

EDMONTON TRANSIT SYSTEM ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING #5, May 27, 2013

HERITAGE ROOM, CITY HALL

PRESENT: John Hayes, John Vandenberg, Izak Roux, Christopher Dulaba, Bruce Robertson, Cristina L. Stasia, Shannah Sutherland, Vaughan Hoy, Leanne Landry, Anand Pye, Gordon Smith, Stu Litwinowich (ATU Local 569)

ABSENT: Amy Mannix

ETS AND CITY STAFF: Rhonda Toohey (Director Policy Implementation and Evaluation), Ken Koropeski (Director of ETS Quality Control), James McDonald (Supervisor Branch Operations Support Services), Dennis Nowicki (Director of Community Relations), Vicki Luxton (Recording Secretary)

1. CALL TO ORDER

- V. Hoy called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

2. COMPREHENSIVE TRANSIT REVIEW (R. TOOHEY)

- **Highlights:**
 - Throughout 2012 B. Boutilier, General Manager of Transportation, has been investigating transit because of questions from Council at the time of budget to “Let’s take a look at the Edmonton Transit System” – The intent of the study is to gain a better understanding of the current and future effectiveness of the transit system.
 - There will be an information report going to City Council on June 12, 2013 to let them know the scope of the review; a contract has been awarded to Stantec Consulting.\
 - We are looking for recommendations from a consultant to give guidance to direct us with our strategic goals.
 - The Terms of Reference identified five areas of enquiry:
 - 1) Governance
 - 2) Fare Structure
 - 3) Operating Costs
 - 4) Asset Management
 - 5) Service Delivery
 - This project has a fairly accelerated schedule with some recommendations by fall and the project being wrapped up March of 2014.
 - Next week we are having a “Blue Sky Session” talking with City Council as well as the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and some Branch Managers. Some international practices of what is going on elsewhere and how do we compare with some of the other cities, not just in Canada, will be discussed.
 - Because of the way we are doing the project and its intent, there is no public engagement process. However, because of the involvement of ETSAB’s Chair, V. Hoy, in this project over the past year, how does ETSAB want to share and be informed of information on this project?
 - **Questions/Comments:**

- *(LL) How does this review different from the review that V. Hoy participated in last year?* The one that is currently ongoing has been moved into this process. Last year's work was totally internal.
- *(BR) Is privatization off the table with this independent board?* This has been discussed. The consultants are going to give an overview to Council and the Corporate Leadership Team (General Managers of the City and the City Manager) on what has been done in other cities, what the possibilities are, and what are the tradeoffs. Privatization could be under consideration. The consultant wants to provide us the realities of governance and this is how it is working in other places.
- *(AP) You mentioned there is no public consultation because of the intent is so broad and high level, or is it something else?* The review is to provide us with high level recommendations and some of those recommendations are going to be internal and not impact the public while some recommendations may impact the public and user fees. So in that case there is probably a follow-up piece of work that would come out of this and provide a recommendation that should be considered and involves some public involvement.
- *(GS) The Blue Sky workshops, is to gather information rather than to communicate information to other people, is that correct?* No, again because of protocol with the City Council we cannot actually gather information from them but what we can do is to provide them an overview of information of what is happening elsewhere and gives Council a perspective of the start of this process. *Are you looking for information from internal professionals within Edmonton Transit as well as the consultant?* Yes, absolutely through one-on-one interviews. *Do you have a list of shortcomings?* We're not starting with a specific list. It costs a lot of money to run transit and it is just that question on how can we best use the dollars to achieve our goals, to serve the customer to be efficient. *Are fossil fuels being considered in this review?* It is not a specific item for this review.
- *(JH) What length of term are you looking at based on the planning and research?* That is a good question. We would want to tie in with our other strategic plans and our time frame for other strategic plans – there is the ten year time frame and the longer term into thirty years. *The core of your reporting back should be at least a ten year time frame?* (KK) We are not really talking about hard plans, we are taking a look at how does the transit system operate, deliver service and does that align with the City's strategic plans of "*The Ways*". *The Way We Grow, The Way We Move, The Way We Finance*. Some of these things could have implications within shorter time frames within a couple of years, such as governance and fare structure. *We have a White Paper tabled today from A. Mannix's group that directly impacts some of the things that you are talking about.*
- *(IR) Do you look at the technology of transit over the next ten years and do you address security?* On security it is a very high level in terms of what makes sense on the structure of how security happens in ETS, so the connection between our internal structures, the policy, and how our structure interconnects with the police. But it is not anything to do with the security itself. In terms of technology, if we talked about fare and fare structure, and Smart Card and that kind of technology, that for sure is something that would be factored in.
- ETSAB members thanked D. Crozier and G. Singh Goraya for their presentation.

