

BUS RAPID TRANSIT ROUTING

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



Background

Engagement History – 2017 Through Spring 2018

A variety of public and targeted engagements were held in 2017 through spring 2018 to provide information and generate public awareness on a potential future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Saskatoon, and to collect public and stakeholder input on elements of the BRT plans, such as routing preferences. These engagements included public surveys, information sessions, workshops, and informal conversations.

Input from these in-person and online engagements reflected a general acceptance and support of rapid transit. However, questions and concerns were raised regarding various elements of the proposed BRT system. Key themes heard from the engagements included:

- In general, improvements to the current transit system in Saskatoon would be welcomed, both by the public and by various stakeholders;
- Some mistakenly assumed “rapid” meant the buses would not be following posted speed limits (e.g., school zones on Broadway Avenue);
- 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 (e.g., business and property owners) expressed concern regarding the proposed route selection citing dedicated runningways, traffic flow, parking impacts, business loss, and negative perceptions of 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;
- Many stated that Saskatoon has always been a “car culture,” and were therefore skeptical that transit ridership would ever appreciably increase; and
- Some business and property owners along Broadway Avenue and in the Downtown area also expressed disappointment that the only routes presented at the in-person engagements were Broadway Avenue with dedicated lanes and 3rd Avenue with dedicated lanes.

These engagements helped inform refinements to the BRT plan. Summaries of these engagements were presented at the Special Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting on June 20, 2018.

2017 & Spring 2018 Engagement Events	Participant Count
March 7 Come & Grow Event	400
In-person meetings - various stakeholders (40)	n/a
Online surveys	2,886
February workshops	112
February open house	51
Living Green Expo kiosk (3 days)	n/a
University of Saskatchewan open house	64
Broadway businesses information session	64
3rd Avenue businesses information session	42
Other come and go information sessions	43



Summary of Fall/Winter 2018 Engagements

The Special Governance and Priorities Committee directed Administration to conduct additional public engagements, with a focus on further gauging public opinion on BRT routing through the Nutana and Downtown areas.



Participants had an opportunity to learn about the various route options for Downtown (1st Avenue or 3rd Avenue) and the Nutana area (dedicated lanes on Broadway Avenue, mixed traffic on Broadway Avenue, or 8th Street to Sid Buckwold Bridge). Participants were also able to indicate if they had a preference for any of these options.

Comparison of Downtown Options		
	1st Avenue	3rd Avenue
Existing Trees and Medians	No change to existing trees. Medians added at transit stations at 1st Ave. and 21st St. and at 1st Ave. and 23rd Street	-7 trees. Median shortened between 19th St. and 20th St. Median extended between 20th St. and 23rd St.
Parking	No change to number of parking spaces along 1st Ave.	+22 spaces
Public Space	Opportunity to improve public space on 1st Ave. between 20th St. and 25th St. (including potential increased pedestrian spaces, street furniture, etc.)	Opportunity to improve public space on 3rd Ave. between 22nd St. and 26th St. (limited opportunity to improve public space between 19th St. and 22nd St. (including potential increased pedestrian spaces, street furniture, etc.))
Vehicle Traffic Impacts	Travel time increases by about one minute during afternoon rush hour between 20th St. and 25th St.	Travel time increases by about one minute during afternoon rush hour between 19th St. and 25th St.
Walking Coverage	Reduced coverage east of 4th Ave. between 19th St. and 23rd St.	Coverage of entire Downtown.
Rider Experience	Most reliable arrival and departure times, transit riders will have an improved station space on the median.	Most reliable arrival and departure times, transit riders will have an improved station space on the median.
# of Bus Routes	3 (existing # of routes 5)	5 (existing # of routes 15)
Impact on All Ages and Abilities Cycling Network	If BRT is located on 1st Avenue, the recommended AAA cycling route is 3rd Ave.	If BRT is located on 3rd Avenue, the recommended AAA cycling route is 4th Ave.
YOUR PREFERRED ROUTE:		

Comparison of Nutana Options			
	Dedicated Lanes	Mixed Traffic Lanes	8th Street Option
Existing Trees and Medians	10 trees No change to medians between 12th St. and 10th St. Medians removed/shortened between 10th St. and 8th St.	No change to existing trees or medians	No change to existing trees or medians
Parking	-14 spaces	+19 spaces	+19 spaces
Public Space	Some opportunity to improve public space on Broadway Avenue (including potential increased pedestrian spaces, street furniture, etc.)	Limited opportunity to improve public space on Broadway Avenue at the station location.	No opportunity to improve public space on Broadway Avenue. Limited opportunity on 8th Street at the station location.
Vehicle Traffic Impacts	Travel time decreases by about half a minute during afternoon rush hour on Broadway Avenue.	Travel times on Broadway Avenue unchanged.	Travel times on Broadway Avenue and 8th Street unchanged.
Walking Coverage	Covers all of Broadway Avenue from 12th Street to 8th Street.	Covers all of Broadway Avenue from 12th Street to 8th Street.	Reduced Coverage of Broadway between 12th Street and 11th Street.
Rider Experience	Most reliable arrival and departure times, transit riders will have a separate space to wait, transfers between routes will be easier.	Improved station spaces, transit riders will have a separate space from existing sidewalk where they can wait.	Unchanged on Broadway.
# of Bus Routes on Broadway	4 (existing # of routes 5)	4 (existing # of routes 5)	3 (existing # of routes 5)
YOUR PREFERRED ROUTE:			

Promotion of Events

Engagement events were promoted through various means, including direct mailouts and flyers to targeted businesses and residences along or near the proposed routes through downtown and Nutana, email newsletters, on the City website’s Engage pages, free event listings, advertising, targeted posters (e.g., on buses), and through social media.

