

**Minutes for BRS-TRANSIT online meeting
Monday, 21 August 2023 @ 1:30-2:30pm**

ATTENDANCE:

- Saskatoon Transit (Transit):
 - Jim Puffalt, Transit Director
 - Cory Shrigley, Customer Support & Engagement Manager
- Bus Riders of Saskatoon (BRS):
 - Robert Clipperton, Spokesperson and Steering Committee Member
 - Peter Gallén, Transit Co-ordinator and Steering Committee Member
 - James Wood, Steering Committee Member
 - Lila Wagner, Steering Committee Member
 - Curt McCoshen, Steering Committee Member

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

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

OLD BUSINESS

- 1) None was discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

- 2) Update on the City Budget deliberations:
 - a. BRS noted that so far the requested staff increases have been approved despite some previous calls for a hiring-freeze.
 - b. BRS also noted that an increase in fares was narrowly defeated (with one Councillor absent) and will most likely be brought up again at the final budget deliberations in November:
 - i. BRS suggested that Transit may want to provide details to Council on the much broader range of rebated fares available to the riders in Calgary.
 - c. BRS further noted that their request for a report on 'free transit for children 13 and under' was endorsed by Council for the final budget deliberations in November.
 - d. Transit noted that Council seems to have adopted the view that 'transit is an essential service', which has so far resulted in support for Transit's budget asks regarding better bus maintenance including increased inventory of spare parts.
 - e. The next GPC-meeting on the budget will take place on August 31, but transit issues are not expected at that meeting.
- 3) Misinformation in Transit-App:
 - a. BRS informed the meeting about posts on their Facebook-page suggesting that Transit-app provided incorrect schedule-information on the Stat Holiday on August 7.
 - i. Transit acknowledged that the 'GTFS-datafeed for a regular Monday' had gone out to the third-party apps that day by mistake instead of the 'Stat Holiday datafeed' as intended.

- ii. Transit noted that they are striving toward 100% accuracy in the GTFS-datafeed to Transit-app and Google Transit. With every sign-up of drivers, however, there are new lessons learned. Transit acknowledged and regrets the negative impact that “incorrect information” can have on customers when mistakes are made. Transit, therefore, intends to strive for clearer communication to customers that may include a post-event explanation, when appropriate.
- 4) Fare Review:
 - a. The upcoming Fare Review also came up in Council’s budget deliberations on August 15.
 - b. Transit noted that most background reports have already been prepared and that they were actually ready to begin public engagements when Covid struck:
 - i. Transit also noted that they would like to research Best Practices a bit more.
 - c. Transit promised to bring further clarifications about the status of the Fare Review to the next meeting with BRS in September.
- 5) Update to the Service Standards document:
 - a. Transit is in the process of preparing an updated Service Standards document to SPCoT and Council – tentatively by year-end.
 - b. Transit noted that the current Service Standards was their first-ever such document:
 - i. That document was high-end and less prescriptive.
 - ii. BRS noted that it also contained inconsistent information, such as route-descriptions that don’t yet exist.
 - iii. Transit acknowledged that consistent language needs to be used throughout the document.
 - c. The discussion at this meeting noted that the new Service Standards could:
 - i. Describe better the variety of actual day-time frequencies.
 - ii. Note the substantial reduction between day-time and evening frequencies.
 - iii. Describe better the substantial difference in end-of-service between week-days and week-ends.
 - iv. Potentially reduce service to areas of the city with consistently low uptake, including providing potential trigger-points for replacing fixed-route service with On-Demand Transit (ODT).
 - d. Transit also noted that they now have access to more granular data on individual routes that will allow more targeted solutions to meet actual demand (see March-minutes).
- 6) Upcoming report to Council on Transit Detour Alerts/Signage:
 - a. Engagements are forthcoming around September 20 to which BRS will also be invited.
- 7) Information confidentiality:
 - a. BRS noted that they would like to share more widely with their membership and the general public various documents, graphs, statistics and other information from Transit.
 - i. Such sharing, however, has from time to time not been possible – apparently due to current rules that require Council to be informed first.
 - b. Transit promised to further investigate the matter with City Administration and report back at the next meeting in September.

8) Continuous transit Improvements:

- a. Regarding 'service improvements', Transit noted that potential adjustments to bus departures will be investigated around typical quitting times (say 4pm/9pm/midnight), so that employees have time to catch the bus and wait times remain reasonable.
- b. Regarding 'raising-the-bar', BRS noted that a bus should not be deemed OK-for-Service unless all systems are fully functional: heater & air-conditioner, kneeling & ramp, GPS and in-bus announcements; and the bus is clean as well.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 18 September 2023 @ 2:00pm (Note: time-change) via Zoom.