

EDMONTON TRANSIT SYSTEM ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING #9, SEPTEMBER 26, 2011
PERCY WICKMAN GARAGE (DATS)

PRESENT: John Doucette, John Vandenberg, John Hayes, Ryan Orchard, Christopher Dulaba, Bruce Robertson, Masood Makarechian, Vaughan Hoy, Gordon Smith, Elizabeth Johnston, Stu Litwinowich

ABSENT: Brian Marcotte, Leanne Landry

GUESTS: Josh Stock (ETSAB applicant), Bluph Adu-Brony (B2 Green Energy)

ETS AND CITY STAFF: Lorna Stewart (Director of DATS), Deanna Crozier (Supervisor of Support Services, DATS), Dennis Nowicki, Vicki Luxton

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. DATS PRESENTATION

- *Highlights:*
 - DATS has been operated by the City of Edmonton since 1975. DATS celebrated their 35th Anniversary in 2010.
 - In 2005 DATS introduced a new business model where the City of Edmonton took over ownership and maintenance of the lift equipped vans by City employees paid hourly. DATS has two fleets of vehicles – one through contractor, and in-house owned and operated by the City.
 - The City of Edmonton continues to deliver all the administration functions of registration, bookings, scheduling and dispatch all out of Percy Wickman Garage.
 - DATS now provides trip administration services to the City of Leduc. Leduc deliver their own trips with their employees, vehicles and register their clients, but Leduc calls DATS to book their trips and DATS sends out manifests to the drivers, and dispatches the trips to them. This started in February of this year and is working well.
 - Registrants are ~10,000 consistently. We have quite a bit of turnover because DATS has an older demographic in their registrants.
 - Next to 311 DATS is the busiest call centre in the City.
 - DATS satisfaction levels have stayed around 93 to 95 per cent.
 - Questions/Answers
 - ❖ *There are approximately 250,000 trips requested that do not result in rides every year? Largely cancelled trips (18-20% cancel) and the others are no-shows. People call and book a trip but when DATS shows up they are not there or they cancelled without enough notice. In other words, long term cancels, short term cancels and people who are just not there at all. Being such a large number is that a major cost for DATS? DATS with their new computer system has a lot of automated process so if the registrant has three no-shows in a month a letter is sent to the registrant asking them to reduce their no-shows. If the registrant*

has another three in the next thirty days a warning letter is sent out. If the registrant has another three no-shows in the next thirty days the registrant loses access to DATS for a week. A lot of the no-shows are registrants that are sick and in hospital and no one knows to call DATS to cancel their trips. Going into the day of service DATS over books by ten to fifteen per cent as DATS expects no-shows and cancellations. DATS does accommodate same day trip requests (around 100 trips per day) but not around peak hours.

- I-book Demo – Book Your Own Trips

- DATS receives lots of telephone calls but has a number of clients who would like to book their own trips and have some clients who are non-verbal so they have typically faxed DATS their trip requests.
- DATS I-Book is an online booking tool that will allow clients to view and cancel trips 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and to book reservation trips during Customer Care Centre Hours from 7:30 am to 5:00 pm.
- The **My Trips** page is used by clients to browse their trips and see trip details. This page will show any trips a client has booked/cancelled in the Customer Care Centre or online.

- Questions/Answers

- ❖ *What is the percentage of registrants that currently use I-Book regularly? It is getting more and more popular even if the registrant just wants to view their trips to confirm what they have booked. DATS has an older demographic so the percentage of registrants is small.*
- ❖ *Is the goal to shift people from the phones to on-line because that is cost saving, is that not the goal? The goal is try to contain the level of phone calls. DATS has twelve agents and 35 clients in the queue. This is the first module and DATS wants it to be stable as well and are looking at subscription trips. But first DATS will look at the worker module so that these agencies in the community that now phone or fax DATS with a list of clients they have programs for can input those requests directly in on-line. Queuing is not ideal but it is what most para transit systems use. It is a fair way of rationing which gives people the service.*

- Eligibility Process Changes

- Presently DATS is reviewing their process and are currently seeing what everyone else does and what works for them, what doesn't, and how much it costs. DATS has public consultations scheduled for mid-November for all stakeholders. DATS will do a session for ETSAB members, DATS Advisory Group, Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities, and public stakeholders.
- If there is an Edmonton Transit trip that meets the client's needs then that is their trip and not on DATS.
- DATS will review client's situations every three years as things change.
- DATS is hiring an eligibility coordinator and occupational therapist and other services are being contracted out to help DATS with this new process for new registrants and existing registrants.

- Questions/Answers

- ❖ *Some of this assessment is being contracted out to other medical professionals, so will this be a parallel check of the internal versus contracted external check or are they partitioning the work and some*

people get assessed internally and some externally on a contract? No, it will not be a partitioning, it will be generating the RFP contract out and then dealing with the contractor and ensuring consistency and if there is training that DATS needs to do. There will be a DATS in-house medical expert to ensure that what DATS is billed for is reasonable and that the reviews are done consistently and in a timely manner. There is a need to design the interview questionnaires and figure out the functional assessment that DATS needs to do and manage as there will be an appeal process as DATS has now.

