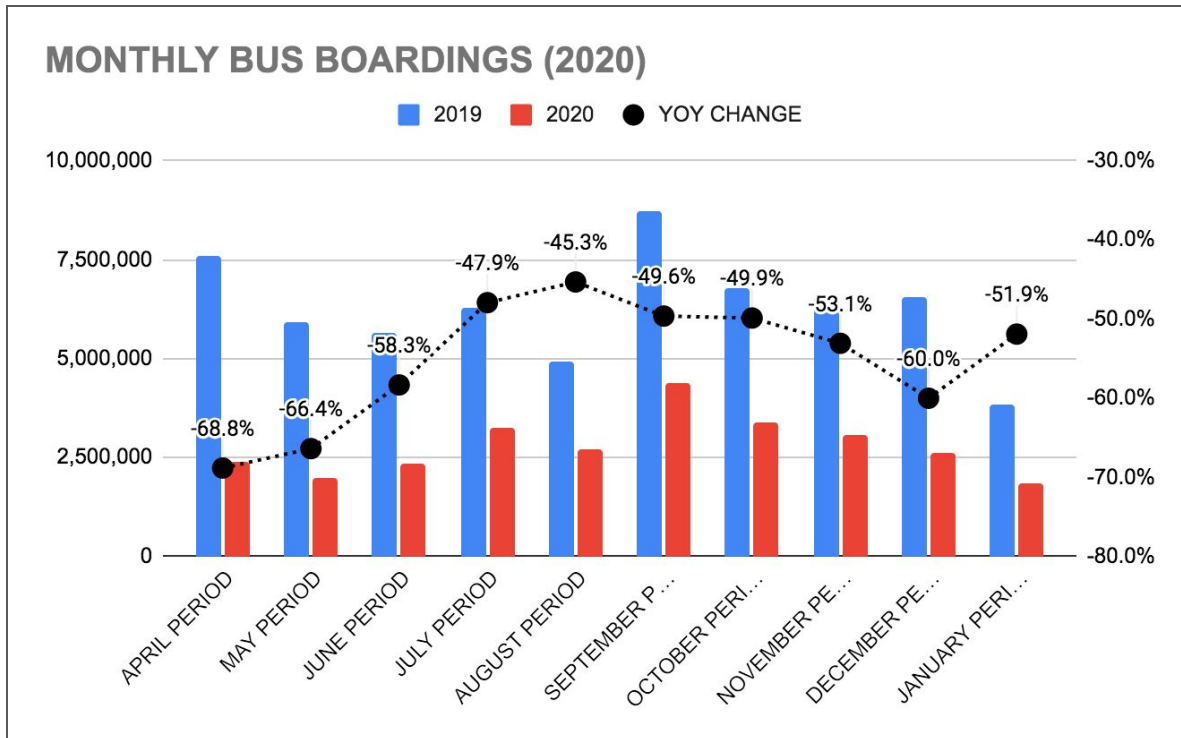


ETS Branch Highlights Report

Date: February 22, 2021

1. RIDERSHIP



Transit ridership continues to hover in the 50% of year-over-year range, similar to patterns observed through much of the fall period. ETS’ research indicates that travel patterns and behaviours have stabilized throughout the last seven months of the pandemic and this indicates ridership will not grow significantly until the public health risk is minimal.

