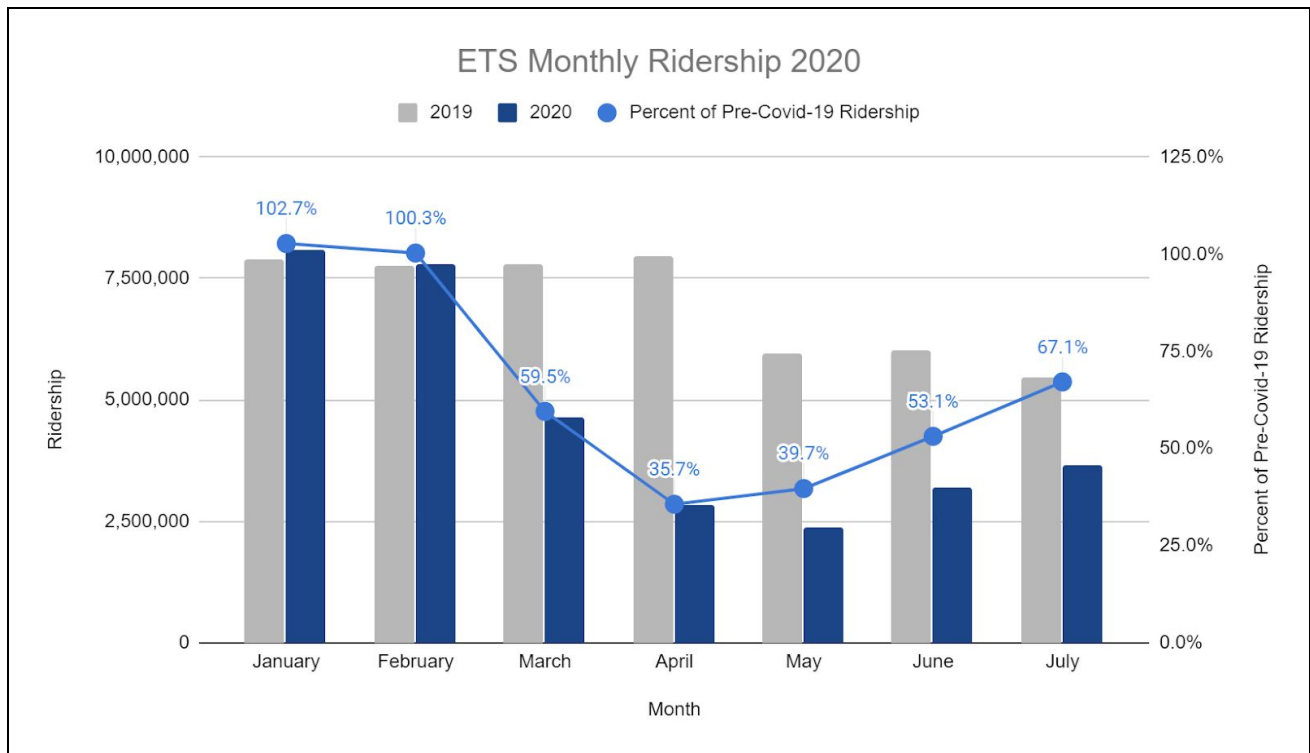


ETS Branch Highlights Report

Date: August 31, 2020

1. RIDERSHIP

Bus and LRT Ridership – April to August 2020



ETS Ridership: Ridership on ETS has seen steady growth towards pre-Covid-19 ridership during the summer. The first several weeks of September may show if transit users are returning to their regular ridership patterns as service returns to a full schedule, albeit without dedicated university routes.

2. ETS UPDATES

Masks on Transit

Masks continue to be mandatory on ETS and in public spaces in Edmonton. Transit Police Officers are encouraging their use and have been handing out masks to those without one. ETS is conducting observational research on transit to identify levels of compliance and to better understand how transit users are using transit during the pandemic. Early observations suggest that over 90 per cent of customers are wearing masks. Operators will be required to wear masks

when not behind an Operator shield. DATS Operators are required to wear masks while driving or assisting clients. Operators will continue to allow passengers who are not wearing masks or face coverings to board transit, as there are multiple health-related exemptions for not wearing a mask.

