

**Minutes for BRS-TRANSIT online meeting
Monday, 12 September 2022 @ 2:30-3:30pm**

LOCATION: Online meeting using Zoom

ATTENDANCE:

- Saskatoon Transit (Transit):
 - Tracey Davis, Fleet and Maintenance Manager and Interim Co-director of Transit
 - Allison Gray, Marketing Consultant
- Bus Riders of Saskatoon (BRS):
 - Robert Clipperton, Spokesperson and Steering Committee Member
 - Peter Gallén, Transit Co-ordinator and Steering Committee Member
 - Curt McCoshen, Steering Committee Member
 - James (Jim) Wood, Steering Committee Member
 - Dominique Tran, Member

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

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

OLD BUSINESS

- 1) See below.

NEW BUSINESS

- 2) Fleet Renewal:
 - a. Context:
 - i. At the August meeting, several issues were raised and discussed regarding designs and technical specifications for the upcoming fleet renewal.
 - ii. At this meeting Saskatoon Transit's Interim Co-Director and newly appointed Fleet and Maintenance Manager Tracey Davis was present to further discuss these issues.
 - b. Bus fit-for-service:
 - i. Before discussing technical specifications for new buses, it was prudent to discuss when a bus would be rejected as unfit for service.
 - ii. The official term Transit uses for a bus fit-for-service is *OK for Service*.
 - iii. Current Criteria:
 1. The minimum technical requirements to declare a bus *OK for Service* are specified by Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI), which is the government body in Saskatchewan that issues road safety regulations:
 - a. Many of these regulations are like those included in the American *US Critical* regulations.
 - b. These include for example such obvious requirements as working breaks, lights and windshield wipers, all of which are checked daily.

- c. In addition, Transit does also have some checks of their own other than those specified by SGI that the bus must pass.
 2. 'Customer Comfort'-criteria are not specified nor included in Transit's overall *OK for Service*-criteria:
 - a. Neither Operator nor Customer Service personnel can declare a bus unfit for service.
 3. Only a Mechanic can declare a bus '*not OK for Service*':
 - a. Each Operator performs a *Circle Check* before starting their shift and fills out a *Schedule-to-Defect* notice for anything that doesn't work as intended.
 - b. Certain *Schedule-to-Defect* issues must be addressed by a Mechanic before the bus can go into service:
 - i. The Mechanic either makes the necessary repairs and 'okays the bus for service' or rejects the bus.
 - ii. Less critical defects will simply be noted and attended to later.
- iv. Potential additional Criteria:
 1. BRS pointed out that the bar has been set rather low in Transit's current *OK-for-Service* criteria since they do not seem to include any criteria to address operator and customer comfort.
 2. BRS noted that the current criteria to declare a bus unfit for service do not include for example such crucial 'Customer Comfort' systems as:
 - a. working Air-Conditioning (A/C) in summer,
 - b. working Heat in winter,
 - c. working Auditory System that announces the next bus stop,
 - d. working Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) system that provides Next Bus-information to riders.
 3. Transit responded that current 'unfit-for-service' criteria indeed do *not* address or include these kinds of 'Customer Comfort' issues.
 4. BRS thus urged Transit to start working diligently towards being able to significantly expand their *OK for Service* criteria to include 'Customer Comfort' criteria as well. Moreover, BRS noted that as the fleet is renewed, the above list might be further expanded to include:
 - a. working Kneeling in all (weather) conditions (Note: the Ramps have not experienced similar cold-weather difficulties),
 - b. working Ticketing System that treats all riders fairly,
 - c. Etc.
- c. Persistent mechanical problems with existing buses:
 - i. Transit noted that besides the ongoing Transit Audit, extensive fact-finding missions have already been conducted to bring clarity to the persistent *Check Engine Light* (CEL) issues that have plagued the fleet and withheld buses from service over the last several months. The following has been observed so far:

1. When the CEL shows Red, the bus must be immediately pulled from service.
 2. When the CEL shows Yellow, past policy at Transit has been to have the issue checked and cleared by a Mechanic.
 3. After consulting with transit properties in Regina, Edmonton, Calgary and Winnipeg, where a Yellow CEL does not automatically trigger a mandatory check/clearance by a Mechanic, the Operators in Saskatoon now consult with the Operations Centre about how to proceed.
 - a. There is some calculated risk involved in this less restrictive procedure, but it has allowed significantly more buses to remain in service without any serious consequences to date.
 - d. Upcoming purchases of new Buses:
 - i. Transit noted that a report on Fleet Renewal was expected to go to the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation (SPCoT) on October 3.
 - ii. It is obvious – under current *OK for Service* rules – that certain technical systems in a bus can be non-functioning and still allow the bus to go into service.
 - iii. However if BRS's suggestions above are adopted, then such leeway would no longer be available. Thus many more technical systems would then become 'critical' in any new buses added to the fleet:
 1. Transit noted that all technical systems listed above are being addressed in the current Request For Proposals (RFP) and was confident that their current requirements and specifications are sufficient.
 2. Transit also noted that climate and accessibility issues had been carefully reviewed for the RFP and that the ATU-local had been consulted to gain input on Operator and Mechanic's issues.
 - iv. Interior Design:
 1. About the interior design of the buses that BRS brought up at the August meeting, Transit noted that final seating and standing arrangements can be determined after a successful bidder has been selected.
 2. Transit noted specifically that one improvement regarding accessibility has already been specified by having all new buses equipped with the *Quantum*¹ wheelchair securement system from Q'STRAIT:
 - a. This sophisticated mobility scooter securement system is remotely operated by the bus Operator.
 - b. An additional advantage is that the *Quantum* equipment can be removed and re-installed in subsequent buses.
- 3) Recent Service Changes:
- a. BRS brought to Transit's attention that the reduced service on 20th Street may have resulted in crowded buses, as indicated by BRS-members on their FB-page.

¹ Website: <https://www.qstraint.com/quantum/>

- b. Transit noted that APC-data from Route 2/10 since the beginning of 2022 does not indicate significantly higher crowding on these buses after the consolidation was made.
- 4) Safety and enforcement of rules on buses:
 - a. Transit noted that a report to SPCoT will be forthcoming by the end of the year.
- 5) Topics for upcoming meetings:
 - a. The October meeting will feature Special Projects Manager Rob Dudiak to provide the quarterly update on the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project.
 - b. Operations Manager Mike Moellenbeck is expected to present Transit's *Dashboard* and associated research projects at a future meeting.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 17 October 2022 @ 1:30am via Zoom (Note: time change!)