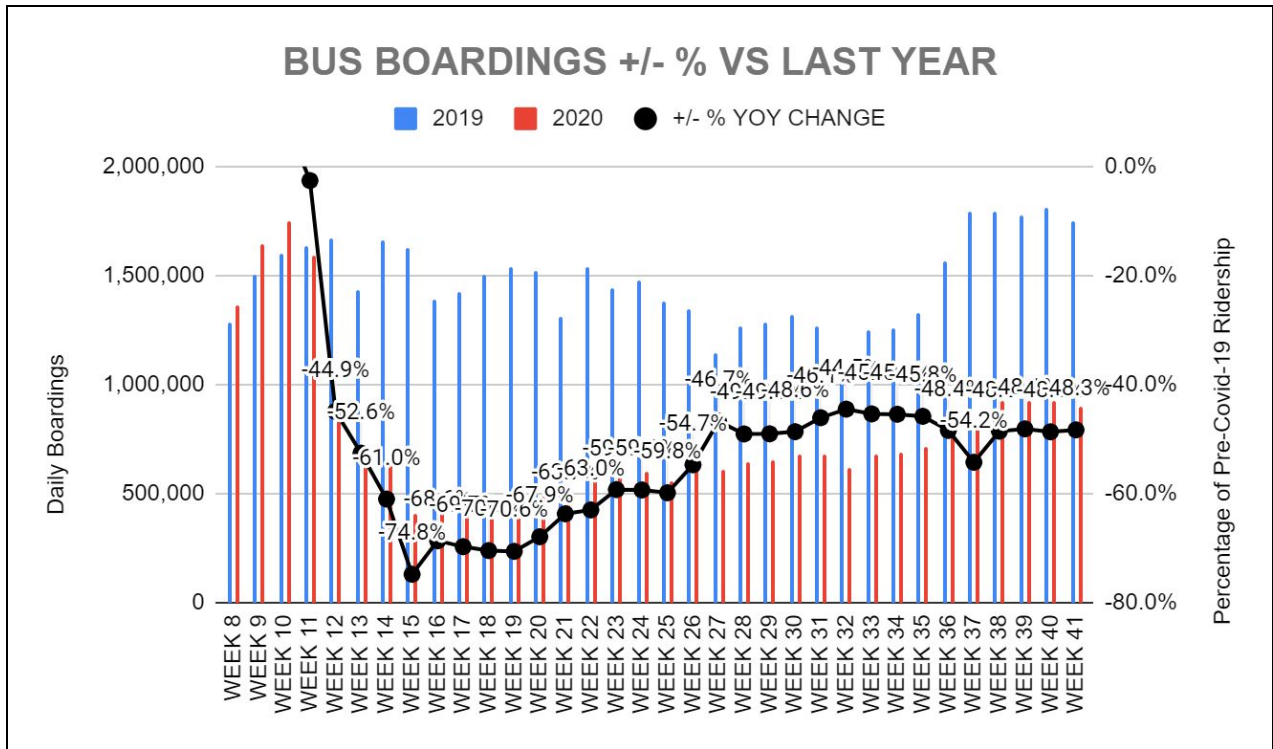


ETS Branch Highlights Report

Date: October 26, 2020

1. RIDERSHIP



MONTH	2019 Ridership	2020 Ridership	YOY % CHANGE
January	7,879,478	8,093,532	2.7%
February	7,773,662	7,794,958	0.3%
March	7,787,312	4,636,999	-40.5%
April	7,945,074	2,453,037	-69.1%
May	5,957,866	1,984,313	-66.7%
June	6,020,062	2,485,008	-58.7%
July	5,451,139	2,811,472	-48.4%
August	5,224,082	2,829,859	-45.8%
September	7,994,130	3,988,943	-50.1%

ETS ridership continues to be monitored and measured using boardings information. September saw an increase of approximately one million trips from August but the increase was short of the nearly three million trip increase that was seen in 2019. As a result, the year over year ridership for September figures have dropped to 50% of 2019.