Fall U-Pass Options

The Universal Transit Pass (U-Pass) provides eligible students at participating post-secondary institutions with unlimited travel on Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) and participating regional transit providers at a discounted rate for each school term in which the student is enrolled. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, post-secondary institutions are primarily delivering learning online and holding a limited number of classes on campus. A joint decision was made by post-secondary institutions, ETS and regional transit partners to not provide a fall U-Pass. To ensure students still have access to discounted transit, Edmonton City Council approved expanding eligibility of two fare products that are typically restricted to post-secondary students:

- **Expand the “Youth” fare category to include all post-secondary institution students** - Currently, only those 24 and under are eligible for the Youth Pass.
- **Expand Ride Transit to eligible post-secondary institution students** - Post-secondary students are usually excluded from Ride Transit because the U-Pass fees are mandatory and serve as their channel for transit passes; however, due to the pause on U-Pass for the fall term, it will be made available to them. Ride Transit will also be available to all International Students. After engaging in discussions with the International Students Association at the University Alberta, ETS learned that proof of income can be supplied as part of meeting the program’s application requirements.

These changes will allow those students who would have relied on the U-Pass access to affordable, discounted transit. These changes are temporary until all parties agree to reinstate and distribute the U-Pass.

Route 747

As of August 1, Route 747 has started accepting airport travellers. It continues to provide service for airport and area employees, shoppers and people commuting to/from Leduc. Wearing a mask or face covering is mandatory on Route 747 as on all ETS routes.

TLC for LRT

LRT will operate at reduced frequencies this September to accommodate the Stadium LRT Station Redevelopment. Until late September, trains between Churchill and Clareview, and Churchill and NAIT will run every 20 minutes. Between Churchill and Century Park, trains will run every 10 minutes.

From late September to late November, trains between Churchill and Clareview, and Churchill and NAIT will run every 15 minutes. Between Churchill and Century Park, trains will run every 7.5 minutes.

Return to Full Transit Service

Starting August 30, 2020, ETS will be resuming regular bus service levels. LRT will be extended back to regular end of service, which is approximately 1:30am, but will operate on reduced frequencies as a result of the Stadium LRT Station Redevelopment project.

Original routing will resume for community routes (bus routes 303-309, 312, 322, 323 and 340), because the 30' buses will be put back into service and they can handle narrower roads.

Kindergarten to Grade 12 classes return to schools in September, so ETS will reintroduce school special buses to provide families with an affordable transportation option for junior and senior high school students. ETS is working with schools to time School Special bus routes to accommodate as many students as possible. This may result in route and time changes from last fall.

Specific routes that connect to post-secondary institutions have been cancelled until further notice (routes 54, 97, 98 and 399) due to post-secondary institutions shifting to mainly distance learning.

ETS is maintaining a number of enhanced safety measures to respond to COVID-19 including an enhanced cleaning protocol and use of a disinfecting agent applied daily with an electrostatic sprayer to all ETS vehicles before they go into service at transit centres and LRT stations. In addition, ETS will continue to deploy buses with Operator shields to provide a safety barrier between the Operator and passengers.

Ride Transit Pass Payment and Distribution

Since the resumption of fares in June 2020, ETS has been distributing Ride Transit Passes by mail to Ride Transit users free of charge because in-person payment and distribution facilities remain closed due to Covid-19. ETS is implementing different options to receive payment for Ride Transit passes including online, over the phone, and direct debit. These sales channels are focused on reducing in-person contact. A survey was conducted with 900 Ride Transit users to identify challenges and opportunities with each of these options. For those unable to pay through the new options provided, limited in-person appointments will be available at a few recreation centres. This in-person channel is restricted to those that cannot pay through other channels and must be scheduled by appointment due to capacity limits at facilities related to COVID-19.

3. ETSAB INFORMATION REQUESTS

None.

4. ETS COUNCIL REPORT TRACKING - 2020-21

Council Reports

During Covid-19 and the local state of emergency, the focus of City Council narrowed to face the challenge of the pandemic and the various impacts to city services, employees, and the public. Scheduled council reports were postponed or cancelled. Future report dates are to be confirmed.

*Not an ETS lead report

AC = Audit Committee

CC = City Council

CPSC = Community and Public Services Committee

Exec = Executive Committee

IRCD = Inter-municipal and Regional Development Committee

UPC = Urban Planning Committee