

BRT PREFERRED CONFIGURATION AND TRANSIT SYSTEM RECONFIGURATION

CONSULTATION SUMMARY: FALL 2017

During the December 2017 stakeholder engagement events we shared our initial thoughts regarding the Preferred Configuration of our City's future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Transit Route Network Reconfiguration, and provided opportunities for stakeholder feedback.

The public and stakeholder consultation included the following components:

- One-on-one key stakeholder meetings through October and November.
- Online survey that was open from December 1 to December 15 (883 respondents)
- Three stakeholder workshops at La Troupe du Jour:
 - December 5, 9:30 to 11:00 AM (23 participants)
 - December 5, 1:00 to 3:30 PM (20 participants)
 - December 5, 7:00 to 8:30 PM (28 participants)
- Public open house on December 6 from 5:30pm to 8:00pm at La Troupe du Jour (19 attendees)
- **Total number engaged: 976**

What we Heard

Key Themes

The following themes emerged from the one-on-one meetings, workshops, open house and online survey:

BRT Preferred Configuration	Transit System Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BRT is generally seen as a positive addition to Saskatoon Transit. • General support for the BRT Preferred Configuration. • Concern that the BRT is the only transit route. Uncertainty about the relationship of BRT and other transit routes in the overall route network. • Concern with BRT impacting on-street parking and traffic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall concern with Saskatoon Transit's current service. • Identified opportunities to improve transit service frequency, reliability, and directness. • Identified opportunities to improve customer service, driver friendliness, stop amenities, snow removal and service information.

Open House and Stakeholder Workshops

An open house and three workshops were held for project stakeholders from the business community, educational institutions (including administration, faculty and students), community groups and associations, special interest groups and City of Saskatoon staff. Participants were given a presentation that covered:

1. The Preferred Configuration for the BRT system, and
2. An Overview of the Transit Network Reconfiguration Design Principles.

The presentation was followed by a Q&A session and open discussion. Display boards were also available for viewing before and after the workshops.

What we heard regarding the BRT Preferred Configuration

Overall, the BRT Preferred Configuration was well received, and generally seen as an improvement to transit service. Uncertainty was noted regarding the BRT routes and other transit services. Concerns were raised related to on street parking and traffic flow along 3rd Avenue and Broadway.

What We Heard	How We Are Incorporating This Feedback
The BRT Preferred Configuration was generally well understood and there is interest to learning more about customer systems and runningways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an opportunity to include more detailed BRT information; specifically, customer system and runningway information during the next engagement series in early 2018.
Commuter parking – is there an opportunity to capture both local and regional (i.e. Warman and Martinsville) commuters through park and ride.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BRT Study includes developing a Park and Ride Strategy.
Concern around the loss of on street parking and travel lanes along Broadway and 3rd Avenue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concern with on street parking and travel lanes will be evaluated prior to finalizing the recommendations.
Concern with high traffic flow and speed along 3rd Avenue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current street design may encourage higher traffic speeds. The addition of BRT to 3rd Avenue and the application of Complete Street design principles should have positive effects on the public realm including traffic calming.
Uncertainty around impact of BRT to businesses along the corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BRT routes will directly connect a large part of the city to each business along the corridors. This will significantly increase the market reach for many businesses. • Construction staging will need to be carefully managed to ensure businesses are not negatively impacted.
Concern that 1st, 2nd or 4th Avenues may be better downtown alignments than 3rd Avenue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown route options are being evaluated.
Concern that removing the Place Riel transit terminal may impact the investments made in the hub and also increase University student walking distance to transit on College Drive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The move to College will slightly lengthen walking distances from the north and shorten walking distances from the south. Increased frequencies and more direct routing will decrease overall travel times. Several routes will run through the campus and connect to service on College Drive. • Student populations served by businesses in the Place Riel hub will not change.

What We Heard	How We Are Incorporating This Feedback
Concern that as long as parking is available and cheap it will be hard to build transit ridership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While we agree with this statement, parking strategy recommendations are beyond the scope of the current BRT study.
Concern that BRT may exacerbate traffic congestion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a coordinated traffic signal system with transit signal priority measures along the BRT corridors will improve overall traffic management and flows along the corridors. Cross corridor traffic and pedestrian movements will be accommodated.
Concern that the BRT and transit network reconfiguration will increase walking distances that may impact accessibility for people like seniors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BRT routes are only one part of the overall transit network. The future route network will include other routes which will serve outlying areas and connect to the BRT. Individuals with mobility limitations will continue to have access to specialized transit services such as Access Transit.
Current frequent transit along 22nd and 8th is well received.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BRT routes will have a high service frequency.
Concern with the lack of frequent transit service to employment centres outside of downtown, such as the north industrial area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The transit network reconfiguration plan will consider transit services to employment centres outside of downtown.
Many current bus stops do not have active transportation connections, such as missing sidewalks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City's Active Transportation Plan has identified missing sidewalk links. The BRT project will ensure all stations have active transportation connections.
Concerns that the bus mall downtown is negatively impacting ridership and property values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the BRT will eliminate the 23 Street bus terminal. All bus routes and passenger transfers will be on-street.
Current service takes too long, and does not offer travel time savings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BRT and transit network reconfiguration will provide more direct, reliable, and frequent service.



Online Survey

An online survey was conducted to gather feedback from the public about the BRT and overall Saskatoon Transit system. The survey link was available on the project website (<https://www.saskatoon.ca/engage/transit-plan>).

What we heard regarding the Transit Network Reconfiguration

Overall, there is support for the BRT; however, there is a lack of understanding that the BRT is only one part of the overall transit system in Saskatoon. With regard to the current transit system most of the feedback identified opportunities to improve transit frequency, reliability, directness, travel times, and customer service.

The following summarizes some the key messages we heard through the online survey:

What We Heard	How We Are Incorporating This Feedback
Improve the reliability and frequency of transit service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses are often late • Long wait times, • Infrequent service - 30 minutes between buses • Better service during non-peak times / days (i.e. early morning, evenings and Sunday service) 	The stakeholder feedback; best practice in transit network design; and experience with similar projects will be will be considered in developing the transit system reconfiguration plan.
Improve route directness and travel times <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better connections between communities and other major hubs outside of downtown and U of S • Decrease travel times • Decrease the number of stops along certain routes. 	
Improve stops and stations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heated shelters • Increased security measures at stations • Better snow removal 	
Improve customer systems and experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital signage • Real-time app information • Driver friendliness • Fare payment systems • Maps and schedules at stops 	
Concern about impact to on street parking along planned runningways.	
Concern about the costs and benefits of the BRT system	The BRT Study will include a Multiple Account Evaluation including a Cost Benefit Study

Next Steps

The next round of stakeholder engagement is scheduled for February, which will include stakeholder workshops and public “come and go” events. The next round of conversations will discuss the functional plan, stations design progress, the park and ride study, transit route network reconfiguration and next steps for the project.