



Transportation Strategy Engagement Workshop

Sir Winston Churchill High School

April 7, 2016

29 Participants

Interests	# of Participants
My child takes transportation arranged by the Calgary Board of Education to get to school (yellow school bus, handybus etc.)	17
My child gets to school in another way (walks, private vehicle, public transit etc.)	15
My child attends an alternative program (language, Montessori, science, TLC) or complex needs program	13
I currently have no children in the Calgary Board of Education system	1



Sir Winston Churchill High School Flip Chart Summary

Travel Distance

Preserve

- Keep CBE, set distance but with more tiers (K-2/3-6 have different distance) – lower for smaller kids – longer for older.
- Maintain 1.6km for K-6.
- Keep services to communities.

Flexibility

- Further distance would be okay if stop had sufficient/safe parking -> some prevents families don't have cars.
- Expand from 1.6km to 2.4km for all programs.
- Expand distance for alternative programs.
- Junior High on city transit so distance shouldn't apply.
- Reduce distance for K-3 to 800m to bus stop regardless of program choice. (Make the distance safe-> no major streets to cross for 5yr olds.)
- Walking school bus in communities.
- Kids need exercise.

Observation

- Reflect the government standard – highlight that is what we are funded for.
- Increase walk distance, most community schools should not have any buses.



Bus Ride Time

Preserve

- 35min is fine.
- Some parents rely on ride time as a form of afterschool care.

Flexibility

- For low ridership Alternative program I would illegible choose the stops.
- Fewer stops to reduce ride times.
- Ok to increase walk distance in order to reduce ride time.
- Needs to be a bigger distance to qualify for ridership.

Observation

- Disagree with above. Walk distance should be max 800m, no major road crossing so that K-6 can walk alone.
- Total travel time must be considered -> i.e. walk time and ride time = total time.
- If transit is considered as a alternative journey time must include all changes.
- 45 minutes to one hour for program of choice, alternate program, is a Calgary reality – compared to other major cities – not realistic.
- Fix the bus on time to a reasonable time (7am?).



Eligibility for Ridership

Preserve

- If on the bus now transportation should be maintained.
- Walk distances per Elementary stay the same.
- Keep yellow bus for Jr. High if CT would require multiple changes and/or community shuttle which are very unreliable.
- Yellow buses for K-6, no CT until grade 7.
- Be considerate of the number of transfers required with CT and total travel time.

Flexibility

- Calgary Transit for older kids as long as it is a direct route for Jr. High.
- One transfer per High School.
- Walk distances increased to 2km -> especially as students get older.
- Increase distance from school for eligibility for bus.
- Base eligibility on day home/day care addresses (K-3 only).
- Use CT if existing route exists.
- Increase bus for special needs kids to be eligible for transportation.

Observation

- There is a difference between students that needs to be transported to a special school (vision/hearing impaired) vs. families that choose to school their children in alternative programming. A chosen program with higher transportation costs could be responsible for the increase cost.
- Families accessing the same program should pay the same fees – i.e. one community should not be forced onto CT if not all are as they are paying more.
- Jr. High should use CT-Jr. High being Gr. 7-9.
- Walk distance should be increased for elementary students before they are eligible for buses.
- Sometimes alternative programs are chosen because the community is full. Transportation should not be made more difficult because we were forced to a different school.



Bell Times

Preserve

- Maximum 2 tiered bell system.
- Feeder school try to have similar bell times.
- Earliest -> 7am bus start.
- Latest bus -> 4pm drop off.

Flexibility

- Families who choose alternative programs need to be flexible.
- Choice has a cost.
- Fine with more tiers in bell system.
- Start 8am stop 4pm.
- Coordinate bell times and bus routes for communities -> schools on one bus with staggered bell times.

Observation

- Try to align alternative program bell times to be sensible for families -> keep elementary and middle or junior high schools longer.
- Prevent multiple buses in a community to going to the same program or to other regular schools.
- Align buses out of a community where possible.
- Increase number of schools one bus goes to.



Number and Location of Pick-Up Stops

Preserve

- Congregated community stops for grades 6-9.