- ❖ *Do you have any means of issuing short term eligibility, such as an accident or a visitor to Edmonton?* DATS has temporary eligibility where DATS matches the duration of the client's needs for DATS with their disability. DATS has a visitor registration where the client still must meet the criteria.

- Facility Tour

- ❖ The ETSAB members were taken on a tour of DATS Dispatch and DATS Booking areas.

3. AGENDA REVIEW

- The following additions were made to the agenda between Items 5 and 6, add two items.
 - 1) Mark Cherrington email.
 - 2) First Riders Program.

MOVED: by V. Hoy/C. Dulaba to approve the September 26, 2011 amended agenda. **CARRIED**

Amended
Agenda
Approved

4. REVIEW OF AUGUST 22, 2011 MEETING MINUTES

MOVED: by G. Smith/J. Hayes to approve the August 22, 2011 minutes. **CARRIED**

Minutes
Approved

5. TASK GROUP PRESENTATIONS

- Bylaw and Mandate Review Task Group (D. Nowicki)
 - A meeting was held on September 4th with City management and the City Clerk's Office. However, D. Nowicki was not available to attend.
 - The approach was to spend this summer coming up with working definitions such as defining the task force versus advisory committee, and starting a best practice review.
 - An example of best practice review is the report prepared by TCRP that was previously passed on to ETSAB members.
 - A set of questions are being formulated by the office of City Clerks from an objective, interpretative, reflective and perspective level.
 - The main point is there will be a facilitator who will have a workshop with each committee with a separate workshop with administration. The two parties will not be put together with the facilitator.
 - Both the advisory committee and administration will approve the completed business template with respect to content.
 - The timeline for the consultation process is October through November.
 - Completed business template is November with approval through

December, with a report written by the City Clerk's Office going to Council in January.

- Questions/Answers:
 - ❖ *Who is the facilitator?* She is an outside facilitator, and does a good job and has worked on this subject matter in the past. Each question will relate to the business case template. Some advisory boards have more of a challenge than others. Other groups such as ETSAB have a regular working relationship with administration. D. Nowicki has voiced concern that this process does not appear to fully meet the intent of Council's motion for a collaborative approach by the advisory groups and administration. Once ETSAB receives the questions and meets with the facilitator, the process may be clearer. ETSAB may need to have a special meeting on this topic, particularly if the timeline is to be met. D. Nowicki stated that ETSAB members are free to call up the City Clerk's Office and ask some questions and get the defined time line.

- Marketing Standing Committee (J. Vandebeld)
 - J. Vandebeld provided three reports to the ETSAB members:
 - 1) Smart Bus Initiative Research Report, August 23, 2011;
 - 2) Smart Bus Presentation and Summary of Comments; and
 - 3) ETSAB Marketing group projects – January to August 2011 summary.
 - G. Smith made a suggestion that the LRT operator could walk through the train when the operators switch trains to help with security issues.
 - Summary of Smart Bus Initiative:
 - ❖ This meeting was held on Tuesday, August 23 at Percy Wickman Garage and J. Vandebeld, G. Smith, J. Hayes and E. Johnston were in attendance from ETSAB. CNIB and DAG as well as their agencies sent representatives to this meeting.
 - ❖ J. Vandebeld went through the features of the Smart Bus with the ETSAB members.
 - ❖ The task group met after the meeting to discuss the seven Smart Bus initiatives:
 - 1) Automated Stop Announcements
 - 2) Advanced traveler information
 - 3) Mobile data terminals
 - 4) Computer aided dispatch
 - 5) Security camera integration
 - 6) Automated vehicle monitoring
 - 7) Automated passenger counters integration
 - ❖ The task group felt that the primary beneficiary of the Smart Bus technology as described would be ETS and administration. Riders would benefit also, but secondarily. Given that the estimated final cost of implementing Smart Bus across the entire system is likely in vicinity of thirty million dollars it begs the question – is adopting Smart Bus the best use of taxpayer money?
 - ❖ The general consensus about these initiatives was to proceed with caution and this task group was not convinced of the benefit of Smart Bus technology to the riders.

