

Meeting minutes for the December 9th, 2025 BRS-Transit Meeting at 4:00 pm

Attendance:

- BRS
 - Odin Swidzinski, BRS-Transit Coordinator
 - Robert Clipperton, Member
 - Peter Gallen, Member
 - Mackenzie Johnson, Member
 - James Wood, Member
- Transit
 - Cory Shrigley, Customer Service and Engagement Manager

Regrets: Lila Wagner

Administrative issues:

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

Old business

Bus orders

- As of December 10th, fifteen of the twenty buses that Transit ordered have arrived, with one bus arriving earlier this week and scheduled to enter service tomorrow.
- The five remaining buses (all of which are articulated buses) have not arrived yet, but Transit expected that they would arrive in January.
 - The one articulated bus that they had received has been huge help in reducing overcrowding on bus routes since it entered service.
- A BRS member said that the new buses are taking the pressure off of Transit.
 - The Customer Service and Engagement Manager said that they could now focus on pinch points as Transit no longer needed to worry about meeting service levels as they now have enough buses.
 - The same BRS member reported that they have not seen posts on the BRS Facebook page about passengers being left behind for a while, but they received reports about people being left behind by empty buses, and reported an instance where someone was confused about bus stops and waited for a bus in the wrong spot.
 - The Customer Service and Engagement Manager said that more information should be provided so that Transit could effectively respond to these issues, and urged people reporting issues to include a photograph of the bus stop, or a time and location.
 - The BRS member said they would make a post about it on the BRS Facebook page.

Transition towards BRT

- A BRS member asked about the transition towards BRT.
 - The Customer Service and Engagement Manager reported that they have had some shelters built that were not adopted/commissioned, so this is the first year where they have dedicated funding for snow removal for certain bus stops.

- The first round of changes was at Broadway where some stops were taken away, and the second round of changes was snow removal, with the next plan being changes to Transit's service standards.
 - Transit has introduced an interim plan to deal with snow clearance at these new stops such as those on Broadway (Oskayak High School and by Ace Burger).
- The transition will come sooner rather than later as Transit cannot wait for a shelter to be built before they begin dealing with snow clearance from the BRT platforms.
 - The difference between how they plan on doing things this winter compared to how they will do things under BRT would be that Transit will only clear a portion of the BRT platform until the new shelters are installed.
 - In order to do so, Transit would need to ramp up funding for snow removal before 2028.
- The same BRS member asked about the legal requirement for snow clearing.
 - Transit reported that there is a separate sidewalk at some platforms, so the sidewalk would still be the property owner's responsibility.
 - Transit said that they will be moving towards the city standards of snow clearance, which would mean that they would only clear the platforms if it has snowed at least five centimetres within twenty-four to forty-eight hours of the snow event.
 - The same BRS member asked if they were only discussing BRT, or if they were talking about the entirety of the Saskatoon Transit route network.
 - The Customer Service and Engagement Manager was only discussing the BRT system.
- The same BRS member asked who is responsible for the rest of the bus stops.
 - QUINT would be responsible for clearing the 255 bus stops with shelters.
 - Some bus shelters were built atop gravel/dirt bases, but the rest of the bus shelters were built atop concrete bases.
 - The rest of the bus stops (there are about 1500 stops in Saskatoon) are not currently being cleared by Transit or a contractor.
 - Enforcement was and has continued to be done on a complaint-driven basis, but Transit has not contacted enforcement.
 - Some property owners have taken care of bus stop location, but some other property owners have not done so.
- Transit has a document outlining five categories of responsibility for snow clearance.
 - The previous BRS member asked if the document could be posted publicly.
 - Transit said the document was not quite ready for public consumption.
 - The Customer Service and Engagement Manager said that this is the first year that Transit had received money for snow removal for their shelters, so they are at the point where they are able to address challenges, such as response times and an improved Service level.
 - The same BRS member said that the discussion they had between Transit and the Broadway BRT Stakeholders group after the construction at Broadway Bridge was completed was either to go back to the old stops or have service where the BRT would be based at, and there was a

consensus to support going straight to the BRT immediately as it would improve travel times.

