

EDMONTON TRANSIT SYSTEM ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING #3, MARCH 26, 2012
HERITAGE ROOM, CITY HALL

PRESENT: Vaughan Hoy, May Lin, John Hayes, Ryan Orchard, John Vandenberg, Leanne Landry, Christopher Dulaba, Stu Litwinowich (ATU 569)

REGRETS: Jonathan Reay, Gordon Smith, Izak Roux, Brian Marcotte, Bruce Robertson

ETS AND CITY STAFF: Dennis Nowicki, Vicki Luxton

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. AGENDA REVIEW

- The following addition was made to the agenda:
 - Add the “Draft Review – Scope of Review – Public Transit in Edmonton” as item no. 6.

MOVED: by J. Vandenberg/C. Dulaba to approve the March 26th, 2012 amended agenda. **CARRIED**

Amended
Agenda
Approved

3. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 27, 2012 MINUTES

MOVED: by L. Landry/M. Lin to approve the February 27, 2012 minutes. **CARRIED**

Minutes
Approved

4. MANAGER’S REPORT (D. NOWICKI)

- **Highlights:**
 - A reminder on April 7th Jasper Avenue construction detour commences. Routes that travel on Jasper and 101 Street are being impacted. Transit will not be operating on Jasper Avenue between 100 and 102 Streets. The detour will remain in effect until construction ends in November. Our Service Development staff is still reviewing whether they will reinstate service for the roughly four months before construction commences again in April 2013. This decision will be announced at a later date.
 - April 29th is when ETS’s regular sign-up takes effect.
 - Airport service commences on April 29, 2012.
 - ETS is presently promoting their Park and Ride sites that are not fully utilized. These Park and Ride sites are at the Meadows, Eaux Claires, Lewis Farms and Davies lot as well.
 - ETS Organizational Changes. A number of changes have taken effect as of March 26, 2012.
 - Plant has moved over to the LRT facilities so the bus and LRT facilities will be under one umbrella.
 - LRT training has moved over to the Bus Operations training and is now

- combined into an ETS Professional Training Team.
- Community Relations has moved over to Business Development with the exception of the Travel Training function which went over to DATS. The Lost and Found went over to Operational Support which was formerly called Safety and Security.
- Community Fair 2012. A decision was made not to host a fair this year as ETS is revisiting this whole concept.
- DATS Eligibility Process. The stakeholder session is scheduled for Tuesday, April 24th from 5:30 to 8:00 pm possibly at the Percy Wickman Garage. (On April 4 ETSAB members were advised this meeting is being held at Stanley Milner Library downtown.)
- Questions:
 - *With route changes do they move stops but the rest of the route outside that medium does not change?* They change some of the schedules, fortunately for the inbound traffic that is less than a problem because most of them end in the downtown area.
 - *What sorts of changes are proposed as part of the DATS eligibility process?* The process is moving in a direction where if people are deemed they can take a low floor bus or the LRT that would be their travel option. They will not be offered the opportunity to use DATS.

5. **ETSAB AND ADMINISTRATION BYLAW REVIEW PROCESS**

- Highlights:
 - Vickie Gunderson from the Office of the City Clerk advised that this report is expected to go to City Council on April 18, 2012. Once this report has been finalized the City Clerk will provide a copy to ETS administration which will be shared with ETSAB. As discussed at past meetings this report will help guide us for future action. We may still want to retain a consultant and if any members have any consultants in mind that might help us through this at a reasonable cost, please bring their names forward.
 - C. Dulaba suggested bringing in a third party who would not be biased towards any one side.
 - This would be done through a sole source because of the time element.
 - It was decided to get some input from Board members for possible names which can be emailed to V. Hoy or J. Hayes to forward on to D. Nowicki.
 - D. Nowicki will check with City's Materials Management people to put together an outline of the scope of work to send out to potential facilitators to determine their availability.
 - *Is there a chance that when Council discusses this on April 18th they could make a quite different decision about advisory boards?* Yes, that is possible but D. Nowicki does not want to lose more time so as to at least lay this ground work between now and April 18th. If a list could be put together and in the meantime D. Nowicki can check about City processes in order to expedite this and by April 18th we are ready to move. We are looking for some common ground between administration and the views of Board members on what the future state for a board would be with the hope of some common framework to be put together. It is important to bring forward experiences we have had on different boards especially the successes. It is like a blank piece of paper even to changing the name.

