

Bus Rapid Transit – Nutana

Bus Riders of Saskatoon believes that BRT should run down Broadway Avenue.

The route over the Sid Buckwold Bridge makes little sense from a transit point of view. It bypasses areas of current and planned high density housing. It bypasses many business-related destination points, making them less accessible to captive users with mobility issues. It makes BRT less accessible to these same users who live along the Broadway corridor. The response that conventional buses will still be available to these people sends the message that unless you are able bodied, and own a car, your time and comfort aren't important. If BRT is to be successful it has to be easily accessible to the greatest number of people.

Routing BRT along Broadway satisfies all five of the general principles that were proposed earlier. Many objections to this route appear to indicate misinformation and thinking that although heartfelt is less than logical. For example, BRT does not mean a 'bus freeway' where high speed buses will careen through two school zones, or the building of a 'park and ride' in Nutana to boost ridership. It will not bring the Hell's Angels to Broadway, or shake historic buildings to the point that they will fall down. BRT will not be a danger to pedestrians crossing Broadway at signalized intersections. As for the fear that BRT will bring 'those people' into the Broadway business district, that sort of input should not carry weight with decision-makers spending the taxpayers' dollar.

We leave the question of whether or not there should be dedicated lanes on this route to the designers and the traffic engineers. Dedicated lanes mean that BRT delivers reliability to the system by ensuring that buses stay on schedule. They must be implemented when congestion begins to occur along the route but can be delayed until that actually happens. We realize that the original proposal was based on traffic flows on Broadway before the opening of the new Traffic Bridge and that current flows may not merit dedicated lanes. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that what is 'normal' can be determined until work on the Sid Buckwold Bridge and Freeway is completed and 'normal' traffic patterns are established. As a

result, Bus Riders can support administration's recommendation of Option Three with one caveat. There are already three high density housing developments and two more are under construction near 12th Avenue, and there is a concentration of businesses in the north end of the Broadway BID. It makes sense to include an additional BRT stop near Five Corners as proposed in Option Two. This modification follows the principle of taking people from where they live to where they want to go.

There has been little or no mention of the role that dedicated bus lanes can play in emergency situations. Last week an ambulance got tied up in the congestion on Broadway. Had there been dedicated lanes, the ambulance could have easily bypassed this pinch point by swinging into the bus lane. We saw how successful this was a few years ago when there was construction on the University Bridge and traffic was limited to buses and emergency vehicles.

An opponent of BRT on Broadway has wondered aloud whether the City prefers the Broadway route simply because they want BRT to be a success. Bus Riders would say, "Yes."

To conclude, Bus Riders of Saskatoon would remind Council that BRT per se does not serve all neighbourhoods. We are looking forward to the next step, in which the feeder network is rearranged to support BRT in an integrated, city-wide transit network.

Robert Clipperton, Steering Committee

Bus Riders of Saskatoon