Requesting one's own Transit statistics

- A BRS member asked if it is possible for a customer to get trip-statistics on their own Bus Card?
- The Customer Service Manager replied that it depends on what ticketing system was used:
 - For Mobile Ticketing (i.e., Masabi *Justride* installed in 2021), the user can see the total rides/scans that they have taken by logging into their Transit/Masabi Account.
 - For standard Bus Cards (used on the Payment-In-Motion ticketing system that was replaced in 2022), Transit can provide statistics on these PIM-cards so long as the person requesting the data can prove that it is their own card.
 - The same BRS member asked how they could retrieve their data from their own PIM card. The reply was that the Customer Service Manager or Customer Service Supervisor (at the Customer Service Centre) must be contacted to provide these statistics.
- Another BRS member said that it was wise to not have the information publicised due to safety concerns.
 - Transit said that if they publicised the service, they would have to deal with safety issues if they cannot conclusively prove that the person's PIM card was owned by the person who used it.
 - The previous BRS member said they were only interested in the number of trips they had taken, not where they went.
 - Transit would be able to provide the requested information in that case.

New business

Enhancements to the ticketing system

- Mobile ticketing will be introduced to all tiers of bus passes, including the discounted fares.
- Transit intends to introduce new MIFARE DESfire cards that could be partitioned to function in multiple ways, and have barcodes to identify each card.
- A BRS member asked if Transit would be mandating age verification when buying the new bus cards.
 - Transit intends to roll back age verification and implement an honour system for the time being.
- Another BRS member asked if they would be implementing an account-based ticketing where you state "all these discounts will be linked to account" or if the new cards would be stored-valued cards.
 - Transit said that the new cards would be both account-based and stored-value.
 - A user could obtain an anonymous card for most of the passes without needing an account.
 - Account-based ticketing would be linked with an email address where the user could go online and update their card without having to go to a

- vendor, and certain passes, such as the social services pass or a post-secondary pass, would require an account to be made.
- Transit would like to replicate the current state of Transit as possible when rolling it out, but they intend to introduce fare-capping where they could institute a maximum cap where once you reach a certain threshold, you would not incur extra charges for the rest of the month.
 - A BRS member asked about proof of university email for UPass.
 - With post-secondary fares, eligible users would be given an entitlement to use the fares until the end of the school year, with the ticketing products available for them to buy at a discounted rate.
 - A student no longer enrolled at a post-secondary institution will no longer be able to take advantage of the post-secondary fares.
 - Another BRS member asked what would be done about the old cards.
 - Transit said that they would keep the card readers on the PIM fareboxes in service for six months after the new card gets introduced, as there would still be many people who still have the old cards, but once the new cards are introduced, the old cards will be discontinued.
 - The same BRS member asked if the new cards are free to those who currently have the old PIM cards.
 - Transit said that they hope to have free card exchanges, but they could not guarantee that they would not be charging \$5 for a new card.
 - The same BRS member asked when they are going live with the enhancements to the ticketing system.
 - Transit plans to launch the new DESfire Cards in March; the cards are in production and are being tested right now.
 - Transit reported that the new PIM-boxes installed in 2022 were not as robust as hoped for. Since their cash-ticketing system is already failing, the current fareboxes will be replaced with a new cashbox when the new ticketing system enters service.
 - Operators may have to hand out a paper transfer, as they previously did before the Go Pass was introduced in 2010, instead of the validator printing out the transfer.
 - Another BRS member asked how the new cards will be scanned.
 - The barcode would be encoded in the card and the cards use RFID¹ (radio frequency identifiers) chips.
 - Transit tested the cards, and it was more instantaneous compared to the old cards where there was a slight lag.
 - The challenge is that MIFARE's primary focus had been mobile ticketing over cards, but the bugs have been mostly worked out.
 - A BRS member asked if Transit would be selling single tickets.
 - Not likely single tickets, but Transit said that they would likely keep selling a ten-ride pack as before.
 - The ten-ride pack would be sold for \$25.

¹ RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) is a wireless technology using radio waves to identify and track tags attached to objects, people, or animals.