Flexibility

- Be able to chase a different address for bus service to be based on (i.e. home daycare).
- Need a more reliable level of service if walking a longer distance.
- Reduced walking distance for K-3.
- Walking routes need to be assessed for safety (esp K-3), if major roads need to be crossed.
- Improved service and stop locations would increase ridership and fill more buses without adding more routes.
- Hire a real AIS tech to optimize routes, a properly designated route can have more stops in less time than some existing routes.
- Design school catchment areas to optimize bussing and/or open or close new schools to minimize need for bussing of regular program students.

Access to Waivers

Preserve

- Waivers.
- Non-negotiable.



User Fees

Preserve

- Access to waivers from fees of other parents.
- All dollars currently in the classroom should stay in the classroom.
- Only waivers in should be honoured.
- Highlight the monthly cost vs. the yearly cost!
- Preserve fee limits for families of special needs students -> no choice in programming.

Flexibility

- Increase user pay/user fee
- Focus more on increasing fees for alternative programming (pay more when it is a choice)
- Transit passes@ Junior High (paid by family/user)
- Flexibility to walk the 2.4km provincial guideline.
- Willing to pay more to ensure short walk distance to stop.
- Max -> would pay the cost, willing to pay.
- Grandfather costs for Div 2 students.
- Fees for special needs kids' transportation should be changed to all kids (even those not needing the bus).
- Uncollected fees should be pursued.
- Yellow bus should closer reflect Calgary Transit costs -> cost is deductible on taxes.
- Family maximum at the same school.
- Increase ridership – increase user fee coming into the CBE.
- Max family fee of ? (1000/fare).
- Allow programs to subsidize costs.
- Plan with program – allow volunteers.

Observation

- Increase user fees.
- Alternative programs should not pay more – they are part of public school system and should be accessible to all families. Also, offer alternative programs were chosen because community school was already full.



Low Ridership Routes

Preserve

- For alternate language schools we need to preserve the service.
- A new Chinese school opened in the NW, that means younger kids are now separated between 2 schools therefore; you have built in inefficiencies.

Flexibility

- Increase the cost charged to parents, as it is a special service to go to language school.
- Why not open or amalgamate to one bigger language school or cluster of language schools.
- Make school start times more flexible – stop at 3+ schools so bus is full.

Observation

- Alternate form of transportation for low ridership small bus/van.
- Have a minimum number of students on a bus.
- Organize carpooling – background checks, compensation, police clearance, car check, Uber.
- Longer bus rides in these situations. i.e. exception to the rule if it is low due to popularity of the alternative program.



Two- or Three-Year Implementation Plan for Changes

Preserve

- Take Band-Aid off!!
- Significant or minor -> implement fully and deal with concerns (correct as necessary) vs 3 years of pain/gripping/worry.
- Take the time to think through and do it the best way possible.

Flexibility

- If there is a significant increase in user fee there should be a 3 year phase in.
- Inform parents of bus stop location for new school year with greater time for parents to adapt. (Aug. 29th is not enough time for parents to make accommodations)
- As new schools being built open, change will happen. This needs to be factored in.

Observation

- Costs too high to wait to implement.
- Communicate ASAP and raise fees Sept. 2016.
- Don't bankrupt the system – cost for kids this year should be paid by families this year just as fundraising this year is for kids in the school now – they get the benefit.



Other

Preserve

- Maintain current classroom funding.

Flexibility

- Joint planning with parents and CBE for special programs.
- Allow people within an area to manage the cost of transportation.
- Allow flexibility for managing routes -> car pool, taxi or drive to one point and bus picks up.
- New schools opening 2017/2018 will impact transportation favourably.
- Delivery to multiple schools on one route.
- Integrated transportation with separate boards like Calgary Catholic.
- More use of designated city buses.
- More competitive tendering for routes.
- Review designated schools for neighbourhood's esp. new neighbourhoods or one with no local school.
- Flexibility for pick-ups – day homes with 1yr contract for base address.
- Parents are choosing to drive because of lack of adequate bussing.
- Moderate increase of fees if service is provided.
- Working with city planner until local school lessen the impact of transportation costs.
- Generate income for CBE for transportation.
- Greater (more time) communication about changes in stops/routes because it is not cost effective for parents.
- Provide before/after school care to alleviate transportation issues for working parents.
- Optimization of route planning.
- Let kids walk-exercise is good for them!
- Reduce head office costs and redeploy to transit.
- Communicate with City Transit – can they offer “student” passes – M-F at a discount to all 7-12 students.
- Do they have a better expertise on route development and efficiency?



