

EDMONTON TRANSIT SYSTEM ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING #6, JUNE 27, 2011
HERITAGE ROOM, CITY HALL

PRESENT: Vaughan Hoy, John Doucette, John Vandenberg, Ryan Orchard,
Christopher Dulaba, Bruce Robertson, Masood Makarechian, John Hayes

ABSENT: Brian Marcotte, Gordon Smith, Leanne Landry, Elizabeth Johnston, Stu
Litwinowich

ETS AND CITY STAFF: Ken Koropeski (Director of Service Development), Dennis Nowicki,
Vicki Luxton

GUEST: Josh Stock (Leading the Way Youth Summit delegate)

1. CALL TO ORDER

- M. Makarechian called the meeting to order at 17:30 hr.

2. PLANNED SERVICE CHANGES (K. KOROPESKI)

- A handout titled September 2011 Service Changes was given to all Board members in attendance and is attached to these minutes.
- Questions/Answers
- *Passenger counts?* There are system wide counts done by the operators a couple of times a year. One type of count is counting the number of passengers boarding between each timing point on the route so for any link of a trip ETS knows how many people are boarding. There is another count that is done each fall whereon a specific point on the route they make an estimate of how many passengers are on the bus at that point so using that information and comparing it against the service standards, ETS will flag routes that are either over performing from a ridership point of view or under performing. On the routes that service is being cut, ETS automatically rechecks against the automated passenger data and if ETS does not have it for a particular route, the operators do another check to make sure there are no mistakes being made. This fall ETS should have enough buses with the automatic passengers counters that ETS will run parallel the manual counts and counting automatically. If this works, there will be more comprehensive data going into our system performance review.
- *The smaller buses how are they used?* Smaller buses are used for different purposes such as for community bus routes designed for senior citizens and persons with mobility challenges. They can go right onto private property such as the front door of Bonnie Doon Mall. ETS also uses them for low demand services and tries to get them out at night. The problem with these buses historically is the fleet is very old and ETS is in the process of replacing them. Because there was not a suitable replacement for them, these buses have a lot of mechanical issues. They really have a two fold purpose as community bus service and low demand time periods. Large or small buses still have to meet that minimum ridership warrant. ETS's community bus service is 10 passengers per hour whereas the regular service low demand time period is 15

passengers per hour.

- *Cancelling of routes through the neighborhoods - when it gets down to two riders per round trip, how long have these routes been in service?* Route 327 has been in service for two years now and it replaced the old route 7 that worked in Belgravia and went downtown. ETS found that more people were walking to the LRT than using this bus route and Route 381 has been in Hollick-Kenyon since at least 2008. This route was Council directed at the time to access this area. Route 55 through Lendrum/Malmo, ETS introduced late night and some of the weekend service one year ago April when South LRT was put in there. Normally we would wait two years for ridership to develop in an area, ETS has seen absolutely nothing. Most of the trips that are being cancelled do not carry any passengers and ETS cannot support this. This is shared with Council but not the community leagues.
- *Are there any routes being cancelled outright, there will be cut backs on existing routes, is that correct?* Yes, those routes that were mentioned could be up to the last five to six trips of the night before they are going or in the morning, the first two or three trips. *If a passenger is on a bus with two or three people, how are you going to communicate to those two or three people on the bus, the service is being cut back?* Notices are put out a couple of weeks before the route is cancelled on the buses and the operator hands them out to the public.
- *Do you have an update on bus service to the Airport?* ETS is in negotiations with the airport. If funding is approved and things go right then ETS could be looking at early next year. *Do you know the ridership on the Leduc Service?* Total is approximately 150 riders per day in the winter months. It is a good start, but not many going to the airport which is fifteen riders per day.
- *Is there a specific population target that the developers look at before they initiate service?* Our service warrants the minimum population of 500 to put the service in. As far as developer funded service, ETS encourages developers to get in as soon as the first house is built. *Is there a specific time period?* Basically ETS asks for a two year commitment and they have all agreed to that in the past and then the City takes it over. This is weekday peak service and it is not going to fail ultimately, it will be successful. ETS's experience with having the service in early as the people are entering the neighborhood, three or four years down the road you have 50% more ridership than you would have in the neighborhoods that did not have it. *What if that neighborhood stalls at 600 and it is the two year period?* ETS would take it over and it would be subjected to the service standards. ETS has never eliminated peak hour service from a neighborhood.
- *The motion from the Councillor for extra dollars, who was the Councillor?* Councillor Sohi, who is extremely supportive of transit. *Could you elaborate on Edmonton Transit Initiatives portfolio that is now attached to Councillor Sohi?* At the beginning of the previous council term, the Mayor and the Councillors sat down and set up particular interests for each specific Councillor. The initiations came from ETS's capital budget and what ETS prioritized. C. Stolte did meet with Councillor Sohi and did go over the initiatives as it was being prepared. *Is it possible to set up some kind of pre-cancellation caution to the neighborhood where the service is marginal perhaps one year in advance?* D. Nowicki stated that it was on his work program and has a staff person that

