

Meeting minutes for the June 16th, 2025 BRS-Transit Meeting at 1:30 pm

Attendance:

- BRS
 - o Odin Swidzinski, BRS-Transit Coordinator
 - o Robert Clipperton, Member
 - o Peter Gallen, Member
 - o Curt McCoshen, Member
- Transit
 - o Cory Shrigley, Customer Service and Engagement Manager

Regrets: Lila Wagner

Administrative issues

For this meeting, Curt chaired the meeting and Odin prepared the minutes.

Old business

- **Bus interiors**
 - o The 2025 bus interiors are the same as the 2024 buses, with Mollenbeck having previously explained the interiors at the previous meetings.
 - o There are still opportunities to examine bus orders for 2026 (or future orders), but the 2025 buses have already been sent out.
 - o A BRS member says that it will be difficult for Transit to implement any changes in time for the 2026 order.
 - Transit says that the timeline is tight, and that it is too late to alter the orders that have been placed for 2025 and adds that the 2026 orders may have already been configured.
 - The BRS member says that they have some concerns about the redesign, as they have made three documents on various aspects of bus interiors.
 - The first document is a list of things in the interior such as air conditioning units, places to hold on, et cetera.
 - The second document is about things that are wrong with the current buses.
 - The third document is a proposal for two new interior designs.
 - The BRS member looked at the 2019 series and the 2024 series to see what modifications can be made to the designs and said that their concerns that they have outlined in the document included “bucket seats” and places for people to hold on to.
 - Transit says that the flip-down seats face towards the middle of the bus, and the main complaint that they have heard is that the seats are slippery.

- The four items of complaint that Transit have gathered are:
 - Lack of places for people to grab on to.
 - Slippery seats.
 - Standing room vs. seating.
 - Rear-facing seats.
- A BRS member asks if this can be discussed at a separate meeting
 - Transit suggests a separate meeting to handle the document on proposed changes, and that the document should be produced by BRS.
 - The BRS member suggests that Transit and BRS work together on producing a document.
 - Another BRS member asks if the meeting should be in-person or Zoom.
 - The BRS member says that the proposed meeting should be an in-person meeting.
 - The previous BRS member asks if Nova could provide BRS with diagrams.
 - The BRS member says that the previous BRS member should try to ask Nova directly, but if Nova turns them down, then this is something that Transit should ask.
 - If there is a meeting date, when should the meeting take place and what orders should be discussed.
 - The previous BRS member says the 2026 orders are in motion, so we will be looking at the 2027 orders at that meeting.
 - When should BRS schedule a meeting on bus interiors, and how much time should we have to discuss it?
 - Transit says that BRS should put together a document that itemises the list.
 - The BRS member asks Transit why BRS should prepare the document.
 - Transit says they have already brought those points forward to the City.
 - The BRS member says they have not seen a revised bus interior design yet.
 - Transit says that they have already started to retrofit hang handles on the buses.
 - There will be ten hang handles on the forty-foot buses, and twelve hang handles on the others.
 - Transit says that a document coming from BRS outlining a list of their concerns will help Transit decide how buses will be redesigned.

- Another BRS member says that they receive conflicting information off the Facebook page or by emails and says that there are always trade-offs because many like the seating design while others do not like various aspects of the seating design.
 - The seat-related issues that the BRS member frequently sees are:
 - People sticking their feet up on the backwards-facing seats.
 - Carsickness because people are seated backwards or sideways.
 - Safety concerns on not being able to see everything going on when seated backwards.
 - People who really concerned about specific changes will send written concerns, and those who are not will generally not say anything.
 - The previous BRS member says that their questions are about three different configurations which is why they want to talk about it; how to clean the buses, it is not just the passengers but people cleaning the buses; straps are a terrible way to hold on a bus because you can easily be thrown off balance: straps are not a solution which is why he wants to talk about interior design.
 - Transit says that they needs clarity on the proposed options and trade-offs.
 - The BRS member says that Nova could bring back some solutions to Transit.
 - Transit will provide the document at the July 21st meeting.
- Another BRS member asks why did Transit introduce bucket seats in the 2024 series.
 - Transit says that the document should be clear because if there are three different documents, it cannot be brought up to the General Manager, Transportation and Construction's level and suggests that the documents be consolidated into a single document.
- The grab-handle locations on the buses are not ideal, but they are a possible retrofit.
- Custodial staff
 - Transit reports that they are fully staffed, but a few people are currently off work.
 - Transit says that two people are responsible for cleaning at the terminal whenever a bus pulls into downtown for a 2-3

minute quick clean in addition to the regular full-time utility staff.