3. OPERATOR RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING (J. MCDONALD)

- **Highlights:**

- **Set the Stage**

- ❖ J. McDonald's group works out of Ferrier Garage and works to get bus operators on the road.
 - ❖ Five times a year the bus operators bid on a shift based on seniority.
 - ❖ Some operators go on the spare board which is number of people necessary to make sure we have an operator driving every bus that is suppose to go out and do service.
 - ❖ The shifts are passed onto our Dispatch in each of the garages. Dispatch crews are the most critical people we have for the day-to-day operations, because these are the people that talk to the operators to make sure an operator goes into each bus and goes out and does the service.
 - ❖ There are a number of operators sitting in the garage waiting to go on a call to make sure we have a person driving all our buses.
 - ❖ The Dispatch crews also manage the overtime shifts.

- **Recruit and Training**

- ❖ Changed from multiple postings per year per type of transit operator to 1 which we open and close on a scheduled basis – helps case administration of the posting, allows us to easily see repeat applications and just makes reporting on the status of a posting easier.
 - ❖ Applicant screening on line – from appointments for tests to the resume process to links for exams it can all be done via email.
 - ❖ We use the STRADA psychometric evaluation, which ETS was instrumental in developing with the Canadian Urban Transit Association, from ASSESS systems to allow us to offer the test online and un-proctored. Applicants are given 72 hour time period to complete the test and once started must complete within 30 minutes. This saves staff time and allows people to take the test at home if they wish.
 - ❖ We have created an online map reading test which also has a time limit. This test also doubles as a test of English Language ability which is set as Canadian Language Benchmark Assessment level 7 (CLBA 7).
 - ❖ DCAT Driver – Cognitive Assessment Testing – provided by DriveAble – normally used in concert with medical authorities to determine if elderly drivers have the cognitive ability to drive. We have partnered with DriveAble to develop a scientific assessment to determine if there is a correlation with scores from the test and the ability to drive.
 - ❖ DORE – Driver On Road Evaluation also from DriveAble – a practical road exam – done in the applicants own vehicle and based on a Alberta class 5 (automobile) drivers road test – we had found that most of those who did not successfully complete our training program could not actually drive.
 - ❖ A realistic job shadowing exercise. We went out to industry and found a best practice example of how to use this job shadow and incorporated it into our revision. What happens now is that an applicant will get the job shadowing exercise emailed to them when they originally apply on line. They are expected to complete the exercise prior to their interview. IF they arrive at the interview without having completed it that ends their application process – as we do consider it critical to the process. If they try to pass it off as having ridden a bus and fake it – those in the interview can tell. The results during the

interview are very interesting and this is one of the ways we are trying to make people see if the job is one they will truly enjoy doing. We have already had a number of applicants self select out of the process based on the job preview.

