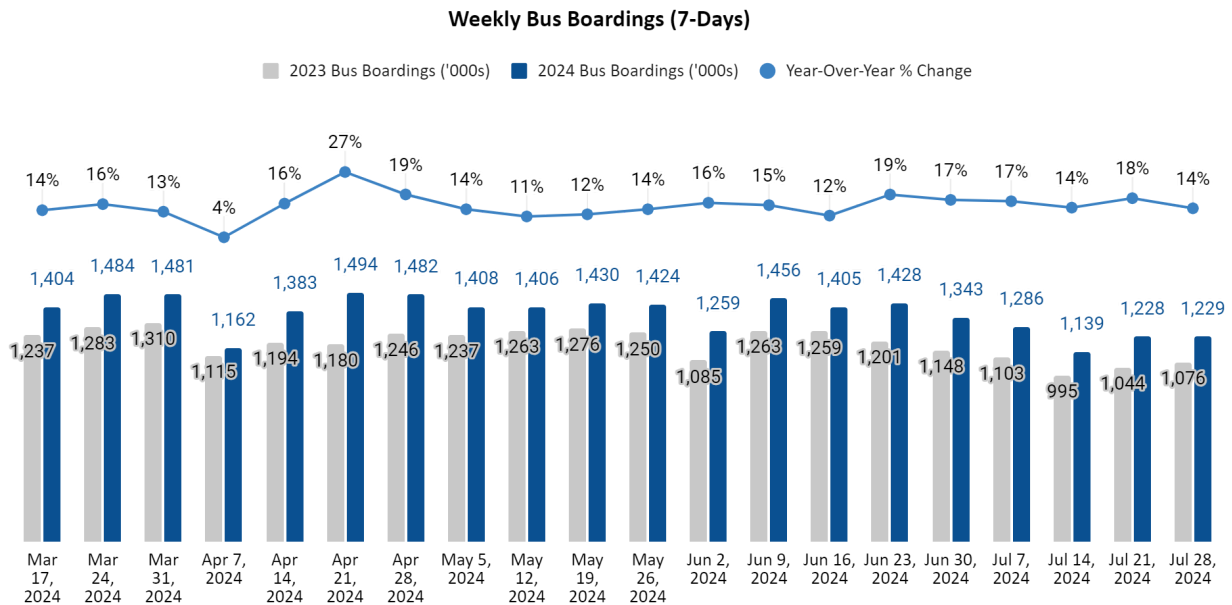


ETS Branch Highlights Report

Date: August 26, 2024

1. RIDERSHIP



In July, bus boardings¹ ranged from 1.14 to 1.34 million per week, representing a marginal decline from June, in alignment with historical summer travel patterns due to students and some workers being on summer break.

Overall, bus boardings continue to grow significantly from 2023, and have exceeded pre-pandemic levels since the beginning of 2024. ETS saw a total of 5.4 million monthly bus boardings in July 2024, representing a 20% increase from 4.5 million bus boardings in July 2023. The increase in bus boardings was driven by more off-peak riders during the weekdays. ETS is pleased to see more riders choose transit to travel to events, recreation, work, shopping and other activities throughout the summer.

¹ Bus boardings refer to the number of passenger entries onto a bus. A bus boarding is counted through Automated Passenger Counters (APC) each time a passenger boards a bus. Meanwhile, ridership refers to the total number of origin-to-destination trips, regardless of the number of transfers/boardings required to complete the trip. A conventional transit rider may board multiple vehicles (buses / LRT trains / On Demand Transit shuttle buses) to reach their final destination.

2. ETS UPDATES

Fall Service Adjustments

Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) is welcoming students back to transit as part of regular fall service adjustments. Beginning September 1, ETS will implement service adjustments to various bus routes and On Demand Transit, making service more convenient for riders. These adjustments include the resumption of school routes and trips.