- A BRS member asks if the buses are being cleaned every night because they have heard from people claiming that the buses are still dirty in the morning.
 - Transit says that it is possible that the first group of people who ride the bus mess it up, which leads to people seeing a dirty bus at 10 am or 11 am.

- **Service changes**

- Transit held information sessions with the general public at Market Mall and Centre Mall last week and will be having one more information session at Lawson Heights on June 17th.
 - Transit reports that the two information sessions they have had are going well, and they have received positive feedback on the route changes.
- Has the schedule for Route 1 been fixed?
 - Transit says it has not been fixed yet, but the Route 1/7 schedule will be fixed in September.
 - The proposed changes will be a combination of changing time points and redesigning Route 1, but it is not a simple fix.
 - A BRS member asks if Routes 1 and 7 are interlined.
 - Transit says that the two routes are interlined.
- Can people working at malls catch the bus on time?
 - Transit says that there are commissionaires on duty until the very last bus returns to the Civic Operations Centre.
 - The last shift time is when the staff gets off of work, but it is impossible for everyone to make it to the last bus leaving each mall as there are custodians who clean the mall after it closes for the night.
 - Transit spoke with a BRS member at an information session on the route changes about this topic and says that there needs to be an audit of the businesses when people get off work, so that Transit can better serve those workers.
 - A BRS member says that the information should be available as part of the lease agreement between the mall and a given tenant and suggests that while Transit should adapt to the schedules of big employers, employers should also work with Transit's schedule so employees can use Transit to go to and from work.
 - Another BRS member says that Transit should talk to mall managers and figure out what is going on so the mall can accommodate schedules.

- Transit says that they will consider speaking with employers to determine activity levels so that Transit can adjust their schedules.
- A BRS member says that BRS could post something about how lack of bus service at certain times interferes with work hours and asks what changes could work.
 - Transit says that the changes to Route 13/17 is a good example of extending service hours during summer and weekend into the evenings and says that Evergreen and Rosewood should have extended service.

New business

- Has Transit been in touch with CUTRIC?

- Transit says that the Transit Director has been in touch with CUTRIC, and once a webinar has been prepared, Transit will be involved in hosting it, but they are not sure if they will offer a unique webinar for Saskatoon.
- A BRS member says that they may have heard the CUTRIC CEO suggest a Saskatoon-specific webinar at the City Council meeting.
 - Transit says that the takeaways from that meeting are:
 - Clarifying the accuracy of the information
 - Having the CUTRIC document fact-checked
 - Making the information available to the public as other stakeholders are interested and says that he will bring it back to the Transit Director.
- Another BRS member says that they noticed that the battery chargers had been removed from the agenda sent out to the Customer Service and Engagement Manager.
 - The BRS-Transit Coordinator says that they believed that the questions were satisfactorily answered at the meeting with the Transit Planning Manager.
 - Another BRS member said that they should discuss route changes between 2025 and 2027 as the BRT network is rolled out.
- Transit says that they will bring back the information at the next meeting.

- Air conditioning

- A BRS member says that the answers should be prefaced with air conditioning being put on the list of essential items needed for a bus to operate.
 - Transit says that it is complex to replace air conditioning units, and it can take a day to repair an air conditioning unit depending on the availability of parts.

