

South**LRT**

# making tracks

[www.edmonton.ca/LRTprojects](http://www.edmonton.ca/LRTprojects)

## The South LRT is Open

Thanks from the City of Edmonton go out to everyone who attended the South LRT Grand Opening and ETS Community Fair at Southgate and Century Park on April 24, 2010. It was a bit of a grey weather day, akin to the 2009 opening of McKernan/Belgravia and South Campus LRT Stations. In Edmonton we seem to be building a tradition of celebrating these LRT achievements with gusto, no matter what the weather.

That day approximately 9,000 people rode the LRT to and from the new Southgate and Century Park stations and visited the opening ceremonies and community fair. Elected officials from the federal, provincial and municipal governments attended, as did representatives from the various community leagues surrounding 111th Street.

“This is a great day for our city,” Mayor Stephen Mandel told the gathered crowd. “People had to go through a tremendous amount of construction. It’s done, and you can move more freely and creatively on the LRT.”

Many are taking that opportunity. So far South LRT ridership is exceeding expectations. All indications suggest we are well beyond the projected goal of 100,000 weekday passengers now that Southgate and Century Park are online.

This bodes well for other LRT projects in Edmonton, which Premier Ed Stelmach endorsed. “We are proceeding with plans with Mayor and Council to ensure that we connect all



Patrons await the arrival of the first passenger train at Century Park LRT Station.

of the City of Edmonton in the very near future with LRT,” he said. That pledge has been backed up with an opportunity for Edmonton to apply for \$800 million in provincial Green TRIP funding. See [www.edmonton.ca/lrtprojects](http://www.edmonton.ca/lrtprojects) for more information.

Now that the South LRT is open to Century Park, the Making Tracks newsletter has fulfilled its role. But there are other LRT projects in Edmonton, including plans to extend the South LRT beyond Century Park to Heritage Valley, and newsletters exist for some of them. Please see the back page of this, the final edition of Making Tracks, for more information about Edmonton’s LRT projects.

Strategy

Concept

Design

Build

Where we are today  
**OPERATE**  
PHASE

LRT service continues during construction of the platform extension at McKernan/Belgravia LRT Station.



## Building LRT Capacity

### Platform Extensions

Upgrades are progressing to increase passenger capacity on Edmonton's LRT network by operating 5-car trains instead of 3-car and 4-car trains. The most obvious upgrades are the platform extensions under construction at Health Sciences and McKernan/Belgravia LRT Stations. These are the only two stations requiring a 23-metre extension to accommodate 5-car trains. All other LRT platforms in Edmonton are long enough already.

LRT service will continue during construction, which means much of the work must be done during off-peak periods and overnight when the LRT network is de-energized between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. Most of the noisy work at Health Sciences and McKernan/Belgravia was completed this spring, so there should not be further excessive noise disruption in the area, especially overnight. However, construction of the platforms will not be complete until October. Occasionally pedestrians and motorists may experience slight detours and delays around LRT platforms.

### Electrical Upgrades

Less obvious are the ongoing upgrades to the LRT network's electrical system. Right now certain sections of the LRT electrical system cannot carry enough electricity to power the City's newest 4-car trains across the entire network. ETS uses a mix of 3-car and 4-car trains. With future growth in mind, the City is upgrading the entire network to carry enough electricity to power 5-car trains. Upgrades to the south sections of the LRT electrical system are complete, and EPCOR is currently upgrading the north sections.

During regular peak periods the LRT can carry about 165 people per car on 12 trains. Each train typically consists of either three or four cars, for a total of about 6,900 passengers on the network traveling at 5-minute intervals. Once electrical upgrades are complete LRT capacity will increase to around 7,920 people on exclusively 4-car trains during peak periods.

Then, as new trains are added to the ETS fleet of LRT cars, we'll start seeing 5-car trains. Eventually only 5-car trains will occupy Edmonton's LRT network during peak periods, boosting peak capacity to 9,900 passengers.



