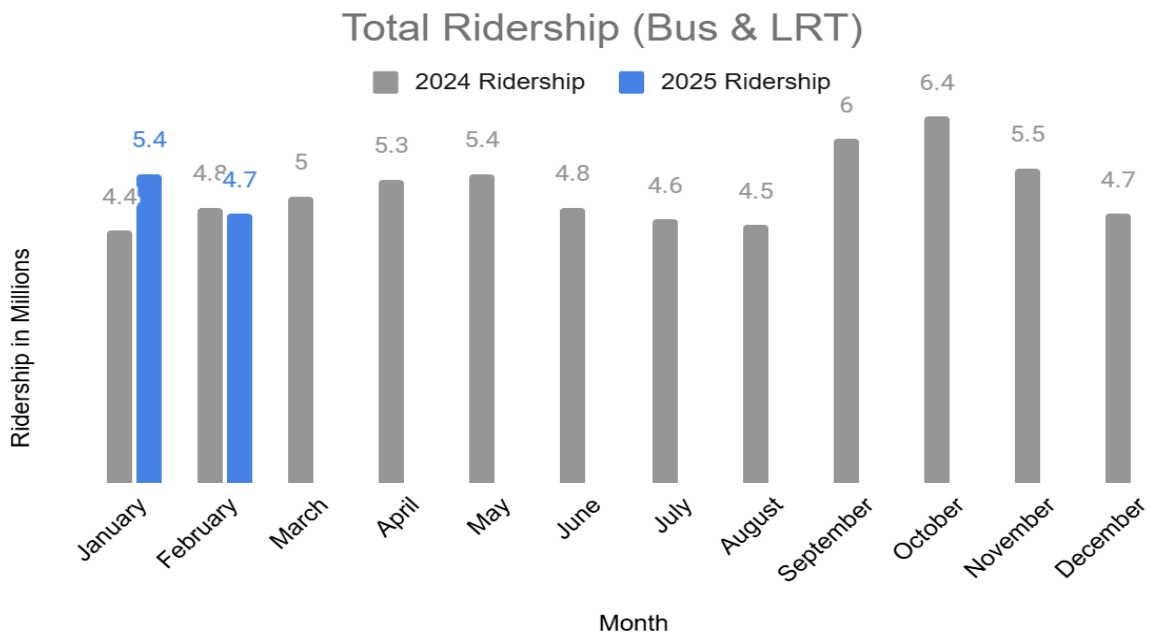


ETS Branch Highlights Report

Date: March 31, 2025

1. RIDERSHIP



ETS recorded approximately 4.7 million riders in February, compared to 4.8 million riders seen in February 2024. ETS is analyzing factors that may have contributed to the change; as an example, February 2024 had an extra day of service due to it being a leap year. In January 2025, ETS ridership significantly increased by 23% to 5.4 million rides, up from 4.4 million in January 2024. In February 2025, the average weekday ridership remained stable compared to January, while weekend ridership experienced a slight drop of around five per cent. VLSE saw roughly 225,00 rides completed in February 2025, marking a 29 per cent increase from February 2024 (174,000 rides completed).

2. ETS UPDATES

Rider Engagement

Junior and Senior High School Open Houses



In mid-March, ETS wrapped up its participation in junior and senior high school open house events. This year, ETS was invited to participate in 43 events in February and March, which is a record number for the Rider Engagement team. Schools request ETS' participation to answer transportation questions from families whose children will be using ETS to get to school in September. Questions include anything from trip plans and fares to safety and security. ETS' successful participation in the open houses is due to active participation from staff across the branch.

Career-focused Garage Tours

ETS is working with the public and Catholic school boards to provide opportunities for career-focused garage tours. In March, mechanics students from M.E. LaZerte School toured the Kathleen Andrews garage to learn about opportunities in transit fleet maintenance. Later this spring, electronics students from Queen Elizabeth School will visit D. L. MacDonald garage to learn about LRT-related careers. Tours for other schools are being planned.

ETS 101 Travel Training

Starting in April, several grade 6 classes across the city will take part in ETS 101 travel training. This program is designed to introduce students to riding the bus before they start using ETS to commute to junior high school in September. ETS travel trainers walk students through the steps of riding the bus, including planning a trip, etiquette, safety and security, and making transfers at transit centres.

MacEwan University Mitchell Art Gallery Art Bus



On March 22, ETS partnered with the Mitchell Art Gallery at MacEwan University to support their annual Art Bus event. Nine art galleries in the downtown area open their doors for the Art Bus event, and ETS provides the buses to help guests move between each gallery. The event provides an opportunity for people to explore some of the city's smaller art galleries. In the spirit of the event, the Indigenous and Pride buses were used to move guests around while showcasing the beautiful artwork on the buses.

Annual Service Plan Launch

The ETS Annual Service Plan is a yearly document outlining operational plans and priorities. It details past achievements, planned service changes and improvements (like new routes or increased frequency), infrastructure projects (such as station upgrades or expansion), and overall goals and objectives for the upcoming year. This plan provides valuable insight into the future of Edmonton's public transit service and how ETS intends to serve its riders. ETS released the [2024-25 Annual Service Plan](#) on March 24 on the ETS website along with the annual [Route Report Cards](#).

