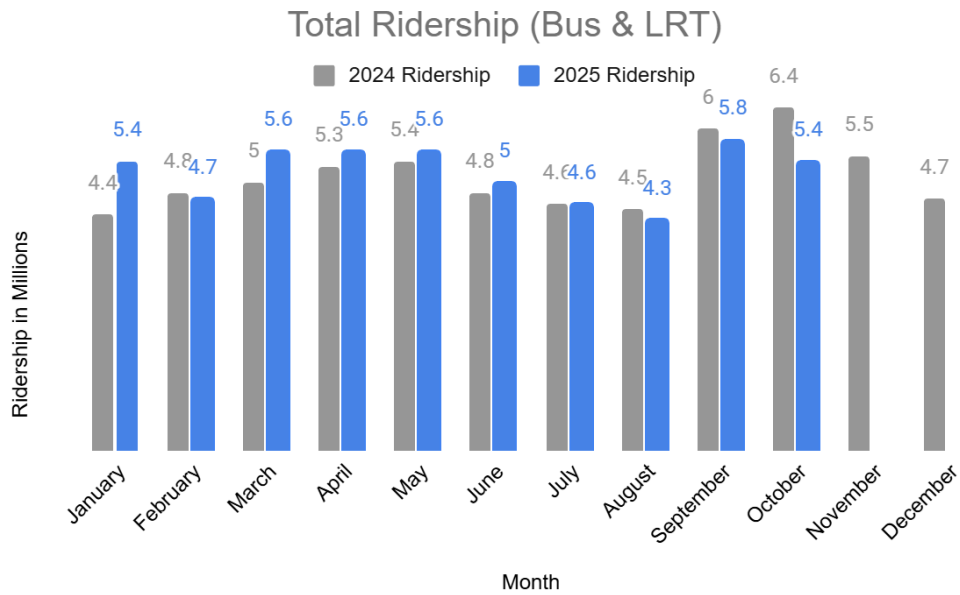


ETS Branch Highlights Report

Date: November 24, 2025

1. RIDERSHIP



ETS recorded 5.37 million total riders in October 2025, which reflects a 16.7 per cent decrease compared to the 6.45 million riders seen in October 2024. This significant decrease across ETS ridership was anticipated and is primarily attributed to the Alberta Teacher’s Association strike that closed schools in October.

Bus ridership declined by 17.2 per cent to 3.69 million in 2025, down from 4.45 million in 2024. Weekday ridership experienced an 18 per cent decrease in boardings year-over-year. The Valley Line Southeast (VLSE) also saw a modest decrease, recording 279,003 riders, a 5.9 per cent decline from October 2024’s 296,685 riders.

Despite the drop in October, the Year-to-Date (January–October) total ridership for 2025 remains healthy at 52.17 million trips, a 2.6 per cent increase over the 51.35 million trips seen in the same period last year.

2. ETS UPDATES

Rider Engagement

ETS Stuff a Bus

The 31st Annual Stuff a Bus campaign takes place November 26-30. In partnership with Save-On-Foods and Strathcona County Transit, ETS invites Edmontonians to fill its buses and trains with non-perishable food donations in support of Edmonton's Food Bank. Food collected in Sherwood Park and Spruce Grove stays with the respective food banks in their communities.

Transit Peace Officers are continuing their participation with Cram a Cruiser events during the week, and for the first time this year, TransEd is participating with a Stuff a Train event at Mill Woods station. Following last year's success, ETS will visit six schools where students will provide donations collected during their school's food drive.

Winterval

The new Indigenous bus was featured at Winterval on November 22, an annual holiday event produced by the Downtown Business Association. Guests had the opportunity to appreciate the artwork on the inside and outside of the bus and talk to the ETS Rider Engagement team. Winterval partner and Edmonton-based Sokaris Studio brought the artwork to life in the evening with a light projection show.

Holiday Lights Tours

Annual ETS Holiday Lights tours are back this year. On December 12 and 14, guests will be picked up from City Hall and taken to the Alberta Legislature grounds and Candy Cane Lane to enjoy the festive light displays. Tickets proceeds from these sold-out tours are donated to Edmonton's Food Bank. DATS also offers holiday lights tours to its clients.

As a gesture of gratitude for the support provided by agencies participating in the Transit Access Grant (TAG) and Providing Accessible Transit Here (PATH) programs, ETS is pleased to offer a limited number of private Holiday Lights Tours at no cost so that their staff, volunteers and clients can enjoy the lights.

2025 International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) Community Resource Fair

On December 3, ETS and DATS will participate in the annual IDPD Community Resource Fair hosted by Voice of Albertans with Disabilities at Mill Woods Town Centre. This fair is focused on highlighting community resources that enable full participation, equity and accessibility for everyone. ETS will promote conventional transit accessibility and travel training opportunities.