- Transit says that not every bus's air conditioning unit is currently functional, as four air conditioning repairs are happening at any given time during the summer.
 - Air conditioning units are at a higher priority than they were three to four years ago, especially as they have a younger fleet and a fuller staff.
 - Transit is working at getting air conditioning repairs done while balancing service needs.
- Transit says that on older buses, parts will become obsolete, which means that a bus can either be sent out without AC or sit in the yard for three weeks if no parts are available for that part.
 - At some point, if an air conditioning unit is unrepairable, the bus may be sent to the scrapyard.
- Transit says that in the past someone drove into a portable air conditioner with a bus, but it got embedded into the bus rather than being run over.
 - Since then, that particular automotive system has been replaced with two proper industrial air conditioning setups that are sized for the buses.
 - There are at least four such air conditioning systems at the Civic Operations Centre.
 - In the last two years, technical training has been provided to Transit employees by Thermo King on how to maintain the air conditioning units.
 - A BRS member asks how many buses have buses without air conditioning?
 - The Customer Service and Engagement Manager does not have the number in front of them, but they have the data and asks the BRS member to clarify what data they would like.
 - The BRS member says that he is asking about the percentage of buses without air conditioning units.
 - Another BRS member says that AC units are a continuum, and it is not as simple as saying that the AC unit works or does not work, because it can partially work but not cool enough.
 - Transit says that the necessity of air conditioning on buses depends on outdoor temperatures: if it is a cool and rainy day, a bus can be sent out without a functioning air conditioning unit.
- **Transit map**
 - A BRS member says that they received a complaint from a passenger that the last time they got a fold-out map, the text was too small to read

- Transit said that the person probably received a poor-quality copy and suggests that they head to the Customer Service Centre to request a new map.
- Transit says that Transit no longer produces Rand McNally-style maps of the route network, but the biggest map they can print on-site is an 11" by 17" map.
- Some maps can be customized to suit a specific customer's needs.
- A BRS member asks why did Transit discontinue the Rand McNally-style map posters.
 - The main reason is because they are expensive to print, but the Customer and Service Engagement manager did not know the whole reason aside from cost.
 - Another problem raised by Transit is that the maps become outdated quite quickly from when the set is printed, and in six months time, something is incorrect that would necessitate replacing the entire set of maps.
 - Another BRS member asks if they still print maps on-site.
 - Transit is still printing some maps, but they now only print one box compared to between ten and twenty boxes they printed in the past, and that Transit is more than willing to print out colour maps.
 - The same BRS member asks if Transit uses laser printing?
 - Transit says the 11" by 17" city maps can be printed at the customer service centre.
 - A BRS member recounts collecting some posters printed for someone and they were printed for \$1 each, despite being slightly bigger than an 8 ½" x 14" and on card stock
 - Transit says that it would be helpful to know what route to make a map about, as it is hard to have a map of the entire route network on an 11" by 17" map because it is only possible to fit so much before the whole map becomes illegible.
- **Other new business**
 - Transit will hire a new Johnson-Shoyama Intern.
 - Transit's goal with the Johnson-Shoyama Internship is to train future supervisors, and Transit aims to have a better retention program so that people will not leave once their term is up.
 - A BRS member asks which university program is Transit hiring from?
 - Transit already has a candidate for the position.
 - Access Transit has updated their policy on service dogs, and Transit is currently looking at e-scooters, as e-scooters are not a mobility device.

- A BRS member says they saw someone who brought in a foldable e-scooter and placed it on the luggage rack and noted that people are bringing in shopping carts onto buses.
 - Transit says that batteries are not the problem (as new car batteries are allowed to be carried on Transit buses), but rather, whether or not e-scooters pose a hazard for passengers trying to get around them.
 - The previous BRS member says that Transit should consider redesigning the bike racks in the front of buses to accommodate e-scooters alongside bikes.
- Route 5 will see no changes.
 - A BRS member says that another BRS member mentioned an issue that made her believe that there was another bus stop being altered on 24th Street, but when he last spoke with her, she confirmed that the bus stop near her apartment building would remain as it was.
- The ULIS (Universal Low Income Subsidy) piece is out of Transit's control.
 - A BRS member asks if Transit has any say in the ULIS process, or if it has been handed off to someone else.
 - Transit says that there are two conversations - fare review, and negotiations of the UPass, which is at a city level - that were originally Transit conversations, but the City has been taken over both of those portfolios.
 - The previous BRS member asks how BRS can help Transit.
 - Transit suggests that BRS should speak with other officials and ask about ULIS.

NEXT MEETING: Monday July 21st, 2025 @ 1:30 pm on Zoom