2. ETS UPDATES

DATS Program Service Enhancement Report and Action Plan Update

DATS is in the process of implementing a three-year action plan to improve the DATS user experience that was initially presented to City Council in June 2019. [DATS Program Service Enhancements - Update and Next Steps report](#) outlines the status of customer improvement actions which include:

1. Implement a more flexible and cost effective service model
2. Address Operator workforce shortages due to excess retirements and unplanned staff absences
3. Explore partnerships with alternative transportation providers
4. Pursue technological enhancements in trip scheduling and real-time customer information
5. Leverage the fully accessible conventional transit fleet
6. Enhanced training for contracted operators
7. Provide clients with an option to book either a pick-up or drop-off window
8. Provide more flexibility to address individual client needs
9. Improve the paratransit trip experience

Despite the impacts of Covid-19 on DATS, the action plan is ahead of schedule and DATS has added two additional tasks to the list: a review and rebuild of the online booking tool and an overhaul of the trip cancellation policies and enforcement program. ETS is focused on completing this action plan to improve the experience of DATS customers. Improving the DATS customer experience is essential to our transit network and a key component of a healthy and resilient city.

Transit's Planning for Wave Two of the Pandemic

ETS has been participating in city-wide efforts to develop operational plans to respond to a second wave of COVID-19. ETS has identified several key operational tactics, including:

Health and Safety

- Maintaining enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols
 - Buses go through the process upon every return to the transit garage throughout the day; LRVs go through the process daily
 - Transit centres and LRT stations also go through the process daily
- Marketing campaign and communications to promote provincial public transit relaunch guidelines

- Inspectors and TPOs monitoring adherence to mask by-law, distributing masks as part of patrols
- Monitoring our boardings on a daily basis; with current service levels, we can support physical distancing among riders (ridership is hovering at half of 2019 levels).
- Maintaining September service schedules, including school routes, to enable distancing among riders.
- Same-day cleaning and disinfecting of bus shelters that are located near school outbreak locations

Fare Sales

- Revised sales channels for low income transit pass sales, starting with October pass sales, reducing the need for in person contact. ETS has had great results to date and customers are buying passes online, via phone, pre-authorized debit or as a last resort, by appointment at a rec centre (see more information below).
- Contingency plans to support on-going fare sales should retail outlets temporarily close

Workforce

- Contingency plans should a transit garage have a COVID-19 outbreak, to ensure seamless, uninterrupted service delivery
- Monitoring our workforce-related COVID numbers to assess and plan for anticipated workforce gaps should the numbers increase
- Benchmarking our recovery and pandemic plans with other large transit agencies in Canada through weekly calls facilitated by Canadian Urban Transit Association

Since the initial few weeks of the Covid-19 pandemic, ETS has been continuously reviewing the measures taken to build a more adaptive and resilient response to future waves.

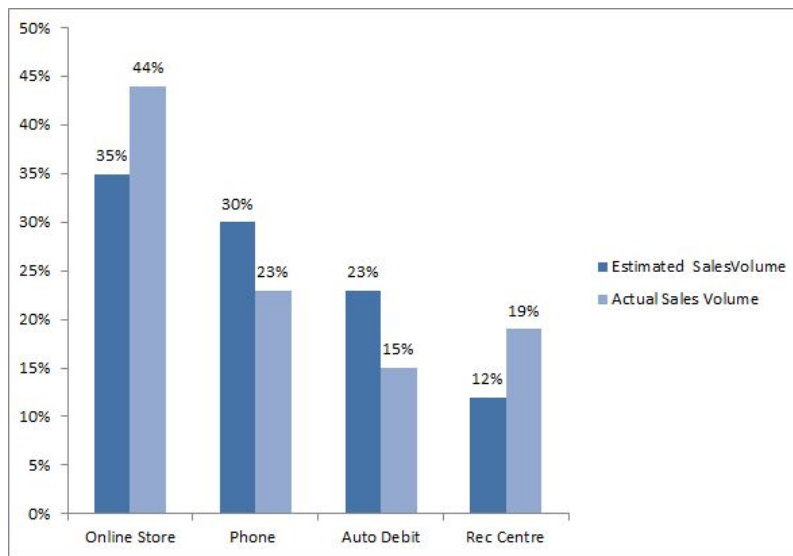
Reimagining Services: Ride Transit Sales

