

**Minutes for BRS-USSU-Transit online meeting  
Monday, 13 June 2022 @ 2:30-3:30pm**

**LOCATION:** Online meeting using Zoom

**ATTENDANCE:**

- Saskatoon Transit:
  - Cory Shrigley, Customer Service & Engagement Manager
  - Allison Gray, Marketing Consultant
- University of Saskatchewan Student Union (USSU):
  - Lia Storey-Gamble, VP Operations & Finance
- Bus Riders of Saskatoon (BRS):
  - Robert Clipperton, Spokesperson and Steering Committee Member
  - Peter Gallén, Transit Co-ordinator and Steering Committee Member
  - James (Jim) Wood, Steering Committee Member
  - Odin Swidzinski, Steering Committee Member

**ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

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

**OLD BUSINESS**

- 1) Bus Shelter Art:
  - a. The winners of the Grades 3 and 7 student art contests on the topic of 'Active Transportation and Integrated Mobility' will be presented to the public next week. The winning art works will be displayed on transit buses.
  - b. A new bus stop shelter created by Indigenous artist Justine "Tini" Stilborn in cooperation with the Saskatoon Survivors Circle will be unveiled in Confederation next week.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- 2) Transit Director retires:
  - a. The participants were informed that Transit Director James (Jim) McDonald has retired effective May 27.
  - b. Tracey Davis, Access Transit Manager, and Mike Moellenbeck, Operations Manager for (fixed route) Transit, have been appointed Acting Co-Directors of Saskatoon Transit.
  - c. The search for a permanent Transit Director has been initiated.
- 3) Service Changes:
  - a. In response to a question regarding two recent and closely spaced service changes on May 29 and June 26, respectively, Transit noted the following:
    - i. Service changes are typically introduced in June-July every summer. The original intent this summer was to i) change the headways on certain routes from 30 minutes to 40 minutes and ii) make route and schedule changes to three routes.
    - ii. Transit noted that major service changes that affect Operators must be preceded by a new Sign-up as stipulated in the contract with ATU 615.

- iii. Since the required sign-up took place in May and because the anticipated headway changes were abandoned after consultations with ATU 615 and City Council, certain service changes needed to take place on May 29.
  - iv. Several bus stops will be removed effective June 26 as originally intended.
  - v. One of the purposes of the recent changes is to be able this fall to reduce the required morning book-out by four-five buses to ease the pressure from the continuing shortage of buses. The purpose is not to reduce overall service hours but instead to redistribute them more evenly throughout the day as needed.
- 4) Vicinity Buses:
- a. In response to a question regarding manufacturing defects in the Vicinity buses in Prince Albert and elsewhere, Transit noted that the frames of those 40-foot buses were manufactured with mild steel. Saskatoon Transit's 30-foot buses on the other hand are manufactured with stainless steel and have not experienced similar problems.
- 5) Update on On-Demand Transit (ODT):
- a. As previously reported, *Space Labs* is the developer of Transit's new ODT-software.
  - b. Official launch of the new ODT-service will take place on August 1.
  - c. The new ODT-system will provide a dedicated app for trip bookings but trip planning and next-bus info will be integrated through Transit-App.
  - d. The new service will operate on a 'stop-to-hub' principle.
  - e. The ODT service area bus stops will be in Brighton and Rosewood in the east and North Kensington and Blairmore in the west.
  - f. Regarding the planned 'soft-launch' of the new ODT-system, BRS offered to notify a few members that have previously indicated an interest in taking part, but suggested that Transit from now on deal directly with the interested participants. Transit's intent is to work hands-on with small groups of volunteers over a couple of days next week.
- 6) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):
- a. BRS conveyed to Transit their interest in understanding the KPIs that Transit/CUTA uses:
    - i. Transit noted that most KPIs for public consumption are included in Transit's Annual Reports and their use can be determined there.
    - ii. Transit further noted that many of their KPIs are for internal technical or fiscal purposes only and are therefore confidential. BRS noted that those KPIs are not what they were looking for.
  - b. BRS acknowledged the receipt of the following list of KPIs that Transit monitors through their *Dashboard*:
    - i. Boardings
    - ii. Boarding by neighborhood
    - iii. On time performance (0 min early, 3 min late – based on our time points; not scheduled time)
    - iv. Book out<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Book out' means the number of buses that at a particular time of day go out on the road. The 'Book-out KPI' keeps track of the percentage of buses that went out compared to the number that was scheduled to go out.

- c. It was noted that this kind of list was helpful but did not tell enough. The participants indicated that they were particularly interested in learning what each KPI means and what it is used for; i.e., the formal definition of each KPI. Moreover if available (at least for some KPIs), the participants were also interested in how the data is collected and analyzed, how the KPI is displayed and for whom it is intended.
- 7) Transit's rider education programs, *Experience Transit*:
    - a. *Experience Transit* has been a resounding success with educational sessions conducted for travel ambassadors and numerous seniors groups and incoming high-school classes plus train-the-trainer sessions conducted for new-comer organizations.
    - b. The three streams<sup>2</sup> of the training program (ET, ET<sup>2</sup> & ET<sup>+</sup>) and the *Experience Transit Handbook*<sup>3</sup> were developed by a Johnson-Shoyama graduate student (see below).
  - 8) Transit projects at the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy:
    - a. Since 2019, Transit has engaged four students from the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy:
      - i. On 16 December 2019, BRS and USSU had the opportunity to meet with Deepak Santhanakrishnan<sup>4</sup>, a post-doctoral fellow at the Johnson-Shoyama School of Public Policy, that had been retained by Transit to 'conduct research and develop models and analytical tools to predict the interaction between transit fares, transit ridership and transit revenue that will be utilized by Transit management for more informed decision making on strategy and transit fares'. His work resulted in a written report plus presentation to Transit.
      - ii. In 2020/2021, Johnson-Shoyama student Antara Chowdhury was engaged to write a report for Transit on Standard Performance Measurements. Extensive research was conducted through this Internship Project to prepare the groundwork for more efficient KPIs and a future Performance Measurement System.
      - iii. In 2021/2022, Johnson-Shoyama student Courtney Doherty was engaged through a Practicum to develop a sustainable structure and curriculum for Transit's rider-training program called *Experience Transit*. Her work included the three streams of the training program and she worked on the Handbook for Transit Riders (as described above).
      - iv. The next Johnson-Shoyama student will start in September and will conclude next spring. More information to follow.
  - 9) Topics for upcoming meetings:
    - a. Operations Manager Mike Moellenbeck is expected to present Transit's *Dashboard* and associated *Research Junction* projects at a future meeting.

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<sup>2</sup> *Experience Transit* on Transit's website at: <https://transit.saskatoon.ca/announcement/experience-transit>

<sup>3</sup> The handbook for transit riders, called *Experience Transit: A Guide to Using Saskatoon Transit*, is available at: [https://transit.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/experience\\_transit\\_handbook.pdf](https://transit.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/experience_transit_handbook.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> See minutes from the meeting on 16 December 2019: [https://busridersofsaskatoon.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/COS-minutes\\_2019-12-16.pdf](https://busridersofsaskatoon.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/COS-minutes_2019-12-16.pdf)

COS-minutes, 13 June 2022

**NEXT MEETING:** Monday, 4 July 2022 @ 2:30am via Zoom