Public and Parents Engagement Evaluation – Sir Winston Churchill High School

To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements:

P1) I was encouraged to share my thoughts and/or feedback during this engagement.

17 Agree 8 Somewhat Agree 1 Somewhat Disagree 0 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

P2) I was able to ask questions and learn about the opportunity for input/feedback prior to my participation in this engagement.

15 Agree 7 Somewhat Agree 3 Somewhat Disagree 1 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

P3) I had the information I needed to participate in a meaningful way.

15 Agree 9 Somewhat Agree 0 Somewhat Disagree 1 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

P4) I was able to provide input on the best way for me to share my thoughts and ideas.

9 Agree 13 Somewhat Agree 2 Somewhat Disagree 1 Disagree 1 Not Applicable

P5) I clearly understand all of the factors being considered in the decision making process and which of these factors I can and cannot influence.

8 Agree 13 Somewhat Agree 4 Somewhat Disagree 2 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

P6) My input was documented as part of the engagement process.

18 Agree 8 Somewhat Agree 1 Somewhat Disagree 0 Disagree 0 Not Applicable



P7) What did you like most about this engagement?

- Small groups.
- Good way to provide input on a number of topics.
- The World Cafe structure was excellent and the “squeaky wheel” didn’t get the most time.
- World Cafe setting worked well...
- Availability of CBE reps who could answer questions.
- The group discussion.
- Hearing issues of other families.
- Some opportunity to point out futility of some of CBE transportation policies.
- The brainstorming and different views on topic at hand.
- Great.
- Short quick and to the point.
- People with alternate agendas were not allowed to take over.
- Access to information.
- Circle discussion at table to hear different opinions/impacts, etc.
- CBE superintendent, trustee, transportation were there to clarify.
- Opportunity to comment on a number of topics. That the session took place – unlike last year’s fiasco at SPB. Well organized.
- Hearing other parent viewpoints.
- Opportunity to be heard.
- Being able to choose topics I felt were most important to me and my family.
- Open dialogue and written format at each table.
- Interaction with a cross section of parents.
- Not enough time and information.
- That it happened.
- That you could select which topics were most important to you.
- Good atmosphere, inviting/welcoming for ideas, respectful.
- Opportunity to hear other parents’ opinions.



P8) What did you like least about this engagement?

- Effectiveness of the timing. These should be 2 hours of effective and open discussions.
- I think there should have been professional mediators at each table to write down feedback and more from person to person.
- More time on topics needed to fully explore the interplay between them and other participants' perspectives.
- Another ½ hr would have been good to participate in other 1 or 2 topics.
- Keep doing what you are doing...
- The preset 9 variables to discuss feels like a losing proposition, like talking about other alternatives.
- That my children's education may be negatively impacted by transportation.
- Facilitator spent too much time at the start talking/managing expectations.
- Not enough time.
- Recommend/suggest that some of the definitions be sent to me in advance "Glossary of Transportation".
- Really felt the decision has already been made to charge parents full costs.

- Not enough time to discuss fragmented issues. Somewhat "decided" thoughts and responses from CBE peeps. Seems like at least some minds are already made up.
- Could only choose 3 tables -> more time needed.
- Too short time period.
- World Cafe – as I was not able to provide discussion and feedback on all parts. I feel it is a futile, confrontation building exercise.
- It is very complex – assumptions and lack of understanding can make it difficult to make good recommendations.
- Broken out into too many categories thus difficult to provide full input.
- Probably could use more time but understood 90min is a long time already but with the number of key topic area it is important.
- I wonder what will happen to the feedback and ideas that we have provided. It would have been better to have some concrete proposals to discuss.
- Difficult to express concerns/ideas with parents in very different circumstances. Found most issues I hear were around alternative schools. I honestly felt if you choose an alternative program or choose to live in an area without school bus access, you need to be flexible and also ready to pay your share if necessary.
- Only 3 factors -> need more time.
- Not enough time to engage in all the table with groups.