

January 18, 2018

To: Members,
Community and Protective Services Committee

Re: 2018 Route Changes

RECOMMENDATION

That the transit route changes outlined in Appendices A, B, C, D and E be approved and implemented on April 29, 2018.

CONCLUSION

The transit route changes presented in this report represent an expansion and enhancement of transit services. These changes are cost neutral and do not require additional resources.

BACKGROUND

The Transit Department is constantly looking at ways to improve transit service. As Regina has grown, there are areas where Transit has not been able to keep up with growth and demand. Transit regularly reviews ridership and usage levels of service to ensure that the service hours are being used as efficiently as possible. Council has approved a level of standards that help Administration compare current transit service levels and utilization to industry accepted standards. These standards help in decision making of where bus service should run.

Policy 3.1 in the Transportation Master Plan describes Transit's coverage standards as follows:

Utilize transit coverage standards to ensure that 90 per cent of all residents, secondary and post secondary schools, and workplaces are within 400 meters of neighbourhood transit and 2 kms of express transit service.

Transit also has a Council approved standard that requires routes to maintain a minimum amount of passengers per bus hour (PBH) for service. These standards vary depending on time of day and type of route. Transit tracks ridership on all the routes by day of the week and by hour of the day.

Through these standards and recorded service requests for additional service, it was identified that some areas of the city still require bus service. These areas include: Fairways West, Greens on Gardiner, Tuxedo Park, the Regina Airport and Westerra Developments. Of these five areas, all but Tuxedo Park have received requests for service. New developments such as Aurora and Coopertown are expected to start development soon, and Transit is looking at ways to use budgeted dollars to provide the best service possible.

The Transit Department reviewed service and identified the following as having low PBH:

- Route 17 - Mapleridge on Saturday: Route 17 performs well during the weekday but has very few riders on Saturdays with only four PBH. The standard on Saturday is to maintain 10 PBH.

- Route 6 Westhill/Ross Industrial: This route is a cross town route that performs well during peak times, transporting residents to and from the local high schools (Thom/O’Neill), and connects Northgate Mall and Normanview Crossing. However, it has little use in 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: Late evening service runs after 9 p.m. until the last bus leaves downtown at 12:15 a.m. with ridership decreasing in the late evening. Ridership varies by route but Route 8-Normandy Heights/Eastview, is the lowest and is well below the standard with only four PBH, Monday through Saturday. Late evening standard is 15 PBH.

As these areas have not met the standards, they should be modified or reallocated to where they are better utilized by customers. The following service areas have been reviewed and identified as potential areas that require new or expanded service: Arcola Express Service, Fairways West, Harbour Landing, Regina Airport, Tuxedo Park, and Westerra. Through Administration’s analysis, Arcola Express, Fairways West, Harbour Landing and Tuxedo Park are areas where service could be changed or implemented without requiring additional resources.

DISCUSSION

The Transit Department reviewed what was feasible to address with the resources provided and it was determined that the Arcola Express, Fairways West, Harbour Landing Expansion and Tuxedo Park areas were able to be serviced with some adjustments to the system. Transit developed five proposed route changes to gather feedback from residents. These route proposals can be found in Appendix A through Appendix E.

All the proposed service changes were provided to the public for feedback from October 2 to October 16, 2017. A survey on Regina.ca was available for residents to fill out. The survey asked if the proposed change for each route would be supported, and if not, there was an opportunity to explain why. An open house was also hosted at the Sandra Schmirler Leisure Center on October 12, 2017 to offer residents the opportunity to provide feedback in person.

In total, there were 836 survey responses and 35 visitors to the open house. The summary of the findings is in the table below. More detail of the survey results can be found in Appendix G.

	I support the new proposed route.		I will benefit from the new route.	
	I Agree	I Disagree	I Agree	I Disagree
Route 60 Arcola Express	85%	15%	77%	23%
Route 12 and 14 Changes	78%	22%	66%	34%
Route 10 Fairways West	78%	22%	69%	31%
Route 40 Harbour Landing	83%	17%	75%	24%
Route 7/9 Tuxedo Park	68%	32%	56%	44%

Table 1 – Survey Responses

The description of the service and the results for each proposed route change are below.

Route 60 Arcola Express and Changes to Route 12 and 14

The Arcola Express route was outlined in the City's OCP and TMP as an expansion of the City's express bus network. An application was made to Public Transit Infrastructure Funding (PTIF) for additional buses, specifically for this service, and as a result, three buses were funded. The route was designed to service the Sandra Schmirler neighbourhood, the Greens on Gardiner area, and the Creeks neighbourhoods. The design of this route was intended to be a direct trip to and from the downtown area, and will reduce travel time from the Sandra Schmirler neighbourhood to the downtown from 45 minutes by bus to 15 to 20 minutes. The expected ridership for this route is 30 PBH. The proposed route for this service can be found in Appendix A.

There were 292 responses to the survey for the new Arcola Express route, which was the highest volume for all proposed route changes. There was 85 per cent support for the new route as it was proposed. Some of the comments received in support of the route include:

- Like the new service in Greens on Gardiner.
- Like the direct route into and out of the downtown and the time it would save.
- Like that the route also services the Gardiner Park Mall.

The support for the route is very high, however, 15 per cent did not support the route. Some comments for suggested changes include:

- The new route would add more congestion to an already busy Arcola Avenue.
- They would like the route to also service Wascana View.
- They want the Arcola Avenue route to stop on Victoria Avenue and Dixon Crescent.
- The bus does not come down the right residential road in the Greens on Gardiner.
- It would be good to have more stops to the downtown.

