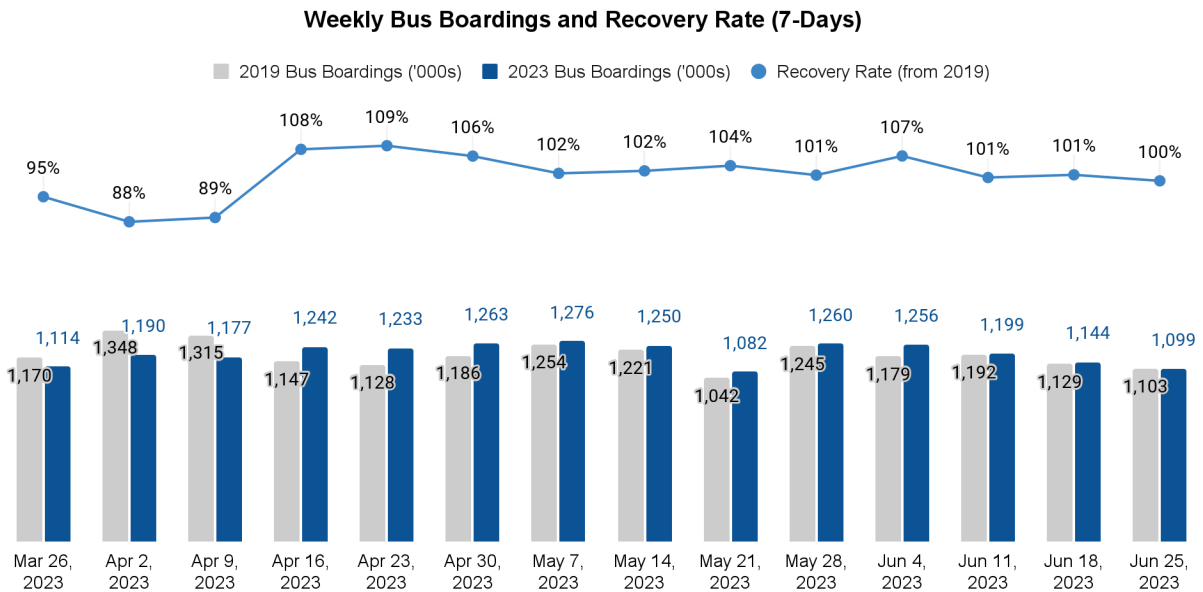


ETS Branch Highlights Report

Date: July 31, 2023

1. RIDERSHIP



Bus boardings were at approximately 1.1 million during the week of June 25 - July 1, representing 100% of bus boardings for the same week in 2019. With summer holidays approaching, the week of June 25 - July 1 witnessed a 4% decrease in bus boardings compared to the previous week (June 18-24) which saw a total of 1.14 million bus boardings.

In June 2023, there were a total of 5.14 million bus boardings, representing 107% of 2019 bus boardings - this is the highest rate of 2019 ridership recovery recorded this year. Year-over-year growth in June 2023 was at 24%, from 4.16 million bus boardings in June 2022. Bus ridership continues to surpass 2019 levels as Edmontonians increasingly choose transit to travel to community events and local attractions during the summer.

2. ETS UPDATES

Enhanced Transit Safety Plan Update

The second monthly verbal update on the Enhanced Transit Safety Plan along with a report on the implementation of the Enhanced Transit Safety Plan were presented to Council on July 4. Some of the key highlights from the verbal update and Council report are outlined below:

- Transit Safety Measures: A set of measures across the four key pillars under the Enhanced Transit Safety Plan (safety, well-being, perception of safety, and integration) were identified to help guide actions over time. An integrated dashboard will be developed to update Council and the public on performance for each of the measures.
- Century Park LRT Station Project: Proactive patrols are being conducted at Century Park LRT station as part of the integrated plan approach that was applied to Southgate LRT station. It was noted that there were two violent incidents reported in May 2023, compared to five violent incidents in May 2022.
- Perception of Safety Data: A multi-method research approach is being undertaken to gain a holistic understanding on perception of safety. A variety of research tools are being utilized to gauge perceptions, including ongoing online surveys, a pilot location-based QR code survey, a well-being intercept survey at select stations and ethnographic studies focusing on storytelling. Insights from the research projects will be shared in the fall.
- Well-Being Approach - Community Outreach Transit Team (COTT): Until the end of August, COTT is piloting an engagement booth at Churchill LRT station on Tuesday and Thursday mornings as a consistent available resource to help connect vulnerable people to social supports and services. This outreach approach has been well-received by community members, with some approaching the booths to learn more about what to do when someone is in need.
- Transit Safety Integration: The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) is working to add more EPS officers to the Transit and Community Safety (TRACS) teams who work with Transit Peace Officers at hotspot crime locations in an integrated manner. In addition, the integrated approach to transit safety will be supported through the EPS' Integrated Call Evaluation and Dispatch (ICED) project, which will match each response to an incident with the appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities and authorities to ensure the most effective action taken. The pedway working group which is focused on improving safety at downtown pedway locations is also working on a project aimed to understand the specific locations of incidents and determine the best action to respond to incidents.
- Opportunities to Further Enhance Transit Safety: As part of the Council report on the implementation of the transit safety plan, additional opportunities for short-term and medium-term improvements were identified, contributing to the plan's four key pillars. These opportunities include but are not limited to permanently increasing enhanced cleaning of transit facilities and vehicles, expanding Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) improvements, establishing a dedicated travel training centre to provide training on transit use and safety and security features to

