

Members Present:

Emily Batty (Chair), Rebecca Hardie (Vice Chair), Mudasser Seraj (Rafi), Zohra Jabeen, Eugene Masahkwe, Bruce Hertz, Brooke Leifso, Lexi McFarlane, Shalene Williams, Bailey Gerrits, Lexi McFarlane, Joshua Jackman, Ken Kirk, Councilor Erin Rutherford.

Regrets:

Steve Bradshaw (President, ATU 569),

City of Edmonton Staff:

Tammy Smith, Admin Assistant Transit Planning, Ridership and Revenue.

Marc Lachance, ETS Staff Liaison Transit Planning, Ridership and Revenue

Materials & Attachments:

- Land Acknowledgement
- Meeting Agenda and ETS Branch Highlights Report
- DRAFT Meeting Minutes - May 2025

CALL TO ORDER 6:00 PM

Land acknowledgement

M. Seraj

Agenda Review DECISION

Moved: by B. Hertz seconded by S. Williams to approve the June 23, 2025 agenda as presented.
CARRIED

Meeting Minutes Review DECISION

Moved: by B. hertz seconded by S. Williams to approve the May 26, 2025 minutes as presented.
CARRIED

Presentations:

a) ETS Service Standards

A. Gregory

- A. Gregory from service planning presented on the ETS service standards, outlining the guidelines for the annual service plan and recent developments. A. Gregory noted that these standards are guided by service policy 539A, budget, and fleet constraints, with performance targets for passenger boardings, crowding, and on-time performance. The standards aim to be transparent, ensure responsible resource allocation, and use data-driven decisions while considering customer feedback.

- A. Gregory detailed several key aspects of the service standards, including adjusting service based on performance, addressing equity considerations, and using data and rider feedback. A. Gregory mentioned that the standards were last updated in 2019 and are currently being reviewed for improvements, including more content on frequencies, on-demand service, and equity. The presentation covered different route types like frequent, cross-town, express, local, and community routes, as well as on-demand service.
- A. Gregory explained the service warrants for introducing new service, route extensions, and productivity guidelines. For new service areas, population thresholds and walking distances are considered, with options ranging from extending existing routes to starting with on-demand service before upgrading to fixed routes. A. Gregory noted that developer-funded service was not always equitable, and new guidelines aim for at least 80% of dwellings to be within 600 meters of a new route. R. Hardie inquired about bus routes primarily serving LRT stations, which A. Gregory confirmed is the case for most routes near LRT.
- A. Gregory discussed criteria for route design, emphasizing the preference for collector roadways over local roads due to safety and infrastructure. Thresholds for employment and post-secondary populations are also considered for new service. Regarding bus stop spacing, A. Gregory outlined guidelines for different service types, ranging from 500-2000 meters for LRT to 250-500 meters for local and frequent services. Adjustments are being made to consolidate some closely spaced bus stops, with consideration for vulnerable areas and seniors' residences. R. Hardie asked about the universality of these spacing guidelines, and A. Gregory stated they are comparable across Canada, with consolidation being Edmonton-specific. The impact of equity considerations on bus stop spacing will also be reviewed.
- The discussion included a detailed exploration of equity considerations, with A. Gregory referencing the social vulnerability index and how it informs service decisions in equity-seeking areas. Councillor Rutherford provided further insight into the index, confirming it includes disability and accessibility factors. R. Hardie raised concerns about the 500-meter to kilometer spacing and its impact on people with disabilities, especially considering weather. A. Gregory responded that in areas serving equity-seeking groups, bus stops tend to be closer, and consolidations are not occurring in those locations. The practice of express routes stopping locally below -20°C was also discussed, acknowledging both its benefits and potential negative impacts on routes with less frequent service. An example of introducing on-demand service for the Alberta Cultural Society of the Deaf was shared.
- A. Gregory outlined the minimum frequency standards for different route types, with frequent routes requiring at least 15-minute service during most times. The maximum walking distance guideline is 600 meters, a balance between direct routes and accessibility. Load standards were discussed, with a general maximum of 45 passengers per bus, though this is being adjusted to have lower thresholds for less frequent routes. The limitations of the ARC card data for tracking bus loads were noted, with reliance primarily on automatic passenger counters. Reliability guidelines define on-time as departing within five minutes of schedule, with a target of 90%.
- A. Gregory explained that productivity guidelines are being changed to be frequency-based, primarily applying to lower frequency routes, while crowding thresholds will be used for more frequent service. The current minimum passenger boarding targets per hour were presented for different route types and time periods. A. Gregory indicated that equity considerations will be integrated into these minimum thresholds, with more lenient targets for socially vulnerable areas. Future service standards will also address on-demand service wait times and potential adjustments

based on the density of on-demand vehicles in a zone. The upcoming mass transit study and its potential to enhance the cross-town network were highlighted.

