



## QUESTION & ANSWERS

January 2019

### **Why is the City Transit system changing now?**

The present system was not sustainable due to rising costs of operating the current buses combined with feedback from passengers that the existing system was not meeting their needs. City Council ordered a review of the system to determine if a better system could be implemented within the current transit budget. There was a delay in our new units arriving from the United States which, unfortunately, pushed back the implementation date by six months.

### **Who decided what the new system should be?**

An advisory committee composed of representatives from the City, Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours and SaskAbilities began meeting in May of 2017 to review the system. The process included conducting focus groups with the various passenger groups, and examining existing bus stop usage and other models of city transit and other bus options. Based on all the input, a series of recommendations were made to City Council in February of 2018. These recommendations were approved, providing the framework for the new system.

### **How were the new routes determined?**

The three main factors used to develop the new shortened routes were: the target group; usage rates of existing stops; and a guideline of 400m walking distance to a bus stop. Based on these three factors and the need to ensure the blue and red routes did not exceed 30 minutes each, the new routes were established. Several hours were spent driving and timing the routes before they were finalized.

### **Who are the key user groups of City Transit?**

Based on ridership patterns and a review of bookings, we found there were four main groups. They are:

- Seniors
- People experiencing disability
- People on lower incomes
- Newcomers

### **Who do I contact if I have questions about the new routes?**

Until the end of February, SIGN shall continue with their dispatch service to assist passengers determine where the new stops are and the approximate time that the bus will arrive at that stop. After the one-month transition, the Transit Supervisor or Community Development Manager can be called. While Bus Drivers have the basic information on how the new system works, questions about the rationale of the service are best directed to the Transit Supervisor or Community Development Manager.

### **If improvements are identified, when will they be implemented?**

We recognize that people react to changes differently and have tried to provide reasonable supports to assist people make the transition to new system. We welcome feedback on the new system and will review it six months after the new system is implemented. There will be no changes for six months and then any potential improvements are subject to budget and capacity.

### **Why was the Ability Centre dropped as an hourly stop?**

To make the system work we needed two 30-minute routes – red and blue routes. Given that the Ability Centre is on the outskirts of the city, it added six minutes to the route – if it were served on a regular basis, it would have meant eliminating other popular stops with high rider volumes. In addition, it is a consistent group of passengers that take the City Bus to the Ability Centre, thus it was decided to serve the stop at 8:30, 12:30, 3:30 and 5:30, thereby minimizing the disruption to the overall system.

### **Why did the cost/trip increase?**

The last increase was more than five years ago. The price moving from \$3.00/trip to \$3.50/trip represents a 17% increase while the costs of operating the service has increased by 32%. (2012 - \$206,170 vs. 2018 - \$273,591 operating expense).

### **Why is the new system using vans instead of buses?**

When we looked at the average ridership levels on the bus, quality of the ride and operating costs, replacing the buses with vans made sense. We acknowledge it will take some time to get used to the new configuration on the vans, so for the first full month of service, fares will be waived for all passengers to encourage riders to try the new service. To ensure we maximize the space on the vans, we will limit the number of packages passengers bring onto the vans to what they can carry on their lap or place safely under their seat. As well, we will stop the practice of passengers joy riding. The transit service is meant to transport people from point A to Point B and not to ride the bus for hours at time as an activity.

### **How do I use the new bus system?**

Use the brochure or website to find the nearest stop to your location, noting the departing time from a previous stop. You can use this information to decide when to be at your stop, ensuring you give yourself enough time to get to the stop. If there is no one visibly at a stop and no passenger needs to get off at that stop, the van will continue without stopping. If the van is running ahead of schedule, it will wait at a stop to ensure it can stay on schedule. A van will not pass by a stop before its scheduled stop time. **We suggest you get to your stop 3 to 5 minutes ahead of the anticipated departing time.**

### **How do delays affect the timing?**

Yorkton's winter weather and train crossings may have an impact on the timing of the route. The time will be made up when there is no one visibly at a stop and no passenger needs to get off at that stop. The van will continue on and make up lost time.