

Brandon Transit – Stroller, Cart and Large Items on Transit Buses - Public Meeting

October 13, 2006

Summary

At a regular meeting of council on September 25, 2006, Councillor Campbell presented a petition with respect to Brandon Transits' current stroller policy. Further to this presentation, on October 10, 2006, Councillor Barletta put forward a request to include the matter of rolling carts on the agenda of the Public Meeting of October 13, 2006.

Under the current policy, riders entering Brandon Transit buses must fold strollers and folding carts prior to entering Brandon Transit buses. This policy has been developed for the safety and comfort of all passengers as well as, ease of entry/exit.

October 13, 2006 a group of 17 attendees representing the user group, City Councillors, and Brandon Transit. The meeting consisted of Mr. Faron Gabler facilitating the following program:

- Presentation – Brandon Transit: Challenges, Objectives and Policies by Jeff Roziere, Director Transportation and Sanitation Services
- Question and Answer Period
- Input from Attendees – Group Work Session
- Group Report Out

Please find on the following pages a report of the meetings notes and findings.

Presentation – Jeff Roziere

Question/Statements and Answer – (by attendees, responses by Jeff Roziere, unless otherwise noted)

- When buses are full it's ok to fold strollers but it doesn't make sense when they are empty! – Gloria
- I have a shopping cart issue, I can't bring my grocery bags on the bus. How do I get my groceries onboard? Will the store understand that I can't but groceries there because I have no way to bring them home? I have to walk all the way home with my food. How can you get something like a machine from Canadian Tire on the bus? – Doug

Response – The intent of this meeting is to ensure that Brandon Transit is accessible and safe for its riders. I do not believe that the store would understand you have difficulty entering transit with your groceries. In terms of getting items home from shopping, we must determine clearly what is, and what is not permitted on the bus in terms of size.

- I can't get on the bus when it's a small one, but I can take a large bus. I have refused to ride on the small bus one time! How do I know which routes the large buses are on? - Doug
- Response – We need to ensure that Brandon Transit is clear in communicating which routes have low floor and which routes have high floor buses on them. As

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indicated in the presentation, this is a common requirement to Transit Authorities as most run a combination of low and high floor buses.

- Should we change buses to larger ones on routes 20 and 21? It seems that these routes take many parents with strollers and seniors to the hospital etc. How do you make sure the buses are on the correct route? - Gloria
Response – Brandon Transit employs a group called the “transit review committee” to conduct reviews of routes and equipment requirements. This review is conducted every three months, and takes into account total ridership demand and balance of all routes across the City. This suggestion can be taken into account bearing these points in mind.
- Could we put groceries above the wheel wells? - Angela
Response – I am assuming this is referring to Low Floors, Yes we allow this, assuming the sizes of items ensure it is safe to do so. – Bruce Hawkins
- Do you know how hard it is to travel with a stroller? – Mellisa
Response –We understand the difficulties, this is why we have arranged this meeting today.
- Have you checked Ontario for policies it is much better than Manitoba. We need low floor buses on routes that have Manitoba Housing.
Response – No, I have not checked in Ontario. The research of policies conducted were the seven cities listed in the presentation. As indicated earlier, our transit review committee reviews bus assignments every three months. As part of this review the committee would work to ensure that buses are operating on the most applicable route given ridership requirements.
- I do not catch the bus when it's cold out because if I can't get on I don't want my baby to catch pneumonia. – April
- Perhaps smaller strollers (sling type) might be better! – Margo
Response – Absolutely Margo, smaller strollers certainly reduce the problem of entry to buses. For example, we have a small sling type and large double stroller here today. There is a great difference in ability to maneuver these strollers.
- I have a small one but they still turned me away! – Angela
Response – Again, potential for resolve of this is why we are here today. Our current policy does not allow for exceptions.
- Can we determine what a small stroller is? - Doug
Response – Yes, I believe that sizes may be critical in deciding future policy in determination of what is acceptable.
- I have a walker and in Halifax they helped me! – Margo
Response – Yes, some Transit Authorities do have drivers assist (given ability) with riders entering and exiting the bus. This requirement is really dependant on

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items such as time availability due to route timing, and driver limitations (medical or physical).

- Why don't the drivers help older people on the bus? I feel bad for them.
Response – That is a sensitive issue, and one that has been reviewed with our Amalgamated Transit Union Executive. There are concerns with respect to drivers touching riders and passengers, this again in terms of safety for both parties. This may be an education and another development of policy issue.

Input from Attendees

Input from the attendees was requested from two main areas. This was accomplished by dividing the group into three groups and requesting feedback with regards to the following two questions:

1. Please describe the impacts the current policy may have on your ability to access Brandon Transit? – **Impacts**
2. What recommendations for solutions (being aware of all potential issues presented today) do you have for Brandon Transit? – **Solutions**
- 3.

Impacts– Response from Attendees

- Having to fold my double stroller on my own and having to struggle with two children and carry on the stroller at the same time just doesn't work. - Group 1
- Concern – Why do I have to take my child out of the belted stroller when I travel in a car it is against the law to have my child on my knee. – Group 1
- Unable to ride buses with Children/Stroller. – Group 2
- Unable to board bus with Grocery Cart. – Group 2
- Cant bring groceries/hamper home from Samaritan House. – Group 2
- It is very inconvenient having to take out child, groceries, diaper bag from the stroller to fold it up. – Group 3
- We feel that it is dangerous to have child on your lap, it is better to have the child strapped in the stroller. – Group 3

Solutions – Responses from Attendees

- Why doesn't the Driver help the passengers on (for example elderly people with walkers and strollers)? – Group 1
- Ability to ride with at least an umbrella stroller. – Group 1
- Allow umbrella type strollers on the bus. – Group 3
- Have designated buses on specific routes. – Group 1
- Regulate what bus goes on each route. – Group 2
- When not in use, allow the handi cap section of the bus open for strollers and carts. – Group 2
- Standardize stroller size being allowed on bus. For example smaller strollers may be allowed on, larger not allowed. – Group 2
- Have hand loops for holding when standing on the bus. – Group 2
- Wait for passengers to be seated before driving – Group 2

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- On routes where there is a higher number of mothers and elderly use low floor buses at all times, for example routes 20 and 21. Routes generally not populated (route 10) should use the Eldorado (small buses)– Group 2
- Have passengers use correct loading and exiting procedures with strollers (pulling backwards on entry) – Group 2
- Removal of front seats on Low Floor to accommodate strollers and carts. – Group 3
- Make sure that passengers are seated safely before moving. Transit should consider that passengers may need assistance to board the bus. – Group 3

Conclusion

Brandon Transit has reviewed the information gained at this public meeting along with reviews of other Transit Authorities with respect to this policy. The department has drafted a revised policy, taking into consideration safety, and accessibility to our riders in determining the policy. The policy will permit strollers and carts of acceptable size onto our buses, and will further define carts how accommodations will be met on our system. We will announce the policy recommendation for implementation November 1, 2006.