

Comprehensive Report

City of Edmonton

Fare Policy Research and
Engagement



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Leger

We know Canadians

This comprehensive report outlines all aspects of the Fare Policy research and engagement completed by Leger on behalf of the City of Edmonton, specifically:

- Focus groups with transit users in Edmonton CMA
- DATS / AISH focus group and IDIs
- Online survey (and open link survey)
- Stakeholder engagement sessions

An executive summary is presented at the front of this report, highlighting the key takeaways from each phase of the research / engagement. The context, objectives, methodology, and detailed findings for each phase are reported in separate sections within.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

- For Edmontonians, transit is both a public good and an essential service. As such, both as users and taxpayers, they recognize that the burden of funding transit services should be shared by everyone and that there needs to be a balance between the taxpayer-funded portion and the user-funded portion of fare box revenue. At the same time, Edmontonians recognize that giving some types of riders discounts is appropriate – with the general sense that everyone should have access to public transit, irrespective of their ability to pay.
- Within the proposed fare policy framework, the distinction between ‘policies’ and ‘programs’ is not always clear. Many of the policy concerns expressed by the public, riders and stakeholders are about transit access for Edmonton’s most vulnerable groups. Most of these concerns could be addressed via the current or enhanced fare programs.
- Although the fare policy framework implies that transit should be seen as part of the ‘competitive’ landscape, for most, transit is not seen as being comparable to any of the other cost-bearing modes (e.g. taxis and private vehicles) so using the costs of other modes (or changes to the cost of those modes) as the basis for setting fares may be fraught. In the context of transit as a public good and given that for many, using transit is not a choice, transit is not universally seen as being on par with other modes of transportation.
- The fare policies as drafted are occasionally confusing when viewed in isolation, however, many of the questions around the proposed policies are resolved and make much more sense in the context of the forthcoming Smart Fare technology.
- Generally, the Smart Fare concept works very well and is understandable (especially by Edmontonians who have experienced it in other cities), but it will still require a significant education campaign (and there needs to be an understanding that some users may not adapt well to the change). As well, there will need to be accommodations for DATS users specifically.

Executive Summary

- With Smart Fare clearly understood, there are opportunities to introduce a distance-based pricing calculation and a Min-Max fare. Distance-based pricing is a change that will require significant changes in attitudes among riders, as some perceive that certain users will be unfairly penalized due to having to travel long distances or more frequently. For many, 'zone' pricing makes more intuitive sense, since many users are familiar with this concept from other cities' transit systems. Which Min-Max fare option to move forward with is not clear.
- The benefits of fare-capping built into the Smart Fare technology address many of the concerns (e.g. penalizing frequent riders) arising from the policies.
- Having fares set as a fixed percentage of the adult fare makes logical sense. Likewise, tying together fare increases so all of the fare categories move in unison is also acceptable with an important caveat – fare increases for all groups must be accompanied by increases in the corresponding social assistance amounts.
- Edmontonians agree that there are some groups within society that should get discounts for using transit. Not surprisingly, into this category fall groups like seniors, low-income earners, and persons with disabilities, etc.
- On balance, Edmontonians tend to set the discounts for students, seniors, low income earners and youth into a fairly narrow range of between \$46 and \$56 per month for a pass. While setting all the discount fares at these levels would result in a significant increase in the adult monthly pass (to about \$118 per month) it does imply that there may be an opportunity to streamline the fare categories into just two groups – adults and all other groups. Again, there is the critically important caveat that there be fare programs in place for the vulnerable Edmontonians that could possibly fall through the cracks.

KEY FINDINGS

Methodology- Caveat

The qualitative findings reported for the focus groups and IDIs provide a summary of the opinions expressed by participants in focus group discussions / one-on-one discussions. These discussions are exploratory in nature with the flexibility to uncover and examine topics and issues relevant to project objectives. Due to the limited number of respondents, results cannot be generalized or quantified, but rather are to be considered in a qualitative frame of reference.

Key Insights - Fare Policy

- Note: There are inherent challenges with reviewing policy documents with the general public. As a rule, these policies are not written in user-friendly language and the public is not used to seeing communications materials from the City in this form. The comments herein must be considered with this reality in mind.
- Generally, users feel that the transit system is a public good and therefore while the direct benefits of this system are realized only by a few, benefits do accrue to the City as a whole. This public good concept arises in discussions about the Fare Policy and tempers the perceptions of the documents. As a public good, users felt that the operating costs of the system should be shared with non-using taxpayers. While there was no consensus about how the costs should be shared, there was no doubt that users should not be expected to bear the whole cost since the benefits of a well operated transit system accrue to everyone.
- Users of the system face some very real frustrations with the system in terms of things like safety concerns, scheduling and routing. Proposed changes to the fare setting system must balance these frustrations with the need to make the system more cost efficient. Riders may notice if their fares go up but their service does not improve.
- There is built in understanding that some user groups get discounts and there is a strongly held belief that everyone should be able to access transit irrespective of their ability to pay. This is both right and fair from the transit users perspective.
- As a public good, users do not feel that it is fair to compare the cost of a transit trip to other, competitive, modes of transport. Many users understand that there are people in Edmonton who have no access to other modes and no ability to pay more for transit fares – while being the most reliant on the system. A policy that adjusts fares based on a market-modifier is viewed by some as just an excuse to raise fares.

Key Insights - Fare Policy (cont'd)

- Many believe that ETS sets fares already as a fixed percentage of the adult fare and, in theory, support the idea of indexing the discounts the various demographics get to a base fare. However, there is some concern that while the ability of most groups to pay an increased fare does rise along with the cost of living, there are some (most notably AISH recipients) who haven't seen their incomes rise in a long time so fare increases just take an additional bite out of their disposable income. Furthermore, for many DATS/AISH users, transit is a necessity, not an option (many may also be low income), and fare caps need to be fair for them.
- Finally, most already recognize that frequent users enjoy a discount by virtue of the fixed price pass they buy. No further discounts are required.

Key Insights - Smart Fare

- Familiarity with the Smart Fare system is already quite high since many riders have traveled to other cities where they are in place. Most report positive experiences with the local Smart Fare system.
- The concept does generate a lot of questions that will need to be addressed through the roll-out. Many of the concerns relate to increased transit fares but these could be easily addressed through the fare capping model. The added convenience of a single card does emerge as well as some support for the credit/debit options. Most like the flexibility of having a variety of options at their disposal. It is important to note that many DATS users may not have access to credit / debit / the internet, however.
- There are some serious concerns about how the system will handle data privacy, disabled users and the implementation costs that must be addressed through robust communications. Many of the concerns expressed in the DATS/AISH focus groups and IDIs were related to tapping on and off- there were concerns with respect to difficulties that may be faced by some users with cognitive disabilities, or with visual or mobility impairments, including concerns about disabled people getting "stuck" on transit.

Key Insights - Smart Fare (cont'd)

- While the concept was positively received, there were some challenges around the distance-based fare calculation idea. Many were concerned that they would end up paying more and that low income riders would be unduly penalized through higher fares and the belief that this group needs to travel longer distances in general.
- Without buy-in to a distance-based fare calculation and without a clear understanding of how fare capping could work, the idea of a min/max fare system is difficult to roll-out. However, the fare capping model directly addresses any concerns about min/max fares.
- The Pay as you Go model works and makes sense. There are clear benefits for infrequent users and this could potentially boost ridership from the very occasional user who already has a pre-loaded card and has the option of transit for the odd trip.
- The fare capping concept is at the heart of making the system salient to users. Pass holders especially, must be clear that they will not pay more under the new system than they do under the old system, but that they could potentially benefit on those months where they require less transit.
- In addition to the practical uses and benefits of the Smart Fare system, the transit services must also explain why they are moving to this system, how it is being paid for and why they are not implementing (the more familiar) zone based system.

Summary of Findings

Transit Usage

- Over three-quarters of Edmontonians use public transit in Edmonton, including DATS.
- Four-in-five who use transit or DATS once a week or more regularly use it to commute to/from work/school.
- Among transit users, two-in-five typically use tickets, one-third use a pass, and nearly one-quarter use cash.
- Transit users who typically pay with tickets, an adult monthly pass, or cash are not overly certain about the current prices.
- Among transit users, typical trips usually last around thirty minutes on average.

Cost Recovery Targets

- A large majority agree that transit is a public good which benefits everyone.
- Nearly three-quarters agree that municipal taxes should pay for some of the costs to operate the public transit system (but not the whole cost).
- Most think lower fares would increase ridership.
- Opinions are mixed on whether users should have to pay by distance, and whether everyone should pay the same per trip.
- Current awareness of the cost of running ETS which is covered by fares is low.
- Close to half think the proportion of operating transit covered by user fares should stay about the same.
- Support for a fare increase builds with more information, but does not increase substantially.

Summary of Findings (cont'd)

Minimum and Maximum Fare

- The majority can see the benefits of the min-max model.
- Three-in-five Edmontonians (58%) prefer some form of distance based fare, while two-in-five (42%) prefer the flat rate.

Discount Rates

- There is strong support for the concept of discounted fares for some groups.
- Most want discounts applied to seniors, children, low income, and persons with disabilities. Every group would see a substantial discount from the adult fare.

Slider Tool

- Based on the average discounts assigned to each user group, there is less variance in the discount rates than currently. The impact of the average discounts for each of the groups' monthly pass prices results in an adult monthly pass price of \$118.
- The proposed prices would result in an adult pass price of \$118, which represents a \$21 increase from the current price of \$97.

With respect to the slider tool results, please note the following:

- None of the fares for each group (except the adult) could be set at more than \$75.
- The calculation assumes a static volume of users.
- By imposing an upper limit of \$75 for each segment, we create an artificial distortion in the pricing distribution. For instance, the current monthly pass price for post-secondary students is \$88.50 (i.e above the \$75 ceiling).
- By consistently imposing the adult fare as the residual of the exercise (i.e., respondents could not change the adult price, only the individual group prices) there is an upward bias against the adult, as respondents never get to consciously set / manipulate the adult price.