2. ETS UPDATES

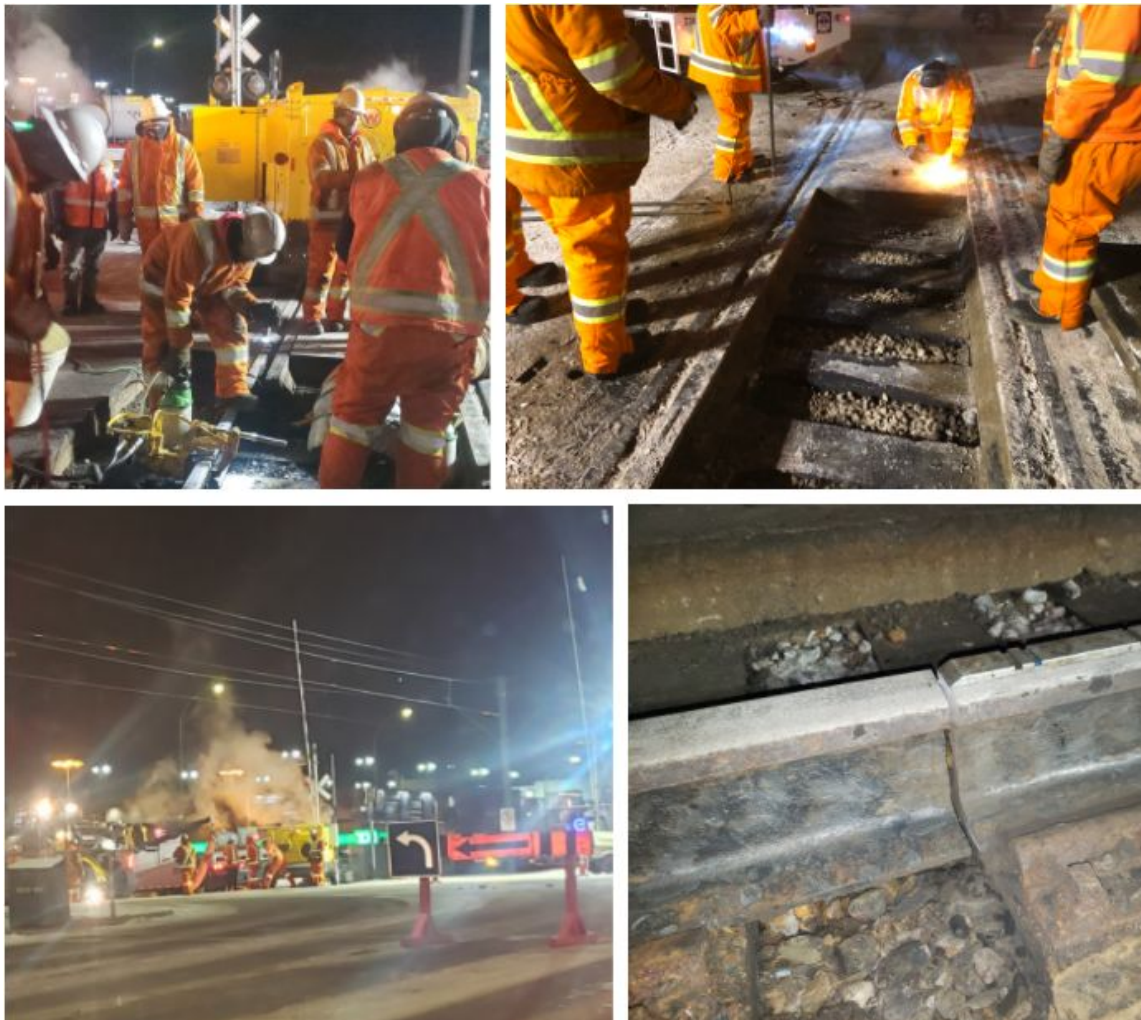
ETS Annual Service Plan

ETS has completed its [2020-21 Annual Service Plan \(ASP\)](#). The ASP has traditionally acted as an annual report that highlighted the accomplishments of the previous year and the projects to be completed or progressed in the upcoming year. This year’s ASP, however, has a different feel because ETS believes it’s important to tell the story of transit during a pandemic from the perspective of all those involved - customers, operators, health care providers, maintenance and

fleet staff, ETS leadership, and even ETSAB members. The main message is that even though Covid-19 pandemic has been trying for everyone, it has afforded each of us the opportunity to step-up and ensure transit continues to provide essential service to those that rely on it. It has taken a lot of extraordinary people to do extraordinary things to keep transit moving. For that, everyone at ETS is tremendously grateful.

LRT Track Work during the Polar Vortex

For the second year in a row, the deep cold caused a crack in the LRT track. The cracked rail was discovered near Southgate late on February 8 and caused the track to be shut down temporarily. LRT service continued, with trains northbound and southbound alternating on the remaining track. City crews were posted outside to manually operate switches during the day. The following evening, crews worked in -34C weather to bolt reinforcement bars to the rail on either side of the crack to secure it. Then, they used a cable to bond the rail back together so that the signalling system works. This is a solid but temporary fix and a permanent repair will be made in the summer when it's warmer. Regular LRT service was restored for the following morning. See the [Transforming Edmonton](#) blog post for details.



Cold Weather Protocol Response

As temperatures plummeted to the -30s during the first half of February, the City of Edmonton activated its extreme weather response to help keep vulnerable Edmontonians safe. Staff from the Social Development branch in Citizen Service and the Homeward Trust organization coordinated the extreme weather response.

ETS provided two dedicated overnight bus routes for people who needed emergency shelter, as well as transportation to get there. The service ran nightly from February 4 -17, picking people up at transit centres and other key locations and dropping them off at a shelter where they were safe and warm for the night. Demand for the bus service increased steadily during the two week period, with as many as 141 people riding one of the two routes on a given evening.

