

**Minutes for BRS-TRANSIT online meeting
Tuesday, 30 January 2023 @ 1:30-2:30pm**

LOCATION: Online meeting using Zoom

ATTENDANCE:

- Saskatoon Transit (Transit):
 - Cory Shrigley, Customer Support & Engagement Manager
 - Allison Gray, Marketing Consultant
 - Brady Waldenberg, Access Transit Manager
- 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
 - Sherry Tarasoff, Steering Committee Member
 - James Wood, Steering Committee Member

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

- For this meeting: Allison led the discussion and Peter prepared the minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

- 1) None

NEW BUSINESS

The recently appointed Access Transit Manager, Brady Waldenberg, was the featured guest.

- 2) Access Transit:
 - a. The purpose of this meeting was to get an update on the business practices and challenges at Access Transit plus discuss a list of pre-submitted questions that BRS had provided.
 - b. Access Transit Manager Brady Waldenberg:
 - i. Brady started work as Access Transit Manager on 16 October 2022, so at the time of this meeting he had been on the job only for about 3 months.
 - ii. Brady replaces Tracey Davis, who had been appointed Fleet & Maintenance Manager for Saskatoon Transit.
 - iii. Since Brady is new to Transit, he has to learn Access Transit's business from the ground up, but he is not new to working for the City of Saskatoon. Prior to this appointment as Access Transit Manager, Brady worked for about 10 years as a Health and Wellness Consultant in the City's Human Resources Department.
 - c. Staffing:
 - i. Access¹ Transit operates Monday to Saturday from 6:15AM to 11:45PM and Sundays 8:15AM to 11:00PM.

¹ <https://transit.saskatoon.ca/access-transit/access-transit>

- ii. A full complement of staff at Access Transit includes 21 full-time and 21 part-time Operators, 9 Booking & Scheduling Clerks, and four Supervisors.
- iii. In 2019, Access Transit was fully staffed, but during Covid several Operators were lost by attrition, which at that time did not cause hardship due to lower demand for service.
- iv. Now that demand for Access Transit service is increasing very rapidly (e.g., 714 and 664 trips completed in November & December, respectively), the hiring of six part-time Operators – to reach full complement – is expected to be completed in the next two/three weeks.
- v. Saskatoon Transit’s Rider Training Program², called *Experience Transit*, is administered by Access Transit:
 - 1. The process of making the existing Experience Transit Co-ordinator position a permanent full-time position has begun.
 - 2. This free program is designed to train Transit users (who sign up for it) knowledgeable and comfortable in using various Transit services that suits the individual needs of the rider.
- d. Staff training:
 - i. Brady has conducted a number of ride-alongs to understand the daily challenges of his Operators and hear first-hand from Clients.
 - ii. Brady is also encouraging Supervisors to do the same.
- e. Fleet:
 - i. A full Access Transit fleet consists of 27 wheel-chair lift buses, of which 19 are on the road daily.
 - ii. Six new buses are currently on order (two of them since 2020) to replace the oldest buses in the fleet, with deliveries now on track for August 2023.
 - iii. Since placing the orders, costs per bus have increased from \$205,000 to \$255,000, but adequate funding is already in place.
 - iv. Bus deliveries have been a challenge. Due to the Covid pandemic, at least one bus manufacturer has gone out of business while others reduced work in response to supply chain and operational difficulties.
- f. Use of Taxis:
 - i. The current contract is with RIIDE.
 - ii. Taxis currently provide about 30 trips per day to alleviate the shortage of fleet and operators during peak times.
 - iii. Transit keeps evaluating when an additional bus becomes more useful and economical instead.
- g. Subscriptions:
 - i. Access Transit accepts ‘Subscriptions’ for regular users:
 - 1. Only certain types of trips qualify for subscriptions, such as going to work or kidney dialysis, while recreational trips do not.

² <https://transit.saskatoon.ca/customer-services/experience-transit>

2. The waiting list for Subscriptions is long.
 3. 50% of total trips are allocated to Subscriptions in order to maintain sufficient capacity for occasional riders and trips.
 - ii. Dialysis patients are always entitled to Subscriptions:
 1. Currently there are 3 dialysis trips per day using Access Transit; trip times must last less than 75 minutes.
 2. BRS noted that City Council some years ago received a letter outlining the hardships that Dialysis Patients experienced on their exhausting rides to and from the hospital. Brady noted that those problems were alleviated a long time ago: subscriptions helped, along with routine pick-up and drop-offs, and group scheduling.
 3. Brady also mentioned that he has already personally been in contact with the Dialysis Coordinator, Trisha, at the Saskatoon Health Region to ensure smooth operation of these regular trips.
 - h. Assessment Process:
 - i. Access Transit has contracted with *Lifemark*, a private physiotherapy and occupational therapy provider on 8th Street, to conduct physical and cognitive assessments of Riders that apply for approval to use Access Transit. The assessment also ensures that Riders' wheel chairs are suitable for the bus.
- 3) Ticket Vendors on the west side:
 - a. BRS: Could City Leisure Centres and Public Library Branches perhaps be suitable locations for ticket sales?
 - i. Saskatoon Transit: Yes, this is something we are looking into.
 - b. BRS: What hardware is required?
 - i. Saskatoon Transit: Two devices are required at Vendor locations, one to take payment and one to load the fares on the card. With the introduction of Phase 2 of the Mobile Ticketing System, Vendors will be required to use a computer and will be provided a different card-loading device.
- 4) Upcoming Engagements:
 - a. Fare Review: await new Transit Director.
 - b. New Transit Network: await approval of BRT funding.
- 5) Next Meeting:
 - a. Discuss relationships between Transit and BRS, and the purposes of our monthly meetings as each party sees them.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 27 February 2023 @ 1:30am via Zoom