- ❖ The interview process used to have between 8 and 12 questions. We have streamlined this process to 6 questions of which 2 are general and 4 are job related scenario questions. Interviews are normally done by an HR specialist and one of our instructor team, since we have dual panels at any one time we can interview 12 applicants per day.
- ❖ Our medical and Functional Ability Recruit Evaluation (FARE) tests are provided by a contractor. Our FARE was just revised last year and now includes a treadmill test among other activities that would be normal for a CTO on a daily basis. It involves simulating the stresses involved in moving the steering wheel, and other objective tests observed of people doing the function. The intent is that no one should be harmed by simply doing the job.
- Transit Skills Competition
 - ❖ This is being held June 4th and 5th at the Edmonton City Centre Airport.
 - ❖ The Board members registered for this competition are scheduled for the morning of June 5th.
- Questions/Comments:
 - ❖ *(GS) Once the driver has gone through the training and is authorized to drive the bus, how long is it before they have their first evaluation?* We will do a probationary discussion with the individual and we also have a program where one of our instructors will contact any of our first year operators who have any kind of accident and walk them through it to see if there was anything the trainer missed in training to give the operator an opportunity to respond to this.
 - ❖ *(CS) The training for accessibility, they get training on the DATS buses, do they also get training on the big buses for things like tie downs?* We have done training on the basic tie down systems that we have but it is a question to ensure all the drivers receive that kind of training. It may take up to three years to get to everybody. *Do you have to deal with sexual harassment on the buses?* No, we do not train that in particular, we train the operators to protect themselves and if there are issues, they are to call our Control Centre who will initiate a call for our security personnel.
 - ❖ *(JV) I am concerned about the legality of asking some of these questions in the interview such as life style questions. The life style questions that we ask – “Are you prepared to work on weekends?” “Are you prepared to work split shifts?” – these are the type of life style questions that are asked. It has got nothing to do with how they live but what they want from this job. In terms the applicant’s disabilities, please clarify if the applicant’s limitations exclude them as a result of your qualifications. It is from the standpoint that it is not a limiting test, and not to exclude, it is meant to find out if a person can do parts of our job without injuring themselves. At that point the person is sent to their doctor and if it is cleared, they get to come back. You use to do eight to ten postings per year, and next year you are going to do one? One for the conventional transit operators, one for the DTS operators, and one for the community shuttle operators. You are satisfied with that one posting will allow you to get enough applicants?* Yes, we will open the posting in January until we get the number we need for that cycle and then we will close it. We will open it again in April and when we get the number we are looking for, we

close the posting. It takes 240 people applying to get 60 people. The difference between the way we are doing it now and last year is simply to open a new posting each time is a huge administrative effort. So to open and close and re-open it is a lot simpler for the people involved. *I notice anecdotally that a lot of operators in Edmonton Transit seem to be of a demographic race and gender group, and I wonder if there is any specific targeting of women and minorities.* Not specifically but we could give you some information of our demographics which may not be what you think you see.

- ❖ (JH) *A lot of the early stuff in recruitment processing is been outsourced – have you measured the effectiveness of outsourcing as compared to in-sourcing?* In particular it is the medical test as the City does not have a medical doctor anymore, so the City does not have the ability. The reason we outsourced to do the reference checks and background checks are because HR could not meet our tight timelines and is less expensive.
- ❖ (IZ) *Your on-line screening, do you also screen hand/eye coordination?* The hand/eye coordination is a function of the medical test. *Do you use simulators?* We tried that even as a test and at this point we do not have the resources to purchase the simulator. It was of questionable value and we are getting a simulator for our LRT system which would be a lot better because that is where we have more trouble getting hours on the rail. But for a bus, it is not one of those things that we are actively looking for.
- ❖ (BR) *240 applicants would get you 60 operators: so of the 60 operators what do you have left?* Of the 60 we would get to start with we would keep about 55% of the total in the end. Of the 60 we would average from the start of the course to the end, we would pass about 55% of those people, and of that 55% at the end of twelve months 78% would still be here. 45% of the people who start training will not pass.
- ❖ ETSAB members thanked J. McDonald for his presentation.

4. AGENDA REVIEW

- Add the following to the agenda under Information Section:
 - ❖ Reminder of change in terms of membership.
 - ❖ Members vacation schedule this summer.

MOVED: by J. Vandenberg/B. Robertson to approve the amended agenda. **CARRIED**

Amended
Agenda
Approved

5. REVIEW OF APRIL 29, 2013 MEETING MINUTES

- Deferred to the June 24, 2013 meeting.

6. MANAGER'S REPORT (D. NOWICKI)

- Highlights:
 - ETS organization Update:
 - ❖ Changes effective May 13 and outlined in memo circulated to ETSAB members.
 - ❖ Duration for one year while further review of transit organization is undertaken (e.g. Comprehensive Transit Review).

- Regional Fare Strategy:
 - ❖ The CRB Transit Committee members voted in favour to prioritize the Regional Fare Strategy on the Green Trip list. A letter is waiting to be drafted for the CRB Committee's approval and this would be sent for the Province to confirm the Regional Fare Strategy as a regional priority under Green Trip.
 - ❖ A CUTA "Issue Paper 42- Accessible Transit in Canada: Building on Benefits", released in May, was distributed to meeting attendees.

7. ETSAB PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR 2013

Marketing Standing Sub-Committee (J. Vandenbeld):

- J. Vandenbeld noted this group will meet before the next ETSAB meeting.