In addition to these standard adjustments, ETS will be reassigning numerous bus bays at transit centres throughout the city. These changes respond to rider feedback, will help routes better align service with rider demand and also help buses enter and exit transit centres more smoothly. Some of the more significant service adjustments are outlined below.

School Special Routes

The start of the school year for the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) does not align with the start of the September service change this year. In response, ETS worked with EPSB to have school specials in place for the early start on August 29 and 30 based on 2023/2024 school schedules. [Full school specials service](#) will start on September 3, in alignment with 2024/2025 school schedules. All school special trips for August 29 and 30 will be visible on Google Maps.

School special service is being expanded to two new schools: Father Michael McCaffery (Route 658, 659, 663) and Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack (Routes 644, 645, 646, 647). Eastglen (Route 627) and Sir John Thompson (Route 618) schools will also see additional service provided.

On Demand Transit

Starting September 1, On Demand Transit service will be added to Rundle Park (Aquatic and Recreation Centre and Rundle Family Centre) and Enoch Cree First Nation (108 Apartments and River Cree Casino). Abbottsfield Transit Centre will be the transit hub for Rundle Park operations, while Lewis Farms Transit Centre will be the transit hub for Enoch Cree First Nation trips.

Growing ridership for On Demand Transit has resulted in longer wait times in some zones. To support this growth, three additional peak buses and one off-peak bus will be added to the On Demand Transit service. ETS is also exploring other options to support trip planning with our On Demand Transit partners and will share more information as it becomes available.

Construction and Detours

The 132 Avenue Renewal Project continues. Construction on the west side of 132 Avenue began on April 15 and will run until Fall 2024. Routes 106, 150X, 613, 624, 625 will be on

detour. Construction on the east side of 132 Avenue started in June 2024 and will continue this fall. Routes 106 and 626 will be on detour.

Route 101 will be on detour until September due to sewage work being completed by EPCOR on 34 Street NW. Route 101 will detour east on 113 Avenue, south on 30 Street and then west on 111 Avenue. Routes 910X and 913 will continue to be temporarily rerouted until late Fall 2024, due to road construction on 57 Avenue between Lessard Road and 184 Street.

Other bus service changes:

- **Route 8** - will be rerouted around Abbotsfield Transit Centre and will now travel clockwise around the Riverview Crossing Shopping Centre. This will help buses enter and exit the transit centre more smoothly.
- **Routes 52 and 924** will swap the streets they run along between 88 Avenue and 95 Avenue. Route 52 will now run along 163 Street and Route 924 will now run along 168 Street, 93 Avenue and 165 Street.
 - This adjustment will provide service for Jasper Place, St. Francis Xavier and the Jasper Place Leisure Centre during all time periods, this means greater access for riders to these destinations.
 - Route 924 will not only see more peak service, but will also have weekend service added to help support other destinations along the route.
- **Routes 109 and 126** will be combined into **Route 109A/B**. This adjustment helps decrease the number of transfers required to access Northgate Transit Centre from northwest Edmonton. This routing change will also help serve newly constructed areas in the Griesbach neighbourhood.
 - Route 109A will run clockwise and Route 109B will run counterclockwise.
- **Route 727** will now operate along additional sections of 119A Avenue now that road construction is completed, reaching more riders.
- Express **Routes 130X, 140X, 150X, and 500X** will have a number of stops added, making it more convenient for riders.
- Due to lower ridership demand, several routes will see service reductions:
 - Route 122 will run every 30 minutes instead of 20 minutes during AM Peak.
 - Route 522 - During midday/evening and weekends, this route will run every 60 minutes instead of every 30 minutes.
 - Route 702 - PM Peak will now be every 15 minutes.
 - Route 900X - AM/PM Peak will now run every 10 minutes instead of every 7 minutes. Midday/evening will now run every 20 minutes instead of every 15 minutes.

For more information on fall service adjustments, visit the [Transit Service Change](#) webpage.