- Transit has designed and printed a single-use ticket (with a built-in transfer) for use in specific programs (such as the Fire Support Officers), and it may be possible for Transit to sell these single-use tickets in the future.
- Another BRS member asked if there is a bulk-buy option for the single-use tickets.
 - Transit has sold those passes in bulk to Family Services and Station 20 West for \$2.50 each, and they are given out for free.
 - Transit reported that several city programs have asked for these flexible passes to reduce conflicts with the operators.
- The previous BRS member wondered about transaction charges and banking fees in the Masabi ticketing system compared to using Visa in an Open Payment system.
- A BRS member asked about the name for the new cards.
 - The card would be known as either the T-GO card or as the Smartcard.
- Another BRS member asked about whether the current card has the same technology as the first generation of smart passes or the current generation of smart passes.
 - Transit said that the difference between the old and new cards would be that the new cards would have the term “Reloadable.”
 - A BRS member noted that the more they publicise the new looks (such as the term and the contactless symbol), the more people can tell the difference between the old and new cards, and suggested that Transit publicise the changes.
- A BRS member asked when Transit would start selling the new cards.
 - Transit said that they would start selling them by March 1st (at the end of Q1).

Fare evasion

- The Transit Director provided an update to City Council about fare evasion and there is a discussion about involving police to enforce fares, but that would be determined at a later date. as Transit would like to learn from other municipalities and not have to enforce fares on their own.
 - A BRS member said that the Police Department stated that they would have to ask the province to change the law to allow them to enforce fares on buses.
 - Another BRS member reported that fare evasion had long been a divisive issue on the BRS Facebook page, with people not agreeing on whether or not Transit should enforce fares or have a “hands-off” approach to fare enforcement.
- A BRS member asked how extensive the broken farebox issue was.
 - Coming out of COVID, Transit made a concerted effort to fix the fareboxes, but since those initial efforts, they had not been tracked as diligently as they had been, and there were fareboxes that had not been maintained.
 - Transit is seeing some confusion on whether or not to wave people on as most buses that have broken fareboxes have working mobile validators.
 - Another BRS member stated that it was not uncommon for the fare boxes to be out of commission in their experience.

Temperature threshold for lowering buses

- The incident reported on the BRS Facebook page, where the operator refused to lower the bus at -11 °C for a passenger, was an operator issue, and the incident should be reported to Transit.

- Transit stated that on older buses, there was a higher risk of failure if buses were lowered below -25 °C, but it is not as much of a problem on newer buses.
 - Below the -25 °C threshold, it would be up to the operator to decide whether or not they should lower the bus.
- A BRS member said that a comment on Facebook suggested that there may be a reason why they did not lower the bus, as “the operator knows their buses” even though they are assigned different buses each day.
 - Transit said lowering the bus was a key part of the circle check, and that the operators should know if the bus is struggling or if it is working fine.

Budget

- Aside from one request for increased funding that did not go through, there were no service cuts and Transit received everything they requested in this budget cycle, and Transit appeared to do well in the budget.
 - A BRS member asked about the revision of the service standards.
 - Transit said that rewriting the service standards would be the Transit Planning Manager’s next priority, and that BRS is expected to be involved in the process.

2026 fare increase

- Transit said that the fare increase will take place on July 1st, 2026, but Transit is looking at updating the bylaws in preparation of the fare changes.
 - The second fare increase will take place in January 2027.
- The fare increases will affect cash fares and regular bus passes, but it will not affect the discounted fares.

Meeting with the Chief Public Policy & Government Relations Officer and the Transit Director

- Transit said that they may be willing to arrange a meeting sometime in January with both the Chief Public Policy and Government Relations Officer and the Transit Director, but the final date would be determined by their availability.
 - A BRS member said that BRS has a lot of things to discuss, and said that they should also speak with the BRT Project Manager at some point in the new year to discuss BRT construction.

Other business

- Another BRS member reported that Winnipeg’s ridership was down due to the route changes, but in Edmonton, similar changes were made right after the COVID restrictions came to an end which meant that there was not a strong decrease in ridership.
 - Transit said that the changes made to Route 17 made the route one of the best performing routes alongside Routes 8 and 10, and said that when they have made service changes, they observed an increase in ridership.
 - Transit is confident that the route redesign will work, but Transit is monitoring Winnipeg to see where they went wrong so that they do not repeat Winnipeg’s mistakes.

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- Transit said that they may be willing to provide a video about BRT construction produced by the BRT Project Manager to BRS.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, January 13th. 2026 @ 4:00 pm via Zoom