

**Minutes for BRS-USSU-Transit online meeting
Monday, 4 July 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 (absent with regrets)
- 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
 - Bob Eaton, Steering Committee Member
 - Odin Swidzinski, Steering Committee Member
 - Curt McCoshen, Steering Committee Member
 - Donna Molin, Steering Committee Member
 - Dominique Tran, Member

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

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

OLD BUSINESS

- 1) N/A

NEW BUSINESS

- 2) Transit Fares:
 - a. Family Week-End Pass:
 - i. In response to BRS's submission on the lack of availability and advertising of the Family Week-End Pass, Transit acknowledged that it has not been promoted except on Mobile Ticketing where it is shown as an option.
 - ii. An improvement regarding all Transit Fares is in the works, however:
 1. All transit fares will be displayed on the screens in Transit's Customer Service Centre at the Downtown Transit Terminal.
 - b. Mobile Ticketing:
 - i. Saskatoon Transit is contemplating making certain discounted fare types available with a self declaration of the *entitlement* on the mobile ticketing apps:
 1. Passes already available in *TGo*-app and *Transit*-app without an explicit *entitlement* from Transit:
 - a. Adult Pass,
 - i. including Day Pass (24-hours from activation),

- b. Child's Pass (K-8; typically 5-13 years of age), and
 - c. Family Week-End Pass.
 2. Transit is considering adding some discounted passes that would be obtained by self-declaring their *entitlement*. The following Passes are being considered:
 - a. Senior's Pass, and
 - b. High-School / Student Pass.
 3. *Entitlements*:
 - a. Currently a person must pay an in-person visit to their School or Transit's Customer Service Office at the Downtown Terminal or one of the ticket vendor locations to show appropriate ID (typically a Student Card, Driver's Licence or Passport) as proof of qualification for the *entitlement*.
 - i. Students can also upload their ID onto Transit's website to receive the *entitlement*:
<https://transit.saskatoon.ca/rider-guide/high-school>
 - b. If self-declaration is adopted, qualifying Riders would simply click a button in the *TGO* or *Transit* app to attest that 'yes, they declare that they qualify for the discounted fare'.
 4. Note that after approval of an *entitlement*, all entitled Passes can be repeatedly purchased through *TGo*-app or *Transit*-app until the *entitlement* expires when renewal is again required.
 5. When asked what BRS thought about self-declaration as a valid entitlement procedure, two separate lines-of-thought emerged:
 - a. One the one hand: "Why not make such a change, since service would be substantially improved while abuse should be minimal? Besides, a person obviously *not* qualified is easily identified."
 - b. And on the other hand: "Abuse of existing fares is rampant and enforcement of fares and other rules is already abysmal. This situation is deplorable and unacceptable – especially for Transit's best customers who already provide the highest monthly payments for their rides."
 - c. It may be noted that these two views are not necessarily mutually exclusive, because the second view pertains mainly to the current lack of enforcement of all fare infractions.
- 3) Safety and rule enforcement on buses:
- a. Current policy:
 - i. Current policy is that Transit Operators and Supervisors do *not* enforce fares – *nor* any other rules on buses that may incite conflict.
 - ii. BRS supports the current policy for Transit Operators and Supervisors, but also deplored the subsequent lack of decorum and decent behaviour on the buses.

- b. Potential changes were briefly discussed:
 - i. Regarding travel without paying valid fare, everyone agreed that the technical deficiencies in the current ticketing systems need to be fixed ASAP:
 - 1. Transit noted that new Cash Boxes, new electronic Bus Cards and new single-trip transfer Tickets will be coming this summer.
 - ii. BRS wondered if Transit is contemplating the creation of a Transit 'Police', but received the answer that no such initiatives are currently being pursued.
 - iii. BRS further wondered if Transit is bringing forward cheaper fares to Council's Budget Deliberations for people *not* being able to pay current fares.
 - 1. Transit noted that such considerations will have to await the upcoming fare review and subsequent budget cycle.