Methodology- Caveat

The qualitative findings reported for the stakeholder workshops provide a summary of the opinions expressed by stakeholders in workshop discussions. These discussions are exploratory in nature with the flexibility to uncover and examine topics and issues relevant to project objectives. Due to the limited number of respondents, results cannot be generalized or quantified, but rather are to be considered in a qualitative frame of reference.

Key Takeaways

Affordability emerged as a very important concern during the workshops. Participants were especially concerned about the impact of the new policies on low income Edmontonians, with some concerned that the most marginalized groups are at risk of “falling through the cracks.” **It will be important to differentiate between the fare policies, and the programs which are designed to assist these vulnerable populations. Concerns were expressed about whether these programs will continue when the new policies are put into place.**

Because the fare policy principles are phrased so generally, they prompted many questions among participants. Many of the concerns / questions which emerged in the discussion are easily answered in the context of the proposed Smart Fare System (as many relate to the functionality of this system). It will be critical to communicate how the new system will work (especially in terms of logistics) to all Edmontonians in a clear, straightforward, and easy to understand way.

Important questions to answer include:

- What steps are being taken to ensure that certain groups (low income, seniors, youth, those living in the suburbs, those travelling to and from surrounding municipalities, etc.) are not unfairly impacted / penalized?
- What programs are in place to support the policies and ensure that the most marginalized groups do not “fall through the cracks”?
- What are the differences between the new system and the previous system?
- How does the system connect with the broader regional transit system?
- How will all of the moving parts of the transit system (bus, LRT, DATS) be integrated within the new system?

SECTION 1: FOCUS GROUPS AND IDIs

**SECTION 1A: EDMONTON CMA TRANSIT
USER FOCUS GROUPS**

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Research Objectives

Overall, the objective of this phase of the research is to...

understand citizens' opinions and reaction to both the proposed draft Fare Policy documents and the introduction of a Smart Fare payment system in the Capital Region

...with the intention of measuring reactions to the policy and Smart Fare systems quantitatively later in the summer. Specifically, this phase of the research is designed to...

About the fare policy:



Assess Underlying Values and Beliefs: To what extent do riders think the fare system on ETS should be fair and equitable for all, while balancing the needs of riders, taxpayers and the City?



Understanding: How clearly do the draft fare policies express the values and beliefs of riders and other users?

About the Smart Fare:



Reactions: What do riders throughout the region think about the idea of the introduction of a Smart Fare system?



Setting Fares: Should the Smart Fare system be structured so users only pay for what they use?



Heavy Users: How should the Smart Fare system be designed so heavy users are not penalized or unduly burdened?



Fare Categories: How should the Smart Fare system be designed so users who currently enjoy a discount continue to?



Communications: What is the best way to introduce the Smart Fare concept to attract as much buy in as possible?

METHODOLOGY

Methodology- Focus Groups

A total of 8 **focus groups** were held in Edmonton, St. Albert and Sherwood Park with users of the various transit systems.

Respondents were screened to assess their usage of the system, if they qualify for a discounted fare, if they use multiple transit systems and where they live.

Date	Time	Group	Transit Usage Segment	Number of Participants
April 30, 2018	Noon	1	Seniors	9
April 30, 2018	6 pm	2	Monthly ETS pass holders, high usage	8
May 2 2018	6 pm	3	Low income ETS riders	8
May 2 2018	8 pm	4	Cash only ETS users	8
May 3 2018	6pm	5	Monthly ETS pass holders, low/medium usage	7
May 7 2018	6pm	6	St Albert Transit Users	9
May 8 2018	6pm	7	Strathcona Transit Users	8
May 8 2018	8pm	8	Strathcona Transit Users (interagency)	9

All were Edmonton CMA residents

None were employed in:

**Any transit authority within any municipality including the City of Edmonton
Advertising, marketing or marketing research firm**

All had lived in the region for at least 6 months

Methodology- Caveat

The qualitative findings in this report provide a summary of the opinions expressed by participants in focus group discussions. These discussions are exploratory in nature with the flexibility to uncover and examine topics and issues relevant to project objectives. Due to the limited number of respondents, results cannot be generalized or quantified, but rather are to be considered in a qualitative frame of reference.

DETAILED FINDINGS

FARE POLICY

Patterns and Challenges of Transit Usage

- Although participants were specifically chosen as transit riders many expressed the same challenges and concerns with ETS and the sister services.
 - Most tended to use the services during peak hours
 - Most were using transit to and from employment or school
 - Few interagency users (except where specifically recruited as such)
- The volume/frequency of usage was determined by the recruiting specifications for each group
- There were a variety of challenges and concerns that were expressed
 - Safety concerns are common, especially on the LRT (less of an issue on buses or in outlying communities)
 - “There are all kinds of people on the LRT who shouldn’t be there”
 - Scheduling issues are frequently cited :
 - “I regularly see the bus I want pulling away as my bus arrives”
 - Cost:
 - “Fares go up every year”
 - Parking
 - “You can’t get parking at the transit centre after 7:00am”
 - Routing
 - “I have to take three buses and the LRT”
- All of these challenges are worsened by the reduced scheduling on the weekends

Modes and Options

- Most have access to other vehicles or modes of transport (many count cycling and walking among their options)
- Mode choice is often driven by trip need:

“You can’t go to Costco on the bus”

- The decision to take trips downtown on transit is almost always decided by the cost and availability of downtown parking.
- Riders (to downtown) are well aware of what it costs to park downtown and this is always perceived to be the biggest driver of using transit during the week.

“I drive unless I’m going downtown or to campus. Then I take the LRT.”

“I take the bus or train every day to school. On the weekend I usually drive, depending on the weather”

- Very few in Sherwood Park or St. Albert will take local buses on weekends or to go anywhere that isn’t a direct link to the downtown commuter services on weekdays.

“It would take me over an hour to go to the mall on the bus when I can drive there in 10 minutes”

Costs of Transit

- All are aware, within a small 'margin of error' of how much they pay for transit.
- Pass holders are aware of the monthly pass charge
- Ticket users know how much a book of tickets costs
- There is some awareness (based on experience) that interagency (ETS→StAT or ETS→Strathcona Transit) costs more
- Those with discounted passes or those who have people in their household who qualify (i.e. Seniors, Ride, AISH, U-Pass, Students) are aware of the cost of those services.
- A few seniors who enjoy significant discounts were almost embarrassed by the low cost they paid
- All recognize that there are variable costs for different groups – albeit, unless they are a member of that group they are unlikely to know the full extent of the discount.
- Most believe transit fares go up every year
- There were few top of mind mentions that taxpayers (i.e. non users) also subsidize the transit system. However, when this was pointed out, most claimed to be aware it was the case and a few were accurate in their estimate of how much of the cost is shared by taxpayers.

Transit Affordability

- After being told that 60% of the costs of operating transit are subsidized by the taxpayer, discussion was quite lively.
- None believed that transit users should be responsible for paying the entire cost of transit services in their communities
- Transit is a 'public good' that provides value that extends far beyond the riders themselves in that it...
 - Takes vehicles off the road and reduces congestion
 - Reduces pollution/has a positive impact on the environment
 - Provides a means of transportation for non drivers, seniors, students, disabled and low income riders
- Other public services/infrastructure are also subsidized by the taxpayer (e.g. roads), so transit should be too
- Very few believe that all users should pay the same tariff but there is some disagreement about how individuals should qualify for the discounts

“My grandmother is a millionaire. Should she get a discount on transit just because she’s over 65?”

- It is, however, a strongly held belief that everyone should be able to access transit irrespective of their ability to pay.
- Subsidized monthly passes (through employers) are fairly common (at least 1 or 2 in each pass holding group)
- There was little agreement on whether ridership would increase if fares were lower. However, there is a likely upper limit on how the fares can go before ridership declines (but this limit is heavily influenced by the cost of parking). This is especially true for the riders in outlying communities who directly compare the cost of driving and parking to the cost of transit.

“With a monthly pass at \$200, I start to consider driving downtown.”

Fare Policy (1)

Note: The Fare Policy discussions were only included the City of Edmonton (ETS users). Also the wording of this policy was changed slightly to include “time of day” after group 1.

Create fares that are consistent for trips that are similar in nature. Ensure fares are also competitive with other ways of getting around and reflect the cost of offering transit services.

***What this means:** Users will be charged based on characteristics such as distance travelled, time of day, etc. Transit fares will balance the need to cover operating costs while being competitive with other modes of transportation.*

Fare Policy 1 Discussion

- The phrasing of this policy statement was very confusing and quickly generated resistance among most of the groups. Users found it challenging to see the relationship between ETS Fares and the costs of competitive modes of transport.
- For many, ETS, as a provider of a public good, did not have any competitors.
- Many felt the linkage to other modes was unfair for those who did not have access to other modes.
- For some, this policy was simply viewed as an excuse to raise fares.

“This raises my hackles. It implies that this is some sort of private enterprise which it is not. It is a service to cater to the needs of people.”

“You need to look at other ways to promote transit, like better Park & Ride.”

“I don’t think a person with limited income should be charged for the distance traveled.”

“...what other ways? Taxis? Uber? So if there’s not comparables to transit, how can it be competitive?”

“I don’t like the idea of the distance. For the time of day, I could see that, especially at night to encourage people to come home from Whyte Ave.”

“What about people who don’t have access to a vehicle, they can only take transit.”

“There is more value in transit than just moving people around.”

“It negatively affects low income and disabled who aren’t able to make the choice to take the bus...and now have to pay more.”

Fare Policy (2)

Ensure that transit service will be reasonably affordable to the public, regardless of age, financial need or other potential barriers.

***What this means:** Transit fares will be structured in a manner that provides access to the service at a rate that is affordable for all users. A consistent relationship amongst the values of the various fare categories will be established (i.e., discounts will be set at a consistent percentage of the regular fare value).*

Fare Policy 2 Discussion

- In theory, and at first blush, this policy is sound and transit users can see the logic in tying fares together in this way. Many likely already believe that this is the approach used by ETS for fare setting anyway.
- There is widespread agreement that discounts for seniors, students, low income and disabled passengers are appropriate and should always be maintained.
- Many also agree that the indexing structure should be fair and appropriate in most cases.
- However, there were several practical objections to this policy that were raised by riders that mostly related to the principle that some users will be negatively impacted by an indexing structure and, essentially, a “one size fits all” model may not be appropriate in all cases.