As a result of the new service, the Arcola Express covers the same areas of existing service, namely the Route 12 and Route 14. Route 12 was modified to remove service from Truesdale Drive (as the new express route will cover that area), and travel through the Windsor Park area (currently served by Route 14). This change would enhance service for residents in Windsor Park as the current Route 14 only runs during peak times. The proposed change to Route 12 would ensure residents have service Monday through Saturday from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and also provides a direct link to the east commercial area and provides a non-transfer trip to the residents in the University Park area. If the new route is approved, Route 14 would no longer be in service as the area would be covered by Route 12 and Route 60. The changes to Route 12 are estimated to raise current ridership from 10 PBH to 20 PBH. The proposed changes to Route 12 can be seen in Appendix B.

The subsequent changes to Route 12 and Route 14 had 92 survey responses with 78 per cent support. Some of the comments of support include:

- Increased service in Windsor park area during the day.
- Transfer is not required to get downtown.

The support for the changes was high, however, 22 per cent of those who completed the survey did not support the route. Some comments for suggested changes include:

- The route will be fine as long as it is aligned with making transfers to the Express route and University route at the Sandra Schmirler and on Victoria Avenue.
- Would still like Route 12 to remain on Truesdale Drive.
- Concern that the extra service through Windsor Park would make the route late.

From the feedback given, it is recommended to implement Route 60 (as detailed in Appendix A). It is also recommended to proceed with changes to Route 12 (in Appendix B), along with the removal of Route 14.

Route 10 – Fairways West Extension

The proposed Fairways West service is an extension of the current Route 10 that would run during peak times only (6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.). This extension of Route 10 would use the bus from Route 14 to provide the service, and would give the Fairways West area a basic level of service to allow travel to the downtown and access to the Martin High school area. The route addition is anticipated to have 15 PBH. The proposed route change can be found in Appendix C.

There were 159 survey responses with 78 per cent support for the route expansion as it was proposed. Some of the comments of support include:

- Like that service was being introduced to the area.
- Like that the route went to Martin High School.

The support for the changes is high, however 22 per cent of those that completed the survey did not support the route. Some comments for suggested changes include:

- There is already too much traffic in Fairways West and the bus service will increase this.
- The bus needs to run more than just during peak times.
- Would rather the Route 12 come into Fairways West area.

From the feedback given, it is recommended to implement changes to Route 10, as detailed in Appendix C.

Route 40 - Harbour Landing Expansion of Service

Route 18 currently services the Harbour Landing area. There are other routes that run close to the Harbour Landing residential area and come as far as the Grasslands commercial area. Transit studied if any of these current routes could extend service into the Harbour Landing neighbourhood to help with overcrowding on Route 18, and it was determined that Route 40, Albert Street Express, was the only route with potential capacity to extend the route to service part of the residential Harbour Landing area. To accomplish this, the loop to the back of the Southland Mall would have to be removed from Route 40. Route 40 would continue to service the mall but would stop on Gordon Road instead. This change would make the trip to and from downtown more direct and expand the service at no cost. The proposed change is anticipated to have 20 PBH. The proposed service change can be found in Appendix D.

There were 211 survey responses and 83 per cent support the route expansion as it was proposed. Some of the comments of support include:

- Like that this is a direct route from residential Harbour Landing to the downtown area. It would help as Route 18 is quite busy.
- Like that it would only require one bus to get to downtown.

The support for the changes is very high, however, 17 per cent of those that completed the survey did not support the route. Some comments for suggested changes include:

- Would still like the bus to come to the back of the Southland mall.
- Would like weekend service in Harbour Landing.

From the feedback given, it is recommended to implement changes to Route 40 as detailed in Appendix D.

Route 7 and Route 9 - Tuxedo Park Service

This proposal would have Route 9 travel down Dewdney Avenue into the downtown and Route 7 travel down Dewdney Avenue back to the east end. Currently, Route 7 and Route 9 both travel along Victoria Avenue, in and out of downtown. The change is not anticipated to have any significant impact to ridership. Currently, Route 7 and Route 9 perform well, always exceeding 30 PBH on an average weekday. The proposed service change can be found in Appendix E.

There were 82 responses and 68 per cent support the route changes as they were proposed. This change has the lowest amount of support. Some of the comments of support include:

- Like that some service is removed from Victoria Avenue and gives access to businesses on Dewdney Avenue.
- Like that it will be faster getting to and from the Glencairn area in the east end.

Support for the changes is high but there were 32 per cent that did not support the route change. Some comments for suggested changes include:

- This would decrease the service along Victoria Avenue, which has more businesses and residential areas.
- Residents from Harbour Landing indicate they travel to Broad Street and Victoria Avenue.

This proposed change has the lowest response rate and lowest support of all route proposals (68 per cent). However, it still has the majority support for the proposed change. Administration is recommending proceeding with this change and will monitor results of the change. The route change can be found in Appendix E.

As with any changes to routes, each will be monitored to see if they reach a desirable outcome in terms of increased ridership and on-time reliability. A summary of the route changes and service reallocation can be found in Appendix F.

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

The proposed changes to service do not require additional budget. The Arcola Express buses were funded through PTIF and have been delivered to Regina. Any operational funding for the additional buses is already contained in the current budget.

Environmental Implications

None with respect to this report.

Policy and/or Strategic Implications

Extending transit service to new developments 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 5.10: Promote intensification and mixed use development along express transit corridors and at transit nodes and potential transit nodes through increased service levels, more direct routes, express services, and competitive travel times.

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

If the proposed changes are approved, there will be regular communications leading up to their effective dates in April 2018. Regular communications using the website, social media, a public service announcement and notices on the buses will be used to communicate the change.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

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

Respectfully submitted,



Brad Bells, Director
Transit Department

Respectfully submitted,



Kim Onrait, Executive Director
City Services