## Warning Bells Required for Traffic Safety

Now that the South LRT is in operation many residents living close to 111th Street are noticing the sounds of warning bells coming from nearby intersections. These bells are required safety features at LRT intersections. Motorists, pedestrians and cyclists must be warned when a train is coming, and the bells have to be loud enough for people to hear them regardless of other environmental sounds such as noisy vehicles, heavy winds, car stereos, earphones, etc.

The City's Urban Traffic Noise Policy requires the overall impact of LRT operations, including warning bells, to be no louder than 65 decibels adjusted (dBA) over a 24-hour period. Noise modeling at residential property lines along 111th Street has indicated sound levels below 65 dBA, which is not loud enough to require sound barriers along the South LRT.

Safety remains the top priority. However, the City is looking at options for a suitable compromise between safety requirements and LRT noise. Regardless, South LRT warning bells are a new sound for people who may be accustomed to the sounds of traffic but not to safety bells ringing periodically during hours of LRT operation. The City will continue efforts to minimize any inconvenience this safety necessity may cause.

## Century Park & Ride Reservations

The 1,230-stall Park & Ride facility at Century Park is a success. Weekdays the parking lot is typically full by 8:30 a.m. Lots of people from south Edmonton are getting out of their cars and onto LRT, thereby reducing traffic and wear and tear on Edmonton roadways, and decreasing the city's environmental footprint and greenhouse gas emissions.

At present all of Edmonton's LRT Park & Ride facilities operate free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis. However, the City is considering a pilot project to allow some parking stalls to be reserved for a fee. The majority of parking stalls would remain available free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis. Check [www.takeets.com](http://www.takeets.com) over the coming weeks for updates.

## Landscaping on 111th Street

Summer 2010 brings the final touches to the South LRT corridor. Landscaping on 111th Street from Health Sciences Station to Century Park Station began in 2009 and continues through September 2010. City contractors are planting grass, trees and shrubs along the LRT right-of-way and the adjacent multi-use trail to create a linear green space for commuters and residents to enjoy.

Landscaping is well underway but far from complete. It's been a wet spring and summer, which has hampered efforts particularly of weed control. Throughout the summer City contractors will be tending the five-kilometre swath of land around 111th Street between 23rd Avenue and 61st Avenue. By fall we hope to have a beautifully landscaped LRT corridor that commuters and residents can take pride in having achieved.

Comprehensive plans exist for landscaping around each section of the South LRT. Full details of the plans are available in the South LRT Plans and Features document. Please contact [lrtprojects@edmonton.ca](mailto:lrtprojects@edmonton.ca) for a copy.



Trees and shrubs are being planted along the South LRT right-of-way this summer.

## South LRT to Heritage Valley

During the grand opening and community fair many people wondered what's next for the South LRT. Plans and preliminary engineering exist to extend the LRT another 4.5 kilometres farther south along 111th Street, beyond Anthony Henday Drive to Heritage Valley at Ellerslie Road and 127th Street. A new Ellerslie LRT Station is being planned to include a Park & Ride with approximately 2,600 parking stalls.

But the big question – when? – has yet to be answered. There is no projected timeline for construction of the South LRT Extension to Heritage Valley, as there is no capital budget devoted to the project. At present City Council has directed two LRT priorities: the North LRT to NAIT (currently in the detailed design phase) and the West and Southeast LRT to be built as a continuous line through downtown Edmonton. These projects should take between five and 10 years to complete.

Beyond the North LRT to NAIT and the West/Southeast LRT, City Council has not defined priorities for other LRT projects. There are three future LRT projects currently

in the planning stage: South to Heritage Valley, Northwest to City Limits and Northeast to Gorman. All are necessary aspects of the City's Transportation Master Plan and City Council's long-term vision for sustainable public transportation in the Capital Region. Altogether it will probably take at least two decades to complete the identified projects. Timelines, as always, depend on funding.



The next extension of the South LRT to Heritage Valley is being planned but will not be built for at least 10 years.

## Find out more about LRT Projects

We welcome your suggestions, comments and questions about LRT projects and the Making Tracks newsletter. For further information or to comment, please contact:

**South LRT information line:**  
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