The low income transit pass program, Ride Transit, was launched in 2017, and is co-funded with the Government of Alberta. It is a key Game Changer Action to end poverty as part of the EndPoverty Edmonton strategy. The program is delivered through a partnership with the Leisure Access Program in Community and Recreation Facilities. Prior to Covid-19, 22,000 program participants purchased a monthly pass. Once approved as a participant in the program, purchases for each month were made in person at ten City recreation facilities and the Edmonton Service Centre (ESC). Due to Covid-19, there were temporary closures of facilities in March, including recreation centres and the ESC. Over the summer, planning began to redesign the sales process for this fare program as part of reimagining how the City delivers services. The overall objectives were to reduce Covid-19 risks associated with in-person contact and develop solutions that could carry through to the implementation of Smart Fare electronic fare payment.

ETS heard feedback from participants about limitations and frustrations of in-person sales channel, through consultations with the AISH community. Additionally, a survey conducted in

August 2020 found that two-thirds of survey respondents preferred a contactless sales process where passes would be sent by mail. Of the contactless options, preferences were split between an online store, pre-authorized debit, and telephone purchasing. ETS has also set up an option for customers to pay and collect their pass by appointment at a city facility.

ETS communicated changes to the sales process to participants in August and then followed up with more detailed instructions that would take effect for the sale of October passes. Overall, sales performed better than expected and the online store channel also exceeded expectations. As of October 1st, overall sales performed at 47 per cent of 2019 levels rather than the projected 30 per cent. Each channel is being monitored closely and after three months of sales, an internal review will be completed to identify lessons learned, areas that require further improvement and to align resources accordingly.



Jump Frog LRT installation

Over the Thanksgiving weekend, LRT track crews installed a special piece of track equipment to the north of Southgate Station where two sets of tracks cross. A “Jump Frog” allows trains travelling straight over this junction without switching tracks to make less noise and reduce wear on track parts. This results in a quieter service for customers, less noise for surrounding neighbourhoods, lower maintenance costs, and a much longer life cycle.

This work, which was completed ahead of schedule, was the result of three years of research and design. It makes Edmonton’s LRT system only the second in Canada that uses a Jump Frog in a transit application.

Accessibility Information More Readily Available for Customers

The General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) is the industry data standard for agencies to publish information such as schedules, routes, and stops, along with real-time data feeds about vehicle position information, trip adherence, and service alerts. This data is publically available and is used for many third party applications - most notably Google Maps, Apple Maps, and Transit App.

Google and the Transit App have created an extension for the GTFS to include additional information such as entrances, exits, escalators, stairways, and the general pathways that connect them. This will allow transit users to receive better instructions for navigating LRT stations including those who may have limited mobility. In the step-by-step directions, users will be able to select 'wheelchair' so that they can receive instructions about how to better navigate their route.

Stadium LRT Station and Track Renewal Project Update

40 year old Stadium LRT Station is in the process of being renewed and retrofitted since it has reached the end of its lifespan. The retrofit includes the addition of a side load platform and two at-grade crossings on both the north and south ends of the station. This work will include removal of the underground concourse and provide barrier-free access to the platform. The project is expected to be complete by the fall of 2021.

There have been construction delays requiring trains to use a single track at that station. This process has had a ripple effect on the system's maximum frequency. Currently, the Capital Line is operating on a 15 minute headway with the expectation of returning to pre-Covid-19 service levels and frequency in December.

Improving LRT Track Worker Safety with New Technology

The LRT team is in the process of installing and testing a new safety system to protect maintenance staff working on LRT tracks. This system includes a device in the cab of each LRV that will notify LRT Operators of upcoming crews. Crews working on the line will also be equipped with an arm band that notifies them of an upcoming train with sufficient warning time to move to a safe location. This new technology that communicates directly between the train and track level crews is expected to dramatically improve upon existing safety processes.

Transit Safety and Security Update

ETS will be presenting two safety and security-related Council reports to the Community and Public Services Committee on November 13. The first is related to women's transportation safety, following up on a Council/Councillor motion; the second report is the annual safety and security performance update, following up on the safety investments Council made in 2018 related to workforce, technology, and equipment.

