

Meeting minutes for the July 21st, 2025 BRS-Transit Meeting at 1:30 pm

Attendance:

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

Regrets:

Administrative issues:

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

Old business:

New routes

- Transit reports that the new routes are working well from their point of view.
 - Route 8: 4 out of the 5 buses in a given hour frequency are staying on time, and overall on-time performance has increased since the routes were consolidated.
 - Route 17: Transit reports really good ridership from Innovation Place and Place Riel as a result of the merger of Route 17 and Route 13, and the route has strong potential, especially during the summer months and on weekends.
- Deficiencies
 - Transit reported that they have received feedback from students who claim that their trip time has doubled, but Transit reiterated that not every route is supposed to be a direct link.
 - Transit reported that some people claimed that Stonebridge has “better service” than Lawson Heights, but Transit stated that Lawson Heights has three routes whereas Stonebridge only has two routes.
 - Transit reported that people on Acadia at 14th used to have direct service to the University from Acadia and the eastern end of 14th Street by taking the cancelled Route 82, but now the trip is 12 minutes longer.
 - Transit said that there are options available for them (i.e. routes 18, 50, and 55), and it will be dealt with on a case by case basis.
- A BRS member reported the recent experience he had on a trip taking route 8 (10-minute frequency): The bus he boarded was 10 minutes late when departing

Centre Mall Terminal, while both the previous and subsequent buses were on time. His bus was slightly delayed going through the roadwork on 8th Street, but the real troubles began downtown. When his bus turned left onto 22nd Street from 3rd Avenue they immediately got stuck in traffic congestion. Turning right onto 1st Avenue and right again onto 24th Street worked well, but then the bus got stuck again in traffic congestion after turning right onto 2nd Avenue. At this point the bus was 15 minutes behind schedule, so the rider asked the bus operator to let him off before they reached the end-stop on 23rd Street.

- Transit said the Planning Department made a request to remove cars from 2nd Avenue during the 23rd Street road closure and the detours, but the request was denied by the Construction and Design Department.
 - Transit had a site visit and confirmed that cars could not be removed from 2nd Avenue.
- The BRS member suggested that the buses might want to continue down 3rd Avenue to 24th Street, turn left on 24th Street, and then left onto 2nd Avenue to get to the end stop at 23rd Street.
- The same BRS member asked for more details about the problem on Route 17.
 - Transit said that the students previously served by Route 13 now have to take the 30 from Silverwood Heights, transfer at Lawson Heights, and then go to the University, whereas they used to be able to go straight to the University when the Route 13 was in service.
- Another BRS member said that some of the route changes were good, but other people on 7th Street have raised concerns about the changes on Route 16 because they now have to walk over to Main to catch the 16 or walk to 8th Street to catch the 8 to get to their destinations.
 - Transit said that the changes impacted people on 7th Street far less than those on Main Street, as it is a shorter walk to 8th Street from 7th Street than from Main Street.
 - A BRS member noted that those buses only go downtown. Going to University was now more difficult from the rental housing on 7th Street.
- The previous BRS member said that it is more difficult to get feedback on the 8, but the general sentiment as reported from the BRS Facebook page is that things have improved on the route, even though one person complained about there being more buses in one direction than in the other.
 - Transit said that not every route fits neatly on a timetable: some routes have headways of every 32 minutes during off-peak times, and every 28 minutes during peak times.
 - The same BRS member asked about the meaning of the term “headway.”
 - Headways measure the time between two buses.
 - Another BRS member asked if they are getting rid of schedules in favour of headways
 - The Customer Service and Engagement Manager had not scrutinized the proposed Transit schedules to answer the question,

