an update on engagement activities:
 - a. Nutana BRT Advisory Group is the only active engagement project related to the future Bus Rapid Transit. The group is focussing on impacts on businesses at bus stops as well as the overall construction timeline for the BRT on Broadway by including the upcoming bridge repair in their deliberations.
 - b. Engagement on the feeder routes for the BRT network is planned to start in February-March. Transit noted that the contemplated plans for this New Transit Network are 'less radical' than those previously presented by the City's BRT consultant, HDR Corporation.
 - c. In the future, engagement opportunities will become less project focussed and more focussed on the participants, meaning that multiple projects of interest to a particular participant can be discussed simultaneously.

BRS INITIATIVES

- 3) Cash Fares on buses:
 - a. Questions posed by BRS:
 - i. Members had observed that the fare boxes in some buses seemed to be located inaccessibly behind the recently installed Driver Protection Barrier.
 - ii. BRS was concerned that many fare boxes seem to be out of order, thus causing loss of revenue for Transit. Perhaps more importantly, BRS noted that the most loyal riders that regularly purchase expensive monthly/annual passes continued to pay in full, while infrequent riders who rely on 10-pack or single-trip cash tickets were often given these free rides.
 - iii. BRS wondered if cash-tickets would be available in the future and how they would be facilitated.
 - b. Responses:
 - i. The current fare boxes have reached the end of their useful service life.
 - ii. Consequently up to 20-25 fare boxes may at any time be out of service:

1. There are two types of causes for malfunctioning fare boxes: log-in by the Operator into the electronic system of the box is prevented, in which case the bus pass validator and ticket printer cannot be used, or mechanical problems in the box prevent the counting and acceptance of cash being inserted into it.
 2. While loss of revenue is a concern, Transit noted that such losses are minimized by placing buses with malfunctioning fare boxes on routes with minimal cash sales (e.g., university routes).
 3. While Operators in the past have put hand-written 'Out-of-Order'-signs on the fare box, that option is no longer permitted.
 4. A Supervisor must be called to assess the situation, place a printed out-of-order sign on the fare box if required, and log the defect into Transit's *Dashboard*-system.
 5. In some cases, a fare box can be fixed through an onsite 'reset'. Otherwise, the fare box is put back 'into service' once it is fully functioning again after diagnosis and repair. Many fixes can be accommodated within a few days, but some repairs do take longer.
- iii. Single-trip tickets will continue to be sold and accepted on the buses:
1. Remote Ticket Kiosks for printed tickets that accept cash and electronic payments are on the roadmap to be installed in high-use locations.
 2. Improved electronic payment methods within Transit's *Justride* ticketing system from Masabi, such as payment by Debit Card, are being pursued.
- iv. Cash will also continue to be accepted on the buses; and preparations are in place to accommodate cash-payments long-term:
1. The purchase order for 150 new fare boxes has been issued to the Canadian company, Payment In Motion¹; delivery is expected in a few months and the tall boxes will be accessible outside the driver's barrier.
 2. Since the simpler (and thus cheaper and less prone to malfunction), new fare boxes are *not* equipped with a ticket-printer, Transit is pursuing other options to provide a ticket/token for free transfers.
- v. Transit is actively facilitating the move away from cash towards electronic payments using Transit's *Justride* ticketing system from Masabi:
1. Eco-passes for employees of qualifying employers are being implemented in *Justride*.
 2. Social Services is excited about the improvement in procedures to provide their clientele with discounted tickets through *Justride*. The new procedure will save staff time to qualify their clients, and minimizes hassles for their clients in acquiring the discounted tickets.

¹ Transit is acquiring Taurus Mechanical Fareboxes from PIM: <https://paymentinmotion.com/products/>

- 4) Concern with Transit's new *Justride* ticketing system:
 - a. A participant at the meeting mentioned that tickets already available in their cell-phone's *Justride* 'wallet' could not be accessed for activation when required on the bus.
 - b. Transit noted that Customer Service can investigate issues when contacted with details including the customer's contact information. For example, in this case Transit would need to know if the issue occurred in *Transit*-app or in the *TGo*-app.
 - c. Transit further noted that neither 'access to the *Justride* Cloud on the Internet' nor 'data pack from the cell-phone provider' is required when activating an electronic ticket that is already in the wallet of the rider's electronic device. Furthermore, access to the *Justride* Cloud – either through Wi-Fi² or data pack on the electronic device – is only required when purchasing tickets into the wallet of the electronic device.
- 5) Snow clearing at the Downtown Bus Terminal:
 - a. BRS relayed a concern from a member regarding the snow clearing at the terminal.
 - b. Transit noted that snow clearing is contracted out and promised to investigate.
- 6) Shortage of buses in the recent cold spell:
 - a. Transit noted that a lengthy discussion on the topic occurred at the January meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation (SPCoT). Transit further noted that a report on the topic will be forthcoming at the February meeting of SPCoT.
- 7) Transit's next 5-year plan, 2021-2025:
 - a. Transit noted that preparation of the next 5-year plan has begun.
 - b. BRS expressed an interest in being involved in early considerations of the next plan. BRS noted that 'resilience' might be a better guiding principle in the next plan than 'efficiency', which in the past seems to have dominated such plans.
- 8) Transit Indicators:
 - a. BRS expressed an interest in accessing the indicators that the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) uses to make comparisons between its member transit agencies; for which Saskatoon Transit provides their applicable data to CUTA.
 - b. BRS also expressed an interest in exploring the indicators that Transit compiles for its own benefit.
 - c. Transit agreed to investigate the issue.
- 9) Topics for upcoming meetings:
 - a. Project Manager Rob Dudiak will provide his quarterly update on the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project at the February meeting.
 - b. Operations Manager Mike Moellenbeck will present Transit's *Dashboard* and the associated *Research Junction* project at the March meeting.
 - c. Discussion with Mandy Fehr regarding engagement will continue.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 14 February 2022 @ 2:30am via Zoom

² 'Data pack' for cell-phones and other electronic devices is indeed expensive but not required for *Justride* tickets, since free Wi-Fi is available at Public Libraries and elsewhere when purchasing such tickets.