marginalized groups, equity analysis of fleet safety features, transit space activations, and technology investments to enhance safety and security.

In the next verbal update on August 22, Administration will be providing an outlook on the integrated work plan for the next six months, including preparation work for the opening of Valley Line Southeast, winter response and updated data on the measures under the four Enhanced Transit Safety Plan pillars.

QR Code Survey Pilot

On July 17, 2023, ETS launched a pilot for a new transit safety QR code survey at four LRT stations (Churchill, Belvedere, Century Park and Stadium). The QR code survey is one of multiple research projects, including online surveys, intercept surveys and mobile ethnography, that are being conducted to collect feedback on perception of safety and well-being from a diverse representation of transit riders and users of transit spaces. The survey aims to capture daily location-based, in-the-moment feedback from riders that will allow ETS to analyze the immediate impacts of newly implemented safety and security measures at transit centres and LRT stations.

The QR codes will be active for four months. Riders and people using transit spaces as pedways will be notified of the short survey through posters with QR codes at the select locations. Free, public Open City Wi-Fi is available at the LRT stations to allow riders to scan the QR code and submit their responses. Insights from this four-month pilot project are expected in the fall. The QR code survey may be expanded to other transit centres or LRT stations in the future.

Next Stop: Storytime Partnership

This summer, ETS is partnering with Edmonton Public Library (EPL) to pilot a new initiative called *Next Stop: Storytime*. An ETS bus meets participants (children ages 3-5, and their parents) at a library branch, and they're taken to a nearby park for storytime. Led by EPL youth program staff, the children sing songs while riding the bus and hear stories in the bus. Through the partnership with EPL, children can have an interactive and memorable experience riding the bus in a safe and controlled environment, while learning a little bit about the city bus. It

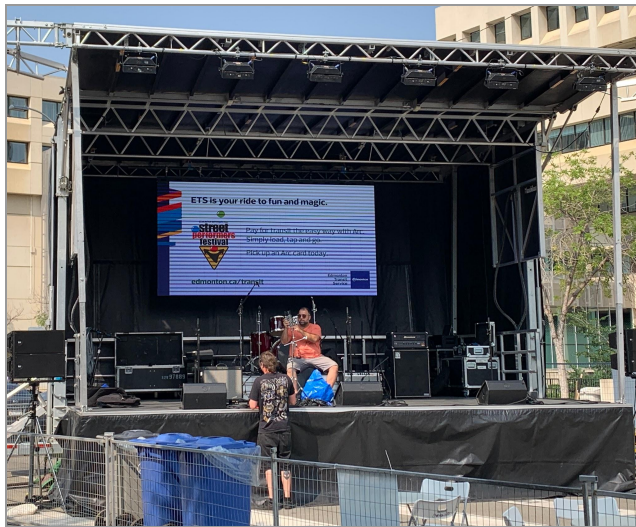
also creates a touchpoint early in their lives before many of them start using transit to get to school in junior high. Three events are scheduled for the summer including the Clareview (July 10), Heritage Valley (July 19) and Lois Hole (August 2) branches.



Festival Partnerships and Sponsorships

Throughout the summer, ETS is supporting volunteers of several festivals by providing free transit. Volunteers are what make many signature festivals successful and are an important part of the city's cultural fabric. By providing an alternative transportation option, festival organizers can offer additional value in appreciation for volunteers' time. In exchange for free transit, ETS is being named an official transportation provider and will have its logo appear in many festival venues. In 2023, ETS is supporting volunteers of the following festivals:

- Edmonton International Street Performers Festival
- Taste of Edmonton
- K-Days
- Edmonton International Fringe Festival



Looking ahead, ETS is looking for opportunities to partner with festivals year-round to continue offering this support.