6. DRAFT REVIEW – SCOPE OF REVIEW – PUBLIC TRANSIT IN EDMONTON

- **Highlights:**

- V. Hoy contacted B. Boutilier last week to see what was planned and B. Boutilier stated he received everyone's comments back and he is formalizing it at the present time. He will be calling another meeting shortly.
- V. Hoy thought the ETSAB members should have a look at this review and went over the points in the review with the members.
- It was decided that ETSAB members would email their comments to V. Hoy.

7. ETSAB PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR 2012

- **Marketing Standing Committee (J. Vandenberg)**

- A conference call was held on Friday, March 23, 2012 with N. Walters from ETS Business Development. D. Nowicki and the Marketing Standing Committee members J. Vandenberg, J. Hayes and I. Roux were in attendance.
- J. Vandenberg's concerns about the marketing strategy of transit to the Edmonton International Airport (EIA) were expressed in an email sent out to all members.
- The key take-away was ETS administration views the EIA employees as the riders to start the service and establish it as a sustainable service with respect to ridership.
- Once the EIA staff base is established, the Edmonton commuters will be on top of that base.
- N. Walters also made it clear ETS is not going to be marketing employees at the exclusion of the general public and the commuter. They will have a coordinated marketing strategy which will include both commuters and those who work at the EIA.
- It is important to note that because the EIA is putting up \$500,000 or approximately 50% of the cost of running the service, there is a requirement to cater to the needs and the desires of the EIA.
- This task group spoke to N. Walters about the importance of good signage at the EIA to inform commuters that there is bus service available.
- The bus stop at the EIA is going to be at the lower level Gate 8 which is a good location, far preferable to the upper level.
- One of J. Vandenberg's concerns was that N. Walters expressed that the ridership makeup is not a concern for him. If 90% of the ridership was EIA employees and 10% were commuters and they are still meeting the ridership numbers, N. Walters does not see this as a problem.
- J. Hayes stated he had two concerns, the first being the overarching feeling that ETS administration was never on board with this service and the second was that having said ETS was talking with the EIA in terms of employees. That approach has a lot of negatives as this may not service the Edmonton commuters to meet their needs as it does for the EIA employees.
- The products being sold at the EIA information desk are the airport service \$5.00 tickets and \$100.00 monthly passes. These are not products that people would use if accessing transit at Century Park. They absolutely

should be selling ETS passes there as well as ETS day passes. These are issues that should be addressed.

- J. Vandenbeld suggested it was a good idea to invite N. Walters to ETSAB's June meeting to give an update on the transit service to the EIA since it starts on April 29, 2012. This will be discussed at Board Process.
- Transit Planning Sub-Committee (C. Dulaba)
 - This group did not meet this month.
- Transit Centres and Amenities (J. Hayes)
 - This group did not meet this month.
 - D. Nowicki will determine the contact person with ETS administration to meet with this group on both the current and future amenities on the bus and LRT transit facilities. V. Luxton will make the arrangements for this meeting.
- Low Income Transit Pass(J. Vandenbeld)
 - The group met on March 19, 2012 which was their second meeting. There were two questions to be answered, with the first question being: "Who should qualify for the low income transit pass?" What should the cutoff be? Calgary has a low income transit pass presently and their cutoff is 75% of Low Income Cutoff (LICO). LICO last year was \$22,600 so 75% of that in Calgary is just under \$17,000. If you make under \$17,000 per year in Calgary you qualify for a low income transit pass. The cost of that transit pass was supposed to be 50% of the cost of the regular pass but it is lower than that at \$37.00 a month, which is a 56% subsidy.
 - The second question is "What should the cost of the pass be, or what should the subsidy be?" What this group is going to recommend is a sliding scale. If you are between 70% and 100% of the low income cutoff, perhaps you could receive a monthly pass of 70% of the price of the normal pass which would be a 30% discount. If you make zero to 69% of the low income cutoff you would receive a pass at 40% of the cost. The numbers are open for discussion but this group is suggesting it is going to be a sliding scale which would be efficient use of the subsidy. The concern this group has is if the rider's income is \$17,500 in Calgary, this rider does not qualify for a low income pass whereas in Edmonton if the rider's income was \$17,500 they would qualify in what could be termed tier two. 70% of the regular pass cost now being \$84.65 would be \$59.25 if the rider's income was between 70% and 100% and \$33.86 if the rider's income was between zero and 69%. These figures are open for discussion but this is the direction this group is leaning right now.
 - Edmonton currently has a low income senior's transit pass that is available to residents who make less than \$16,500 per year. This marking line is very low and there have been some criticisms of LICO being quite low so if you are saying 75% of something which is already pretty low the rider would have to be destitute to qualify for this pass. This group is hoping to rectify this by positively affecting those who are in the higher low income bracket and making a real significant difference to those who are in the lower bracket.