“To some of those demographics, their ability to pay doesn’t go up.”

“Socio-economic status has to be taken into account.”

“It’s very ambiguous.”

“We have seniors who fall into different categories, so it should depend on affordability.”

Fare Policy (3)

Promote the use of transit through discounted fares for frequent usage, rewarding individuals that choose transit as a primary means of transportation.

What this means: Greater discounts will be offered throughout fare categories for riders that use the service more frequently.

Fare Policy 3 Discussion

- This policy statement was generally viewed positively, primarily because the system already benefits heavy users through the monthly pass system.
- Most pass buyers have already ‘done the math’ and realize that their pass gives them the per-ride discount they would not enjoy as ticket or cash fare payers.

“I like the idea that you know your price already so you know it’s worth it.”

- Many are also aware that a book of tickets is less expensive than the cash fare, so those users get the frequent traveler benefits as well.

SMART FARE

Smart Fare Concept

The City is considering introducing a “smart fare” system that allows users to travel on Edmonton Transit, Strathcona Transit and St Albert Transit using one electronic payment system - you just tap on and off using a smart card, smart device, credit card or debit card. You can use the same card or device on all three transit systems.

Smart Fare technology is very similar to the way you use a bank card. The account funds remain online rather than loaded onto the card. When you tap your preferred card, the amount for the trip is deducted from your “account”. When the amount of money left in your account gets low, you would get a notice to add more funds.

Smart Fare Concept Discussion

- Familiarity with the concept is already quite high since many participants had traveled to other cities where similar systems are already in place.

- Some groups also spontaneously generated the idea prior to its introduction.

“Realistically, if there was an integrated system it would be the better way....if we could travel anywhere in the Capital Region”

- Some were aware of the discussion at council or in the media about implementing a Smart Fare payment system here.

- But there were still a lot of questions as the groups began to unpack the idea.....

How fast would the tap on/off be?

What happens if you forget to tap off?

What happens to the data?

What happens if you're out of funds and you try to get on the bus?

Will it be cheaper?

Where do you get the cards?

Will it be an app on your phone?

What happens if you lose your card?

Where do you load the card?

How will the infrastructure be paid for?

What happens if you don't have internet access

What happens if you don't have access to a bank account?

Will they raise the fares?

Will it be zone pricing or fixed price?

How will employers pay for/subsidize it?

Will it cost more to go to the airport?

How would visitors to the city use it?

Can I still pay cash?

- Many liked the idea of being able to pay via credit/debit as well as the phone and dedicated card option – primarily having more options to pay was considered a strong benefit.

- On balance, riders were generally positive about the idea and/or felt it was inevitable.

Smart Fare Concept Discussion – Root Causes and Concerns

Most of the questions related to an underlying concern and a genuine desire for understanding and transparency in the system

Question	Underlying Concern or Root Cause
How fast would the tap on/off be?	Worried about slower load times on the bus/bottle necks
What happens to the data?	Privacy concerns
Will it be cheaper?	Cost
Will it be an app on your phone?	A mix of convenience for some, too much technology for others
Where do you load the card? Where do you get the cards? What happens if you lose your card?	Online security concerns as well as convenience
What happens if you don't have internet access? What happens if you don't have access to a bank account?	Access for marginalized communities/fairness
Will they raise the fares?	<i>"Is this an excuse to raise the fares"</i>
How will employers pay for/subsidize it?	Cost/convenience " I only use transit because my employer pays for it"
How would visitors to the city use it?	Convenience
What happens if you're out of funds and you try to get on the bus?	Being stranded
How will the infrastructure be paid for?	Increased fare/taxes
What happens if you forget to tap off?	Cost
Will it be zone pricing or fixed price?	Clarity of fares
Will it cost more to go to the airport?	Cost
Can I still pay cash?	Cost, data privacy

Smart Fare Concept – Some Very Specific Concerns

A few of the participants voiced concerns that will need to be **specifically addressed** given the sensitivity of the issues and the potential for a serious reputational hit to the regional transit systems.

Data Privacy

For some there were real issues about the privacy of the origin/destination data and how it could be compromised and individuals could be identified if the Smart Fare system is tied to bank accounts or credit cards. Recent events involving privacy breaches have heightened sensitivities to this issue and this must be clearly addressed as part of the Smart Fare roll-out.

On the other hand, some users saw the value to the transit systems that the extra data provided in terms of route planning and scheduling. This “macro level” data analysis is an important benefit and should be highlighted but it is not enough to raise the comfort level of those concerned with the risk of data breaches.

Physically and Intellectually Disabled Riders

There were some concerns that the Smart Fare system might add a level of complexity that could be difficult for some users to manage (e.g. remembering to tap on/off or keeping the card loaded with funds). For these users to benefit from the fare capping and discounted fares they must be able to acquire and use the card. A balance must be struck between introducing the new system while being sensitive to the abilities of some users.

Cost to Build and Maintain the System and the Impact on Fares

Some were very concerned that the cost to install and maintain the system will automatically drive fares up. There is a clear understanding that the technology will be expensive and the cost savings are not obvious (e.g. not printing passes, better O/D data etc.). This needs to be addressed in the communications strategy so users understand that they will not be bearing the full cost of the implementation.

As well, some users are wary of the recent LRT signalling challenges and do not want to see a repeat with the Smart Fare system. There is a sense that the Smart Fare technology is not ‘new’ and we do not need a risky “made in Edmonton solution” to implement the system when excellent examples are already in operation elsewhere.

Distance-Based Calculations

- Generally the idea of charging users a fare based in the distance traveled (in the absence of a fare cap or trip maximum) was not well received.
- Many likened the idea to “Uber” or taxi without the flexibility of door to door service.
- Most assumed they would pay more.
- Many were concerned about what happens if they don’t tap off.

“It only makes sense if you tap to get off

- Any distance calculation would have to be ‘as the crow flies’ since riders have no control over the route their buses take.
- Many assume that low income riders tend to travel longer distances and would therefore be the most disadvantaged by a distance-based calculation.
- Many (some from experience in other cities) gravitated to the idea of ‘zone pricing’ but some realized that Edmonton isn’t big enough to justify it. As well, a short trip across a zone boundary has obvious implications.
- Within a fare capped system, however, how the cost of the trip is calculated may not matter as long as riders know that they will pay no more than “x” for a trip of “y” for the month.

Min/Max Fares

- Without buy-in for a distance-based fare system, the Min/Max fare concept doesn't make a lot of sense.
- Most felt that a zone pricing model would account for the Min/Max idea – with the added challenge of short hops across zone lines. Notwithstanding the challenge that many felt that Edmonton's geography doesn't support a logical zone system other than the interconnectedness of the regional transit systems that currently exist. Since most ETS users never access St. Albert or Strathcona transit, they do not see how a zone system could affect them.
- When pressed, however, there was a small consensus that the gap between the minimum and the maximum should be quite narrow – e.g. \$2.00 to \$5.00 rather than \$1.00 to \$7.00.
- Since most felt they would reach the maximum fare on most trips, they felt they would benefit most from a lower maximum rather than a lower minimum.

Pay as You Go and Cash Fare

Pay as You Go

- The Pay-as-you-Go option made sense to most groups.
- They clearly recognized that infrequent users would benefit – especially after explaining that the money on the card doesn't expire. This could be a benefit for the very occasional rider who has the pre-loaded card and has the option to use transit from time to time. With the card in hand, they may be more likely to consider transit as an option.
- Visitors to the city would also benefit. Some had examples of using these cards as tourists in cities with Smart Fare systems and reported very positive experiences.
- Any possible benefits for the discounted user groups (e.g. low income) did not arise spontaneously. Once explained, it made sense to some that lower income riders would be better able to manage their cash flow with this system. However, many (some from experience) know that the decision to take transit is often a direct trade off from other expenses and that by mid-month they may have no money left with which to add value to the card. With the fare capping system in place, however, this concern is mitigated somewhat.

“Sometimes people have to choose between transit and eating and when the money is gone, it's gone until the next month”

Cash Fare

- It made sense to all that the system continue to allow cash payments and that the cash fare users would not realize any of the fare capping or short distance benefits.

Fare Capping

- Many of the groups got to the idea of fare capping on their own as a solution to the questions and challenges raised earlier (See Page 33).
- Fare capping also felt closest to their monthly pass reality and they tended to think of the cap both in terms of calendar months and the pass amount they currently pay.
- Once described...

One idea is to cap the maximum amount a person has to pay in a month for transit. So if you're a heavy user and take multiple trips you might reach the cap quite quickly and all the rest of the trips you take that month would be free. On the other hand, if you didn't use the system as often, you might not reach the cap in any given month. In that case, you'd just pay for what you use.

...many of the previous concerns were immediately addressed.

- There were key advantages for all groups – although some were still concerned about how to verify who qualifies for a discounted fare.
- Clear benefits accrue to...
 - Frequent users who took holidays and who would therefore travel less than the break-even point for pass versus other payment method in a given month
 - Frequent users with unpredictable schedules because of the ebb and flow of work requirements
 - Long distance or inter-agency users

Information Needs

- To introduce the Smart Fare system questions raised by the users (see page 34) must be clearly answered.
- Some of the key messages that need to be clearest include...

- Why is the City and region doing this and what are the benefits to whom?

“If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”

- How is the technology introduction going to be paid for?
 - Why is the city not using a zone system?
- Messaging should strongly emphasize how the fare capping system works and how users will only be charged the rate they are entitled to. There will be a built in relating of the costs to the user using the new system compared to the old system. If a current monthly pass holder pays no more than \$108 this is the benchmark future costs will be compared against.
 - **Note:** The groups did not discuss the possibility of eliminating the free/incremental costs of interagency transfers. It was expected that users would be strongly opposed to this idea and therefore it was felt that any discussion about the subject would be counterproductive to the conversation as a whole. If this change occurs however, the communications around it must be very carefully managed.

**SECTION 1B: DATS / AISH FOCUS GROUP
AND IDIs**

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Research Objectives

Overall, the objective of this phase of the research is to...

understand citizens' opinions and reaction to both the proposed draft Fare Policy documents and the introduction of a Smart Fare payment system in the Capital Region

...with the intention of measuring reactions to the Smart Fare system quantitatively later in the summer.