- but said that if Transit is providing a schedule, it should match with the schedule.
- The BRS member suggested that Transit keep scheduling as it is more convenient for people to plan trips around a consistent schedule.
 - The Customer Service and Engagement Manager said that he would take the information back to the team, as it would be something that Transit must figure out when building up the BRT and new conventional route networks.
 - Another BRS member said that the Transit app should mirror any changes to the schedule so that it can continue to be useful for passengers.
 - The previous BRS member said that a rider had complained that there should be more than two weeks notice in providing route changes, and that it should be easy for people to know what routes they have without having to use their phone.
 - Regarding a complaint about the detour signage on Broadway, Transit said that when they responded to the complaint about signs, they found one sign facing the correct direction, but another sign that faced the wrong direction, and corrected it.
 - The BRS member commented that in general the signage on Broadway was very well done, with a separate map at each stop showing where on Victoria riders could catch the bus.
 - Another BRS member said that when she took the 5 to the temporary downtown terminal, the temporary signs were fine one way, but not the other way, and suggested that the signs be clear for people travelling both ways.

Downtown terminal

- Transit reported that the Downtown Terminal will reopen by August 4th, and it is possible that it may reopen next week.
- Transit has moved their commissionaires and supports to the temporary downtown terminal, but they have been speaking with stakeholders about disturbances alongside 2nd Avenue.
- Transit updated the bus stops to reflect the detours, but the Transit App has had issues in updating the schedules to reflect the detours.
- A BRS member said that the Transit App data is incomprehensible for buses going down Victoria Avenue.
- Another BRS member said that Transit is being unfairly blamed for buses running late, especially when there is a lot of construction.
 - Transit said that they only received a day's notice before they set up the temporary downtown terminal.

Bus interiors

- Transit has thoroughly read all the documents that were sent to them (safety, old/current layouts, and proposed layouts) and sees pros and cons in both of the proposed layouts.
- Transit says that layout #2 is more or less identical to the current Transit layout with the exception of grab handle placements, and says that it would be great to meet with the subcommittee to discuss as he has seven questions to ask.
- A BRS member asks if Transit has contacted Nova about the interior redesigns.
 - Transit has not contacted Nova, as the Transit Director has been on holiday, but he has spoken a little bit with him on the documents and will speak to him again to discuss the documents.
- Is it possible for the BRS subcommittee to have a meeting with Transit at the Civic Operations Centre to discuss bus interiors?
 - Transit says that they could have a meeting with the BRS subcommittee to discuss bus interiors.
 - The BRS member says that they need to workshop, with one bus in the 2024 series (preferably an electric bus), and an older Nova bus with a different interior layout. Both buses should be near each other, so that the participants could walk in and out of them during the workshop.
 - The same BRS member would like to see “a crowd of people” attend the session so that people can give their suggestions on bus designs.
 - Transit says that it is a great idea as it could serve as a mini-engagement suggestion.
 - The same BRS member asks when will the two buses be available for tours?
 - Transit says that it would be better to do this before September and will discuss it with the Transit Director.
- Another BRS member asks their fellow members what date would work best for them?
 - Many BRS members are flexible, but one BRS member says that it is important for the date to be communicated ahead of time.
- The Customer Service and Engagement Manager asks who from Transit should be there?
 - The previous BRS member says that it could just be the Customer Service and Engagement Manager.
 - The Customer Service and Engagement Manager suggests that there should be some other Transit staff at the meeting along with himself.
- The same BRS member suggests that Transit appoint someone to be in charge of interior design.
 - Transit says that the Maintenance Manager is responsible for requests for proposals and suggests that the maintenance manager should be at the meeting/workshop.
- Another BRS member suggests that the Customer Service and Engagement Manager should suggest some dates.

- The previous BRS member suggests that this should be the first step in a series of meetings about interior design, not just a one-off meeting with Transit.
- A BRS member says that the meeting should take place on a quieter day such as on the weekend when more buses may be available.
- The Customer Service and Engagement Manager will speak with the Transit Director and come back with some dates at the next meeting.