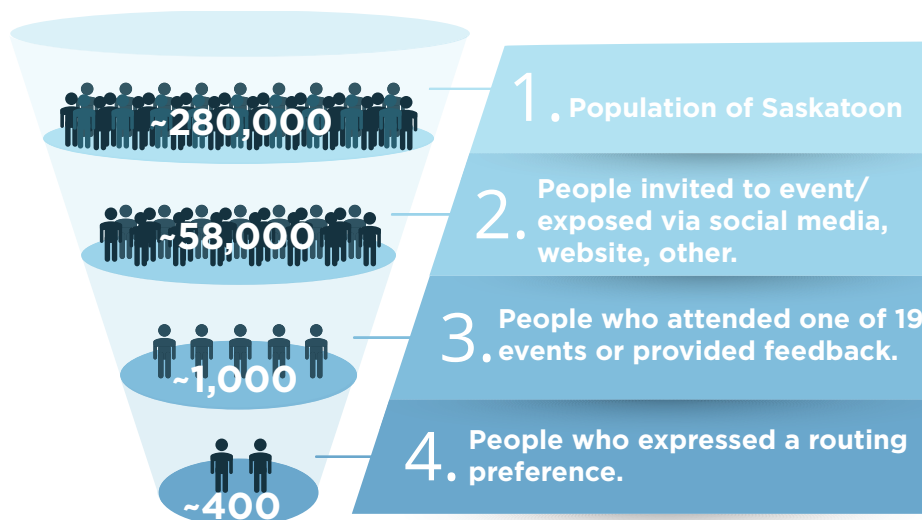
Flyer and Invitation Distribution

Area	Direct Mail	Flyer Distribution	Total
Downtown	1,051	3,233	4,284
Nutana/Broadway BID/Buena Vista	1,085	7,697	8,782
Varsity View	658	2,680	3,338
Total	2,794	13,610	16,404

There were also 42,682 impressions of BRT engagement event promotions on social media (referring to the number of times this promotional content was displayed on a person’s screen on Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

Feedback and Route Preferences

In total, 961 people participated in the BRT engagement events held fall/winter 2018, with 31.6% of participants indicating a preference for one of the downtown route options and 41.2% of participants indicating a preference for one of the Nutana area options. Several participants expressed an appreciation for the opportunity to learn about the various options for routing and each of their projected impacts, as well as the opportunity to provide input on concerns, considerations and preferences.



The table below provides a breakdown of the indicated preferences at the various events:

PREFERENCES GIVEN

EVENTS	Total Attendees	Downtown Options		Nutana Options		
		1st Ave	3rd Ave	Broadway Dedicated	Broadway Mixed	8th Street
Transit operators	55	13	5	15	2	5
Downtown	73	20	13	14	6	14
Nutana	216	64	32	36	31	95
Midtown Plaza	124	10	12	7	10	5
U of S - Place Riel	93	4	22	27	4	2
1st Avenue	6	0	0	0	0	0
Lawson Heights	41	5	2	4	1	5
Centre Mall	52	3	12	9	4	5
Stonebridge	10	1	0	1	0	0
Varsity View	25	10	4	1	1	14
Market Mall	113	8	5	7	10	4
23rd Street Terminal	65	19	19	16	6	10
3rd Avenue	17	4	1	1	1	2
Alice Turner Library	10	1	1	3	0	0
Broadway Avenue	8	1	0	0	1	2
Station 20 West	11	2	3	2	3	1
Confederation Mall	42	1	7	0	3	6
TOTALS	961	166	138	143	83	170
% of total attendees indicating route preference*		17%	14%	15%	9%	18%

*note: less than half of participants indicated a preference among the options for each category.

Overall, of those who indicated a preference for one of the two Downtown routing options, 55% preferred 1st Avenue and 45% preferred 3rd Avenue. Of those who indicated a preference among the three routing options for the Nutana area, 43% preferred BRT to continue past Broadway Avenue on 8th Street to the Senator Sid Buckwold Bridge, 36% preferred Broadway Avenue with dedicated transit lanes, and 21% preferred Broadway Avenue with mixed traffic.

Of note, these totals were heavily influenced by the results from the event in Nutana, which had 216 attendees. Moreover, a relatively high proportion of attendees at this event provided a preference (44% provided a preference for a Downtown option and 75% provided a preference for a Nutana option). Of the total indications of route preferences received at the engagements listed above, over half (56%) of the indications of preference for the 8th Street option and over one-third (39%) of the indications of preference 124 for the 1st Avenue option were received at the Nutana event.

The feedback from the Downtown engagement event, on the other hand, deviated less from the general results than did the feedback from the Nutana event.