



What We Did & Heard Highlights: Alternative Transit

Newer Communities

November 2019

SHARE YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

What We Did & Heard Highlights: Alternative Transit

Edmonton Transit Service:
Public Engagement for Newer Communities

Overview

Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) is exploring alternative transit options for newer communities that do not have transit service today and may not have it in the proposed bus network redesign. Alternative transit service could connect residents in these communities to the new bus network so they can get to where they want to go.

To guide ETS' work in developing an alternative transit approach, we asked residents to help refine proposed approaches for their communities.

In fall 2018, we met with residents from three established communities (Cameron Heights, Wedgewood and Westridge) to discuss their expectations for possible alternative transit service. ETS used these considerations, listed below, when researching potential solutions for newer communities.

- + **Safe service:** all drivers should meet strict ETS standards
- + **Affordable service:** fares should be the same as regular transit
- + **Fast service:** ride time should be 15 to 30 minutes
- + **Accessible pick up locations:** the community should help decide where these are situated

Newer communities identified for this potential service needed to meet several criteria. These included:

- + not having existing transit service within 600 metres
- + their current road network design may not be able to support a 40' transit vehicle
- + a minimum of 200 occupied dwellings.

Newer communities being reviewed for alternative transit include:

- Cavanagh
- Edgemont
- Hays Ridge
- Keswick
- Graydon Hill
- Hawks Ridge
- Starling
- Trumpeter

 *This [on-demand van] would be a good start for the community. Need to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities would be addressed ie wheelchair.* 

Dragons Head Golf Course workshop participant

What We Did

- + Two drop-in community workshops held in September 2019
- + 100 workshop participants attended
- + 516 completed online surveys

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Drop-in community workshops: these were three-hour drop-in sessions held in September for the clusters of neighbourhoods identified for potential alternative service. ETS planners and engagement consultants met with local residents at the Terwillegar Recreation Centre and the Dragons Head Golf Course. Participants were asked to provide input to help refine a proposed alternative transit approach, as well as speak directly to the planners about their concerns.

Surveys: a survey was hosted at edmonton.ca/firstlastkm from September 24 to October 6. The survey targeted workshop

participants, local residents who were unable to attend and Edmontonians who work or visit these neighbourhoods. Residents were notified of the survey via mailed postcards, as well as email, if email addresses were supplied during workshop sessions.

Community outreach: with support from the City's Neighbourhood Resource Coordinators, the City connected with community leagues, as well as volunteers forming a league for their community, to let them know about the public engagement opportunities and encouraged them to promote the workshops and survey to their residents.

What We Asked

In early September, we asked **workshop** participants to adapt and adjust approaches to alternative transit, which included an on-demand van, ride-hailing app, taxi and limited bus service. Participants told us what they thought the pros and cons were for each option and then were asked to select their top two preferences.

A limited bus service option was included, in part, to gauge the communities' interest in using public transit. It also provided a cost and services comparison to alternative transit options.

For on-demand services (on-demand van, ride-hailing app and taxi), we asked participants how they would prefer to book (phone, smartphone app or computer) and when they most want to travel. We then asked about how they prefer to schedule their trip: do they want to be picked up at the same

time and place every day, do they need flexibility for appointments and how far in advance do they want to book.

Participants were also asked to identify where they would prefer to be picked up and dropped off by placing a dot on a street map of their community. Cluster points emerged and will provide direction for further research by ETS planners.

From late September until early October, we conducted an online survey to validate what we heard at the workshops and provide an opportunity for those who could not attend to provide their input. Based on the top two preferred options that emerged in the workshops (on-demand van and limited bus service) we asked residents again which one they prefer (one, both, or neither) and when and how they would want to use the service.

What We Heard

TYPE OF SERVICE

Of the four options presented at the workshops, limited bus service and on-demand van were identified as the two preferred choices. These results were validated through an online survey after the workshops. Participants identified limited bus service as their number one option; however, many of them were open to an on-demand service. Their primary concern was access to some type of public transit service and they felt both options provided a sense of reliability and safety.

Participants liked the idea of limited bus service because they thought it would be predictable, easily available, accessible and they were familiar with this type of service. An on-demand alternative transit is new to Edmonton and participants had lots of questions about how it would work compared to what they know. They liked that limited bus service would be scheduled, which would address concerns about planning trips ahead of time. That said, they also indicated the smaller vehicles offered through on-demand vans would be more appropriate for their communities' needs, would provide flexibility and would be appropriate for students and children.

Participants expressed safety and security concerns with the ride-hailing app and taxi service options. They also voiced concerns about limited space, potential cost to users, availability of vehicles and accessibility.

PICK-UP LOCATIONS, BOOKING TRIPS, SCHEDULING SERVICE

Participants said they would use the service most during the peak AM and PM rush hours between Monday and Friday (7 to 8 a.m. and 4 to 5 p.m.). They expressed the need for flexibility when booking their trips during peak and off-peak hours including evenings and weekends. They also said they would need to be able to make planned and unplanned trips using the service.

Participants were given the opportunity to choose pick-up and drop-off points during the workshops. They expressed concerns about walking distances and wanted to ensure pick-up and drop-off points were located in convenient places.

A full report of the results is available on edmonton.ca/firstlastkm.



Still a growing community. New people moving in all the time. Will need time to establish ridership.

Dragons Head Golf Course workshop participant

Have a smaller bus every 15 mins in Cavanaugh. Check your census records, a lot of families live there. It will fill up fast.



Terwillegar Rec Centre workshop participant

Next Steps

More residents selected limited bus service as their preferred option. However, the on-demand solution is anticipated to provide residents with more flexible travel times and the possibility for off-peak service in some areas, as well as an earlier introduction of transit service in their neighbourhood. If in the future demand for alternative transit service exceeds vehicle capacity, ETS could explore adding regular scheduled bus service.

Implementation of an alternative transit service option is subject to City Council direction, city policies and programs, available funding and technical requirements. Community feedback will be provided to City Council to help them in their decision-making process about alternative transit on November 19, 2019.



Really needs service to Keswick area and there is no walk way to walk to get on other ETS please.

Terwillegar Rec Centre workshop participant

If ETS provided an efficient service to a nearby transit station connecting to other frequent routes, I would consider taking transit over my vehicle. Ideally it would be nice to have a transit option(s) that gets me downtown under an hour from the Big Lake area.



Dragons Head Golf Course participant

Thank you for participating in sharing your voice and shaping our city. For more information about City of Edmonton public engagement, see edmonton.ca/publicengagement. Updates about the City of Edmonton alternative transit project can be found at edmonton.ca/firstlastkm.