A total of 8 focus groups were held in Edmonton, St. Albert and Sherwood Park with users of the various transit systems (the findings for this phase are reported earlier within this report).

In addition to the focus groups, 1 focus group was conducted with clients and staff at the Winnifred Stewart Association, and 4 in-depth interviews were conducted with DATS Advisory Group committee members. The focus of these sessions was to incorporate the perspectives of Edmontonians with disabilities (or those who work with them).

The objectives addressed in the focus groups and in-depth interviews are:

- What are the current transit patterns and challenges with respect to DATS and ETS use among people with disabilities?
- What do people with disabilities (and the agencies that serve them) think about the introduction of a Smart Fare system, and are there any perceived challenges?
- How should Smart Fare should be implemented so that those who travel for longer distances or more frequently are not unfairly disadvantaged?
- What are the thoughts on the “Pay As You Go” system?
- What questions still need to be answered / information needs need to be fulfilled prior to the introduction of the Smart Fare system?

METHODOLOGY

Methodology- Focus Groups

Focus Groups

One focus group was held at the Winnifred Stewart Association in Edmonton on May 22, 2018. A total of 12 people participated in the group (a mix of clients and staff). In order to attend to the needs of clients, some staff were unable to stay for the entire duration (or had to leave and come back). The feedback in this group came largely from the staff members, as the clients were unable to provide feedback.

In-Depth Interviews

The City of Edmonton provided Leger with a list of 7 DATS Advisory Group (DAG) committee members to conduct the in-depth interviews for this research. Of these 7 people, Leger was able to schedule four interviews. We were unable to reach the remaining 3 after a total of four call attempts (the maximum advisable so as not to bother the potential respondents). The 4 interviews were conducted between the dates of May 29 – June 1, 2018.

Herein, both those who participated in the focus groups and IDIs are referred to as “participants”.

The qualitative findings in this section provide a summary of the opinions expressed by participants in focus group and one-on-one discussions. These discussions are exploratory in nature with the flexibility to uncover and examine topics and issues relevant to project objectives. Due to the limited number of respondents, results cannot be generalized or quantified, but rather are to be considered in a qualitative frame of reference.

DETAILED FINDINGS

USAGE AND COSTS

Patterns and Challenges of Transit / DATS Usage

- Most focus group participants (clients and staff) report using ETS. They predominantly pay using bus passes or tickets (staff noted that clients' guardians, or in some cases the staff, would be responsible for obtaining transit passes or tickets for the clients).
- All of the DAG committee members report using transit, with some using monthly passes and some using tickets (often based on the frequency with which they use transit- if planning to use more, a pass is usually selected versus tickets). Interestingly, one member noted that she only uses DATS in the winter, whereas she gets around using ETS/the LRT in the summer.
- The DAG committee members felt that most DATS users would be using a monthly pass.

Challenges with DATS...

- The most commonly mentioned challenge related to DATS is scheduling: it can be difficult for people to get places on time using DATS, and to know how long they will be at a certain place so they can schedule a pickup. Often, this means a "lack of freedom to come and go as one pleases, or modify one's schedule/activities on short notice."
- Crowding (i.e. lots of people) in DATS vans was also flagged as a concern by one participant.
- One person mentioned that having to pick up a transit pass can be difficult for DATS users, who may have challenges with respect to picking up the pass in person. Similarly, low income passholders have to prove their eligibility, which may be difficult for some.
- There was also a mention that DATS does not travel outside the city limits, which reduces the options for some users.

Costs of Transit

- Consistent with the research among the general population of transit users, broadly, there is knowledge that different people (such as seniors, youth, students, low income users) pay different prices to access the transit system.
- One DAG committee member also mentioned a reduced rate for companion fare, in that the companion of a person with a disability can ride for free.
- Also consistent with the general population research, generally, those who use transit are aware of how much they pay (whether this is for monthly passes or tickets).
- Although caregivers and guardians would usually have access to a debit or credit card to load funds onto a Smart Card, it was noted that many DATS users would not have access to credit/debit, and/or internet access.

SMART FARE

Smart Fare Concept

The City is considering introducing a “smart fare” system that allows users to travel on Edmonton Transit, Strathcona Transit and St Albert Transit using one electronic payment system - you just tap on and off using a Smart Card, smart device, credit card or debit card. You can use the same card or device on all three transit systems.

Smart Fare technology is very similar to the way you use a bank card. The account funds remain online rather than loaded onto the card. When you tap your preferred card, the amount for the trip is deducted from your “account”. When the amount of money left in your account gets low, you would get a notice to add more funds.

Smart Fare Concept Discussion- General Questions and Concerns

- When the smart fare concept was introduced, most were not immediately clear on how the system would work. A few people had experience using a similar system in other cities (including Toronto, Montreal, Malaysia, Singapore).
- After discussing the concept, participants had similar questions to those expressed in the general population transit user focus groups, namely:
 - Cost
 - What will the new system cost people compared to the current one?
 - Is there an initial cost to get the Smart Card?
 - How will the prices be regulated?
 - Will different groups (i.e. seniors) still be able to pay lower fare?
 - Security concerns
 - How will my personal information be protected?
 - Will they be able to track where I'm going? (when this particular concern was addressed, another participant in the focus group mentioned that this can already be done through cell phones)
 - How will they protect my banking information / ensure it doesn't get "hacked"?
 - Fairness
 - Will those travelling longer distances be unfairly penalized?
 - Does this punish people in the suburbs?
 - Sometimes, people do not have fare available, and the driver lets them ride for free (this seems unfair- how will it be dealt with?)

Smart Fare Concept Discussion- General Questions and Concerns (cont'd)

- Loss of card
 - Will someone else just be able to pick up the card and use it?
 - Is there a replacement cost for losing your card, and if so, how much is it?

- Loading and tracking
 - Participants were unsure about where they would load their card, and mentioned that transit stations should have kiosks where it is possible to put more money on the Smart Card (with clear instructions about how to do so). It was also mentioned that ensuring proper maintenance of these machines is critical (and that there needs to be a way to get customer support if someone has any questions or is confused).
 - Participants stressed that it will be important to have many locations across the City to load the card.
 - Others were unsure how they would track the funds available on their card.

- Transferability: is the Smart Card transferable between people? If so, how does this work?

- One person did not understand the tap on / tap off concept right off the bat, and was concerned that the card would charge her for the original trip she planned versus the trip she actually took (i.e., I originally planned to travel to Clareview station from Century Park, but now I have to get off at Stadium- what happens?). Once it was explained that she would only pay for the trip from Century Park to Stadium, her concerns were assuaged.

- One important concern that also came up among this group was the fact that many users of inner city agencies in the City may receive bus tickets from these agencies in order to get to appointments. They were concerned that it may not be feasible for these users to have a Smart Card, and noted that this is a serious concern for accessibility. With respect to this, there were also some concerns about trying to “trade” the value of the Smart Card on the street. Participants were very concerned about ensuring that the needs of these vulnerable Edmontonians are met under the new system.

- Will there be a tap at the rear of the DATS bus?

- Will the driver be able to help?

- One person in the focus group wondered how the Smart Card will be integrated with the UPass.

Smart Fare Concept Discussion- Concerns for People with Disabilities

- When asked how the Smart Fare system may work differently for people with disabilities, one person urged the City...

“Do not lump everyone into one category. This is trying to accommodate the disabled, rather than include them. Strive for inclusion, not just accommodation.”

She mentioned that it is critical for ETS to include people with disabilities to get their unique perspective, noting that people with disabilities need to be part of the Smart Fare decisions and discussions.

- The following concerns were expressed for people with disabilities traveling on transit and/or DATS, largely related to tapping on and off:
 - How will someone with a visual impairment manage the tap on/tap off process?
 - How do we make the tap on / tap off process clear for those with a cognitive disability?
 - Not everyone has good use of their hands or arms- currently some people in wheelchairs or walkers may tape their bus pass to their mobility aid so the driver can see it- how will they be able to tap on and off?
 - Concerns with respect to people with disabilities getting “stuck” on transit if they are confused / unsure about the tap on / tap off process.
- One staff member in the focus groups mentioned that currently, staff members at associations (including Winnifred Stewart) use transit tickets to accompany clients of the association (such as those with a disability) on transit (currently, these tickets are purchased on a yearly basis). She mentioned that it will be critical to know how the Smart Card will work for these staff members, and what sort of coordination will be required for staff who need tickets to take the clients places.
- Access to the Smart Card was also a concern. One participant mentioned that currently, low income pass users have to fill out a low income transit pass application form, be approved, and personally pick up the pass. They wondered how this will be accommodated in the new system.
- There will be a real need for “training” for some members of the community who may have limitations on their understanding of the new system.

Fare Capping

- In the focus group, the idea of fare capping, or a “maximum” did not come up intuitively.
- Once it was explained...

One idea is to cap the maximum amount a person has to pay in a month for transit. So if you're a heavy user and take multiple trips you might reach the cap quite quickly and all the rest of the trips you take that month would be free. On the other hand, if you didn't use the system as often, you might not reach the cap in any given month. In that case, you'd just pay for what you use.

...there was a bit of difficulty in understanding the concept.

- When the idea of a maximum was mentioned in the group (and that those not hitting the maximum would pay as they go), a comparison to current fares immediately came up. Participants stressed that the maximum should not be above the current monthly cost, and that they would need to see specific costs for the Smart Card system to compare to the system in place now.
- One person noted that “it doesn't really matter as long as you don't go over the maximum for the month.”
- Affordability is of paramount concern, in the words of one participant, “The numbers have to be the same or similar, if not, what's the use? Nobody wants to pay more than now.”
- A few mentioned that it is **crucial for the City to understand that a lot of people who use DATS have low incomes and are dependent on transit- they need access to the system and the fare caps need to be fair for them.**

Fare Capping (cont'd)

- One participant offered the idea of giving a discount to those travelling in off-peak hours.
- After some explanations and back and forth, most understood how fare capping is intended to work, and this concept assuaged most of the initial concerns they brought up following the introduction of the Smart Fare concept. **A clear explanation of how fare capping works and the benefits it provides will be very important.**
- One participant who had particularly good knowledge of the fare capping system noted that once the system is in place, it may be helpful to do targeted information sessions with associations who work with DATS users and people with disabilities to clearly explain how the new system works, with lots of time set aside to answer questions and concerns.
- Only one participant offered comments on the idea of minimum / maximum fares (this topic did not prompt much conversation in the focus group as uncertainty with the Smart Fare and Fare Capping systems was still present). He noted that there should be a minimum and maximum fare:

“The gap between the minimum and maximum fare should be smaller (versus larger)- the minimum should be enough to pay for the service, and the maximum shouldn’t be so high that it dissuades people from taking transit, or makes it undesirable to take transit for long trips based on the cost. Transit needs to remain competitive with other modes of transportation.”