- A. Gregory provided examples of how the annual service plan has been applied, including a new route in Keswick/Glenridding and increased service on route 747. Some low-performing routes were converted to on-demand service. Frequency was increased on several busy routes and reliability improved on routes frequently running late, while minor frequency reductions occurred on routes with low ridership during frequent service times. Adjustments were made to school services and routes in growing areas. The process for reviewing and adding travel time to routes experiencing delays was explained, with reviews occurring every sign-up (five times a year) for busier routes. The impact of Valley Line West construction on west-end routes was acknowledged, and the challenges of securing funding for additional scheduled travel time due to construction were discussed. A successful example of obtaining funding for a detour on route 2 due to bridge construction was shared.
- R. Hardie inquired about the timeline for new cross-town routes, and Andrew Gregory indicated that future routes are planned, potentially including Ellerslie Road and 153rd Avenue, but are currently limited by the availability of buses. The possibility of prioritizing new cross-town routes due to their popularity and population growth in served areas was raised, with A. Gregory noting that current underperforming routes are minimal, mostly limited to late-night service where on-demand options might be considered. The significant population and ridership growth in the past year were highlighted. The criteria for converting on-demand to conventional service and vice versa were outlined, with ridership and population being key factors. The decision to implement a new route in Keswick/Glenridding was based on its higher ridership and population compared to other potential zones. The redeployment of on-demand buses saved from the Keswick/ Glenridding upgrade to other busy zones was noted. Rebecca Hardie questioned the lack of a large central transit center downtown. A. Gregory responded that a mobility hub is being considered near Churchill or CN Tower, which would integrate buses with other transportation modes and regional services. The primary obstacles to this project are funding and land availability. The current Government Centre transit hub's limitations and potential replacement by a new central hub were discussed.
- A. Gregory showcased the route report card system, which rates each route based on ridership, schedule adherence, and on-time performance, providing a link for the board members to access this data. Examples of route performance for routes 56, 110X, and 4 were reviewed, highlighting factors affecting on-time performance such as construction and traffic . The possibility of using articulated buses on route 4 was considered but is currently hindered by the length of existing bus stops. The plan for a future mass transit corridor along the route 4 alignment was mentioned, which would include articulated buses and improved infrastructure.
- Discussed the current downtown transit hub, noting its limitations regarding accessibility and its less than ideal location for a central hub due to its distance from key downtown areas. E. Masakhwe raised the point about land availability and the historical presence of a Greyhound station near Rogers Place. Explained that transit-oriented development wasn't a major consideration when Rogers Place was built, and that CN Tower Loop served as a temporary transit center before the Valley Line. Highlighted the potential for a mobility hub in the vicinity of Churchill Square and the arts district, suggesting other suburban regional hubs.
- R. Hardie expressed regret that transit integration wasn't part of the initial ICE District plans. The ICE District exceeded expectations, significantly transforming downtown and improving connectivity.

- Discussed the current route report cards and considered the idea of area report cards to consolidate on-time performance data for buses going through areas like downtown and Strathcona. Mentioned that the current software requires using two screens to compare routes side-by-side.
- Outlined plans for an LRT extension north and the development of new mass transit BRT routes (B1 and B2) to improve city-wide connections, including potential airport links. Emphasized that LRT and mass transit are interconnected and complementary.

New Business/Updates:

a) Councilor Emerging Issues/Updates:

Councillor E. Rutherford

- Not too much in the immediate horizon coming to council for the remainder of the term of this council. Questions about why we didn't have the transit hub downtown at the same time as Rogers place was. It was an isolated place and wasn't expected to link all the downtown.
- Excited to see equity in Transit planning based on demand.
- Discussion about gaps in equity.

b) Meeting dates September and December, 2025.

E. Batty

- September 29 on truth and reconciliation day move one week earlier to 22nd one week earlier and in December 22nd to be prior to the holiday seasons

Working groups/subcommittees:

a) Number of Meetings and Public Notice:

E. Batty

- Notification to the public on when these meetings will be held and in review to be held.
- Any decision making needs to be done public.
- Time frame for announcing a public meeting?

b) Sub Committees:

i: Arc Card Review

R. Hardie

- R. Hardie reported on the ARC card review committee, stating that their terms of reference are nearly finalized. R. Hardie mentioned that she had questions for Marc Lachance regarding available data. M. Lachance provided information on existing customer satisfaction surveys related to ARC but noted limitations on adding more questions due to survey length, suggesting further discussion on specific data needs. E. Batty requested that the draft terms of reference be shared with the board by July 21st for review and potential approval at the next meeting.

ii: Fare Funding gap

E. Masahkwe

- E. Masahkwe provided an update on the fair funding gap subcommittee, stating that they have developed a scope of work and identified data needs to draft a position paper on maintaining reasonable fares and the potential impact of fare increases. E. Masahkwe indicated that a draft of their terms of reference would be shared with the board a week before the next meeting. the chair for the committee. Also come up with information requests for M. Lachance.

External Updates:	
<p>a) ATU 569:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nothing new to report. 	S. Bradshaw
<p>b) Branch Highlights Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See attached report • M. Lachance presented the highlights report, noting that May ridership maintained April's levels, which is positive considering university schedules. They highlighted ETS's involvement in summer festivals, the return of the "Story Time Next Stop" program, and the Heritage Fleet display at Kdays. • M. Lachance also mentioned the free transit on Transit Tuesday and ETS's participation in Seniors Week. • M. Lachance discussed mechanic classes for apprenticeship trades as a recruitment effort, a major update to the regional ETSs trip planner, and the Oracle project gathering qualitative rider feedback. Inquired about the availability of the Oracle project feedback, particularly for the ARC card review. M. Lachance indicated it would be shared later and that initial insights weren't directly related to ARC. • M.Lachance reported on the successful transit rodeo and the response to a major LRT disruption in May. They also provided an update on DATs rider research involving focus groups to gather in-depth qualitative information. 	M. Lachance
<p>c) Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided a condensed update from the Accessibility Advisor Committee (AAC), mentioning the corporate guideline for service dogs, positive feedback on the art card, and AAC's focus on inclusivity for persons with hearing impairments, including challenges with announcements on LRT. 	J. Jackman
<p>d) ETS Branch Manager/Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing to report 	E. Batty

Topics of the night	R. Hardie
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on ETS service standards by A. Gregory • Councillor Rutherford continued on discussion on items discussed by A. Gregory • Sub committee updates and Branch Highlights 	

Motion to Adjourn 8:10 pm