Fall Student Outreach

To help students familiarize themselves with ETS, whether they are new to Edmonton or public transit in general, ETS is participating in a number of information fairs hosted by the University of Alberta, MacEwan University, NAIT, Norquest College and Concordia University during their student orientation activities. Students are able to get assistance with trip

planning, pick up transit information, like Ride Guides, and ask any questions they have about navigating the system. Transit safety information is also made available to students.

On August 22, ETS participated in the First Riders event hosted by the Edmonton Public School Board and the Edmonton Catholic School Division. This event is focused on students who will be riding the bus to school for the first time, whether it's yellow bus or public transit. Families of Grade 7 students learned about how to ride ETS, find transit information and how to stay safe. Our partners at PWTransit also participated in the event by bringing an On Demand Transit bus and helping families learn to use this service if this will be part of their children's daily trip to school.



Starting August 29 and throughout the first week of classes, ETS will have teams in select transit centres engaging with riders during the morning peak service. The teams will help students find their connections in the transit centres, plan trips and provide other transit information. Transit centres the teams will be on site at, include: West Edmonton Mall Transit Centre, Mill Woods Transit Centre, Century Park Transit Centre, Northgate Transit Centre, Southgate Transit Centre, Lewis Farms Transit Centre, Meadows Transit Centre, Clareview Transit Centre and Eaux Claires Transit Centre.

Here to Help Campaign

From August 29 to September 20, Transit Peace Officers (TPOs) will conduct high-visibility and high-engagement patrols in transit spaces to support students returning to school. The patrols are part of the "Here to Help" campaign, which aims to enhance safety, convenience and reliability for all transit riders during the busy back-to-school period.

The City of Edmonton is leading this initiative as part of the City's Enhanced Transit Safety Plan. This initiative also involves the Community Outreach Transit Team (COTT) and Edmonton Police Service Transit Community Safety Team (TRACS).

Patrol locations:

TPOs will be deployed at eight LRT stations and transit centres across the city to educate and inform riders about transit bylaws and ensure a safe welcoming environment:

- Century Park LRT/Transit Centre
- Southgate LRT/Transit Centre
- University LRT/Transit Centre
- Coliseum LRT/Transit Centre
- Clareview LRT/Transit Centre

- MacEwan LRT
- Northgate Transit Centre
- Westmount Transit Centre

TPOs will be on patrol during weekday peak hours, which are from 7 to 9 a.m. and 2 to 4 p.m. when student traffic is highest. Additionally, Downtown Peace Officers will be present in the Churchill LRT pedways during these times. Transit Peace Officers, Edmonton Police Service officers, ETS staff and security personnel are available to help year round, providing support where it is needed most.

The City of Edmonton recognizes the importance of helping youth riders feel supported and safe on transit. Knowing there are supports along their journey can ease the transition back to school for students and their parents/guardians, while helping to establish transit as a lifelong preferred travel mode. "Here to Help" aims to build connections with students, increase their confidence in navigating the transit system, and raise awareness about safety tools and resources available. The campaign will be promoted through various communications channels, including the City's website, advertising, media relations and social media.

Folk Fest Transit Support

From August 8 to 11, Edmonton Folk Music Festival attendees were able to take the Valley Line Southeast to the festival grounds at Gallagher Park for the first time. Riders accessed and exited the event through Strathearn and Muttart LRT stops near the North and South gates for the festival.

For the first time, ETS also supported the festival's volunteers, artists and staff with free transit access to help them get to and from the festival grounds.

ETS was pleased to see event attendees choosing to take the service as a convenient, easy and reliable way to travel to the Folk Fest Music Festival. Ridership on Valley Line Southeast was approximately 50 per cent higher on August 8 and 9 compared to regular weekdays and over 110 per cent higher on August 10 and 11 compared to normal weekend ridership.

