

August 23-September 7 Experience with Grande Prairie Transit On Demand Service

August 23

90 minutes on the phone with On-Demand Dispatch and then City Hall Customer Services to try and learn how to log on to the On Demand system as the instruction online are very brief and unhelpful. Both staff struggled to answer my questions such as 'Can I use my CNIB card?', 'Why does locations around the world come up when I enter Towne Centre Mall but not in Grande Prairie?'

9:17-Booked on demand online. Message said bus would be there in 5 minutes

9:38-bus arrived. I had called Dispatch to ask questions about which bus to take once downtown. She said the driver could help. He started 2 weeks ago and was going to call Dispatch himself. I called and was told to take Route 6 which would get me to Crystal Park School at 10:44. I asked about Route 7. She said that was an option. Route 7 would arrive at 10:00 and get me there soon. I said that the guide said Route 7 stopped running every hour at 8:30. Dispatch said that was wrong and it ran every hour. No more split shifts.

9:45-Arrived at Towne Centre Mall. Route 8 driver told me route 7 would be at 10:30. Split shift ends at 8:30! Route 8 could get me to the mall and then I'd have to walk

Called Dispatch. Got an answering machine. Finally got a hold of the Dispatcher at 10:30. Advised of the incorrect schedule info. Asked how to book return trip. She contracted herself and told me I could book from prairie mall home but I reminded her she previously told me that was out of zone. She found I was right. I was told I would need to book my ride once I was back at TCM. You need to be at your destination to book. Can't book while on connecting bus.

10:30-route 7 arrived. Got the Crystal Park School. An hour later I got back on and went to Superstore to get my groceries. At that point a friend drove me home because I was tired from my morning and didn't have it in me to learn the way home. Over the last two weeks friend and coworkers have driven me many times so that I can avoid transit.

August 25 Transit

9:30-attempted to get on demand. Two attempts with my stop number and TCM said it was out of zone. Third attempt worked. 12 minutes away

9:30- text bus was 5 minutes away

9:45 text bus had arrived

9:49- arrived in the wrong side on road and did u-turn. GPS told her to go down 90 street
9:50-en route to TCM
9:57-arrive at TCM
27 minute trip
3:47-logged on for a bus. 30 minutes and then message that there wasn't a seat available.
3:48-tried again bus in 31 minutes.
3:51-text bus is 5 minutes away
3:56 -at TCM and see a bus pull away. Called dispatched to ask how I would know if I missed the bus. Was told it was still coming and 3 people would be in it.
4:01- text that bus is 15 minutes away.
4:07- text bus is 5 minutes away
4:10- bus arrived.

August 26

7:24-booked ride. Pick up in 9 minutes.
7:29-text bus 5 minutes away
7:36- pick up. Got on the bus then got the text my ride had arrived! I understand they do that when they get to their destination.
7:42-Arrived at TCM
7:59-Route 7 arrives
8:17- arrive at Crystal Park School
53 minutes to get to work

August 27

9:34-log on for a bus 29 minutes wait
9:37- text bus is 15 minutes away
9:48-text bus 5 minutes away
9:54-bus arrived.
10:00 arrived TCM

August 31

5:40- book bus. 6 minutes away. Got an immediate text 5 minutes away
5:45- text bus was there. It waited 3 minutes for me to walk there
5:57-home

September 1

7:20-log on for bus. 24 minute wait

7:28- text bus 15 minutes away
7:37-text bus 5minutes away
7:40- I arrived at stop
7:55-text bus had arrived
7:58- bus arrived

Missed my connecting bus. Both me and another passenger could go to prairie mall instead of TCM.

8:10- Arrive at prairie mall
8:14- on route 6
8:20- Arrived at work.
60 minutes from the time I logged on for a bus until I arrived at work.

How are you suppose to track the bus when there are 2 message across the screen that cover the route?

September 2

9:14- 9:20 repeatedly logged in for a bus. Got message it was busy. No buses.
9:20-9:23 on hold with dispatch- all buses full. Could get me a ride at 9:40 with pick up at 10:18. I had a funeral to go to. I thought calling 75 minutes ahead would be enough time. I called a cab.
2:24- could not find the old stop on Wesrside Drive by BMO on map because there are no addresses. Called dispatch. 7 minutes on the phone with her to confirm the stop was still there and for her to find the stop. (I had already walked there.) She told me it would be 20-25 minutes for the bus. I asked her to book the on demand bus for me from TCM. She booked it for 3:10 in case route 3 was late.
3:00-arrive at TCM
3:05- text that my bus was 15 minutes away. 27 degrees out. Little shade.
3:14-text would arrive in 5 minutes
3:21-on bus headed home. Thankful for the air conditioning!
3;31-home. Driver turned down 90 street instead off 88 st and had to do U Turn to get to stop.
3:31-home

September 3

9:17- logged in for bus. 13 minutes away. Immediately get text bus is 15 minutes away
9:22- text bus is 5 minutes away
9:30-pick up. To another pick up in Signature Falls.

9:39-arrive at TCM

10:14- logged on for bus. Text it was 5 minutes away.

10:19-text bus had arrived. Left at 10:20

10:26- home

It would be great if I could copy and paste the verification code instead of having to manually enter each number.

September 7

11:20-11:32 called dispatch as there are no addresses in the Guide and I needed to go to a new location. It was a waste of time. The dispatcher had never heard of Isabell Campbell School and I had to guess which stop it be. Then I calculated the transfer at Eastlink (which is called Eastlink on the On Demand app and Community Knowledge Campus on the Guide). Then the dispatcher told me that at 7:47 the buses only run once an hour in a Thursday. She said she was looking at the Monday to Friday schedule and it was scheduled for 11:17, 12:17, 1:17 ect. I had to educate the dispatcher on how the high priority/split shifts worked. Pre-booked the on demand for 7:30 to connect to the Route 1 at 7:47 at Eastlink/CKC September 8. I was very frustrated. The dispatcher was completely unhelpful and useless.

*** I took two cabs today to get to physiotherapy and then work because transit can't get me from Countryside South to Resources Road and then it takes too long to take a bus and get to work.

4:18-4:21- repeatedly tried to log for a bus and got message no on demand was available

4:21 called dispatch and got answering machine

4:22-4:28 tried for bus. Message none were available

4:28- called dispatched and got answering machine

4:28-4:31- tried for bus

4:31- bus available in 31 minutes

5:01- pick up at TCM

5:11- home

53 minutes from the time I first tried to get a bus and got home. I was the only person on the bus and saw two on demand buses leave TCM with very few passengers onboard. I spoke to the 10 people waiting at TCM. None said they were waiting for an on demand bus.

6:05-I received this message 'Hi Alison, this is a reminder that you're scheduled to be picked up tomorrow between 07:30 AM and 08:00 AM at 90 St-63 Ave. We look forward to having you on board!' Now I am wondering if I will make my connecting bus and get to my 8:00 meeting on time.