

Saskatoon, November 4, 2019  
Mayor Charlie Clark and City Councillors,

Provided to SPC on Transport  
Nov 4, 2019 7.1.1  
Marjaleena Repo.

My name is Marjaleena Repo. I've lived in Saskatoon since 1978 and have used the transit ever since as my main way of travelling in the city, out of necessity as I don't drive, and also out of the belief that public transit is the transportation of the future and needs to be supported.

I'm here today to speak against Saskatoon Transit's plan to stop communicating with its passengers about detours by posting paper notices. Transit director Mr. McDonald has stated in media interviews and documents that this is done because the city is moving to digital communication, and the move would save an estimated \$100,000. We passengers will see notices, as is already happening, that merely direct us to use mobile apps and Transit's website to find out where the stop has gone.

As for digital communication in order to save paper and money, we have heard that story before. In late 2017 councillors voted to cancel a very useful recycling calendar that did not only have dates of recycle and waste pickup, but also other helpful information on the topic of waste management. Then, too, councillors patted themselves on the back for "saving paper" and for saving \$85,000 dollars from the city's one billion dollar budget, and they too relied on clearly misleading data telling them that "most people" have access to cell phones and computers, and could fend for themselves, when in reality that is not the case, as I pointed out at the time.

This is what we had in the recycling calendar, clearly and colourfully presented, and this is what we have now, pages printed from the website, with no additional information you might want and need. We are on our own to find that information the best we can, and yet the city prides itself of being serious about recycling and waste management. I don't believe there has been any follow-up on the city's part on how those who relied on the calendar and benefitted from it have been affected, and what it is like to have to compile from a variety of sources the information that was previously easily available in the calendar.

Transit is now jumping to make the same mistake by introducing changes that many of its customers cannot easily or at all adjust to, and all in the name of "less paper" and with the same flawed assumption that "most passengers" have ways and means of coping because they have cell phones. Numbers are being thrown around (such as an



page 2

American report that 98% of Americans own a mobile phone, information likely not relevant in Saskatoon), but has Transit done even the most elementary survey on what devices if any its patrons have and with what capabilities?

The problems are already manifesting themselves. On that recent extremely cold day we all suffered from I was facing one of those notices at a bus stop. My hands were too cold to handle anything and so was my smart phone, and I had to wander off in search of the "next stop" which I failed to locate. Lot of swearing under my breath resulted from the non-existent service by the Saskatoon Transit.

The facts that stand out in the both cases are that valuable services are being cut back in the name of "saving paper" and nickels and dimes when far more meaningful savings could be made in other areas without depriving residents of important services.

And if service is not the main function of Transit, then what is? If this is the same Transit that hopes to increase its passenger numbers, making life harder for them is hardly the way to go about it.

Marjaleena Repo

█ Elm Street

Saskatoon, SK

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September 25, 2017

Mayor and City Councillors  
City of Saskatoon

**Re the proposed cancellation of the waste and recycling calendar**

Mr. Mayor and Councillors.

My name is Marjaleena Repo. I have been a resident of Saskatoon since 1978.

I'm here to speak against the plan to cancel the annual waste and recycling calendar, which has been recommended by the environment, utilities and corporate services committee.

I see this recommendation to be very short sighted and based on inadequate information about the need for the printed calendar which gives information not only about collection dates but of different waste-handling methods. The calendar is well done and its information attractively presented. No wonder that in the city's 2015 Recycling Survey 75% of the respondents recalled receiving the calendar and that most kept it for reference, as I do and so do most of the people I know who depend on it.

The reasons offered for its cancellation have to do with saving money, showing environmental leadership (in abolishing paper) and the supposed lack of need for such a printed calendar.

The savings of \$85,000 (in a \$1 billion plus budget) and less use of paper, could be financially and environmentally positive, with all things considered, but these must be contrasted with what the cancellation actually means for people living in single-family homes, whether they be homeowners or tenants, as apartment and condominium dwellers have their own ways and means of dealing with garbage collection and recycling information and don't need individual calendars.

The committee appears to have based its recommendation for the cancellation on the July 2017 Recycling Survey, according to which, "96% of all the respondents have access to the internet at home or a mobile device" and because "69% of single-family homes support discontinuing the distribution of print calendars and only 29% oppose."

This information does not correspond with my knowledge about internet access in general and this city in particular. I tried to get hold of this survey so I could examine its methodology, the nature of its sample, the questions asked and NOT asked, but it turns out that it is not yet available on the city's web site, and was not even presented to the councillors at the committee meeting, who therefore could not have examined it critically!



The report assumes that being online means that you can actually access information in a useful form. This clearly is not always the case, as people can be on line but not able to print, they can have mobile phones that they only use for calling, they can only afford limited data so avoid websites, some can only access the internet sporadically because they pay as they go, and others have access but only use it reluctantly and only for limited purposes such as contact with friends and relatives. All these people would be in the category of "having access" but theirs does not compare with, for instance, the access that councillors have at home and in their offices, and they would be the losers in the calendar cancellation.

Thus the 96% figure can be highly misleading and those with limited access can also be found among the 29% who oppose the cancellation of the calendar, which in itself is not an insignificant number.

There seems to have been little thought given to the options for people who now depend on the printed calendar, although in media reports I read that people are expected to go to city facilities, such as libraries and leisure centres, to get copies printed. They would not only have to fend for themselves, but get themselves to these facilities, ask the library and other staff to help them print a copy, for which they would pay a printing fee, while the staff of these facilities would take time off their other work to do that. Perhaps the other "option" is for people to pester their friends and relatives to have the calendar printed for them? In any case, a simple, straightforward, helpful and attractive calendar is to disappear and to be replaced with whatever is available from whatever source, at the expense in time and money to the individual and/or civic institutions, who are now to be downloaded with new tasks and costs in the manner of taking from Paul to give Peter.

A complete re-think is needed about the cancellation, with the service to the citizens having to come first and foremost, and I am asking you to do that. The other worthwhile agendas of saving \$85,000, digital-first and environmental leadership must not be advanced by creating inconvenience and discomfort to the citizens.

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