Transit Planning Sub-Committee (C. Dulaba):

- This group did not meet this last month. ETSAB's letter that pertains to the NW LRT went to TC on April 29th just in time for the May 1, TC meeting. At that meeting Councillor Loken made two motions:
 - ❖ Motion One: That Administration consult with Canada Lands and provide a report to Transportation committee to determine how the 137 Avenue proposed transit centre can be reduced in size and ensure that both the transit station and proposed transit centre are integrated to allow for Transit Oriented Development at the Griesbach site – due date is July 10, 2013.
 - ❖ Motion Two: That prior to preliminary engineering state Administration further review the concept plan to address issues regarding the impact and benefits of the proposed change from an urban to a suburban style LRT system at 153 Avenue including transit station alignment and provide a report to Transportation committee.
- There is more information on the LRT Governance Board so C. Dulaba stated it would be a good idea if ETSAB was updated on this framework by the ETS representative.

Park & Ride Sub-Committee (G. Smith):

- A meeting was not held in May.
- D. Nowicki referred to R. Toohey's comments if ETSAB has any draft notes that they are willing to share with her all work program themes would be very appropriate. Also the study ETSAB did on the Commuter Rail could be shared as well and any other recently completed sub-committee work.

Fare Structure and Payments Sub-Committee (A. Mannix):

- The White Paper was shared with all ETSAB members. This paper was the result of the work and comments of this Sub-committee. Originally we set out to tackle the issue of how fare structure could help this transit system accommodate future growth and grow ridership. We had ideas that generally aligned with all "The Ways" documents.
- Our committee was essentially tackling the problem of how you can balance on one side being maintain system growth with a city that is growing in its gross area, and on the other hand essentially if you penalize people for living on the outskirts or travelling a greater distance that you would decrease ridership. These two positions we had long debates about whether it was fair to allow people to pay the same fare if they were travelling a greater distance.

- One thing that did not have to do with any kind of distance or zone fare or distance recommendation which we felt would maximize the efficiency of the system was using Off Peak Fares. Because you get to 100% capacity in peak times but have to maintain minimum service levels at other times, it is a good idea to spread out the ridership and be consistent at all times. This was recommendation one.
- The second recommendation was our compromise on distance fare and that was if you were going to take a much longer trip we agreed that you should pay relatively more, but we could not agree on how that would work. This is a distance fare based on two kilometers – either you travel two kilometers in which you get a short trip discount or you travel over two kilometers in which case you get a short trip discount or you travel over two kilometers in which case you pay a base fare. That ties into Transit Oriented Development (TOD). This recommendation requires a Smart Card to measure the distance.
- Discussion and questions followed:
 - ❖ (JH) *One thing you might want to put a line on the first page listing the various types of fare considered. The other one is whether 2000 meters is an appropriate distance as it is an awfully short distance, and perhaps it could be raised to 3000 meters for the short distant fare. It is arbitrary and too short for a city that is 35 kilometers across. Will the measure increase the number of short trips to encourage more ridership? What we really are proposing is a two zone system.*
 - ❖ (JV) *This solves what a zone fare would try to solve, namely we want to incentivize shorter trips and we want to get it so the people are living closer to where they are working and to incentivize that behaviour. This is a very good compromise that the members on this committee deserve a great deal of credit for the work they have done. This is the most rigorous process J. Vandenberg has been a part of on this Board in terms of a Sub-Committee.*
 - ❖ (VH) *this paper is great and made a few recommendations of changes that should be made to the beginning of the document.*
- A. Pye suggested that this sub-committee have a final meeting – a brief of what things are needed in a Smart card in order to make this work.
- Recap on the points that need to be added or modified to the White Paper:
 - 1) Make changes to the introduction.
 - 2) List the different kinds of fare model that were considered.
 - 3) As the crow flies, 2 or 3 kilometers.
 - 4) Add a recommendation that a short trip fare that is not geographic.