Key highlights from the reports include launching a text-to-report option for transit users, providing a discreet way for users to report concerns to the ETS Control Centre. Other highlights relate to continued reduction in mischief-related occurrences at transit centres and LRT stations, as well as a reduction in criminal occurrences. Overall, there has been a significant increase in the volume of calls to report concerns, providing ETS with opportunities to intervene early and address concerns before they escalate. Another update relates to completing the installation of Operator shields on all of the buses, which serves as a critical component of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Operators during the pandemic.

U-Pass Update

With the continued online delivery of most post-secondary classes in the winter semester, ETS, regional transit and post-secondary partners have agreed to not offer the U-Pass in the fall term.

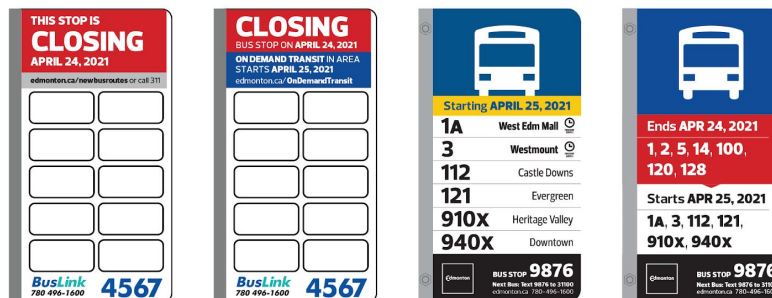
ETS will be taking a Council report forward in November to request extension of the temporary fare options provided for the fall term, including eliminating the age limit for Youth fare products so affected students can access discounted fares, as well as temporarily allowing affected students to apply to the Ride Transit program if they meet income eligibility requirements. In the first month of the fall term, approximately 800 students had applied for the Ride Transit program.

ETS is currently negotiating the 2021-2024 U-Pass agreement with post-secondary institutions, which will require adoption through a student referendum in spring 2021.

Installation of New Bus Stop Signs for the Bus Network Redesign

In mid-October, crews began installing or updating the more than 7,000 permanent bus stop signs as part of the Bus Network Redesign. It will take several months to change over all signs, and all current bus routes remain the same until new routes begin on April 25, 2021. The new signs feature the new route numbering system which will include the final destination and ways to get real-time schedule updates for the next bus. The user-friendly signs incorporate universal accessibility standards so they can be seen by a wide range of people.

Coloured temporary wraps on the bus stop signs indicate how the routes will change and if a particular stop will open, close or be replaced by On Demand Transit service:



- Existing stops being used in the new network will have red and white wrap showing new and current route numbers.
- New bus stops will have a bright yellow wrap to tell when this bus stop will open.
- Closing bus stops will have a red wrap applied to the top of the sign to let customers know when it's closing.
- Closing bus stops in areas that will receive On Demand Transit service will have a red and blue wrap that lets customers know when it will be closing and that On Demand service will be coming, although not necessarily to that particular bus stop.

The new bus network will give Edmontonians access to a more direct, more frequent and better connected bus service. It is part of Edmonton Transit's ongoing efforts to modernize public transit.

Valley Line West Funding Commitment

The Valley Line West LRT passed a provincial review that will clear the way for the \$1.47 billion funding agreement to be finalized between the Government of Alberta and the City of Edmonton. The Valley Line West is the second part of the 27km line that will stretch Mill Woods to Lewis Farms in Edmonton's west end.

The Valley Line West LRT is in the procurement process that is scheduled to be completed in 2020 and construction is slated to begin in 2021.

3. ETSAB INFORMATION REQUESTS

None.

4. ETS COUNCIL REPORT TRACKING - 2020-21

Report #	Report Title	Anticipated Meeting Date	Committee
CO00116	ETS Fare Collection Support and Maintenance Agreement with Cubic Report	November 9	Exec
CO00091	U-Pass Options for 2021	November 13	CPSC
7026	Current Policies - Transportation Services Users - Increased Safety Measures - Transportation Services Users	November 13	CPSC
7969	Transit Safety and Security Update	November 13	CPSC
7813	Transit Fare Fines	March 2021	TBD
	Transit Tickets and No Fixed Address*	2021	CPSC
6778	Update on the Bus Network Redesign	2021	CC

*Not an ETS lead report

AC = Audit Committee

CC = City Council

CPSC = Community and Public Services Committee

Exec = Executive Committee

IRCD = Inter-municipal and Regional Development Committee

UPC = Urban Planning Committee