Pay As You Go

- There was some trepidation in the focus group with respect to Pay As You Go. A couple of participants mentioned that the current system (wherein one buys an adult pass up front at the beginning of the month) is more convenient (and you don't have to worry about reloading). The idea that the Pay As You Go system may help those who do not have all the money for a pass at the beginning of the month did not prompt much conversation.
- One participant in the in-depth interviews mentioned that Pay As You Go is beneficial because if you do not reach the fare cap, you can hold on to the leftover money. In her words, "it's sort of like tickets, where you can keep them at the end of the month if you don't use all of them."
- For the DATS user who also has easy access to other modes of transportation (e.g. taxi, family vehicle, etc.), the Pay As You Go system is a convenient means to offer more options.

Information Needs

- The following information areas need to be covered when introducing the new system:
 - **Security of personal information and protection of privacy** for the Smart Fare system
 - **Cost of the system** – noting that users will compare the cost to the current costs to take transit, and benchmark against these
 - Steps being taken to ensure **Smart Fare is fair** for all Edmontonians
 - Basic information on **how to use the card** (how and where to load it, how to check the balance, etc.)
 - How low income Edmontonians will be able to use the new Smart Cards (currently they are required to fill out forms and pick up transit passes in person- there will need to be a mechanism for this)
 - The steps being taken to **ensure the needs of vulnerable Edmontonians** (such as those who are homeless and/or reliant on inner-city agencies) **are met**
 - The steps being taken to **ensure the needs of Edmontonians with disabilities are met** (especially with respect to the tap on / tap off system, which may be difficult for these users)

- Participants in the in-depth interviews offered the following suggestions for communicating changes related to the Smart Fare system with DATS users and Edmontonians with disabilities:
 - Clearly communicate the information in plain language, in a way that respects those with disabilities and those who do not have disabilities
 - Get the word out to DATS users through caregivers, the DATS newsletter, information on buses, and potentially a presentation to DAG
 - Educate and inform agencies in Edmonton who work with people with cognitive disabilities, and empower them to educate their users
 - Educate drivers on how the new system works – drivers will need to be trained so that they are able to help if needed, and have the knowledge to answer questions
 - Be prepared to provide in-person demonstrations at places like Winnifred Stewart to ensure users are completely comfortable with the new system.

SECTION 2: ONLINE AND OPEN LINK SURVEYS

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Context & Objectives

Stemming from the Transit Strategy, the City of Edmonton needs to develop policies to guide the setting of transit fares in the future.

The functionality of the policies is closely tied to the proposed introduction of the Regional Smart Fare Program. In the meantime, before finalizing the fare policies, research is required to better understand Edmontonians' likely response to both the introduction of the policies, and the resulting changes to how fares are set (and the levels for various fares).

The four draft policy pieces are:

- **Balanced cost recovery rate:** In Edmonton, 40% transit operating costs covered by rider fares and 60% by municipal taxes. In similar communities, rider fares cover 40%-60% of costs.
- **Fairness:** Fares are consistent for trips similar in nature.
- **Affordable:** Consistent fare discounts for people who need it, e.g., seniors, youth.
- **Frequent user discounts:** Encourage more people to ride transit by rewarding frequent users.

This research was designed to measure the practical outcomes that could stem from the introduction of these policies, including:

- What are the personal and societal benefits of a functioning transit system?
- What proportion of the costs of running transit should be covered by the fare box?
- How should transit fares be set in the future?
- What discount rates should apply to the various user groups in society?

METHODOLOGY

Methodology- General Population Survey

Data Collection

1,205 residents of Edmonton proper aged 15 or older (“Edmontonians”) were surveyed online via Leger’s panel, Legerweb.com, between the dates of July 9th to 21st, 2018. Within this report, “general population survey” is used to denote the findings among this group.

Target Respondents

City of Edmonton proper residents aged 15 or older who have lived in the City of Edmonton for at least 6 months.

Statistical Reliability

As a non-random Internet survey, a margin of error is not reported (margin of error accounts for sampling error). Had these data been collected using a probability sample, the margin of error would have been $\pm 2.8\%$, 19 times out of 20.

The data for the general population survey are weighted by age, gender, and city quadrant.

Methodology- Open Link Survey

Data Collection

In addition to the general population survey, the City also offered interested citizens the opportunity to complete the survey through an open link.

The open link was provided on the City of Edmonton's website, and hosted on Leger's secure server. The link was open from July 10-26, 2018.

A total of 2,559 surveys were completed through the open link.

Analysis / Caveats

The open link questionnaire was identical to the general population questionnaire, with the following exceptions:

- All terminations present in the general population questionnaire were removed from the open link survey, specifically:
 - Those outside of Edmonton city limits were not disqualified from completing the survey (although neighbourhood and length of time lived in Edmonton were only captured among those who identified they reside within City limits)
 - Those within Edmonton who have lived there for less than 6 months were not disqualified from completing the survey
 - Those under 15 years of age were not disqualified from completing the survey

Analysis / Caveats (cont'd)

The open link is not subject to the same controls as the general population panel survey, and therefore, any differences between the two should be interpreted with caution.

It is possible for one person to complete the open link survey multiple times. Duplicate IP addresses were not flagged and removed from the final results, due to the fact that more than one unique individual could complete the survey from one computer, sometimes in large volumes (such as at a public library, for example).

The data for the open link survey are not weighted.

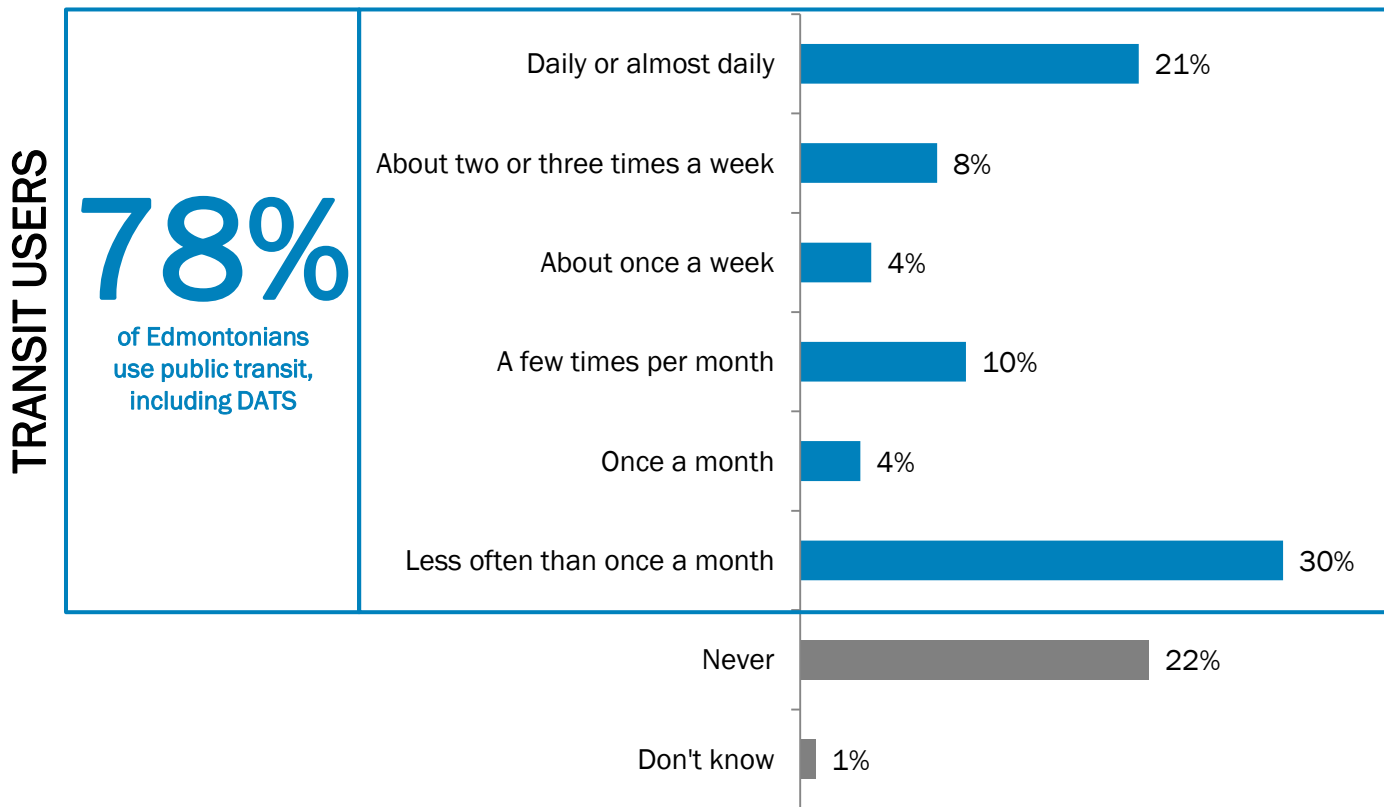
The open link survey data has been reported alongside the general population survey in the appendix, for reference only. Any differences between the two surveys exceeding 15% have been flagged in yellow.

