

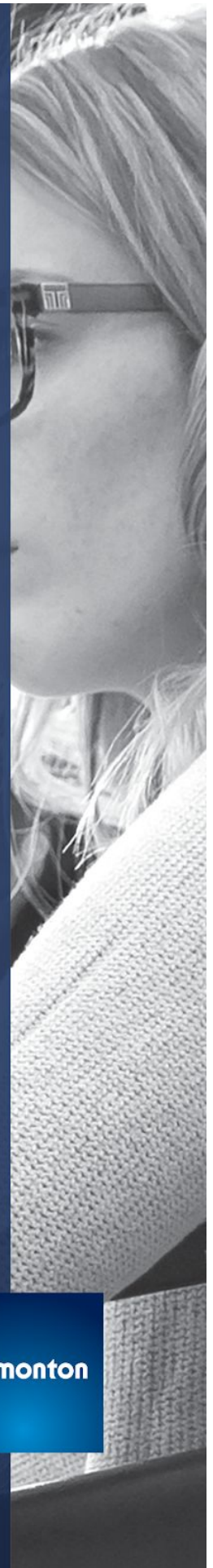
What We Heard & What We Did Report:

Alternative Transit Service Options Public Engagement June 2019

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Edmonton

October 2019



OVERVIEW

Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) is exploring alternative transit options in communities that will no longer have regular bus service and have walking distances greater than 600 metres to the nearest transit stop in the proposed bus network redesign. This service could possibly connect residents in these communities to the regular bus network.

To guide ETS’ work in developing an alternative transit approach, we asked residents to help refine it by providing input to this question:

How do we improve the quality of life in your community through a new, convenient and safe transit option?

In fall 2018, residents told us about their expectations for an alternative transit service if they will not have regular bus service, as listed below. ETS used these considerations when researching potential solutions.

- **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 go

Some communities considered for alternative transit include:

Twenty communities were invited to six alternative transit workshops.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aspen Gardens ● Avonmore ● Breckenridge Greens ● Brookside ● Cameron Heights ● Cloverdale ● Falconer Heights ● Gainer Industrial ● Girard Industrial ● Grandview Heights ● Henderson Estates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kenilworth ● King Edward Park ● Lansdowne ● Lauderdale ● Montrose ● Potter Greens ● Rio Terrace (Patricia Heights and Quesnell Heights) ● Wedgewood Heights ● Westridge
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WHAT WE DID

- Six drop-in community workshops held in June 2019
- More than 330 workshop participants attended
- The survey received more than 1,100 responses

Public Engagement Activities

Drop-in community workshops. These were three-hour drop-in sessions held in June for the clusters of neighbourhoods identified for this potential alternative service. ETS planners and engagement consultants met with local residents in schools, libraries and community halls. 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 July 29 to September 8, 2019. The survey was focused on workshop participants, local residents who were unable to attend, and Edmontonians who work in, or visit these neighbourhoods. Residents were notified of the survey via a mailed postcard and email, if email addresses were supplied during the workshop sessions.

More than 1,110 surveys responses were received.

Community outreach. With support from the City's Neighbourhood Resource Coordinators, we connected with community leagues to let them know about the public engagement opportunities and encouraged them to promote the workshops and survey to their residents.

“There are several valley line LRT stops with no proposed bus routes connecting (Muttart, Avonmore). Wouldn't we want bus routes from every station, as a connection point? Yes!”
- King Edward Park Community League Hall workshop participant

WHAT WE ASKED

Participants were asked to help refine approaches to alternative transit.



In June, we asked **workshop** participants to help us adapt and adjust approaches to alternative transit. These included four options: 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.

For on-demand services (on-demand van, ride-hailing app and taxi), we asked how they would prefer to book (phone, smart phone app or computer) and at what hours during the day they need 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? 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 July to September, we opened an online **survey** to validate what we heard at the workshops. 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 to better understand when and how they would want to use the service. The survey was also an opportunity for those who could not attend to provide their input.

“Most important is reliable scheduling. On demand [option] is too unpredictable”

- Terwillegar Recreation Centre workshop participant

WHAT WE HEARD

Participants felt a strong connection to the ETS brand and what it represents.

Type of service. Of the four options presented to workshop participants, limited bus service and an on-demand van were identified as the two preferred choices. When these options were compared to the taxi service and ride-hailing app options, participants said they felt the on-demand van and limited bus options were safer because they would be either operated by ETS or a third party contracted by ETS. Workshop participants said they felt a strong connection to the ETS brand and they want to maintain a sense of safety, predictability, accessibility and availability of service when using public transit. They told us these expectations would be harder to meet for with the ride-hailing and taxi options.

Participants preferred limited bus service, followed by the on-demand van option.

The top two choices were validated further in the survey. Just over half of survey respondents said they preferred limited bus service (52 per cent), followed by the on-demand van (23 per cent). When the question was reframed about the likelihood to use alternative transit, 64 per cent of respondents said they would likely use the limited bus service and 41 per cent said they would likely use the on-demand van.

Pick up locations, booking trips and scheduling service. Many participants told us proposed pick up and drop off locations would work for them. Their main concerns were walking distance (especially in the winter months), wait times, personal safety and the need for schedules to be flexible.

Most participants would use the service during weekday peak hours.

Though most participants would use the service during peak hours Monday to Friday, they told us they need flexible operating hours so they can make unplanned trips. They also want to be able to board an on-demand van without booking a seat in advance. To book their trips for an on-demand van, most participants would use a mobile app on their smartphone. However, many want the option to book by phone or online.

For detailed results broken down by neighbourhood, you can find them in the consultant's report on edmonton.ca/firstlastkm.

SUMMARY

More residents selected limited bus service as their preferred option. However, the on-demand van solution could provide better service in low density areas. This is because alternative transit could be operated with fewer riders than the minimum number of passengers required to maintain regular scheduled bus service.

Alternative transit could also provide residents with more flexible travel times and the possibility for off peak service in some areas. If the demand for alternative transit service eventually exceeds vehicle capacity, ETS could explore adding regular scheduled bus service.

The on-demand van solution could provide better service in low density areas.

*“Flexibility of pick up points essential. Will there be a trial run or is it set in stone?”
- Ormsby School workshop participant*

NEXT STEPS

Community feedback will be provided to City Council to help them in their review of alternative transit in November 2019. ETS will present its information to Council at that time.

Implementation of an alternative transit service option is subject to City Council direction, City policies and programs, available funding and technical requirements.

*“I think this whole concept is great! We have considered not having a vehicle or car sharing - this opens up other options...”
- Highlands Library participant*