



Bus Network Redesign

# What We Heard Report Summary

## Cameron Heights

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**SHAPE** OUR CITY



**ETS**

April 2019

# Transit in Cameron Heights

Within the proposed Bus Network Redesign, several difficult decisions needed to be made about providing service to areas where ridership numbers are low or have steadily declined, have a low number of residents, and/or have considerable geographic restraints that impact ETS's ability to provide traditional transit service.

Within the City of Edmonton, there are several communities facing these challenges, including Cameron Heights. At the request of Ward 5 Councillor, Sarah Hamilton, ETS hosted three workshops with specific Ward 5 communities who will be impacted by changes to services.

The intention of the workshop was to get feedback and perspectives from the residents

of Cameron Heights to build a greater understanding of the impacts of removing regular scheduled ETS service from their community. This feedback would be used to develop alternative transit solutions including on-demand service that is more flexible in meeting the needs of communities with low ridership.

## What we did

To build a deeper understanding of the community's concerns, ETS hosted a community workshop with 28 Cameron Heights residents on November 20, 2018 from 6 to 8 p.m. It was held at the Callingwood-Lymburn Community League Hall.

The workshop format included four different table conversations to understand the community's transit needs and to collect feedback about how the proposed changes to the transit network would affect them.

Leger 360, a third party professional research and engagement consultant facilitated at each table and collected participants' responses before they moved to the next conversation. Leger 360 compiled all of the input received and after the workshop, asked a volunteer from the community to review and validate the consultants' notes to ensure that what was collected was accurate and represented the fulsomeness of what was expressed.

# What we heard

## What does transit mean to you?

Many participants told us that some family members use the bus to go to school or to move around the city. One resident said transit allows her daughter to be independent and that it will mean the same for her younger daughter in a few years.

## What are the impacts of the bus network redesign to your community?

Participants in Cameron Heights told us their community is isolated from the rest of the city because it is adjacent to ravines, the North Saskatchewan River and Anthony Henday Drive. Because of their location, transit is very important for **residents who do not drive** because they must leave the neighbourhood to access services.

**Families** with children who will be teenagers in a few years said transit is important for accessing part time work, school and extracurricular activities.

**For seniors**, transit is a way to get to medical appointments, shopping and the rest of the city. Some residents told us that removing regular scheduled service means more of them will be forced to drive, which would add to the congestion on Anthony Henday Drive.

**Homeowners** also expressed concerns about how their property values might be negatively affected by removing regular scheduled service. If regular scheduled service will be replaced, residents wanted to know what the other options are.

## What are the most important things that ETS needs to know about providing bus service in your community?

Participants said they felt rejected by the City when they saw how the Bus Network Redesign project will improve service in other communities. Participants said they **wanted transit options that will connect them** to the Leger Transit Centre, so from there they could access the Terwillegar Recreation Centre and services in the Windermere area. Because their community is bordered by ravines and a highway, residents wanted ETS to be aware that **safety** is a concern for them.

## What do you want City Council to know about the process so far, and what needs to change?

Cameron Heights residents wanted City Council to know they are a growing community with many young families whose children rely on transit. University-age residents also depend on the bus to get to school every day. Participants wanted to be part of the future plan of transit in their neighbourhood and want to be kept informed if ETS is making changes to transit service. Residents see transit as an important service and thought the City should maintain it no matter the cost because they pay taxes and should have access to the service like other communities.

## What data or facts do you need in order to give informed perspectives or views to ETS?

Participants wanted more details about how ETS collects data on the number of people in their community who ride the bus. Participants also told us new developments in the area mean ETS will eventually need to provide service and wondered if regular schedule service could be re-implemented in the future when it's more feasible. In the meantime, residents wanted to know what the other transit options will be for their community and how school-age children will get to class every day.

## Final thoughts shared by the community participants

*We need transit. We are unique in that we are isolated by the ravine, Henday and the river. Concerns regarding what future service will look like, service on demand seems to have been decided but we don't know any details on how that will meet our needs. We want to continue to be a part of the process so that our needs are met.*

## Next steps

In November of 2019, ETS will be presenting the proposed bus network report and the comprehensive public engagement report to City Council. Council members will use this feedback to help them in making decisions about Edmonton's future transit network. While these reports were initially expected to be presented in spring 2019, it was decided to bundle them with other related transit reports that are being presented to City Council in November.

If approved, the new bus network will be implemented in summer 2020. The City of Edmonton will make route maps, route schedules and other materials available in spring 2020 so citizens can begin pre-planning their trips. ETS will also have extensive public outreach in summer 2020 to help transit users plan their trips and learn the new network.

## Alternative transit options

ETS transit planners identified communities that would benefit from a different kind of transit service where walking distances are greater than 600 metres. This new approach would balance the needs of residents with the ability for ETS to provide wide-ranging, high quality transit service. ETS is working on alternative transit options for:

- + communities with walking distances of greater than 600 metres
- + communities with a low ridership demand
- + communities with considerable geographic constraints
- + newer communities that are substantially built up with a population base that can support the introduction of a flexible service.

Working in collaboration is an important part of alternative transit options for Edmonton. Community engagement planning is underway and ETS anticipates hosting further workshops in communities where alternative transit options are being proposed. More information about these sessions and about alternative transit options will be made available later in 2019. Alternative transit options, along with engagement findings, will be presented to City Council for consideration in November 2019.