- ❖ A pilot on two routes with the cost of 3.4 million dollars and fitting 50 buses on select routes.
- ❖ There was concern expressed by this task group that ETS is spending money on this technology and is the average ETS rider going to benefit? Are there other priorities that may benefit transit riders more, such as Smartcard?
- ❖ The task group had trouble seeing the cost savings with regards to Smart Bus, and felt that some of their questions were not fully answered regarding the benefit of Smart Bus to customers.
- ❖ D. Nowicki suggested ETSAB should have a meeting on Smart Bus initiatives to be presented to the board as a whole to help to clarify the task groups' questions/uncertainty about this project.
- Questions/Comments:
 - ❖ *Can this task group compile a summary of their work in 2011 in a report to give to the Transportation Infrastructure Committee (TIC) in the near future?* Yes, J. Vanderbeld confirmed that a report will be drafted as requested to be forwarded to the main board for their approval.
- Fare Policy Task Review Group (L. Landry)
 - M. Makarechian stated that two reports are going to TIC on October 18, 2011:
 - 1) Transit Fare Structure and Three-Year Model and
 - 2) Annual Seniors Transit Passes.
 - The Fare Policy Task Review Group will be preparing their report in the next couple of weeks to comment on these two reports.
 - D. Nowicki asked if the Task Group intends to accept administration's offer to meet again and M. Makarechian advised they would not be meeting with administration.
- LRT Task Group (B. Robertson)
 - A meeting was not held in September for the LRT Task Group.

6. **EMAIL FROM MARK CHERRINGTON (J. VANDENBELD)**

- J. Vandenbeld reminded the members of the content of Mark Cherrington's email regarding a safety concern for a transit rider.
 - A question was posed to D. Nowicki – *Is it the operators' discretion in taking a passenger out of harms way when they are facing difficulty?* D. Nowicki and S. Litwinowich responded that an operator cannot deny a ride to a passenger and there is no reason to turn the ride down, unless the operator would be putting himself or other passengers in danger.
 - D. Nowicki reminded members of the ETSAB Bylaw where it states "Complaints received by the Board will be referred to the Edmonton Transit Customer Commendations and Concerns System for investigation."

7. **FIRST RIDERS PROGRAM (V. HOY)**

- V. Hoy attended the First Riders Program with his son at Northlands and was amazed at how many people turned out for this event. The program is focused on Kindergarten and Grade 1 students as well as Grade 7 students transitioning to

ETS. V. Hoy noted that it would be beneficial to all if a microphone could be provided next time as it was very difficult to hear the presenter. The kids were not comfortable with the conversation of explaining soft skills so the parents had to explain it to the kids when they got off the bus. D. Nowicki will pass this information along to the parties involved.

8. MANAGER'S REPORT (D. NOWICKI)

- *Highlights:*
 - **ETS's Centennial Book**
 - ❖ A complementary copy of ETS's Centennial Book will be provided to each ETSAB member at the October 24, 2011 meeting.
 - ❖ Employee sales will be carried out at the ETS garages over a two week cycle which starts next week, with general public sales starting during October.
 - **Transit Service to the International Airport**
 - ❖ City Council approved the motion for a three year pilot project between the City of Edmonton and the International Airport and to return through TIC and to City Council for approval. Date to be determined.
 - **Transit Passenger Bylaw Amendment Bylaw 15889**
 - ❖ City Council approved the changes to the fines pertaining to Bylaw 15889. ETS is inviting feedback via Facebook from customers relating to the Transit Passenger Bylaw Amendment Bylaw 8353, and many comments received regarding consuming food and drink on transit vehicles. ETS is receiving a lot of support for allowing beverages because of their closed container. It is interesting that ETS is not really getting a clear signal on the food end; it is a little more mixed.
 - **Recruitment of Three ETSAB Board Positions**
 - ❖ Closes September 30th.
 - **Late Night Service Pilot**
 - ❖ Service Development looking at options for 24 hour transit service.
 - ❖ What routes recommended for late frequency.
 - ❖ Costs and other options to the 24 hour service. Maybe limiting to two or three trips during the morning period.
 - ❖ There will be no time for any consultation with ETSAB on this service due to the short turnaround time to prepare the report.
 - ❖ Discussion at the meeting questioned what number of customers at various times of the night; consideration for a more comprehensive coverage both geographically and frequency of service at the beginning and end of the late night time period and reduced coverage and frequency between 0200-0430h; and concern for the safety of drivers and passengers (i.e. what type of customer are we transporting at that time of night).

9. INFORMATION SECTION

- *DAG Report (E. Johnston)*
 - Director's Report for DAG and Hard to Serve Clients Report was handed out by E. Johnston to all members for their information.
- *ATU 569 Report (S. Litwinowich)*
 - Mayor Mandel congratulated S. Litwinowich on ATU 569's 100th

Anniversary at City Council on September 27, 2011.

- S. Litwinowich has been working on negotiations for three ATU contracts.
- TIC Lunch Meeting (M. Makarechian)
 - The luncheon went well. All four TIC Councillors were in attendance.
 - It was decided to invite the four new TIC Councillors to a breakfast meeting in November.

10. TOPIC(S) OF THE NIGHT

- Email to be sent to TIC stating that the Marketing Task group will be sending out their report in the next month to TIC.

MOVED: by J. Doucette /G. Smith to adjourn the ETSAB Meeting at 20:35 hours.

CARRIED

Motion
Approved

Next meeting: Monday, October 24, 2011 in Heritage Room, City Hall