will be talking to Service Development on a few routes like that to work with them in the community to see if a few things can be done to help spur on that ridership. ETS has also targeted a couple of the Park 'n Ride sites that are under utilized to get some more vehicles parking and riding there.

- *What is the developer paying for new service?* They are paying 100 percent of the incremental operating costs so there is no impact on the tax levy. There is no subsidy for those two years. The City is still supplying the bus and there are support costs that are provided on a per hour basis, like indirect support costs such as the planners and communications. ETS would be charging for the operator cost, fuel and maintenance.
- *Brian Marcotte was wondering if you had any comment on transit service in Calgary from direct downtown to the airport and how it might relate to our situation.* Eight dollars per trip between downtown Calgary and the airport. They are anticipating less than ten passengers per trip which is all within the City of Calgary.
- *Any comment on the Provinces deregulating inter city bus out of the competition?* Not right now, the regulations are suppose to be published on July 8th and are starting information sessions throughout the province on July 11th. It should not affect the existing contracts that ETS has but until ETS sees what is actually in writing it is not the time to speculate.

3. AGENDA REVIEW

MOVED: by C. Dulaba/J. Vandenbeld to approve the June 27, 2011 agenda.

CARRIED

Agenda
Approved

5. REVIEW OF MAY 30, MEETING MINUTES

MOVED: by V. Hoy/B. Robertson to approve the May 30, 2011 minutes.

CARRIED

Minutes
Approved

5. TASK GROUP PRESENTATIONS

- *Bylaw and Mandate Review Task Group (M. Makarechian)*
 - **Summary of the Day (M. Makarechian)**
 - ❖ The Chairs of the Advisory Boards had a lengthy public meeting with City Council on Tuesday, June 21, 2011.
 - ❖ The Mayor, top management from all departments, City Clerk, and eleven members of Council were present at this meeting with six Advisory Board Chairs.
 - ❖ The morning was spent in two round table discussions involving taking notes and switching everyone around. Everyone shared ideas on how the Advisory Boards were working, what is needed and brainstorming.
 - ❖ In the afternoon expectations were shared. A matrix was built where Board members could speak to their expectations of Council and of administration. Both Council and administration could speak to their expectations to the other two as well.
 - ❖ There was a motion from Councillor Batty to wrap discussions up and the motion directed administration to prepare a report assessing each Board and coming back in January with a recommendation as to each

Board's future. Maintaining or reviewing the Board's mandates, transforming them into administrative boards or dissolving the Boards. This was followed by a discussion among the Councillors and then Board members were invited to comment on that discussion and the motion was amended a couple of ways and was eventually passed.