Transit Operator and Worker Appreciation Day

On March 18, ETS celebrated National Transit Operator and Worker Appreciation Day and took the opportunity to recognize and appreciate the work of team members across the organization highlighting that each person makes a difference for the city and region. On March 18 at City Council, Council acknowledged National Transit Operator and Worker Appreciation Day through a protocol item. The Mayor and City Council took a moment at the start of the meeting to speak about the many contributions made by ETS employees.

International Women's Day

On March 8, ETS joined in celebrating International Women's Day, recognizing the significant contributions of women in the transit industry and beyond. Throughout the month, ETS showcased 18 women from across its operations through digital displays at transit facilities and in the Edmonton Tower, as well as in a City publication. This celebration underscored ETS's commitment to recognizing and supporting the achievements of women in the community. The City also released a [video](#) highlighting some of the amazing women, mothers, sisters, and friends who keep our city moving.

Rider Respect Campaign



Show kindness and respect for your fellow riders.

-  Put people first.
-  Not all disabilities are visible.
-  Don't make assumptions. Ask before you help.

CNIB | Edmonton Transit Service | Edmonton

ETS has partnered with the Canadian National Institute of the Blind (CNIB) to improve transit accessibility for the sight-loss community. Enhancements have already been made, including changes to emergency push strip colors, curb painting, and bus signage, following feedback from CNIB's "Get On Board" campaign. Further improvements, such as expanding curb painting and re-tiling benches in LRT stations, are planned for 2025. On December 17, 2024, ETS launched a Rider Respect campaign which was geared to raise awareness and encourage respectful behavior among transit riders. The campaign was informed by the engagement with CNIB and identified as one of the actions in the updated Accessibility Action Plan. ETS worked with CNIB on development of the campaign, which intends to highlight respect towards persons with disabilities.

DATS Update

In December 2024, DATS overhauled its system that clients use to book their trips online. The new system provides a more user friendly interface and a variety of modern features to help DATS clients better access the service, including:

- An interface optimized for mobile devices
- Ability to monitor vehicle location in real time
- Updated estimated arrival times
- Ability to utilize open address entry to book trips to any location within google maps
- Ability to access historical trip information

This new system has resulted in a 30 per cent increase in online trip booking, which has helped to bring down the on-hold wait times for those calling in to book their DATS trips.

DATS is also excited to celebrate its 50th year of providing service on May 5th. DATS will celebrate this milestone by hosting an open house on this date featuring food and refreshments, activities, and an opportunity for DATS clients to meet staff as well as a variety of agencies and advocacy groups that help support people with disabilities in the community. ETSAB members are welcome to attend the event.

Youth and Post-Secondary Rider Research

In 2025, ETS is continuing its efforts to understand youth and student perceptions of transit, through two research projects:

Youth on Transit Phase Two

This February ETS partnered with the Edmonton Public and Catholic school boards to conduct a survey with youth riders (ages 12 to 18) and parents/caregivers of youth. This phase follows the first phase of the Youth on Transit research project completed in 2024, which included focus groups and interviews with youth ages 12 to 24. Qualitative insights from the first phase highlighted the importance of service reliability, affordable fares and safety measures for younger riders. Launched in late February, the second phase of research

quantified the qualitative research results and provided an opportunity for parents to share their perceptions of children using transit. The results from the survey will allow ETS to dive deeper into awareness of various ETS programs and experiences with transit among youth.

Post-Secondary Research

Post-secondary students are an important rider segment for ETS, and understanding their unique needs and perceptions can inform recommendations to further support them and encourage continued transit use as they transition into the workforce. ETS has partnered with the Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA) to conduct research and engagement with this rider segment in 2025. The goal is to understand the unique experiences and travel patterns of post-secondary students on public transit, including safety, service-related factors, behaviours on transit, and general attitudes and perceptions towards transit. The project will include focus groups taking place in late March, followed by a post-secondary student survey in the fall.

March Council Report

Options to Further Enhance LRT Safety

On March 18, 2025, City Administration presented a report on [LRT safety enhancement options](#) to City Council, in response to the following [motion](#) from the October 2, 2024 City Council meeting:

That Administration, as part of its current work plan, include reallocation options of the LRT Commissionaires budget to hire transit peace officers and or automated passenger counters, and/or attendants, and other interventions, and provide a report to Council.

The report outlined five options for redirecting operating funding to additional safety and security measures. Key recommendations included reallocating the budget from Commissionaires security guards to Transit Peace Officers (TPOs) to enhance enforcement presence, as well as investing in Automated Passenger Counter (APC) equipment. After discussion of the report, Council referred the report back to Administration to develop details on an alternative approach that would combine an enhanced TPO deployment and implementing Safety Attendants utilizing the same budget amount. The report returns to City Council on April 8, where the additional information will be presented.

3. ETS COUNCIL REPORT TRACKING - 2025

Report Number	Report Name	Committee / Council	Council / Committee Meeting Date
CO02718rev	Options to Further Enhance LRT Safety - Further Analysis	Council	April 8/9, 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