Edmonton International Fringe Festival Transit Support

ETS continued its longtime partnership with the Edmonton International Fringe Festival (August 15-25) by providing free transit access to volunteers, artists and staff. For the second year in a row, ETS also provided transit tickets for the festival's Community Care Team. This team assists individuals who are displaced from the festival grounds, which includes providing a transit ticket to access services from agencies supporting vulnerable individuals.

As part of this partnership, ETS spent two days at Kids Fringe. Back by popular demand this year, families were able to explore the inside of a bus, take pictures in the driver's seat, and learn more about public transit. Families were also able to get transit information from staff on site.

August Council Reports

On August 27, City Administration is providing an update to Council about mass transit planning for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in the report Mass Transit: Implementing for 1.25 Million People. The report provides an overview of the approach for BRT routes and discusses next steps, which will include moving the project forward to a more detailed planning phase. The report and supporting documents can be accessed through the [August 27, 2024 Urban Planning Committee agenda](#).

On August 28, City Administration will be discussing two reports at Executive Committee. The reports and supporting documents can be accessed through the [August 28, 2024 Executive Committee agenda](#).

Ride Transit Program Funding Gap

On May 23, the Ride Transit Program Funding Update report provided an overview of the program, and presented a projected funding gap for 2024 of approximately \$10 million, with further growth in demand anticipated in future years. In response, Council passed a motion for Administration to bring forward a report outlining options to address the Ride Transit Program funding gap. The report provides an analysis of program eligibility criteria; transit user fees; and program funding.

Implementation of Transit Revenue Actions

The Implementation of Transit Revenue Actions report responds to a motion passed at the May 23, 2024 Executive Committee meeting. The report provides information on the process to implement items P-18 (create an online store for ETS souvenirs or merchandise) and P-17 (enhance ETS fare collection for special events revenues) outlined in Attachment 7 of the April 23, 2024, Financial and Corporate Services report FCS0236. It also makes a recommendation that Administration implement the next steps required to advance the two revenue items, and that Administration bring forward budget adjustments when actual revenues can be confirmed.

September Council Reports

On September 17, City Administration will be presenting the following reports at Urban Planning Committee:

- CO02559 Administration Response: ETSAB Perception of LRT Safety - an information report responding to ETSAB's Perception of LRT Safety report.
- CO02262 Infrastructure Enhancement for City Transit Facilities (ETS Fare Gates Pilot) - an information report responding to a motion asking for information about assessing a two-year trial for fare gates at two LRT stations.
- CO02352 Rider Experience for Paratransit, Dedicated Accessible Transit Service - an information report outlining options to improve the rider experience for paratransit Dedicated Accessible Transit Service (DATS) service, including the pickup window for trips and late night travel.

A detailed schedule of upcoming reports is available in the ETS Council Report tracking section below.

3. ETS COUNCIL REPORT TRACKING - 2024

Report #	Report Title	Meeting Date*	Committee*
Upcoming reports being led by ETS:			
CO02505	Ride Transit Program Funding Gap	August 28, 2024	Exec
CO02506	Implementation of Transit Revenue Actions	August 28, 2024	Exec
EXT02558	External report from ETSAB: Perception of LRT Safety	September 17, 2024	UPC
CO02559	Administration Response: ETSAB Perception of LRT Safety	September 17, 2024	UPC
CO02262	Infrastructure Enhancement for City Transit Facilities (ETS Fare Gates Pilot)	September 17, 2024	UPC
CO02352	Rider Experience for Paratransit, Dedicated Accessible Transit Service	September 17, 2024	UPC
CO02481	Transit Service Needs to Meet Population Growth	October 9, 2024	UPC
Other upcoming reports of interest:			
UPE02216	Mass Transit: Implementing for 1.25 Million People	August 27, 2024	UPC
FCS02093	Multi-Year Transit Funding Plan	October 9, 2024	Exec

Note: New reports will be added once a report number has been assigned.

*Subject to change

CC = City Council

CPSC = Community and Public Services Committee

Exec = Executive Committee

UPC = Urban Planning Committee