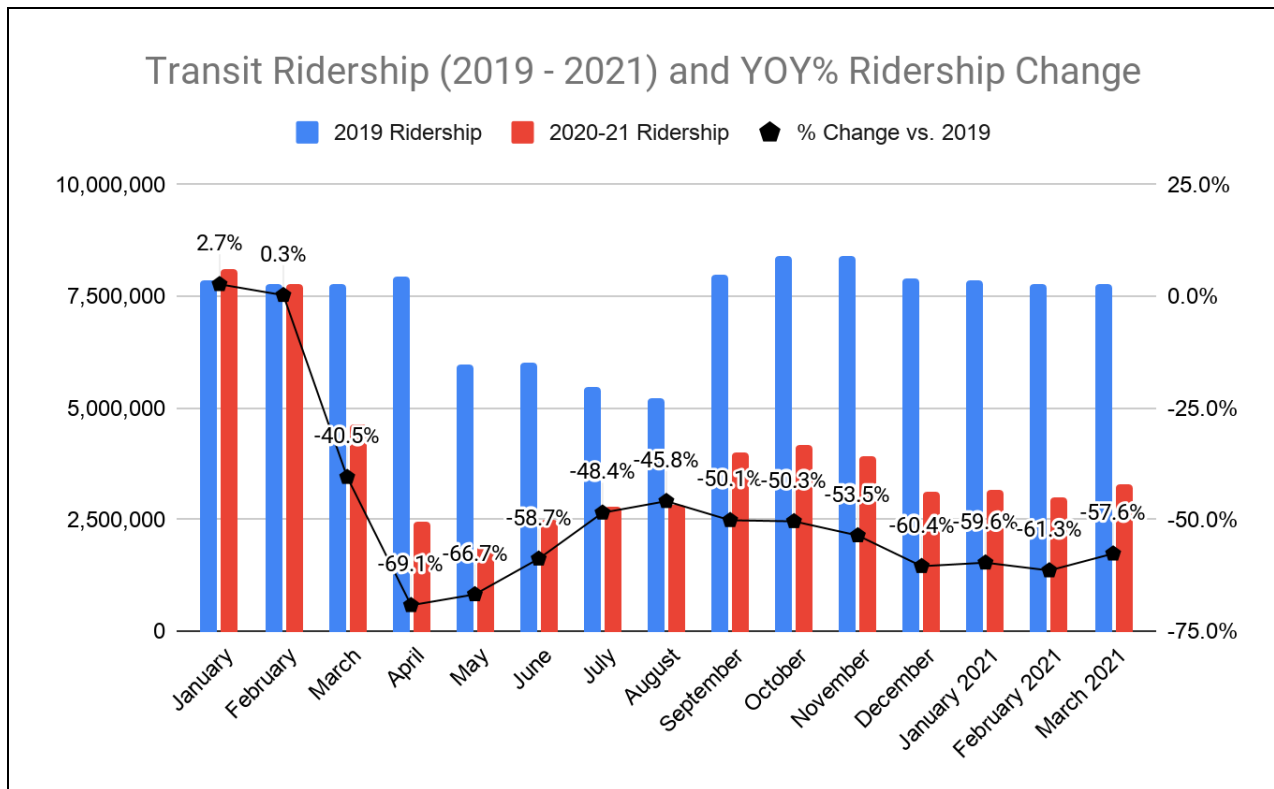


ETS Branch Highlights Report

Date: April 29, 2021

1. RIDERSHIP



Ridership remains in the range seen since December 2020 when a number of new public health restrictions were imposed to combat Covid-19. April 2021 will be the first full month of YOY transit ridership since the pandemic began but we will continue to report in comparison to 2019 figures to provide context to historical transit ridership trends.

2. ETS UPDATES

Valley Line Southeast - Service Level

A recent council discussion has approved the Annual Operations Plan for the Valley Line Southeast LRT. Each year, the City and the third-party operator of the Valley Line LRT, TransEd, are required to come to an agreement on 14 different service levels that can be operated on the line that combine the number of one-car and two-car trains, as well as the frequencies of trains.

Through the Project Agreement, the City can establish different service levels throughout the year if required and this would be determined by ridership trends.

Once travel patterns are established, a more consistent pattern of seasonal service adjustments are expected to be set. ETS' current services have a seasonal pattern whereby there is higher service from September to April, and lower service from May to August based on reduced trips by post-secondary students, and riders who shift to active modes of travel, like cycling and walking.

2022 Transit Fee Schedule

Earlier this month, City Council's Executive Committee discussed our recommendation to bring forward to City Council an additional category in our 2022 Transit Fee Schedule. The new fare categories include a Pay-As-You-Go trip rate, and a single trip 'Smart Ticket' option that uses Smart Fare's tap on/tap off technology. The Pay-As-You-Go trip rate will allow customers to pay \$3 for one trip, rather than having to pay the full amount upfront for a monthly/annual pass. When Pay-As-You-Go rates are used in conjunction with fare capping, the customer pays \$3 for each trip when it is made, up to the fare cap for the daily and monthly period. After reaching the cap, they travel for free as they have paid the equivalent to what a daily or monthly pass is today. This rewards frequent transit riders. This addition to the fare schedule sets the stage for the launch of Phase 1 of Smart Fare this fall. Phase 1 will include Adults, U-Pass students, select public and catholic schools, and transit staff across the region. Phase 2 will launch in 2022, and include discounted fares, such as the Ride Transit Program, Seniors Annual Pass, etc.

Launch of the New Bus Network and On-Demand Transit

As launch day approaches on April 25 for the new bus network, there is a flurry of activity to prepare customers for the change. Printed materials and route brochures are being distributed to the transit garages to be made available on buses. As well, ETS staff are preparing to provide outreach support at the transit centres and LRT stations on the day of the launch, and the week following.