DETAILED RESULTS

DETAILED RESULTS

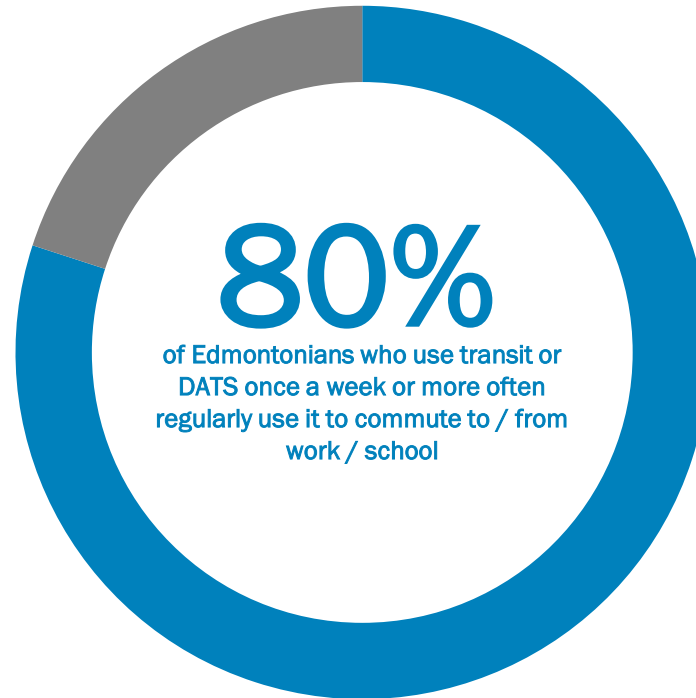
Transit Usage

Over three-quarters of Edmontonians use public transit in Edmonton, including DATS.



Base: Edmontonians (n=1,205)
 Source: General population survey
 T1. How often do you ride public transit in Edmonton, including DATS?

Four-in-five who use transit or DATS once a week or more regularly use it to commute to/from work/school.

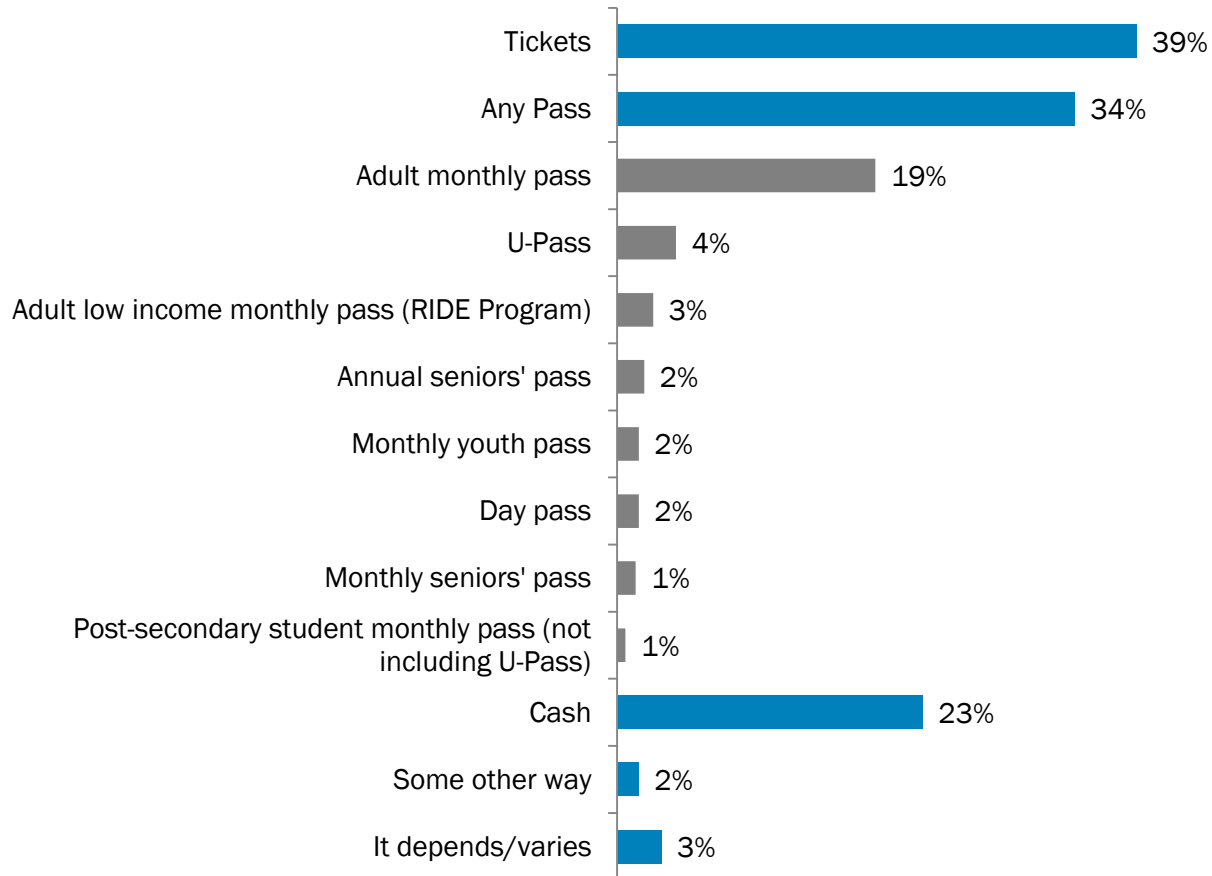


Base: Edmontonians who use transit or DATS once a week or more often (n=359)

Source: General population survey

T5. Do you regularly take transit to commute to and from work or school?

Among transit users, two-in-five typically use tickets, one-third use a pass, and nearly one-quarter use cash.

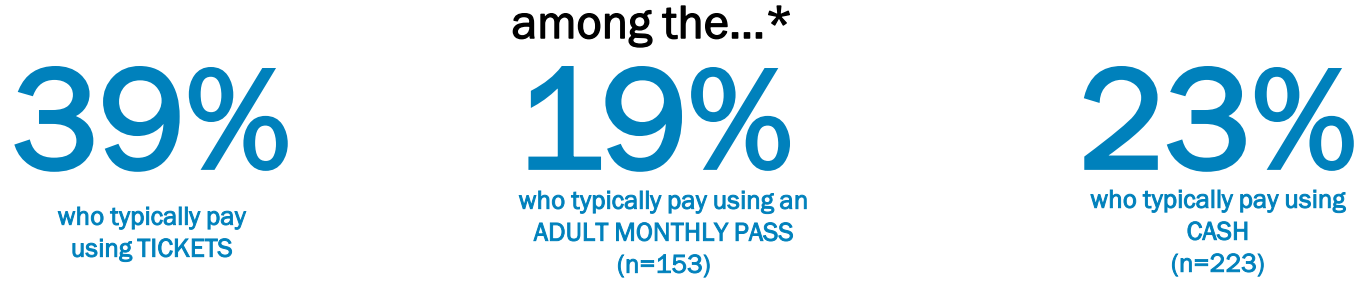


Base: Edmonton transit users (n=917)
 Source: General population survey
 T2. How do you typically pay your fare on ETS or DATS?

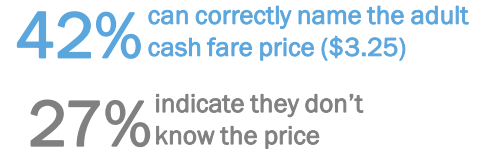
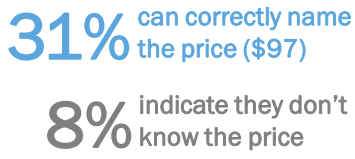
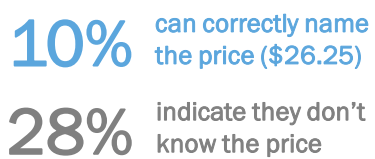
Users who typically pay with tickets, an adult monthly pass, or cash are not overly certain about the current prices.

CURRENT PRICES

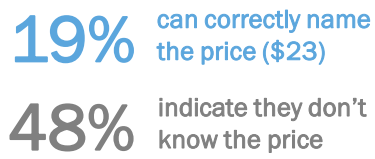
\$23 <small>(book of 10 youth / senior tickets)</small>	\$26.25 <small>(book of 10 adult tickets)</small>	\$97 <small>(adult monthly pass)</small>	\$3.25 <small>(adult cash fare, single trip)</small>
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...among those <65 years old (n=304)



...among those 65+ years old (n=61)

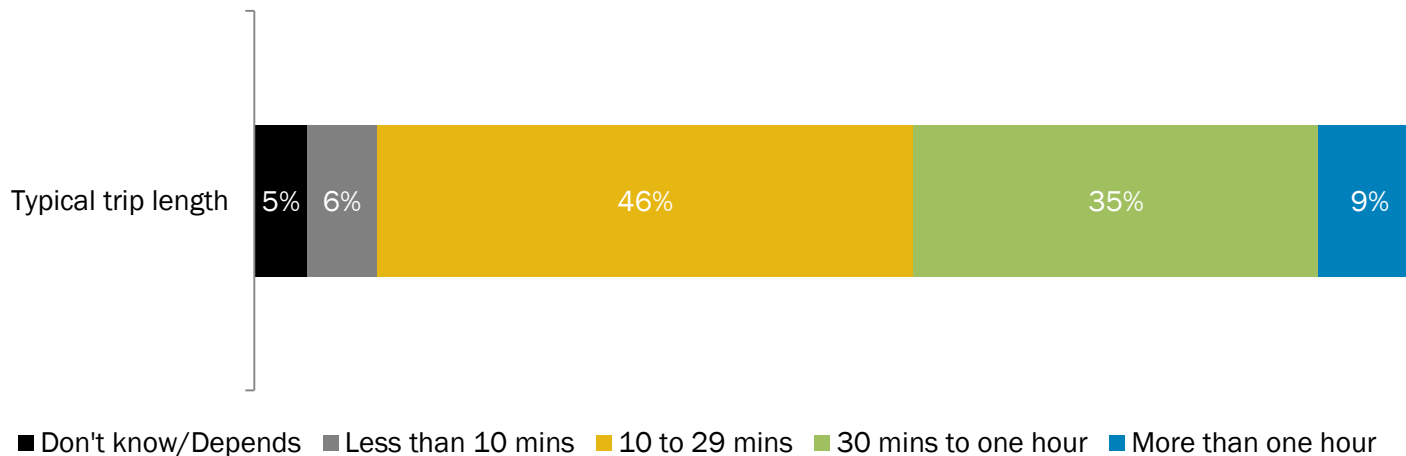


Base: *Edmonton transit users (n=917) Results are not shown for pricing for all pass types excluding adult due to insufficient sample size (<30 respondents).