On June 10 and 11, ETS participated in Sustainival by showing off the hydrogen-powered bus at the Ice District. Sustainival is a festival powered by renewable energy and it aims to promote sustainability. In 2023, Sustainival moved to the Ice District and Fan Park in downtown Edmonton, and ETS was invited to showcase the hydrogen-powered bus as part of the Green Marketplace.

Transit Space Activations

In June, artists with the Alberta Circus Arts Festival performed and interacted with transit riders at the Northgate, Southgate and Westmount transit centres. The artists included a professional juggler and mini workshops that provided an opportunity for transit riders to learn a new skill while they waited for the bus. This included hula hooping and juggling. These activations were positively received by riders as they added a little joy to their commute.

ETS also welcomed two Edmonton Elks players to Century Park Transit Centre ahead of the team's home opener. Steven Dunbar Jr. (#7) and Eugene Lewis (#87) interacted with many high school



students on their way home from school by signing mini footballs and giving out tickets to an upcoming game. Many Elks fans were excited to meet some of their favourite Elks players while waiting for the bus.



3. ETSAB INFORMATION REQUESTS

Arc Vending Machine Locations

Arc vending machines are located at all LRT stations, West Edmonton Mall transit centre, Mill Woods transit centre, and the Edmonton International Airport. In addition, riders are able to purchase and load Arc cards at various retail locations such as gas stations and convenience stores. There are currently 69 retail locations located throughout Edmonton which offer Arc cards, with additional locations being added in the future. At the time being, there are no plans to install Arc vending machines at locations outside of transit spaces, however ETS will re-evaluate this option once Arc is fully rolled out in the future.

Arc Card Fees for U-Pass Students

Students at participating U-Pass post-secondary institutions are required to purchase an Arc card which then can be activated with a U-Pass. If the student loses their Arc card, they would be required to purchase another one, which applies to all riders.

4. ETS COUNCIL REPORT TRACKING - 2023

| Report # | Report Title | Meeting Date* | Committee* |
|---|---|--------------------|------------|
| Upcoming reports being led by ETS: | | | |
| CO01922 | Monthly Update on the Transit Safety Plan and the Downtown Core - Verbal Report | August 22, 2023 | CC |
| CO01337 | Edmonton Transit Services in Newer Developing/Developed Communities | August 29, 2023 | UPC |
| CO01551 | Developer-funded Transit Service Options to Support Early Adoption of Transit in New Neighbourhoods | August 29, 2023 | UPC |
| CO01562 | Bus Service for Youth After School Hours - Approach and Work Plan | August 29, 2023 | UPC |
| CO01923 | Monthly Update on the Transit Safety Plan and the Downtown Core - Verbal Report | September 12, 2023 | CC |
| CO01885 | Metro Line to Blatchford Operating Options | September 20, 2023 | Exec |
| CO01580 | Fare Policy Amendment - Children Under 12 | October 13, 2023 | Exec |
| CO01955 | EPCOR Contract Extension - D&T for Substation Remote Monitoring | October 13, 2023 | Exec |

| | | | |
|--|--|--------------------|------|
| COXXXXX | ETSAB: A Review of Winter Mobility and Accessibility of Pathways to Transit Stops | TBD | UPC |
| COXXXXX | Administration Response - A Review of Winter Mobility and Accessibility of Pathways to Transit Stops | TBD | UPC |
| CO01944 | Monthly Update on the Transit Safety Plan and the Downtown Core - Verbal Report | October 24, 2023 | CC |
| CO01974 | Opportunities to Enhance Transit Safety and Security | October 24, 2023 | CC |
| OCM01136 | Bylaw XXXXX - Amendments to Bylaw 8353 - Conduct of Transit Passengers | TBD - Fall 2023 | CPSC |
| CO01953 | Monthly Update on the Transit Safety Plan and the Downtown Core - Verbal Report | November 21, 2023 | CC |
| CO01552 | Commingle Paratransit and On Demand Services | December 5, 2023 | UPC |
| CO01632 | Direct Downtown to Airport Bus Route | December 6, 2023 | CC |
| CO01954 | Monthly Update on the Transit Safety Plan and the Downtown Core - Verbal Report | December 12, 2023 | CC |
| Other upcoming reports of interest: | | | |
| FCS01246 | Revenue Source for Transit - Potential, Risk and Implementation and Intergovernmental Advocacy | September 20, 2023 | Exec |

*Subject to change

CC = City Council

CPSC = Community and Public Services Committee

Exec = Executive Committee

UPC = Urban Planning Committee