Agency outreach workers, with assistance from City of Edmonton Peace Officers, were on board each bus to screen community members for COVID-19, provide masks and determine which shelter best met an individual's needs.

Regional Transit Services Commission Approved by Government of Alberta

On January 28, the Government of Alberta approved the Regional Transit Services Commission's (RTSC) application to establish as a legal entity. The legal formation comes after much work and extensive collaboration by eight member regional municipalities: Beaumont, Devon, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, St. Albert, Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and Edmonton. With the legal formation of the RTSC and after the selection of a Chief Executive Officer, the RTSC will enter the formation and set-up phase of operations.

After which the first phase of services from the Commission will focus on local and regional services provided by the regional partners. ETS, however, will continue to operate as-is for the foreseeable future.

As the RTSC sets up and gradually rolls out an integrated regional transit service, more riders will be able to connect to ETS' established bus and LRT networks. This connectivity will allow for increased accessibility to destinations across our region..

Transit Mode Share Report

On February 2, City Administration presented its "[Transit Mode Share](#)" information report that focused on what policy, transit investment, partnership and pricing mechanisms are required to increase transit mode share. It also explored the economic development impacts of increasing ridership.

It found that doubling or tripling of mode share requires, not just investment in transit, but other city wide "levers of change." It essentially boils down to a change in the cost-benefit for Edmontonians such that transit is either made cheaper, faster, etc. or automobile use is made more expensive (e.g. parking costs). Administration, including ETS, will continue to work to outline the path to realize the [City of Edmonton's City Plan](#).

Transit Safety and Security

ETS continues to be focused on providing a safe transit journey for customers. To date, ETS has implemented a number of safety and security measures including:

- Help buttons, pull handles and yellow push strips - equipped on all LRT trains
- Security guards - deployed at 19 Transit Centres/Stations throughout Edmonton.
- Transit Peace Officers - patrol transit property and collaborate with members of Edmonton Police Service.
- 24/7 Phone line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to report safety concerns to ETS staff by call Transit Watch at 780-442-4900
- Transit Watch text message service - a silent text message service for customers to alert control centre of safety or security concerns
- Blue Help Phones (emergency phones) - connect directly to ETS security
- CCTV surveillance cameras throughout ETS property and vehicles
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) - designing facilities to discourage crime and encourage feelings of safety through lighting, mirrors, etc.
- Stop Request - a daily program that allows passengers to stop at a location other than a bus stop along the route after 6pm, provided it's safe to do so.
- Recruit and hire more women as transit operators - to reflect the community ETS serves

In 2021, ETS has committed to looking at safety and security on transit using a wide range of perspectives. ETS is a leading transit agency in North America for using gender-based analysis (GBA+) in enhancing safety and security on transit. This framework approach will also further support a safer community and city, and will help increase ridership.

Starting this year, ETS administration will reach out to community groups to develop a root cause analysis of safety and security on transit. This will aid in developing action plans to improve safety on transit, as well as in our larger community.

Emergency Advisory Committee Meeting Update

On February 8, Edmonton's new City Manager, Andre Corbould, provided an update to the Edmonton City Council Emergency Advisory Committee. This included activation of the Extreme Weather Response that enables ETS to provide a shuttle service between shelters in Edmonton and some transit and LRT centres. The update also provided some statistics on the patrols and ticketing related to face mask wearing.

A significant portion of the update was, however, related to Edmonton's recovery from Covid-19 and to set a course going forward. This includes a principles-based approach in alignment with the following:

- Safe and inclusive
- Considers downtown revitalization
- Agile and adaptive
- Promotes vibrancy - brings energy
- Engages with the community - integrates key partners
- Supports the vulnerable

- Considers the status of institutions, economic activity, vaccination roll out, vulnerable populations, public health restrictions

This approach is adaptable to changing conditions and accounts for the uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic. As such, regular updates will be made to adjust the trajectory of recovery in the future.

3. ETSAB INFORMATION REQUESTS

None.

4. ETS COUNCIL REPORT TRACKING - 2020-21

SIRE	Report Title	Meeting Date	Committee
7813	Transit Fare Fines	March 1, 2021	CC
6778	Update on the Bus Network Redesign	April 19, 2021	UPC
COxxxx	DATS Program Service Enhancements Update	June 2021	TBD
8198	Bus Network and On-Demand Service Implementation Update	August 11, 2021	CPSC
COxxxx	Transit Safety and Security Annual Update	October 2021	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