

Bus Riders of Saskatoon

April 28, 2024 – 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm - Zoom Video Conference

Facilitator: Curt

Recorder: Robert

Regrets:

Present: Curt, Peter, Lila, Nathan, Colleen, Dave, Jenn, Odin, Robert

1. Welcome, Introductions and Treaty Land Acknowledgement:

“I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are on treaty land referred to as Treaty 6 Territory and the City of Saskatoon and that all of the people here are beneficiaries of this treaty. Treaty 6 encompasses the lands of the Cree, Nakota, Dakota, Saulteaux (*SOE-TOE*) and the homeland of the Metis Nation. We are dedicated to ensuring that the spirit of Reconciliation and Treaty 6 is honoured and respected. This acknowledgement also reaffirms our relationship with one another, and we are committed to move forward in partnership with Indigenous Nations in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration. “

2. Finalization of Agenda. Agreed to consider Agenda item 15.1 Child Free Fares after agenda item 4.

3. Review of minutes of March 24th meeting. Minutes Approved.

4. Date & time for next meeting Next meeting will be Sunday June 2 at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

5.1 None

6. Correspondence

6.1 Thomas Kinge - Virtual Engagement re: Pavement Stamping re:
Wednesday - May 8th at 18:30 to 20:00 or In Person - Thursday May 9th
at 4:00 to 5:30 at City Hall.

- Peter will go to the virtual session. Jenn will go to in person session. Lila would like information on the in-person meeting.

6.2 Robert sent emails to SPRP, a teacher and a parent for input re: Child Fares

7 . Access Transit – Bob/Sydney

7.1 Wait time when booking (question from last meeting):

- Robert shared this response from the Access Transit User Group: “So it is possible but it depends on the perspective. People are usually not on hold any longer than 25 minutes. I watch that every day. However when you call there is probably 60 other people calling all at the same time. The queue holds 24 calls so then when it is full, it drops the call. So you call back and hope that you are the one who gets the next empty spot and that can take upwards in the area of 20 to 30 minutes depending on how lucky you are.”

8. Facebook/Website Issues

8.1 Facebook Membership – up to 1800+

8.2 Facebook issues since last meeting:

April: BRS Admin (9); COS reposts (5), Commendations (2); Questions from Riders (7); Info offered by Riders (5); ATU reposts (2); Fare evasion (1); Rider safety (2); Other systems (4); Service issues (3); Lost & found (1); Other reposts (1); Misc. (2). = 46 posts (down from 59 last month; Greatest reach 851 – Assault on a Rider after leaving a bus. Views in past 30 days – 9,502.

9. City of Saskatoon Meetings

9.1 Meeting: Monday, April 15:

- Discussion Topics: Evaluation of Transit’s ability to maintain service during heavy snowfalls, update on ‘free child fares’ project, GPS issues, signage issue raised on Facebook.

- Transit was well prepared for the meeting and we got some good information.
- Odin shared in minute taking responsibilities and will take on more responsibilities in coordinating our meetings with Transit.

9.2 Next meeting: Monday May 13th @ 1:30 via Zoom

9.2.1 Agenda: Topics: Service changes in July, September plans in anticipated overloaded high school buses from Stonebridge, impact of construction on transit on College drive, impact on Transit of changes to Wiggins intersection.

9.2.2 Attendees: Peter, Curt, Odin, (Jenn), Dave, others.

- Odin will be our point person with Transit on these meetings.

10. Standing Policy Committee on Transportation (SPCOT)

10.1. Regular Meeting - Tuesday, April 2 , 2024

- No Transit related items were on the agenda for this meeting

10.2 Regular Meeting – Tuesday May 7, 2:00 pm

- Agenda to be announced

11. City Council Meetings

11.1 Council Meeting – April 24, 2024

- No Transit related items were on the agenda.
- Next meeting May 22nd, 2024 - Agenda to be announced.

12. Keep Transit Moving Coalition (Robert)

12.1 Meeting: Tuesday March 26. Robert attended. Short meeting to report on KTM's messaging to Federal Government regarding the Budget

12.2 Next meeting: Tuesday, April 30th, 4:00 pm EST. Robert plans to attend.

13. Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Project (SPRP) – (Lila) no formal report but we were joined by the SPRP Coordinator for much of our meeting.

14. Climate Hub – Curt

- Group continues to meet but there has been little to no discussion on Transit per se

15. Ongoing Actions

15.1 Child Fare engagement

- Robert reported on a two pager he prepared in consultation with Lila and Peter in response to a request from Transit for a written response.
- The main issues of contention seem to be 1) Age limit up to which children will not be required to pay a fare 2) What sort of pass would a child rider be required to show upon boarding? 3) Will children need to be accompanied by an adult to be allowed to ride fare free?
- A representative of the SPCP was present at the meeting. They reaffirmed that access to transit is needed to reduce poverty. Would like free transit for all. Feels that Transit use should be built into children during their early years and feels accompaniment is a parenting issue. If we want to build ridership we should get children riding the bus independently. Children ride buses by themselves all over the world.
- A member suggested it should be easy for parents to have their children on the bus.
- A member voiced the needs to consult with ATU – there has been some expression of concern by drivers about unruly children. Another commented that adults can be unruly as well.
- Another agreed that there will be a cross section of people on the bus. They used the example of the new basketball court in Victoria Park which people had predicted would be vandalized soon after opening, but that this has not come to pass.
- Another noted that there is such a fear of violence in the City – including at libraries and on transit. They noted too that there is fare evasion by adults. If we are going to talk about rowdy behaviour we should be worried about adult behaviour rather than child behaviour.
- Suggestion: Perhaps there is a need to discuss a back up plan for when there is misbehaviour. Children do behave differently in larger groups.
- It was noted that children ride for free in many cities in Canada. In BC all systems must provide free Transit for those aged 12 and under. The province funds this. In Washington State there are free fares for those under 18. Kelowna has instituted free fares for those up to age 24. In most Cities those above 8 or 10 are allowed on the bus unaccompanied.

- Robert reported that at the public consultation it was suggested that perhaps identity passes could be available for older children, that perhaps there could be a curfew for unaccompanied children riding fare-free and wondered if these ideas would be acceptable.
- A member questioned passes for young children but that maybe a child in Grade 6, 7 or 8 could be given the responsibility for a pass. Providing every child with a pass could be very expensive.
- Summary comments included 1) spending money on passes is a big expense 2) Gd 6 or 7 children are riding by themselves now. 3) there should be a conversation but there would be very few small children riding on the bus alone. 4) it is not public policy concern to try to control everything that arises. Try it and see what happens 5) this should be simple and straight forward. Let's just put it in simple and easy now and see how it works. Enforcement and fare review can look at it again.

15.2 Councillor Meetings: Discussion of strategy

15.2.1 Report on meeting with Councillor Loewen.

- Meeting was very positive.

15.2.2 Next Councillor?

- Gough in June, Kirton in July or August

15.3 Meeting with ATU?

- Robert will try to set up a meeting early in June.

16. Other Business

16.1 None.

17. Adjournment