DATS Update

DATS Trip Volume Growth

So far in 2025, DATS has provided 8 per cent more trips compared to 2024. DATS usage has now exceeded pre-pandemic levels. A service package will be presented to Council for

consideration during the Supplementary Operating Budget Adjustment deliberations in December in order to address the growth in trip volume and in order to maintain the 98% accommodation rate.

New Translation Services in Call Centre

The DATS call centre introduced translation services in 2025 that allow clients and caregivers to interact with DATS staff with the assistance of a professional translator.

DATS Audit Update

DATS has now completed five of the eight recommendations from the Office of the City Auditor stemming from the [DATS 2024 Audit Report](#). All recommendations have been completed on or ahead of schedule. The completed recommendations include:

- Updating formal eligibility guidelines and implementing the Eligibility Quality Assurance Program
- Improving management and oversight of contracted services
- Implementing additional approval controls for contracted service payments
- Establishing formal strategic goals and completing a routine risk register
- Establishing processes to review and verify data used in strategic and operational reporting

The remaining recommendations are on track to be completed by the December 31, 2025 deadline. These include:

- Updating formal training materials
- Completing a service model review
- Implementing processes to purge expired client data and implement stronger password requirements for the paratransit software

DATS Eligibility Update

DATS implemented a new eligibility process and guidelines in June 2025 that improve efficiency and consistency of eligibility decisions while offering a smoother client experience. These changes include:

- A shorter, more concise registration form and medical form
- Eligibility decision key and quality review process to enhance consistency of eligibility decisions
- Enhanced scripting for eligibility staff to help determine opportunities for accessible travel training

ETS Wins the CUTA Lorna Stewart Award

On November 5 at the Canadian Urban Transit Association Awards ceremony in Montreal, ETS became the first recipient of the [Lorna Stewart Corporate Leadership Award](#) for our work with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) on our [Get on Board campaign](#).

This award is named for former ETS employee Lorna Stewart, who was a trailblazer for accessible transit systems in both Edmonton and Vancouver. In her leadership position with Dedicated Accessible Transit Service (DATS), she placed accessibility at the forefront of service planning, and while in Community Relations, she promoted inclusivity across all modes of transit. She demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to inclusive transportation that enabled all riders to travel with independence and dignity.



This award recognizes the exceptional efforts of transit agencies, paratransit systems and businesses that have gone above and beyond to dismantle barriers in transit and provide inclusive, accessible transit services.

The Get On Board campaign aimed to understand and remove barriers for riders who are blind, deafblind or with low vision. ETS developed an accessibility action plan that led to improvements for riders who are blind, deafblind or have low vision, including better LRT audio announcements, high-contrast curbs and benches, clearer bus signage and more visible emergency strips. Leadership at our ETS branch also completed disability awareness training to strengthen awareness and understanding.

ETS also launched a Rider Respect campaign to promote awareness about visible and invisible disabilities. ETS is proud to champion kindness and respect for all riders to increase accessibility across our transit system. [Read more about the award](#) and [about Lorna Stewart](#).

Beyond the award, ETS supported the next generation of transit professionals by sponsoring the CUTA Young Leaders Summit (YLS). The YLS is a premier three-day youth conference dedicated to fostering emerging leaders through dynamic sessions, networking, and a high-stakes case competition focused on solving real-world transit challenges. ETS had two of its employees be selected to attend and participate.

During the conference, ETS Principal Planner, Matthew Goebel, was recognized by CUTA as a Rising Star. During the Rising Stars Inspiring Leadership and Networking social, Matthew presented on the increased return on investment and equitability of ETS following the Bus Network Redesign in 2021.

Finally, Strategic Planning Analyst, Nathaniel Haile was on the winning team of the YLS case competition. His team successfully pitched a national framework to address overcrowding on transit after major events in Canada.

3. ETSAB INFORMATION REQUESTS

Transit Priority Measures and Federal Funding

The Southeast Transit Garage and Mass Transit Planning projects continue to advance. A formal update on Bus Rapid Transit and Transit Priority Measures will be provided to the Urban Planning Committee on March 23, 2026. In addition, public engagement activities are underway to collect feedback about Bus Rapid Transit. Learn more here:

<https://engaged.edmonton.ca/brt>

4. ETS COUNCIL REPORT TRACKING - 2025/2026

Report Number	Report Name	Committee / Council	Council / Committee Meeting Date
CO02980	Advancing Bus Rapid Transit and Transit Priority Measures	UPC	March 23, 2025

Note: New reports will be added once a report number has been assigned.

*Subject to change

CC = City Council

CPSC = Community and Public Services Committee

Exec = Executive Committee

UPC = Urban Planning Committee

Audit = Audit Committee