4) *Transit-app*:

- a. *Transit Royale* upgrade:
 - i. Saskatoon Transit now provides a free upgrade for all Riders to the enhanced version of *Transit-app* called *Transit Royale*.
 - ii. A *Transit Royale*-subscription unlocks additional features, new customization options, and complete access to *Transit-app* across more than 900 cities supported worldwide. The *Royale*-subscription also provides access to power features such as:
 - a. fun customizable themes,
 - b. ability to switch the app icon,
 - c. personalized emoji avatars, where riders can become 'celebrities' on their local bus routes with leaderboards for users competing to help the most riders with GO crowdsourcing.
- b. Trip planning:
 - i. When asked why trip planning in *Transit-app* does not always provide the fastest or most obvious trip, Transit noted that turning off 'minimize walking' in the Settings might solve the problem.
 - 2. Transit agreed that this information would be useful as part of their *Experience Transit* user training program.
 - 3. A participant suggested that short video clips would be a helpful way to provide advice – especially for younger riders who prefer videos over text.
- c. Route #514/25:
 - i. BRS brought to Transit's attention a discussion on their FB-page regarding a rider who was left stranded on a bus stop for route #514. Transit requested and was promised more specifics.
 - ii. Transit explained that route #514 (which does not have a printed schedule but is visible in *Transit-app*) provides a trip first thing in the morning and last trip in the afternoon to serve riders in the North Industrial Area. In between, the route operates as the regularly scheduled route #25.

- 5) Pilot on the new On-Demand Transit (ODT):
 - a. Two BRS-members participated in a one-day pilot on the new ODT-system.
 - b. The pilot went well, but it was noted that the ridership on the system was very light that day, so the effect of heavy bookings could not be evaluated.
 - c. The participants were pleased with the new app and with the change in operating range so that the new ODT will better serve particularly chosen areas of the city.
- 6) Bus Stop Closures:
 - a. The closures seem to have gone smoothly; Transit has received only one complaint, which was the same complaint BRS had seen on their FB-page.
 - b. As a result, one stop on 20th Street that was going to be closed will remain in service mainly to accommodate a rider with a disability.
- 7) Public Art for the BRT:
 - a. Survey closes on July 11.
- 8) Upcoming Service Changes:
 - a. Transit is planning two sets of service changes for this fall:
 - i. The purpose is to remove redundancy and improve dependability, reliability and predictability of service during the current shortage of buses.
 - ii. The proposed changes are expected to have minimal impact on the service.
 - iii. Consultations were conducted both with Transit's Productivity Committee and with ATU-615.
 - iv. There are still eight routes that were changed from 30 to 40 minute frequency during the pandemic, which Transit plans to restore back to 30 minute frequency as soon as bus availability permits these changes, while still providing dependable and reliable service.
 - b. The purpose of the first set of changes, which will come into effect in September-October when University comes back into session, is to remove four (4) buses from the daily schedule/roster to ensure the availability of a sufficient number of roadworthy buses. The freed-up buses – when available – will instead be kept as Spares in the daily roster. The contemplated changes are:
 - i. Collapse routes #2 and #10 into a modified route #2 running on 20-minute headways. This change will remove one bus from the daily roster.
 - ii. Change the frequency of the Frequent Transit Corridor (FTC) along 22nd Street from 10-minute to 15-minute headways by removing route #64 from the FTC and keeping it strictly local to serve McCormack. This change will remove a second bus from the daily roster.
 - iii. Cancel route #62 and replace it with an extended route #9. Current bus stops on route #62 along Fairlight Drive will no longer be served, but walking distances to route #9 will remain within the 450 meter limit in the *Service Standard*. This change will remove a third bus from the daily roster.

COS-minutes, 4 July 2022

- iv. Remove the overload Extra from the Confederation – Tommy Douglas school run. This change will remove the fourth bus from the daily roster.
 - c. The second set of service changes will come into effect in November-January, but details were not yet released.
 - 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.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 15 August 2022 @ 2:30am via Zoom