

Regina Accessible Transportation
Stakeholder Advisory Committee
Recommendations
May 2014

I. Review the Transportation System to Improve Equity Efficiency and Effectiveness in order to achieve an Equivalent and Comparable Public Transit Service for People with Disabilities.

In May of 2013, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission brought together a group of individuals representing disability related organizations as part of a Stakeholder Committee to review the Transportation System related to the City of Regina. This group was tasked with developing specific recommendations related to the report "*Achieving Equivalent, Comparable and Accessible Public Transportation in the City of Regina: A Report to Stakeholders*" that was released in June 2013. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee established a series of recommendations in response to the "Issues to be Addressed" section of the report.

Recommendation:

a. Ongoing Review of the Accessibility of Transportation Services

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee will meet at a minimum biannually, in April and October, to review the state of transportation services for people with disabilities in Regina. The purpose is to identify, avoid and find workable solutions to emerging human rights concerns.

II. Ensure that Equivalent and Comparable Complementary Transit Services (Taxi Services) are Available to People with Disabilities

More than 11% of Canadian adults experienced disability related to pain, mobility or flexibility with 40% experiencing all three at the same time (Statistics Canada CSD, 2012). Statistics Canada reported that 11.5% of Canadians have a mobility disability (PALS, 2006). Based on the 2011 Statistics Canada Census of the Population estimate of 193,100 persons with a mobility disability, it can be surmised that approximately 22,200 residents in Regina have a mobility disability.

Recommendations:

a. Increase the number of accessible taxis licenses

In order to provide a comparable level of availability for people with disabilities, it is recommended that the City adopt a population ratio (the same ratio as provided for regular taxis) to determine an appropriate number of accessible taxis. The proposed population ratio would provide one accessible taxi for every 1,250 residents with a mobility disability, which equates to 18 accessible taxis based on current statistical information.

To work towards achieving the 1:1,250 accessible taxi ratio, it is recommended that additional accessible taxi licenses be issued incrementally. There are currently four active accessible taxis. The incremental approach will lessen the impact of an increased market on existing drivers. It is recommended that a total of 10 accessible taxi licenses be in place by the end of 2014 and that the end of 2017 achieve the accessible taxi ratio.

b. Equalize drop rates

All taxis will charge the same fares for service with increases calculated based on the Taxi Cost Fare Model as per Schedule "D" in the Taxi Bylaw amendments presented to City Council in February 2014. The Administration recognizes that the cost of operating an accessible taxi is higher than for a regular taxi and is reviewing options for mitigating the revenue lost from the decrease in accessible taxi drop rates.

c. Require Comparable Technology and Vehicle age Requirements for Accessible Taxis

Currently, Regina taxi bylaw provides vehicle age and technological requirements for only regular, seasonal, and temporary taxis. Age requirements mandate that by 2018, no vehicle to be used as a taxi shall be nine model years or

older. Computer-aided dispatch systems, GPS systems, security cameras, and electronic payment systems must be installed in taxis by the end of 2015. In order to maintain an equal service level across the entire taxi industry, the same requirements are recommended for accessible taxis.

III. Develop, Implement and Revise Strategies to Ensure that Transit Hot Spots Frequented By People with Disabilities are Placed on a High Priority for Barrier Free Access throughout the Year

Using data from Regina Transit's automated fare collection system, ten bus stop areas in Regina have been identified that have a high level of usage by people with disabilities (See Appendix 1). These "Hot Spot" areas have a high number of people using mobility devices such as wheelchairs or scooters and CNIB passengers that use the bus stops at these locations.

Recommendations:

a. Make Snow Removal at Hot Spots a Priority

Partner with the City's Winter Road Maintenance Branch to ensure snow removal at the Hot Spots is a priority beginning winter 2013/2014. Snow will be removed from the Hot Spots by the City's Winter Road Maintenance Branch within 48 hours after the end of a snowfall. The Transit Quality Assurance Coordinator will monitor that the snow has been removed from the Hot Spots within two business days following the 48-hour snow removal period by the Winter Road Maintenance Branch.

b. Create a Fully Accessible "Pilot" (Template) Bus Stop

The bus stop that recorded the most people with visible disabilities was the downtown hub on 11th Avenue where most transfers take place. It is recommended that in 2015 an accessible bus stop at this location be created to trial including, but not limited to:

- Accessible signage including tactile features;
- Audible pedestrian signals;
- Appropriate sidewalks and curb cuts;
- Proper path of travel;
- Tactile wayfinding; and
- An accessible bus shelter.

c. Collect Feedback related to the Accessible Bus Stop and Refine the Model

The City will gather feedback on this pilot accessible bus stop up to December 31, 2016 and ascertain what is working, what is not, and what modifications may be required. This model would then serve as a template for creating additional accessible bus stops.

d. Review and Update the list of "Hot Spots" Annually

The City will review data collected from its automated fare collection system on an annual basis of bus stops frequented by people with visible disabilities with the Stakeholder Advisory Committee. The City's list of Hot Spots will be

updated annually and communicated to relevant City Branches.

