



What We Did & Heard Highlights: Refining the New Transit Fare Policy May–July 2018

SHARE YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

ETS

November 2018

What We Did & Heard Report: Refining the Transit New Fare Policy May-June 2018

Together, we are creating a new Transit Fare Policy that ensures Edmontonians have access to balanced and affordable transit fares so everyone can move around our city.

We want to ensure transit prices are balanced so individuals and the community benefit from the service. Deciding how much to charge to ride transit is not a simple task.

To help pay for transit, about 60% of the total cost comes from City taxes and the rest comes from fares and other non-fare revenues. While the City can aim to recover more from transit customers, lower fares help those who depend on transit the most, and encourages Edmontonians to make transit their primary mode of travel.

The Transit Fare Policy is a key action from Edmonton's Transit Strategy. From May through July 2018, we asked for your feedback about the new Transit Fare Policy. We held focus groups, workshops and conducted an online survey to learn more about your transit priorities. Your feedback, along with principles from the Transit Strategy, will be used to develop a policy that helps us decide the fares to charge, discounts to provide and how best to recover transit operating costs.

Our Timeline



MAY-JULY 2018

Public Engagement

NOV 2018

Transit Fare Policy to Council

2019

Rollout of Transit Fare Policy, if approved

By the Numbers



109

Attended one of 12 focus groups or workshops



3,764

Completed an online survey

What We Did

Edmonton Transit Service invited public and community stakeholders to provide feedback and perspectives on draft fare policies, education required to support implementation for a new fare system and fare-capping models.

- + **Eight focus groups** were held in April–May 2018 to review fare policy principles. Participants included seniors, low-income transit users, cash-only users, monthly pass holders and regional transit users from St. Albert and Sherwood Park. One focus group was held in May 2018 with 12 clients and staff at the Winnifred Stewart Association, and **four in-depth** interviews were conducted with DATS Advisory Group committee members. The purpose of these sessions was to incorporate the perspectives of Edmontonians with physical and/or cognitive challenges (or those who work with them).
- + **Two community stakeholder workshops** were held in July and August to gather more information about how the new fare policy principles might affect the communities and individuals represented by a variety of city-based organizations (e.g. seniors, students, vulnerable populations, children and families, community wellness and taxpayers).
- + **An online survey** ran July 10 to July 25. It was open to the public (2,559 responses) and an online panel (1,205 responses).

Highlights of What We Heard

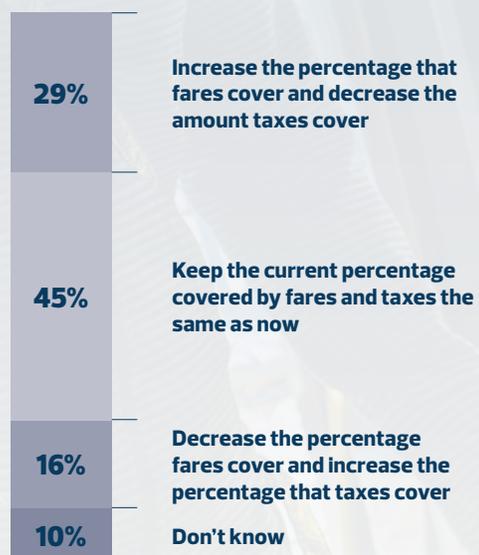
- + A large majority of survey participants (81%) agree a good public transit system benefits everyone.
- + There is strong support (63% to 74%) for some groups (seniors, children under 13, people with low incomes, people with mobility challenges) receiving discounted fares.
- + In the focus groups, support for distance-based fares increased significantly when combined with a daily/monthly fare-capping approach.

BALANCED PRINCIPLE:

Fares will recover a portion of operating costs recognizing both the individual and public benefits of transit.

COMMON THEMES

- + Nearly three-quarters (73%) agree that City taxes should pay for a portion of the cost to operate transit.
- + In other Canadian cities of similar size, fares cover 40% to 60% of the operating cost. The option of keeping Edmonton's percentage the way it is (with fares covering 40% to 45%) received the most support. This is known as the Revenue Cost Ratio (RC Ratio).



EQUITABLE PRINCIPLE:

Fares will be consistent for trips of similar nature, reflect the cost of service and encourage more transit riders compared to the cost of transportation alternatives.

COMMON THEMES

- + Some people think it's unfair to compare the cost of a transit trip to other ways of getting around, such as cars, bikes and taxis.
- + Three-in-five (58%) Edmontonians prefer some form of distance based fare, while two-in-five (42%) prefer the flat rate we use today.

REWARDING PRINCIPLE:

Frequent use of transit will be promoted through discounted fares for individuals that choose transit as a primary means of transportation.

COMMON THEMES

- + This policy statement was generally viewed positively, primarily because the service already benefits frequent users through the monthly pass.
- + There is moderate support (32%) for frequent users to get further discounts.

AFFORDABLE PRINCIPLE:

Transit service will be affordable to the public, regardless of age, finances or other potential barriers.

COMMON THEMES

- + The majority (63%) believe no one should be prevented from taking transit because of their ability to pay.
- + Responses about discounts for monthly passes based on age, income or student status showed support for the reduced fares to be set between 39% to 47% of an adult monthly pass.



How Your Input Was Used

After carefully reviewing the survey feedback and other public engagement results, Edmonton Transit Service has adjusted the recommendations included in the draft Transit Fare Policy and will present it to City Council for consideration this fall.

Based on focus group feedback and discussions with community stakeholders, the principles presented in the Fare Policy have been reworded for clarity and intent. Input from the online survey was used to guide the development of recommendations, including the target for the Revenue Cost Ratio (RC Ratio) and the realignment of the fare categories and associated discount rates.

What Happens Next

The proposed new Transit Fare Policy, along with feedback from public engagement activities, will be brought to City Council in early 2019 for consideration.