○ **Comments by Councillors (M. Makarechian)**

- ❖ Councillor Batty very early on raised the question to M. Makarechian - *are advisory boards today redundant given all the other consultation (the internet, the much expanded public consultation and the committee meetings) that occurs?* M. Makarechian suggested that between that kind of consultation and the expertise that administration provides there is a volunteer who has spent a lot of time on an issue and has something to contribute.
- ❖ There was a discussion about expertise, whether experts need to be appointed. A constructive comment that came from Councillor Anderson who stated that committees that are very active like Edmonton Design Committee and ETSAB who are in front of City Council obviously have a lot to say to us, so let's keep them going. Those committees that have not been in front of us for months or years maybe are not needed. M. Makarechian thanked Councillor Anderson for singling ETSAB out as an active board that is doing a lot of communication with Council. A lot of Chairs spoke up about this issue of redundancy and defended the quality of the discourse of advisory boards.

○ **Comments on the Motion (M. Makarechian)**

- ❖ When the time came for the motion the discussion was really sudden and there had been no discussion throughout the afternoon about dismissing the boards or transforming them into administrative bodies. And the report was going to be an administrative report about the future of each board which eventually was amended to be a shared report/collaboration between each board and administration. The City Clerk's Office, as well as the sponsoring department that administers each board, will collaborate in making recommendations in the report that is coming back to Council.

○ **Administration Comments (D. Nowicki)**

- ❖ D. Nowicki stated that the minutes would be a summary of the notes that we had in our breakout sessions and we need to wait for these minutes to come out as they will provide guidance on the questions needing to be addressed. Corporate Services Department will put together some framework for the report. The reports do not have to go to City Council at the same time and the Mayor stated they do not expect this process to be completed at the end of this year. This process could go on for a year or more.
- ❖ There was a lot of time talking about the boards overall, not individual boards. City Council did not articulate that they had any preconceived notion of what should happen to Boards. D. Nowicki was hoping at the end of day both the Board Chairs and the administration would have had more of inkling what Council felt like doing with individual boards.

- ❖ The discussion regarding the boards have a role delegated by Council hinted at some of their usefulness is no longer there as their original mandates have been fulfilled, whereas others thought they are important. There were some comments about boards being specific to a project and concluding when the project was completed. Through a few comments there was some sense that a number of Council members feel the value of ETSAB. Councillors and administration need to remember that most Board members are volunteers and have their careers outside of the Boards.
- ❖ M. Makarechian stated that the Mayor asked why ETSAB has to line up to talk to Council, why do they not get their own time slot. There should be a special time set aside to hear from the Boards outside of lining up with the general public.
- **Questions/Comments**
 - ❖ *Was there any discussion about Boards having more authority than what they have got?* That was incorporated in the amendment to the motion where a fourth option was added – with possible expansion of mandate. There was talk of more formal recognition of the board as part of Council’s work, formal communication, strategies, etc.
 - ❖ *I thought the impetuous for setting up this meeting was to establish some sort of framework in describing how administration can relate to advisory boards?* It was not that specific, it was really looking at the future of advisory boards and the role they have today. *There seems to be an opinion in administration saying – “We do not know how to deal with you guys because you are kind of council but you are not, and you are kind of public but you are not.” So you did not get any clarification during the meeting how that could be improved?* There was no clarification and that was one of the comments brought forward by administration. The issue was raised but received no answers.
 - ❖ *We do not hear from Council at all, did you raise that with the Councillors?* M. Makarechian said ETSAB often does not know what Council’s priorities are for the next eleven months. M. Makarechian said ETSAB could hear it at the luncheons informally, and we would like to put a good amount of our effort in topics of interest to the current TIC (Transportation Infrastructure Committee). There was a sense that, ETSAB knows what is important, knows what’s coming, and looks at the reports. Council could give us direction for two-thirds of our time and leave a third to our devices to choose our priorities.
 - ❖ *So there are some processes not specifically defined that a report will go forward with input from this Board, Transportation Services and ETS administration and with some input from the City Clerk’s Office?* The direction is administration and the Boards will collaborate and come back at any time before the end of January 2012.
 - ❖ *So where does ETSAB go from here, do we strike a task group for four or five members as it is hard for a committee of twelve to draft what our thoughts are - do we stay with a committee of the whole or*

a small task group of four or five members? D. Nowicki suggested that members wait to see the actual motion made by Council, the meeting summary, and if there is any specific direction on how the report should be framed.

