

October 10, 2019

To: Members
Community and Protective Services Committee

Re: 2018 Route Changes Update

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the route changes in Appendix B and C be approved to be implemented in January 2020.
2. That item CPS18-1 be removed from the List of Outstanding Items for the Community and Protective Services Committee.

CONCLUSION

The transit route changes that were implemented in May 2018 have had positive impacts, with new transit service to new neighbourhoods in the Greens on Gardiner, Fairways West, Harbour Landing and Tuxedo Park. This expanded service has increased ridership to over 138,000 over the course of one year and decreased customer travel time for customers using Regina Transit by having services direct to popular destinations. The minor route changes proposed in this report are expected to increase ridership and operating efficiency.

BACKGROUND

Administration made numerous route changes in May 2018 to better use Transit resources and expand service to new service areas. The Community and Protective Services Committee approved these changes and requested that the committee be updated in 2019. This report provides an update on the changes made.

The changes for service are as follows:

- Route 60 Arcola Express - This was a new route that was established to get residents from the south east area of the city to downtown in a timely manner.
- Route 10 Expansion to Fairways West - This route expanded service to include this residential area of the city.
- Route 40 Harbour Landing Expansion of Service - The extension offers more coverage in the residential area of Harbour Landing.
- Route 7 and 9 Tuxedo Park Expansion - This change implemented service on Dewdney Avenue between Winnipeg Street and Park Street.

In order to complete these service improvements, service was reduced in underperforming routes, instead of increasing operational funding. This included the following routes:

- Route 17 - Maple Ridge on Saturday: Route 17 only had four passengers per bus hour (PBH). The standard on Saturday is to maintain 10 PBH.
- Route 6 Westhill/Ross Industrial in mid-day: This route had very low ridership off-peak periods with only three PBH between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. The standard for this service is 20 PBH.
- Route 8 Normandy Heights/Eastview late evening service: Route 8 - Normandy Heights/Eastview is the lowest ridership bus in the evening from 9 p.m. until midnight and is well below the standard with only four PBH, Monday through Saturday. Late evening standard is 15 PBH.

These service changes have been in place for one year, which allows us to compare their performance from a year ago and to determine if the changes have been effective in terms of operations and ridership.

DISCUSSION

Ridership Changes

Transit monitors ridership levels through R-Card data and compares these to the established Transit Service Standards for ridership. This helps Administration make decisions on service changes, including the changes made in May 2018. Overall, the changes have resulted in a net increase in ridership of more than 138,000 rides over the course of one year. This increase in ridership represents a two per cent increase of the overall ridership in the past year. A ridership breakdown by each route change can be found in Appendix A.

Each of the service additions have met or exceeded ridership projections, with the two express routes (40 and 60) seeing the greatest change in ridership. The lowest increase in ridership (Route 10, Fairways West expansion) is slightly lower than expected. As a result, Transit is exploring different service options for this area.

The reduction of ridership in routes 6, 8 and 17 was expected, with a loss of 30,000 rides in one year, however the changes with the reallocation of resources going to service improvements had an increase of over 168,000 rides with a net difference of an additional 138,000. Initially when the changes occurred, Transit received seven service requests about the reductions in service and all of them were with regards to the reduction of service of Route 8. Since the initial change, there has not been any further service requests regarding the change.

Transit Priority Signal

Part of the route changes included a transit priority signal installed at Arcola Avenue and Ring Road, travelling to downtown to help give the bus priority at this busy intersection. The first year of operation resulted in various changes by Traffic Engineering to ensure the light was operating effectively. Over the past six months, the signal has been running well and helps speed up the transit travel time for customers during the busy morning hours. When the signal is used, this can save transit up to two minutes of travel time to the downtown. As a result, the on-time schedule adherence for Route 60 is performing well with a 91 per cent on-time performance.

Proposed May 2020 Changes

Although the service changes have performed well, there are two more proposed service changes:

- 1) Route 60 Arcola Express - This route has performed well in its first year with ridership steadily increasing. The continued development of the Greens on Gardiner community has allowed the route to be expanded, to which Administration recommends that it extends to Anaquod Road to cover the residences further to the east of Chuka Boulevard. This will have no cost implications and will make the service available for more residents as it will reduce their walking distance. The proposed change can be seen in Appendix B.
- 2) Route 6 Westhill/Ross Industrial - This route had some service hours reduced in the route review. However, it has a lower on-time performance. The route's on-time performance is currently at 85 per cent but the standard is 90 per cent. This route has delays in the Ross Industrial area along 9th Avenue North as it gets congested during peak hours. Administration proposes the route uses Ring Road to access the Ross Industrial area, which will allow faster access to the area. In addition, 9th Avenue North will still be serviced, as this part of the route will turn into a one-way loop instead of a two-way line. This service change will maintain the same level of service but will raise the on-time performance from 85 per cent to 90 per cent. The proposed change can be seen in Appendix C.

Pending approval, the above proposals they will come into effect in January 2020.

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications. The proposed changes to the routes do not require additional funding or increases to service hours. The small route changes extend service within the route's current allotment of time.

Environmental Implications

None with respect to this report.

Policy and/or Strategic Implications

The changes completed has helped the City achieve its 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.

Policy 5.16: Provide transit service in new neighbourhoods as soon as feasible to encourage transit use and influence early adoption.

Other Implications

None with respect to this report.

Accessibility Implications

All buses in the conventional fleet are low floor accessible.

COMMUNICATIONS

A media launch for the new Route 60 Arcola Express was held in May 2018. The communications tactics helped spread the word and start out the new services strong with high ridership numbers. The proposed changes will be communicated in a similar nature to customers, if the proposals are approved.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The determination of the routing of buses is within the authority of the Community and Protective Services Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Brad Bells, Director, Transit & Fleet

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read "Kim Onra".

Kim Onra, Executive Director, Citizen Services

10/1/2019

9/26/2019