- In terms of real cost, J. Vandenberg found some information from Calgary Transit. Calgary does not have an Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) pass whereas Edmonton does. 77,900 people in Calgary purchased a low income pass in 2011 of which about 40% are AISH qualified riders. Calgary Transit pegs their cost for providing the low income pass at \$3.9 million which is an inflated number. It simply takes the number of passes sold multiplied by the discount and assumes that every single one of the 77,900 people are going to purchase the full fare product. J. Vandenberg suggests the total cost to Edmonton would be in the vicinity of \$1.2 million per year if Edmonton was to introduce a low income pass.
- At the next meeting this group is going to put together a report with some specific recommendations based on this information with hard numbers which will be verifiable and proven to the ETSAB members.
- Questions:
 - *The Donate a Ride how does this work?* In January there is a campaign for Donate a Ride where ETS solicits donations for rides. D. Nowicki described this program as intended for a bridging service or emergent needs until such time as a person can connect with on-going support or they are back on their feet. Agencies will apply for tickets and tickets are distributed to these groups. For this year there are 66 agencies participating in this program. These agencies provide individuals with tickets which are not intended for long term use by these individuals. The tickets come from three sources: 1) The City of Edmonton (Edmonton Transit) contributes based on a formula of 6% of the projected population for the year; 2) the corporate donation program which occurs during the whole course of the year and; 3) the public contribution which occurs in the month of January. So it is the combination of these proceeds that are used to purchase the tickets that are allocated to the participating agencies.
- More discussion followed on the amount of detail required for this report and on the categories used by other municipalities that use LICO in Canada.
- J. Vandenberg would like to see this report be part of the next City Budget for 2013. In order for this committee's mandate to be considered for next year's budget this needs to be on the radar for May or June at the latest as this is where the heavy lifting towards the budget comes forward.
- D. Nowicki suggested the committee find out more about this topic on the Transit Review being conducted by B. Boutilier and his team.

8. INFORMATION SECTION

- ATU 569 Report (S. Litwinowich)
 - No report.
- CUTA Conference Delegate Selection (V. Hoy)
 - A handout with the criteria for selection of a delegate from ETSAB to attend the CUTA Conference was handed out to the members.
 - D. Nowicki outlined to the members that one member can attend one of the two CUTA conferences being held this year.
 - The first conference is in Victoria, B.C. starting on May 26th to May 30th.
 - The second conference and trans-expo trade-show is in Quebec City starting

November 11th to November 14th.

- The members discussed both conferences and decided to send a delegate to the Fall conference in Quebec City in November, 2012.
- D. Nowicki will bring this item forward at the August ETSAB meeting.
- Succession Workshop (V. Hoy)
 - V. Hoy suggested the Board do a Succession Workshop in advance of some of the valuable members retiring from the Board in the future.
 - The members discussed the recruitment process handled by the City Clerk's Office and how the process evolves.
 - It was decided to invite V. Gunderson from the Office of the City Clerk to ETSAB's April 30, 2012 meeting to speak to the members on the eligibility and recruitment process for appointment of new volunteer members.
- Fast Track Process
 - V. Hoy addressed this process to remind members about the guidelines to this process.
 - V. Luxton will email the guidelines to the Fast Track Process to all members.
- ETSAB'S 2011 Annual Report
 - The Board members perused the report as a group and made some changes.

MOVED: by L. Landry/J. Vandenbeld to accept ETSAB's 2011 Annual Report as amended. **CARRIED**

Motion
Approved

10. **TOPIC(S) OF THE NIGHT**

- ETSAB marketing committee met with ETS marketing staff and were very pleased with progress on Transit to the Airport.

Next meeting: Monday, April 30, 2012 in the Heritage Room, City Hall