
Engagement Results – Bus Rapid Transit and Downtown All Ages and Abilities Cycling Network

Recommendation

That the report of the General Manager, Community Services Department, dated June 20, 2018, be received as information.

Topic and Purpose

This report provides a summary of engagement activities conducted to date in support of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the Downtown All Ages and Abilities (AAA) Cycling Network projects, including what has been heard so far from the community and various stakeholders.

Report Highlights

1. A variety of engagement activities were conducted for the BRT and Downtown AAA cycling network projects.
2. Public and stakeholder engagement indicated there is general agreement that a BRT system would improve transit in Saskatoon. Concerns raised were often related to the route selection of Broadway Avenue and 3rd Avenue, including dedicated lanes (runningways), traffic flow, parking impacts, business impacts, and perceptions of more transit-related activity.
3. Although a variety of preferences were expressed about which streets are best suited for AAA cycling corridors, most participants indicated that the network presented was the best selection given the many trade-offs considered. Participants who were not supportive of the AAA cycling network cited negative impacts to motorists, challenges with parking, and cost implications.

Strategic Goal(s)

The Plan for Growth projects, including BRT and the Downtown AAA cycling network, support the long-term strategy of Sustainable Growth of adopting an integrated approach related to transportation, servicing, transit, and land use.

The BRT and Downtown AAA cycling network projects also support long-term strategies of Moving Around, including increasing transit ridership by establishing it as a viable transportation option, optimizing the flow of people within the city, and developing an integrated transportation network that is practical and useful for vehicles, buses, bikes and pedestrians.

Background

The City of Saskatoon is committed to providing stakeholders ample opportunity to engage, inform, and provide input on City-run projects through engagement activities and events.

Report

Engagement Activities

A variety of public and targeted stakeholder engagements have been conducted for the BRT and Downtown AAA cycling network projects, including public surveys, information sessions, workshops, and informal conversations. All Plan for Growth projects, including the BRT and the Downtown AAA Cycling Network Study, were also included in the March 7, 2018 Come & Grow Community Open House.

To date, the Administration has conducted 60 unique stakeholder engagement activities and meetings, interacting with approximately 3,000 individuals regarding these two initiatives. Stakeholder engagement will continue as the projects move into their next phases. To see a complete picture of the engagements conducted and number of engaged participants, refer to Attachment 1.

What We Heard – BRT

Results from an online survey conducted in late 2017 indicated mild to moderate agreement that the proposed BRT system would:

- reduce transit travel times;
- improve the reliability of transit service;
- provide a positive customer experience; and
- be a responsible investment toward improving transit service.

The Administration conducted in-person engagements – such as public information sessions, targeted stakeholder information sessions, workshops, and conversations with specific stakeholders to inform potential refinements to the BRT functional plan. The project team was available to answer questions and record feedback at each event, while adding the technical support of the external consultants for larger activities.

Input from these in-person engagements reflect the general acceptance and support of rapid transit expressed in the public survey. However, questions and concerns were raised regarding various elements of the proposed BRT system. Key themes heard from the engagements include:

- In general, improvements to the current transit system in Saskatoon would be welcomed, both by the public and by various stakeholders;
- Stakeholders suggested site-specific refinements and specific functional improvements, which were provided to HDR Corporation as a functional requirements list to potentially incorporate into the functional plan;
- Several participants expressed interest in the inclusion of a park and ride system;

- Multiple stakeholders on Broadway Avenue and 3rd Avenue expressed concern regarding the proposed route selection citing dedicated runningways, traffic flow, parking impacts, business loss, and their perceptions of more transit-related activities;
- Some felt the proposed routes and times would not adequately service the North Industrial area;
- University of Saskatchewan administration, students, and employees were generally favourable of the proposed BRT system, though some were not favourable of moving the station from Place Riel to College Drive; and
- Many stated that Saskatoon has always been a “car culture,” and were therefore skeptical that transit ridership would ever appreciably increase.

For greater detail on the feedback received during BRT engagements, see Attachment 2 - BRT Engagement Summaries.

What We Heard – Downtown AAA Cycling Network

Engagement efforts included two Active Transportation Advisory Group (ATAG) meetings, two stakeholder events with key organizations, property owners, and businesses, and participation at the Come & Grow Community Open House.

Event	Approx. # of Participants
ATAG #1	10
Stakeholder Event #1	40-50
ATAG #2	6
Stakeholder Event #2	20
Community Open House	400

Comments from stakeholders were generally positive. Although a variety of preferences were expressed about which streets are best suited for AAA cycling corridors, most participants indicated that the network presented was the best selection given the many trade-offs considered.

Key themes heard through the stakeholder engagement process include:

- Ensuring all people using the street feel safe, whether they are driving, walking, or cycling;
- Ensuring sightlines at intersections and driveways are clear;
- Improving education for all users on how to navigate streets with AAA cycling facilities; and,
- Ensuring downtown AAA cycling routes are well connected to the city-wide cycling network and connect to city-wide destinations.

Generally speaking, feedback from the Community Open House was supportive of a AAA cycling network and of the streets that were selected. Of those who supported the

network, many agreed with the streets selected and supported the evaluation process used to arrive at those streets. Participants who were not supportive of the AAA cycling network were generally not supportive of any protected cycling facility within the Downtown, citing negative impacts to motorists, perceived underuse of AAA facilities, and cost implications.

The proposed network incorporates the feedback heard throughout the Downtown Protected Bike Lane Demonstration Project. Similarly, the input the Administration received through the Downtown AAA Cycling Network Study placed a priority on safety, connectivity and balancing the needs of all users. This input is reflected in the process used to evaluate the suitability of downtown streets, as well as the streets selected for the Downtown AAA cycling network. The detailed design of the AAA cycling network will in turn, incorporate the safety concerns heard through public and stakeholder engagement; for greater detail, see Attachment 3.

Post-Implementation Monitoring Framework

The Administration is developing terms for a post-implementation monitoring framework that would, in part, give stakeholders confidence that the City will be monitoring system performance and outcomes on an ongoing basis and could address any emergent issues in a timely manner.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

See the above report and attachments for details on public and stakeholder involvement.

Communication Plan

The Administration has developed comprehensive communication and engagement plans for the Growth Plan implementation initiatives, including the BRT/Transit Plan Implementation and Downtown AAA cycling network projects.

The plans identifies numerous opportunities to communicate project progress with the public through the project websites, engagement page, news releases, press conferences, monthly Plan for Growth newsletters, and a range of social media and public space communication channels. Also, each component of the Growth Plan has identified stakeholder and public engagement touchpoints.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no policy, financial, environmental, privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

Engagement activities will continue through functional planning, detailed design, construction planning, and during the construction design itself.

Public Notice

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

Attachment(s)

1. Engagement Inventory
2. BRT Engagement Summary
3. Downtown AAA Cycling Network Engagement Summary

Report Approval

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