

April 11, 2019

To: Members
Community and Protective Services Committee

Re: Transit Sunday Service Information

RECOMMENDATION

1. That item MN18-12 be removed from the list of outstanding items for the Community and Protective Services Committee.
2. That this report be received and filed.

CONCLUSION

Administration has provided three service opportunities for additional Sunday Transit service. Any expansion of service will require additional budget in order to implement.

BACKGROUND

Council instructed Administration to prepare a report identifying improvements to Transit's Sunday service for both conventional and paratransit bus service, including the costs associated with the expanded service.

Paratransit service runs from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sundays and transports approximately 200 passengers. On average, seven of the trips on Sundays are completed using taxis. The amount of Sunday trip refusals is currently below 0.5 of a percent. The greatest demand for service occurs between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. as customers go to and from church services.

It should be noted that prior to 2016, paratransit operated from 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sundays. The hours were changed to align with conventional transit service hours. This was done at the recommendation of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission with the purpose of both services to be equitable in their service delivery. The reduced hours on Sunday were reinvested in the paratransit service, wherever demand warranted.

Conventional transit service currently operates at 60-minute frequencies on Sundays, with nine routes that run from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. This level of service is consistent with the Council approved service standards for Transit. Service on Sundays last changed in 2009 when service operated from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 60-minute frequencies.

As part of the Council approved service standards, the ridership expected for routes operating on a Sunday is 15 passengers per bus hour (PBH). Overall, the ridership on a Sunday is meeting these levels with only a couple of routes below the standard.

Route/Direction	PBH
#1 Broad North/Dieppe	13.5
#2 Argyle Park/Wood Meadows	31.4
#3 Sherwood Estates/University	21.0
#4 Walsh Acres/Hillsdale	24.6
#7 Glencairn/Whitmore Park	27.3
#8 Normandy Heights/Eastview	15.6
#9 Parkridge/ Albert Park	21.2
#10 RCMP/ Normanview	12.4
#12 Varsity Park/ Mount Royal	15.1
Average	20.2

Table 1 - Sunday Conventional Ridership

On average, there are 3,800 trips taken each Sunday and the cost recovery is 35 per cent on conventional transit. As a comparison, a summary of service levels and average ridership for each day of the week can be found in Appendix A.

It should be noted that any changes to Sunday service will also apply to the nine statutory holidays transit currently operates on. The statutory holidays mimic Sunday service levels.

DISCUSSION

There are three options to be considered when looking to improve Sunday services. This includes increased frequencies, additional routes and increased hours of operation. Transit Administration considered these areas when comparing with other municipalities' level of services and operating hours on Sundays. The results from other municipalities can be found in Appendix B while the detailed comparisons with Regina are as follows:

1. Increased Frequencies

For conventional transit, the majority of similar sized Canadian municipalities contacted operate at both 30 and 60-minute frequencies, depending on the route and ridership levels. Conventional transit service in Regina operates at 60-minute frequency on all routes, all Sunday. Ridership levels on seven of the nine routes exceed the ridership standard of 15 PBH.

If frequencies are increased from 60-minutes to 30 minutes, ridership is forecasted to exceed the service standard of 15 PBH on five of the nine routes within the first year of implementation. This could increase ridership by 123,000 annually and would represent a 1.8 percent increase in transit ridership overall. Having some routes at 30 and 60-minute frequency would be consistent with other municipal transit systems' levels of service. Appendix C shows projected ridership for each route on Sunday at a frequency of 30-minutes.

For paratransit service, the current amount of service hours provided each Sunday is 75 hours. The amount of refusals during the day is low with one advanced booking and six same day bookings. However, if one bus was added to the Sunday schedule, the estimate would be an additional 33 trips in 11 hours.

2. Additional Routes

As noted in Appendix A, conventional transit operates nine routes on a Sunday. These routes are categorized as base routes of the system. Base routes run seven days a week, on approved holidays, and constitute the core of the transit system. Regina currently operates 43 per cent of its routes on a Sunday. Looking at other municipalities, other systems run additional routes on a Sunday, in comparison to Regina. A summary of these findings can be found in Appendix B.

As previously mentioned, a transit route would have to sustain 15 PBH to warrant operation on a Sunday. Below is an analysis of other routes that run on a Saturday but not on Sunday.

Route	Weekday PBH	Saturday PBH	Projected Sunday PBH
5 Uplands/Downtown	26.3	18.3	12.6
15 Heritage	10.8	7.7	5.5
18 Harbour Landing/University	44.4	29.5	19.5

Table 2 - Additional Sunday Routes Projected Ridership

Of the three Saturday routes, one would be projected to maintain a ridership benchmark of 15 PBH or more. If implemented on a Sunday, this one route could increase ridership by 13,085 annually.