❖ *Will you be the spokes person for General Manager of Transportation?* D. Nowicki noted once we see the direction, the Department will make that decision.

- More discussion followed on how to proceed. It was decided to hold the main Board Meeting on Monday, July 25th for 60 minutes. The meeting would then be adjourned followed by a Task Group Meeting to discuss ETSAB's strategy going forward on this issue.
- Marketing Standing Committee (J. Vandenbeld)
 - This task group received a presentation from D. Nowicki and J. Noble with regards to changes to the Trip Planner and in particular notices regarding buses that were detoured or cancelled. J. Vandenbeld supports this initiative and thinks it is very useful for citizens to go on the website and be able to see which services are affected. One important distinction is that because of a software issue the only routes that show up as being detoured are the planned cancellations. And unplanned service outages such as a water main break would not show up immediately. Apparently 85 per cent of all outages are planned. Some specific comments were that it could be made more user friendly, and J. Vandenbeld can provide the members with the report given at the meeting if interested.
- D. Nowicki then acknowledged that if there were a water main break then ETS would miss that time period but if the bus stop were to be closed for any length of time then this would be entered into the system. The Trip Planner would say this route is being impacted in the following way. Rollout is targeted for mid August for the Trip Planner part, provided the beta testing goes well. If there are any problems this will be deferred until
- Fare Policy Task Review Group (M. Makarechian)
 - This task group had a very good meeting with J. Davidson from Business Development and gave the task group members an update as the fare policy process has changed substantially and has advanced one whole year. As it was targeted to go to Council in the fall of 2012 for a six year period, it is going to Council this fall and for a three year period (2012 – 2014).
 - J. Davidson sent this task group a series of documents to review and we expect to meet with J. Davidson at least twice more before the report is drafted at the end of this summer. Any critique this task group had would emerge in these private meetings with J. Davidson. As an example there has been some discussion and a motion to review the seniors' subsidy and the way it is distributed. M. Makarechian echoed ETSAB's old position about shifting subsidy away from high income seniors into other low income categories which J. Vandenbeld led the work on this a couple of years ago. It is a very good opportunity for ETSAB to comment on this and J. Davidson has been very helpful and answering all of our questions. This three year plan will not incorporate the Smart Card. D. Nowicki confirmed that Smart Card needs approval from Council.
- ❖ Questions
 - *In the last six year plan the cost recovery ratio was used as a very*

important metric and it went from thirty and close to fifty if not beyond. Was there any sense that cost recovery is an important measure of system success of the new plan? J. Davidson stated that the cost recovery ratio is starting not to be the driver because adult fares which account for the majority of transit's farebox revenue are basically at a ceiling. There is not a lot of room to move some of the adult fares up anymore (eg. adult monthly pass). The reason is it is within a few dollars of the regional passes and ETS would lose business to St. Albert as people could buy that for six dollars more if there was much more increase and have the option to go to St. Albert and be ahead. There is about eight dollars of wiggle room before it is cheaper to buy a St. Albert pass with all kinds of implications to that. Financial sustainability is still an important issue but the cost recovery ratio is just a measure of financial sustainability. In order to achieve financial sustainability, in J. Davidson's opinion, transit payment options need to reflect the cost drivers of transit (eg. peak/off peak, zone or distance fares, premium vs regular service) rather than the demographic characteristics of transit customers (i.e. youth, senior, adult).