New business:

Requesting meetings

- Meeting with the Transit Planning Manager
 - The Customer and Service Engagement Manager will need to speak with the Transit Planning Manager and the Executive Assistant to the General Manager of Community Services to determine what would be the best time for them to meet with BRS.
 - A BRS member says that the meeting should be a regular meeting with Transit, as while they are from two different city departments, Transit is handling the engagements.
- Meeting with the Experience Transit staff
 - Transit does not have a dedicated person in the Experience Transit portfolio for BRS to meet with.
 - The previous BRS member asks if there will be such a person in the new year.
 - Transit said that there would not be such a person and added that it would be very unlikely that Experience Transit would have a dedicated person before April 2026.
 - Another BRS member asked if such a position would be a full-time position.
 - Transit said that the position would pull them away from their regular duties, and envisaged the Experience Transit position as a “return-to-work” position for bus drivers who are returning to work but cannot drive a bus yet.
- Meeting with the Maintenance Manager
 - Transit said that the Maintenance Manager would likely not need a full meeting, and they could spend twenty to thirty minutes at a regular meeting to answer any questions that BRS may pose.
 - The same BRS member asked if they may be willing to attend the next meeting.
 - Transit said that the maintenance manager may be willing to attend the next meeting, but they need to speak with them first.

- Meeting with the Special Projects Manager
 - Transit said that the request to meet the Special Projects Manager is doable.
 - Another BRS member asked when should BRS meet up with the Special Projects Manager.
 - A BRS member said that the meeting should be in September or October when construction is finished.
 - Transit said that construction would not be finished in September, so if they were to have a meeting in September, BRS would not receive the full picture.
- Meeting about the dashboard
 - The public Transit dashboard (which was a partnership with the University) has been closed, and Transit has shifted their efforts towards UPoint.
 - A BRS member asked for more information about UPoint.
 - Transit said that they cannot provide more information about UPoint at this time.

Long distance buses

- Transit did allow Rider Express to park at a transit bus stop near the downtown terminal in the spirit of active transportation.
 - Transit signed a six-month memorandum of understanding with Rider Express to allow them to park there, and Transit reports that it has gone well.
 - Since FlixBus entered the market, Transit is planning to meet with FlixBus to review their request
- FlixBus reached out to Transit, but Transit has been a bit reluctant to let FlixBus use the bus stop before the bylaw is reviewed and updated if necessary.
- A BRS member said that long-distance buses should be integrated with Transit, but some long-distance buses may not want to go downtown in order to speed up travel times.
 - Transit reported that Yellow Buses were allowed to use Calgary's downtown bus terminal, but when Red Arrow entered the market, they wanted to also use Calgary's downtown bus terminal. This example will help inform how Saskatoon Transit resolves this.
- Another BRS member says that it would be advantageous to Transit to facilitate connections between Saskatoon Transit and the long distance buses.

Transit maps

- A BRS member says that the person who complained about the poor-quality paper maps provided them with a usable cycling map which had less information but was much easier to read.
 - Transit will bring back the information at the next meeting.

- Another BRS member asks if there is a way to print individual sheets at the next bigger size.
- A BRS member says that Transit could print the map across three or four pieces of paper and send them to the person wanting a system map.

Other new business

- A BRS member asked if Transit has started to design a new transit office when they shut down the downtown terminal after BRT goes live.
 - Another BRS member said that the looming economic crisis may mean that it may be a bad idea to have a new Transit office after the downtown terminal shuts down.
 - The previous BRS member said that it is always a good idea to plan ahead.
 - Transit said that they have not thought much about it.
- Another BRS member said that when they went to renew their senior's pass and asked for the statistics for their own pass, the clerk was unable to do that.
 - Transit said that they will look into the situation, but it is a private question between that member and Transit.
- The Transit budget will be discussed at the next meeting.
- A BRS member discussed an incident where a person using a wheelchair was unable to get off the bus at the downtown terminal, as the driver closed the door before letting them off, and asked about Transit's policies.
 - Transit said that if the customer wanted to get off the bus, they need to be let off the buses and urged the BRS member to report the incident on that person's behalf.
- There are no special guests planned for the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, August 18th, 2025 @ 2:00 pm on Zoom