IV. Ensure Ongoing Safety and Sensitivity Training for all Transit Staff, Including Operators and Administrators, with Regard to the Accommodations of People with Disabilities Require while using Public Transit

Providing training related to how to assist and serve passengers with disabilities to all Transit employees ensures that:

- Passengers are transported safely;
- Transit operators learn to assist passengers in a way that protects their safety and prevents injuries;
- Transit employees are aware of their roles and responsibilities; and
- Transit employees have information and tools that will assist them to provide good customer service and deal with any issues that may arise.

Correspondingly, it is equally important that Regina Transit invest in training and communicating with passengers with disabilities about their responsibilities related to using transit. This will also ensure passenger safety and a positive travel experience.

Regina Transit needs to continually work with stakeholders representing people with disabilities in developing and delivering training to its employees. It also needs to consult

stakeholders representing people with disabilities when developing communication materials and training for passengers.

Recommendations:

- a. *All Regina Transit Bus Operators Receive Securement and Awareness Training Related to People with Disabilities including Refresher Training.*

By the end of 2014, all Regina Transit bus operators will be trained on disability awareness, securement and ridership issues. Any operator who receives a complaint, which is substantiated through investigation, related to their customer service or securement skills will receive refresher training if warranted.

In addition, all Regina Transit bus operators will also receive general refresher securement and awareness training once every three years to ensure that their skills remain current. This is particularly important because of the safety implications related to their role in securing wheelchairs.

- b. *All additional Regina Transit Employees Receive Awareness Training about How to Provide Appropriate Customer Service to People with Disabilities*

By the end of 2014, all Regina Transit employees will be trained on disability awareness and ridership issues.

c. *All New Regina Transit Employees Receive Training about How to Provide Appropriate Customer Service to People with Disabilities*

Beginning in 2014:

- New bus operators will receive training related to the securement of mobility devices and disability awareness and ridership issues as part of their initial training;
- City paratransit staff will receive training within three months of being hired; and
- All additional new transit employees will receive training within six months of being hired.

d. *All Contracted Paratransit Operators Receive Training about How to Provide Appropriate Customer Service to People with Disabilities*

By the end of 2014, all contracted paratransit operator employees will be trained on disability awareness and ridership issues. In addition, these contracted paratransit operator employees will receive refresher training once every two years. Quality assurance personnel ensure that this training takes place.

e. *Regina Transit to have a Certified Mobility Device Securement Trainer on Staff*

By the end of 2014, Regina Transit will commit to having at least one certified mobility device securement trainer within its staff complement.

f. *A Process be Developed to Monitor Securement of Passengers using Mobility Devices on Conventional Transit Buses*

By the end of 2014, a process is developed and implemented by Regina Transit to ensure that random checks of the securement of mobility devices is performed. This will be to monitor the effectiveness of the securement training.

g. *A Communication and Training Strategy be Developed to Educate People with Disabilities about Transit*

By the end of 2014, a communication and training strategy is developed and implemented by Regina Transit to ensure that people with disabilities are provided opportunities to learn how to use transit. This will include but is not limited to; demonstrations about how to use transit, utilizing public events such as open houses, redesigning communication materials to make them more accessible, and promoting communication information.

V. Maximize the Integration and Accessibility of the Transportation System to Comply with *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*

This section in the report is defined to include accessibility for people with disabilities in a universal sense. This relates to enhancing accessibility to include audible stop announcements and other accessibility factors built into the transit system. It also includes enhancements to the paratransit system to make it more equivalent with the conventional transit system.

Recommendations:

a. Develop and Implement a Third Party Complaint / Compliment Process

By December 31, 2014, Regina Transit and Bylaw and Licensing for taxis will implement a process whereby people with disabilities can have a person or agency report a complaint / compliment on their behalf. This process will be publicized so people are aware of this option.

b. All Conventional Transit Buses be Low-Floor Accessible

By December 31, 2015, all conventional transit buses will be low-floor accessible. Once the fleet is completely low-floor accessible the full accessibility of the fleet will be promoted.

c. *All Conventional Transit Buses have an Audible Stop Announcement System*

By December 31, 2015, all conventional transit buses will have an audible stop announcement system.

d. *Enhance Paratransit Service so that it is Comparable to Conventional Transit*

The unaccommodated trip rates for paratransit will decrease beginning in 2014. By the end of 2015 the City, Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, and stakeholder advisory committee will establish definitions and standards related to unaccommodated trips based on research and best practices in other Canadian jurisdictions. The City will develop an implementation plan to ensure these standards are met.

Appendix 1

The frequently accessed “Hot Spots” include (and listed in no particular order):

1. 11th Ave (Rose to Lorne St) - both sides of the street
2. Albert Street from 9th Ave - 15th Ave - both sides of the street (Old Superstore to College)
3. Broad Street from 11th Ave - 14th Ave - both sides of the street (Sask. Drive to College)
4. Broad Street from 1st Ave - 3rd Ave - South bound only
5. Rae Street behind the Golden Mile Mall – both sides of the street
6. 12th Ave from Albert St to Lorne St (Behind City Hall)
7. 7th Ave N @ Smith Street, South Bound and East Bound (Northgate Mall)
8. Sangster Blvd @ Garuik Cr., @ Stern Bay and @ Carnegie St
9. Albert St @ Avonhurst Dr. – South bound only (by A&W)
10. Fleet St @ North Service Road