

August 12, 2015

To: Members,
Community and Protective Services Committee

Re: Victoria Avenue East Bus Route Changes

RECOMMENDATION

That the transit service for Route #9 Parkridge, as outlined in Appendix A, be approved and implemented effective September 20, 2015.

CONCLUSION

The Transit Department needs to adjust the current route in Parkridge to accommodate the realignment of Eastgate Drive. These changes will be done at no additional cost and will allow transit service to continue to the residents of the Parkridge community.

BACKGROUND

Plans to replace and upgrade the infrastructure around the Victoria Avenue bridges over Pilot Butte Creek, east of Coleman Crescent, have been underway for several years. Victoria Avenue East, between Coleman Crescent and Prince of Wales Drive, is not equipped to handle the increasing traffic demands and needs to be widened. In addition, there is also a need to improve safety at the intersection of Eastgate Drive and Coleman Crescent as its close proximity to Victoria Avenue increases the potential for traffic accidents and would only be magnified once Victoria Avenue is widened. In order to address these issues, access from Eastgate Drive to Victoria Avenue needed to be altered. By removing the bridge on Eastgate Drive, along with a portion of Eastgate Drive, and realigning Eastgate Drive to meet with westbound Victoria Avenue directly, these safety issues can be resolved and westbound Victoria Avenue can be widened.

The planned construction by the City of Regina Roadways Department began June 22, 2015 and is anticipated to be completed by October 30, 2015. Transit routes will be affected by the changes. The Roadways Department has indicated the current routes will be accommodated during the beginning of construction. However, before construction is complete, the routes will need to be altered to accommodate the changes to Eastgate Drive.

Route #9 Parkridge currently travels south on Coleman Crescent to get to Eastgate Drive. During construction and once construction is complete, Eastgate Drive will not be accessible from Coleman Crescent and the route will have to be altered (See Appendix A).

Transit produced a proposal for bus route changes in the area. The current route that would be affected is depicted in Appendix A. As a result of the changes on Eastgate Drive, Route #9 Parkridge is proposed to remove service off of Coleman Crescent, Fines Drive, Brown Street, Thomson Avenue and Eastgate Drive between Dewdney Avenue and Eastgate Drive. The proposed route change would introduce service on Dewdney Avenue East between Brown Street and Prince of Wales Drive. The changes would remove four bus stops between Dewdney Avenue and Eastgate Drive. Replacement stops would be put up on Dewdney Avenue travelling

eastbound between Brown Street and Prince of Wales Drive to accommodate those passengers. Service is still provided on Coleman Crescent, Fines Drive, Brown Street and Thomson Avenue with Route #7 Whitmore Park and will remain unchanged. The current service has enough scheduled time that it can accommodate the change with no added resources.

Route #50 Victoria Avenue Express was proposed to remove service off of Dewdney Avenue, Prince of Wales Drive and Neville Drive as the proposed Route #9 would cover this area more frequently. Route #50 could be rerouted to Eastgate Drive where Route#9 Parkridge would no longer service.

DISCUSSION

On June 4, 2015, the Roadways and Transportation Department held an open house at the Victoria Square Mall to gather feedback on the street widening project. The Transit Department also attended the open house to show the proposed route changes. The event was advertised by sending direct mail-outs to residents of Glencairn Village, Creekside, Eastpointe Estates, Eastgate, Parkridge and Kanosis communities. In addition, residents were invited to submit comments by email or by calling Service Regina. Social media was also used to inform residents of the open house. There were approximately 80 attendees at the event. In total, Transit received 12 formal comments about the proposed changes. Of the 12 comments received, one comment was praise for the Route #9 change, two were concerned with the changes to Route #9, three were concerned with general traffic in the area, and six were concerned with the changes to Route #50.

A summary of the comments received were:

- The positive comment to the Route #9 change was shorter walking distances and more frequency of service on Dewdney Avenue East. No positive comments were received about the Route #50 changes.

Of the concerned comments:

- Six customers indicated they wanted Route #50 to remain unchanged and remain on Prince of Wales Drive, Dewdney Avenue and Neville Drive. They indicated a change in this route would create greater walking distances to the nearest bus stop and less convenience when taking the bus.
- Two customers indicated a change to Route #9 would create longer walking distances to the nearest stop, no more service on Coleman Crescent, Brown Street, Thomson Avenue and Fines Drive via the Route #9, and a longer route to get downtown.

Administration provides comments in response to the concerns raised:

- Based on feedback to the Route #50 changes, Transit Administration has decided not to make the proposed changes to Route #50. All feedback received stated customers would appreciate the route to remain the same as changes would negatively affect their travel on this route.
- Based on feedback to the Route #9 changes, customers were concerned with losing service on their streets. Although service will be removed from Coleman Crescent, Fines Drive, Thomson Avenue and Brown Street from Route #9, service is still provided on those streets by Route #7 in the opposite direction. Based on the configuration of Eastgate Drive and Victoria Avenue bridge construction, Route #7 will remain in place on these streets.

If the Route #9 change is approved, bus stops will be installed approximately every 200 metres between Brown Street and Prince of Wales Drive. Residents with property adjacent to a proposed bus stop will receive a letter notifying them of the location one month prior to installation. However, in most cases, bus stops will be situated next to green spaces to lessen any impact on residents in the area. The route changes would come into effect September 20, 2015 to coincide with other schedule adjustments.

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

No additional budget will be needed for these route alterations as the current resources allow for the extra travel time. The current schedules will be maintained so there will be no additional service hours in this change.

Environmental Implications

Providing transit service to Dewdney Avenue East will allow residents alternative ways to get around and has been requested in the past. A standard sized bus replaces 40 single occupant vehicles, thus, reducing traffic congestion and parking issues.

Policy and/or Strategic Implications

This change supports 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.

Other Implications

None with respect to this report.

Accessibility Implications

All buses on this route will be low-floor and wheel chair accessible.

COMMUNICATIONS

Transit Administration shared the plans for the proposed route changes with residents via a direct mail-out, open house, social media and links to information on Regina.ca.

If the proposed Route #9 is approved, schedules will be distributed to Transit Agents. Information indicating the route changes will also be provided through a media release, social media and on Regina.ca. Any homeowners adjacent to a new bus stop will be notified one month prior to the impending installation.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'L. Griffin'.

Lynette Griffin, Acting Director
Transit Department

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Onrait'.

Kim Onrait, Executive Director
City Services

Report prepared by:
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