Source: General population survey

QT3a. How much do you pay for using an adult monthly pass? QT3b. How much does it cost for a book of 10 tickets? QT3c. How much is the adult cash fare for a single trip on ETS?

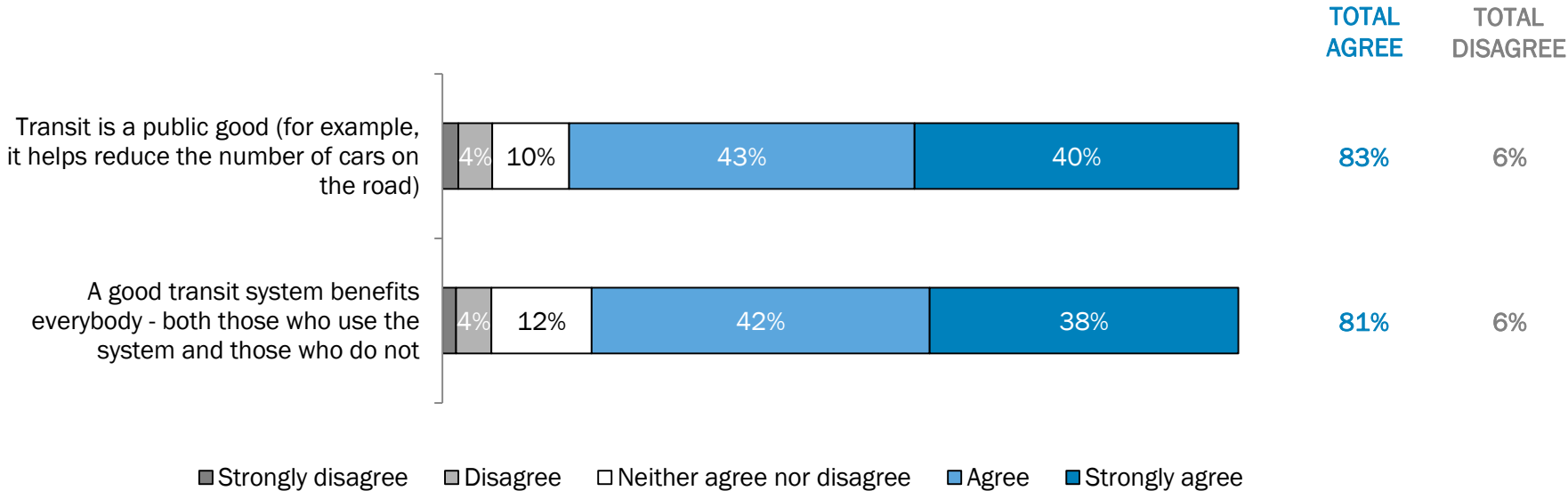
Among transit users, typical trips usually last around thirty minutes on average.



DETAILED RESULTS

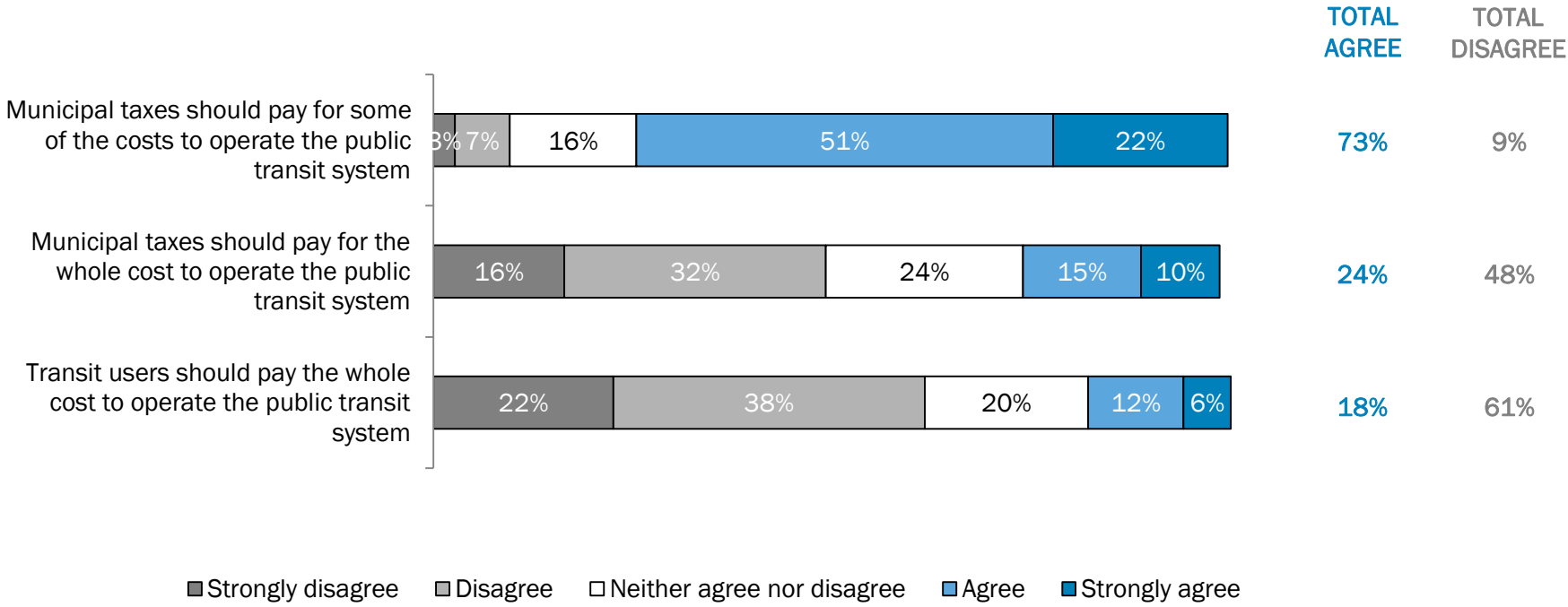
Cost Recovery Targets

A large majority agree that transit is a public good which benefits everyone.



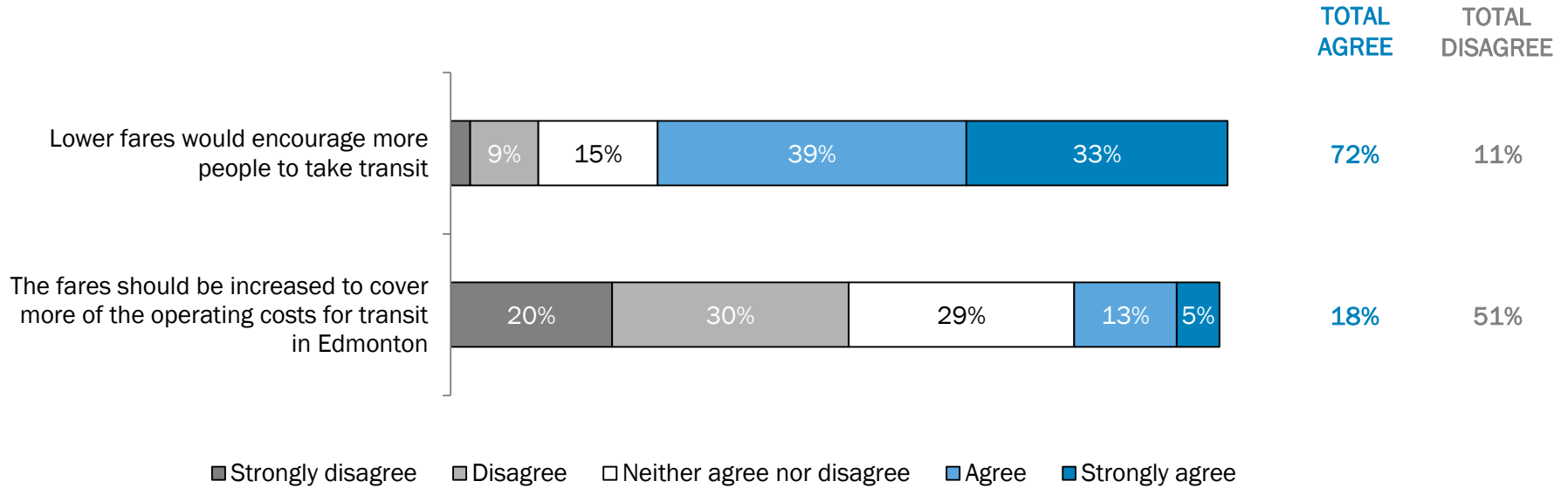
Base: Edmontonians (n=1,205). Mentions 2% or lower are not labeled. Don't know responses are not shown.
 Source: General population survey
 C1. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about transit in Edmonton?

Nearly three-quarters agree that municipal taxes should pay for some of the costs to operate the public transit system (but not the whole cost).



Base: Edmontonians (n=1,205). Don't know responses are not shown.
 Source: General population survey
 C1. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about transit in Edmonton?

Most think lower fares would increase ridership.

