

May 15, 2012

To: Members,
Community Services Advisory Committee

Re: Designating Additional Low Floor Transit Routes

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
- MARCH 7, 2012**

That this report be received and filed.

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE – MARCH 7, 2012

The Committee adopted a resolution to concur in the recommendation contained in the report.

Councillor John Findura; Michelle Busch, Jennifer Cohen, Bill Gray, Richard Harmon, Heather Petrychyn, Michael Richter, Barbara Schmuland, Don Shalley, Don Trew, and Debra Welder were present during consideration of this item by the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee, at its meeting held on March 7, 2012, considered the following report from the Administration:

RECOMMENDATION

That this report be forwarded to the Community Services Advisory Committee for information.

CONCLUSION

Designating additional low floor transit routes will assist people requiring low floor buses to have better access to travel throughout Regina. Currently, Routes 1, 2, 4, 8, 15 and 17 are low floor bus routes. In addition, the Transit Department plans to make Routes 3, 5, 7, 10, 11 and 21 low floor effective May 7, 2012.

BACKGROUND

The Transit fleet is comprised of 106 units of which 85 are low floor buses and 21 are high floor. Low floor buses have no steps at the front or rear door and can kneel or lower at the front to make entering the bus easier. Low floor buses are also designed with a flip out ramp that the operator can deploy to make the bus accessible to people pushing strollers or using wheelchairs, scooters and walkers. High floor buses have steps which makes access for some difficult.

The City of Regina is committed to only purchasing new buses that are low floor. As the number of low floor buses has expanded, the Transit Department has also expanded the number of designated low floor accessible routes. When a route is designated as accessible, transit assigns only low floor buses to that route. If there is a mechanical breakdown of a bus on a low floor route, Fleet Services will try to ensure that the replacement bus is also low floor. It is anticipated that all buses will be low floor by 2016.

The fleet of low floor buses has now expanded to a point where the Transit Department can further expand its designated low floor bus routes. This report advises the Committee as to what additional routes Transit plans to designate as low floor.

DISCUSSION

Regina Transit currently has six accessible low floor bus routes. The areas that these routes cover can be viewed in Appendix A. The routes are:

- Route 1 (Dieppe/Broad North) which connects with Pioneer Village, the Pasqua Hospital, downtown and Northgate Mall;
- Route 2 (Argyle Park/Downtown) which connects the Superstore/Walmart and Northgate Mall with areas in north Regina and the downtown;
- Route 4 (Walsh Acres/SIAST) connects areas in northwest Regina, the Hillsdale neighbourhood, downtown, Wascana Park, the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, University of Regina and SIAST;
- Route 8 (RCMP/Eastview) connects Pioneer Village to the 13th Avenue shopping area, downtown and the Eastview neighbourhood;
- Route 15 (Heritage) connects senior residential complexes in the Transition, Cathedral and Core Neighbourhoods with the General Hospital, 13th Avenue shopping and downtown; and
- Route 17 (Community Services Village) connects the Community Services Village and downtown.

These routes were chosen based on feedback received from customers requiring low floor bus service and disability-related community based organizations. Data from piloting low floor bus service on particular routes was also considered. The number of buses needed to service particular routes was also a factor in the decision.

The Transit Department plans to expand its low floor routes effective May 7, 2012 to include the following:

- Route 3 (Sherwood Estates/University) connects areas in northwest Regina, downtown, Wascana Park, Conexus Arts Centre, University of Regina;
- Route 5 (Uplands/Downtown) connects the Northgate Mall and Avon Shopping Centre with downtown.
- Route 7 (Glencairn/Whitmore Park) connects areas in east and south Regina with the downtown and three shopping centres;
- Route 10 (Woodland Grove/Varsity Park) connects areas in east Regina with the downtown, and Regina General Hospital;
- Route 11 (Normanview/Normandy Heights) connects northwest and southwest areas of the city with the downtown, Sportplex, four shopping centres and the Pasqua Hospital;
- Route 21 (University) connects east Regina neighbourhoods with the University of Regina and SIAST; and
- Proposed Harbour Landing route. This route will connect with the Golden Mile Shopping Centre where people can transfer to routes that will take them downtown, to the University and several high schools. The route is not reflected in Appendix A because it still requires final approval.

The combined coverage of the existing and proposed low floor bus routes can be seen in Appendix A.

These routes were chosen based on feedback received from customers requiring low floor bus service and organizations representing people who use accessible transit services, input received at the Accessibility Forum held on October 1, 2011, the ability of these routes to cover areas of the city that are currently not serviced by low floor bus routes, demographics, the requirement of small buses for particular routes and data by route collected through the automated fare collection system.

The Transit Department also considered the possibility of designating certain buses within every route as being low floor accessible. Feedback received from customer groups indicated that this might be confusing for those who have difficulties reading schedules. This is also more challenging for Fleet Services who is required to do a bus change off when there is a mechanical difficulty.

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

There are no additional costs or cost savings as a result of expanding the number of designated low floor bus routes.

Environmental Implications

None with respect to this report.

Strategic Implications

Designating additional low floor bus routes aligns with the City's vision of becoming a more inclusive community because it will provide enhanced mobility for people requiring low floor bus service.

Other Implications

None with respect to this report.

Accessibility Implications

Designating additional low floor bus routes will enhance the ability of people with mobility challenges to use fixed-route transit. It will also give some paratransit customers another travel option which is important given that paratransit cannot meet its current demand for service.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Transit Department will promote the new low floor routes through a Public Service Announcement and in the upcoming spring paratransit newsletter that is sent to all paratransit customers. The low floor bus route brochure will also be reprinted and sent to organizations, groups and multi-unit residences advising them of the expanded low-floor bus routes. When transit schedules are reprinted, those which are designated as low floor will be marked with the universal symbol of wheelchair accessibility.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The Administration has authority to determine what type of buses are used on transit routes. Forwarding a copy of a report to another advisory committee is within the authority of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Peggy Roettger, Secretary