As a reminder, the most up-to-date information can be found at edmonton.ca/newbusroutes and edmonton.ca/ondemandtransit. Here you can also download and print route brochures for the new routes, as well as an online bus stop map that shows which bus stops are closing or staying in service.

The launch of the On-Demand Transit service will also happen on April 25. In April, staff have been preparing trip planning tools (see below) and testing the system to ensure it operates smoothly on launch day.

3. ETSAB INFORMATION REQUESTS

Trip Planning with On-Demand Service

Starting April 25, and in alignment with the launch of the new bus network, ETS is launching an On-Demand Transit for 37 neighbourhoods and 16 large seniors' residences. To see all the locations with On Demand Transit visually, this [map](#) provides a good overview.

There are three ways to book your ride:

- Download the *Edmonton On Demand Transit* app - Book your trip and track your shuttle bus location. The Edmonton On Demand Transit app will be available through the Google Play and Apple stores.
- Create and sign in to your account via the link at edmonton.ca/OnDemandTransit.
- Call ahead - an On Demand Transit representative can help book your ride at 780-496-2400. (opens 30 minutes before the start of daily service).

Bookings are required before boarding a shuttle bus to ensure there is enough room for everyone. The real-time trip planning software is trying to manage the best routing for the pre-booked customers.

Once you book a trip, you are given an estimated time for your pick up, and the arrival time at the transit hub. If you book using the *Edmonton On Demand Transit app*, you will receive updates about arrival times and get a text message when the ride is close. The app will also tell you the bus number, so riders can ensure they are getting on the correct shuttle. If you booked through the call centre, there is no automated call back feature to notify you of arrival times.

Some additional details of the On Demand Transit service include:

- All On Demand Transit areas will have peak and off-peak service, including weekends.
- A trip can be booked up to 60 minutes in advance to take customers from a set pick up/drop off spot in your neighbourhood or a designated transit hub.
- All the shuttle buses are accessible for wheelchairs, and include 1-2 built in child safety seats.

For more details, see the [On Demand Transit Guide](#).

Digital Assistant

The ETS digital assistant currently looks for keywords and phrases then provides the best answer from a list of responses. In some cases it is able to make a match based on other correctly spelled words in the sentence. Otherwise, it may ask the customer to rephrase the question.

The ETS digital assistant platform is basic text matching at this time. However, over the coming months it will be transitioning to a more intuitive AI learning platform that will allow for more flexibility in meaning and spelling. It is able to recognize some key “angry” words, so if the customer is dissatisfied with bus service or schedules, the digital assistant will refer them to the Bus Network Redesign customer feedback form.

Outreach to Ethnic Populations

Organizations serving newcomers, seniors, people with disabilities, low income/vulnerable people were contacted to offer information presentations (virtual or onsite) about the new bus network, On-Demand Transit, and information materials (electronic and printed materials) when available.

There have also been bus network ads made in different languages (see below).



Ads have been placed in newspapers and magazines targeted to ethnic populations, including:

- Mill Woods Mosaic
- Asian Tribune
- Alberta Filipino
- Punjabi National - translated
- Des Pardes Times
- Vietnam Times Magazine - translated

Overdose Increase

As with all emergency situations, ETS Security Personal and Peace Officers have direct contact with the ETS Control Centre that can dispatch the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) and EMS.

Over the last few months, in response to concerns with crime and disorder, ETS has added additional security guards, more Transit Peace Officer patrols, and additional video surveillance via CCTV security cameras on transit to proactively monitor facilities. While this does not directly address the overdose concerns, the larger presence of security personnel provides an additional

layer of oversight, natural surveillance, and support at transit facilities. Additional EPS members will also be deployed on transit in late April, as part of the City’s integrated and multi-pronged approach to further enhancing safety and security.

Transit Watch Text Message Service

Last year, ETS launched the Transit Watch text message service so that customers can discreetly report security concerns or suspicious behaviour directly to the ETS Control Centre. To date, in 2021, ETS has received 379 unique text interactions (the total number of text messages received during these interactions is higher). The following is the breakdown of the types of texts received:

Text Type	2021 YTD
Assault	1
Assist Other	15
Bylaw Complaint	140
Check On Welfare	41
Disturbance	8
Drugs	40
Fire	1
Fraud	1
Harassment	4
Liquor Act	10
Lost And Found	4
Medical Incident	1
Mischief	4
Property Damage	3
Sexual Offences	1
Suspicious	2
Threat Utter	2
Trespassing	5
Trouble Not Known	3
Trouble With Loitering	50
Trouble With Person	43
Grand Total	379

In early 2021, the text message service started to become the dominant reporting tool, instead of riders calling the Transit Watch phone number. Each month in 2021, ETS has received approximately 80-95 calls and between 98 and 144 text messages.

4. ETS COUNCIL REPORT TRACKING - 2020-21

SIRE	Report Title	Meeting Date	Committee
CO00534	CO00534 Bylaw 19712 Conduct of Transit Passengers Bylaw Amendment	May 3	CC
IIS00416	ETS Fleet Storage and Maintenance Facility Project	May 10	Exec
CO00526	Transit Centre Security Measures	May 11	UPC
EXT00489	Edmonton Transit Advisory Board: Inclusive Transit	May 25	UPC
COXXXX	Administration Response: Inclusive Transit	May 25	UPC
COxxxx	DATS Program Service Enhancements Update	June	TBD
8198	Bus Network and On-Demand Service Implementation Update	August 11	CPSC
COxxxx	Transit Safety and Security Annual Update	October	TBD
COxxxx		Q1 2022	TBD
COxxxx		Q1 2022	TBD

*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