3. Hours of Operation

When comparing both Regina conventional and paratransit service hours with other municipalities, hours varied with most times starting at 8 a.m. and ending at 9 p.m. Using the R-Card ridership data, conventional transit tracks ridership by time of day. The graph in Appendix D shows typical ridership by the hour of the day on a Sunday, in terms of PBH.

For the majority of a Sunday, the standard of 15 PBH is met but a sharp downturn occurs between 6 and 7 p.m. This occurs as buses pick up few customers near the end of their routes. The same trend is seen at the end of the evening on Saturday and on weekdays.

In consultation with other municipalities, Sunday service after 7 p.m. has low ridership. Although not all municipalities could provide specific ridership statistics, the majority had equitable, or less than, 15 PBH and expressed that Sunday evening service is their lowest ridership time. About 80 percent of ridership that is experienced on a Saturday evening is also experienced on a Sunday evening. Ridership at 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on a Saturday in Regina is 14.3 PBH. Given the feedback from other municipalities and ridership trends on Saturday, it is estimated that Sunday service would be 11.4 PBH, which is below the service standard of 15 PBH. Total ridership would equal an increase of over 20,000 rides for the additional two hours.

If paratransit service is extended to 9 p.m. each Sunday, it is estimated that ridership would increase to an additional 1,300 rides in a year. Ridership demand for paratransit at these hours is low but would provide a basic level of service for the few that would use it.

Paratransit Taxis

An alternative to extending the hours of service of paratransit is to offer accessible taxi bookings until 9 p.m. This would be a cost-effective option but does raise some concerns. For example, not all paratransit customers are able to use taxis as their level of service is restricted, such as escorting passengers to and from the door of their pick-up location and waiting to ensure customers are inside their destination before departing. Furthermore, some passengers who have a disability may require more extensive assistance than taxi operators are able to provide, creating safety issues. Thus, the use of taxis solely on Sunday evenings is not advised but should continue to be used to supplement the service, as required.

Summary of Service Improvements

A summary of the service improvement options can be found in Appendix E. The chart shows the number of passenger trips and their return on investment for each service change.

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

If additional service to the current Sunday service is required, there will be a requirement for additional budget resources. The net operating budget required for these service improvements ranges from \$37,391 to \$495,100. The details of each service improvement are listed in Appendix E.

It should be noted that if any service option is chosen, an additional \$79,900 in salary and benefits would also be required for a supervisor position for the added service on the road. This would help monitor and supervise the additional service on the road. Only one position is required regardless of how much service is implemented from Appendix E.

If any service option is pursued, it would have to be submitted through the 2020 budget process. No capital budget would be required for any of the service options as no additional buses would be required to provide the service.

Environmental Implications

None with respect to this report.

Policy and/or Strategic Implications

Expanding transit service helps achieve the transportation goals and policies in *Design Regina*, the City of Regina's Official Community Plan (OCP) and specifically, "Goal 2: Public Transit: Elevate the role of Public Transit" in Section D3.

Policy 5.11: Enhance transit service in existing residential neighbourhoods to support continued residential and employment growth.

It also supports the Transportation Master Plan (TMP), specifically Goal 10: Transit will be a reliable and convenient travel choice throughout Regina in section D3.

Policy 3.4 Expand transit service through increased frequencies and /or hours of service where appropriate.

Although some service increase is necessary on a Sunday, if additional budget were available, Transit Administration would recommend use of the service elsewhere, such as some unserved communities in Regina.

Other Implications

None with respect to this report.

Accessibility Implications

All buses in the conventional fleet are low floor accessible. Expanding transit service to run later in the evening would ensure access to public transit for a greater amount of the day and allow more freedom of movement for those who rely on the transit system.

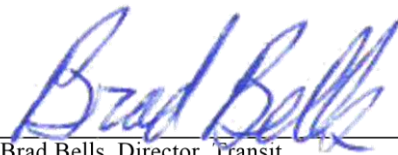
COMMUNICATIONS

There are no communications required at this point.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Any additional budget for Transit service must be approved by Council.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brad Bells".

Brad Bells, Director, Transit

3/22/2019

Brad Bells, Director
Transit & Fleet

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Onrait".

Kim Onrait, Executive Director, Citizen Services

3/29/2019

Kim Onrait, Executive Director
Citizen Services

Report prepared by:
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