- *Did you talk about the One Stop Shop?* J. Davidson stated that this is stalled at this point. D. Nowicki stated there is some heartbeat but has stalled partly because of the City's reorganization.
- *In the new plan, are we losing the plateau years?* Yes. *In the original five or six year plan there were three flat years.* Essentially it was get the cost recovery ratio up and keep it level. D. Nowicki pointed out that C. Stolte told ETSAB last year when ETS put forward its original budget it was with no increase, but the fare increase came forward as one of the measures the City used to address the overall budget.
- M. Makarechian referred to this task group as a model for how ETSAB can be involved early long before a report has been drafted. From ETSAB's point of view it has been working well and J. Davidson seems to be happy with ETSAB's participation. M. Makarechian hinted about some of the things that ETSAB might oppose such as the move away from youth discounts in the cash fare as it is important to build the youth mindset to use public transit.
- LRT Task Group (B. Robertson)
 - No report.
- Commuter Rail (J. Hayes)
 - This task group has not met this month. This group will be meeting in the next month and will have a final report at the next meeting with two recommendations.

6. MANAGER'S REPORT

- Highlights:
 - AISH July Monthly Pass
 - ❖ Due to the postal strike there was over 3000 AISH monthly passes stuck at the post office. The Federal government has ruled the postal workers back to work tomorrow. ETS has extended the June AISH pass validity

until July 8th. That information went out in a media release on Friday. There are about 3100 people on ETS's auto debit program and receive their passes through the mail service. Auto debit is done a month in advance; therefore the July pass was paid for in May. ETS mailed the passes during the rotating postal strike and less than 24 hours later, the post office employees were locked out. About 1100 people purchase their passes in person or through a public trustee.

- Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (TIC)
 - ❖ By-law 15798 change – amending the monetary penalty schedule will be on TIC agenda for June 28, 2011.
- Questions and Comments
 - ❖ *How did the transit service work for the U2 concert?* Overall it went well, as ETS cleared people out very quickly. The service that was put out for this concert matched the Grey Cup level of service. It went as well as ETS hoped for.
 - ❖ *On page 3 of the Manager's Report it is noted that temporary suspension of ETS on-line store until further notice, is that going to be back on-line quickly?* Yes, and would suspect sometime this week.
 - ❖ *On page 5, the LRT parking stalls, I note for Stadium and Belvedere they are at 48 and 58 per cent respectively and you note that the number of paid stalls is being reduced. Do you anticipate that being phased out at the end of the year with the pilot project?* Further changes are anticipated before the end of the pilot project. *What is the 109%?* ETS has oversold them in Century Park. There were questions on the paid stalls table and it was decided this table needs some clarification. Clarification will be forthcoming at the next meeting.

7. INFORMATION SECTION

- DAG Report (E. Johnston) – No report.
- ATU Local 569 Report (S. Litwinowich)
 - this is the 100th anniversary for ATU and they will have some events later in August and September.
- Summer Schedule (M. Makarechian)
 - There will be a meeting in July – Monday, July 25, 2011.
 - The meeting in August will be decided at the July 25, 2011 meeting.
- TIC Lunch Meeting (M. Makarechian)
 - V. Luxton will send out an email reminder to all members asking for their commitment to attend the Monday, August 29, 2011 luncheon meeting.
- Conflict of Interest Guidelines
 - These guidelines were adopted unmodified last spring.
 - There needs to be more clarity around these guidelines.
 - The new members were not advised of these guidelines.
 - V. Luxton will check with the City Clerk to ensure they have a copy of the Ethical Guidelines for the ETSAB members.

8. TOPIC(S) OF THE NIGHT

- Received a presentation on service changes and the general consensus was supportive.

MOVED: by J. Doucette/V. Hoy to adjourn the June 27, 2011 ETSAB Meeting at
20:00 hours. **CARRIED**

Motion
Approved

Next meeting: Monday, July 25, 2011 in the Heritage Room, City Hall