MOVED: by J. Hayes/B. Robertson to accept and ratify the report in principal pending final edit by the sub-committee. **CARRIED**

Motion
Approved

- **Alternate Transit Modality Sub-Committee (J. Hayes):**
 - We will meet to review the seven modalities that were discussed at our first meeting and will come up with a series of measures and the group can then compare them. The measures will essentially be practical measures – do they move people and would this benefit the city in other ways.
- **Long Term Fare Strategy (J. Vandenberg)**
 - We had our first meeting to determine what our Terms of Reference should look like and this was sent to all members. What this group is doing is looking at city-

wide initiatives with regards to fare policy on a more practical level which is different than A. Mannix's group that was more structural. How much should the fares be, what kind of subsidization should there be of demographic groups, what should "The Way We Finance" look like with regards to transit. There was a document that ETSAB produced a number of years ago called "What is an Affordable Fare?" Essentially that was ETSAB's policy document which needs to be found and modified as required.

- We want to look at different fare products to determine their viability and usefulness such as the Day Pass. J. Vandenbeld compared the Day Pass with 12 Canadian cities and will put something together before the next meeting. J. Vandenbeld would love to see Edmonton adopt a low income transit pass. The City of Calgary does have a low income transit pass.
- The deliverables are we plan to meet as often as necessary and put something together similar to A. Mannix's White Paper. Members of this committee are J. Vandenbeld (Chair), A. Pye, J. Hayes and L. Landry.
- D. Nowicki pointed out that the Transit Review was attempting to complete the Fare Governance before September, and it would be valuable to provide input into this Review.
- V. Hoy cautioned this committee that there is a substantial amount of work to be done on this committee before August and suggested this group do not take on too much of a work load.

○

8. INFORMATION SECTION (V. HOY)

- ATU Local 569 Report (D. Nowicki for S. Litwinowich)
 - S. Litwinowich will be attending the Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference in Vancouver on May 30 to June 3, 2013.]
- Gerry Wright Better Transit Award Letter Update (V. Hoy)
 - J. Vandenbeld spoke to S. Cheng, a former member of both ETSAB and Citizens for Better Transit that formerly administered this award. S. Cheng wanted to see ETSAB retain this award and stated the award was not onerous and relatively easy to administer. V. Hoy and C. Dulaba will contact the writer of the letter and ask some questions. Will follow up on this at next month's meeting.
- ETS Skills Competition (June 5) (D. Nowicki)
 - D. Nowicki confirmed that I. Roux, J. Hayes, J. Vandenbeld and B. Robertson will be participating in the ETS Skills Competition.
- ETS Accessibility Workshop (May 21, 2013) (C. Stasia, G. Smith)
 - C. Stasia attended the Accessibility Workshop last week and suggested that this presentation be brought to the whole board. The timeline of the workshop is the audit in June and July, the assessment in August and the report due in September. C. Stasia stated it would be valuable to ETSAB if this workshop was presented to the board to get member's feedback.
 - One of the big concerns that were brought up is the need for bigger lifts to accommodate bigger chairs for the growing obesity epidemic. There was discussion about how difficult it is to load passengers on and off the DATS vehicles in Churchill Square because of the newspapers, and public art on the sidewalks.

- It was decided to invite DATS to come in July or August to give the Board a presentation. C. Stasia stated that G. Smith's presence was missed at the meeting. (G. Smith was not able to obtain a trip booking to attend this meeting). C. Stasia did bring up the tie-down issue on the airport bus on behalf of G. Smith.
- A presentation time will be scheduled at the Board Process Meeting.
- Advisory Committee Terms
 - A discussion Followed on the email sent by the Office of the City Clerk to each member of ETSAB regarding the extension of their terms on the Board until the end of April, 2014. A reminder to please respond to this email by the end of May.

Vacation Schedule of ETSAB Members

- V. Hoy recorded the vacation times of the members on behalf of the Board.

9. TOPIC(S) OF THE NIGHT

- The Board appreciated the two presentations from R. Toohey and J. McDonald. Both presentations were useful. Some substantial work was done by the Fare Structure Committee with a report coming within a month.

MOVED: by B. Robertson/J. Hayes to adjourn the May 27, 2013 ETSAB Meeting at 8:21 pm. **CARRIED**

Motion
Approved

Next meeting: Monday, June 24, 2013 in the Heritage Room, City Hall

MEETING DATES

January 19, 2013	August 26, 2013
January 28, 2013	September 30, 2013
February 25, 2013	October 22 (Tuesday), 2013
March 25, 2013	October 28, 2013
April 29, 2013	November 13 (Wednesday), 2013
May 27, 2013	November 18, 2013
June 24, 2013	December 16, (3 rd Monday) 2013
July 22 (3 rd Monday), 2013	January 18 (Saturday), 2014