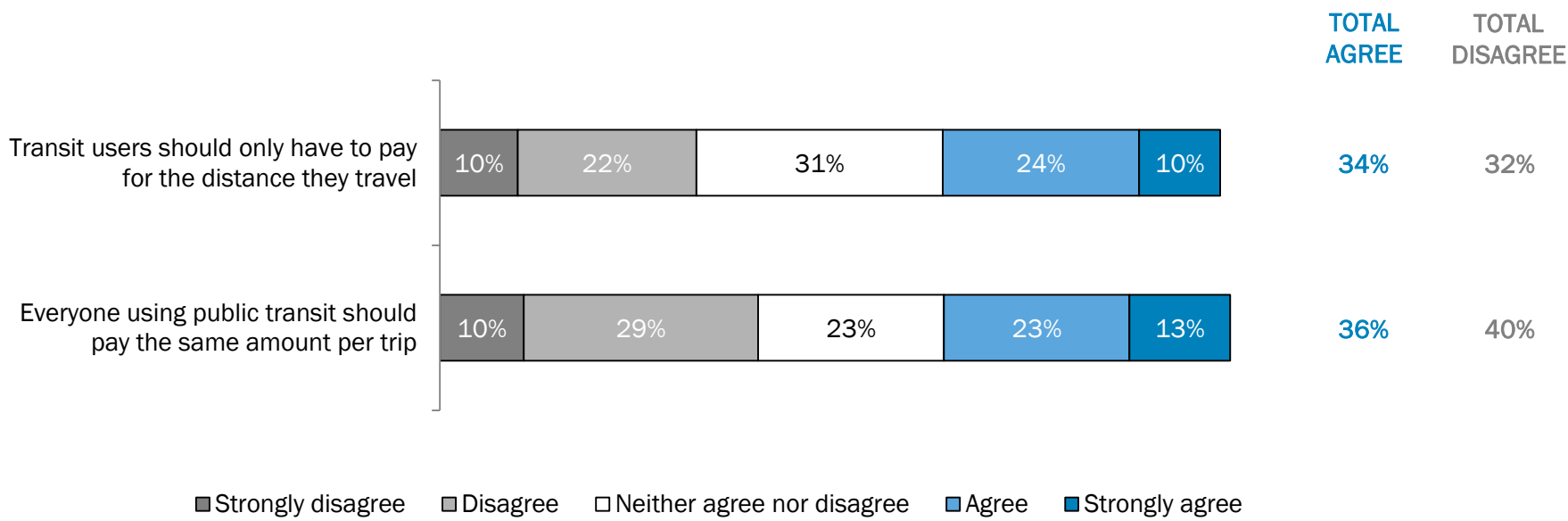


Base: Edmontonians (n=1,205). Mentions 2% or lower are not labeled. Don't know responses are not shown.

Source: General population survey

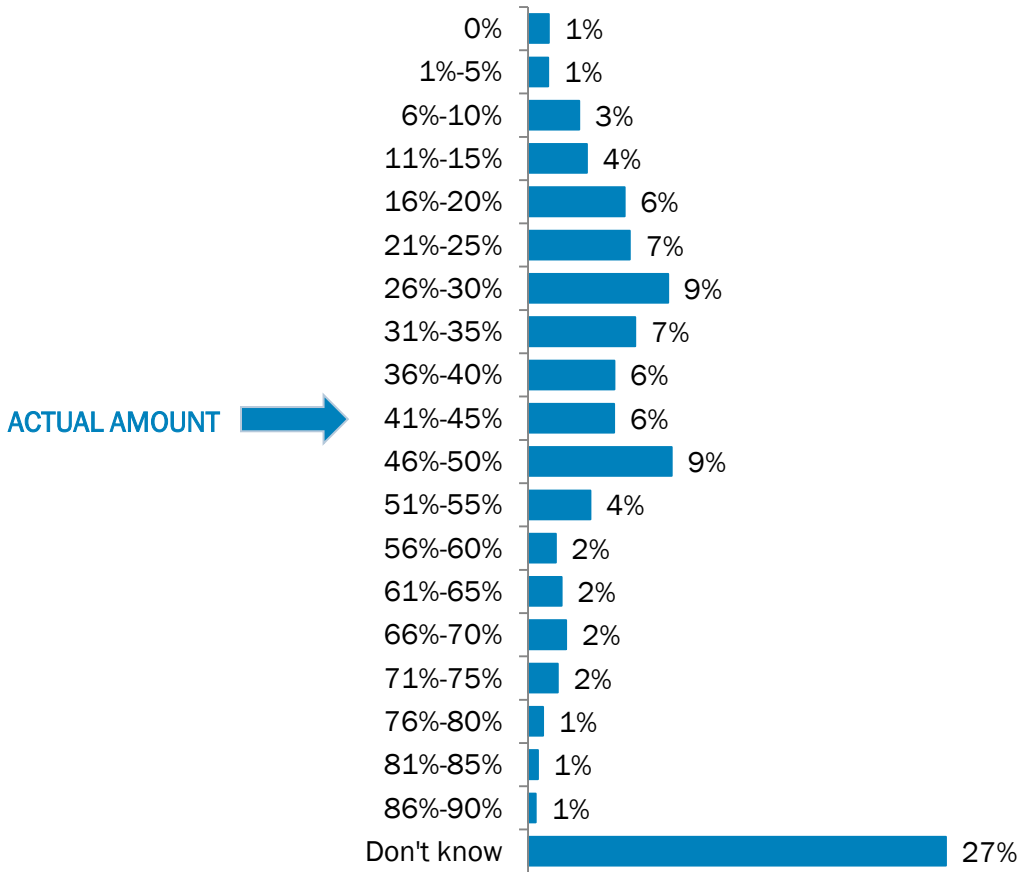
C1. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about transit in Edmonton?

Opinions are mixed on whether users should have to pay by distance, and whether everyone should pay the same per trip.



Base: Edmontonians (n=1,205). Don't know responses are not shown.
 Source: General population survey
 C1. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about transit in Edmonton?

Current awareness of the cost of running ETS which is covered by fares is low.



Base: Edmontonians (n=1,205)
 Source: General population survey

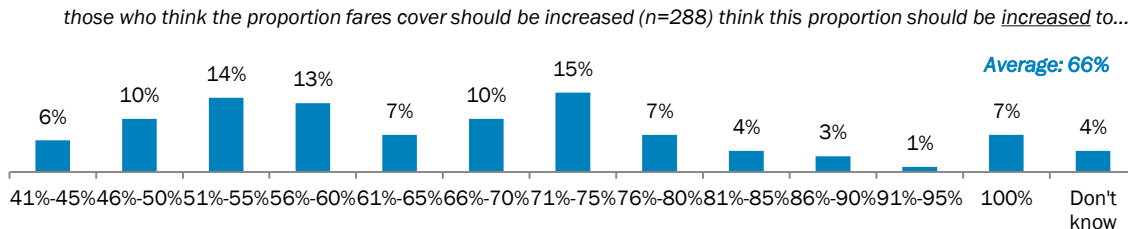
C2. As you may know, only a portion of the cost of operating transit is covered by the fares users pay. As far as you know, roughly what percent of the cost of running ETS is covered by the fares?

Close to half think the proportion of operating transit covered by user fares should stay about the same.

Currently in Edmonton, the revenue from customer fares covers about 40%-45% of the cost of running transit in Edmonton. The rest of the cost is covered by taxes. Do you think the amount covered by the fares should...

24%

think the amount covered by fares should be **INCREASED** (i.e. cover more of the cost)

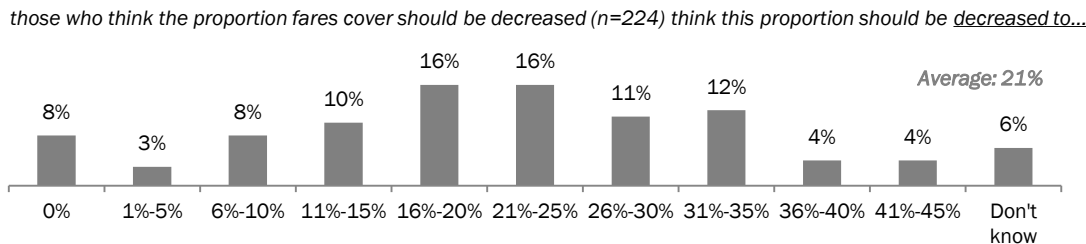


47%

think the amount covered by fares should stay **ABOUT THE SAME**

20%

think the amount covered by fares should be **DECREASED** (i.e. cover less of the cost)



9%

aren't sure

Base: Edmontonians (n=1,205)

Source: General population survey

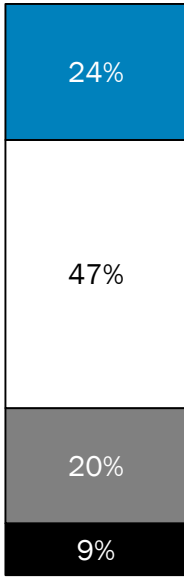
C3. Currently in Edmonton, the revenue from customer fares covers about 40%-45% of the cost of running transit in Edmonton. The rest of the cost is covered by taxes. Do you think the amount covered by the fares should... C4. **IF FARE PERCENTAGE SHOULD BE INCREASED:** What should the percentage covered by the customer fares be INCREASED to? C5. **IF FARE PERCENTAGE SHOULD BE DECREASED:** What should the percentage covered by the customer fares be DECREASED to?

Support for a fare increase builds with more information, but does not increase substantially.

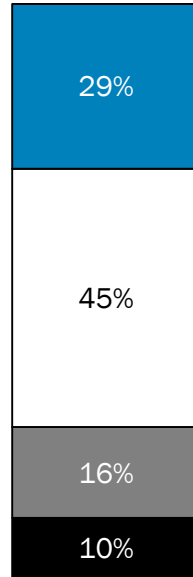
Currently in Edmonton, the revenue from customer fares covers about 40%-45% of the cost of running transit in Edmonton. The rest of the cost is covered by taxes. Do you think the amount covered by the fares should...

In other Canadian cities of the same size, the customer fares cover between 40% and 60% of the cost of running the transit systems. In Edmonton the fares cover between 40% and 45%. Knowing this, do you think that Edmonton should...

Prior to receiving information specific to this topic, 18% of Edmontonians agreed (agree, strongly agree) that fares should be increased to cover more of the operating costs for transit in Edmonton.



- Be increased (i.e. fares should cover more of the cost)
- Stay about the same
- Be decreased (i.e. fares should cover less of the cost)
- Don't know



- Increase the percentage that fares cover and decrease the amount taxes cover
- Keep the current percentage covered by fares and taxes the same as now
- Decrease the percentage fares cover and increase the percentage that taxes cover
- Don't know

Base: Edmontonians (n=1,205)
 Source: General population survey
 C1. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about transit in Edmonton? C3. Currently in Edmonton, the revenue from customer fares covers about 40%-45% of the cost of running transit in Edmonton. The rest of the cost is covered by taxes. Do you think the amount covered by the fares should... C6. In other Canadian cities of the same size, the customer fares cover between 40% and 60% of the cost of running the transit systems. In Edmonton the fares cover between 40% and 45%. Knowing this, do you think that Edmonton should...

DETAILED RESULTS

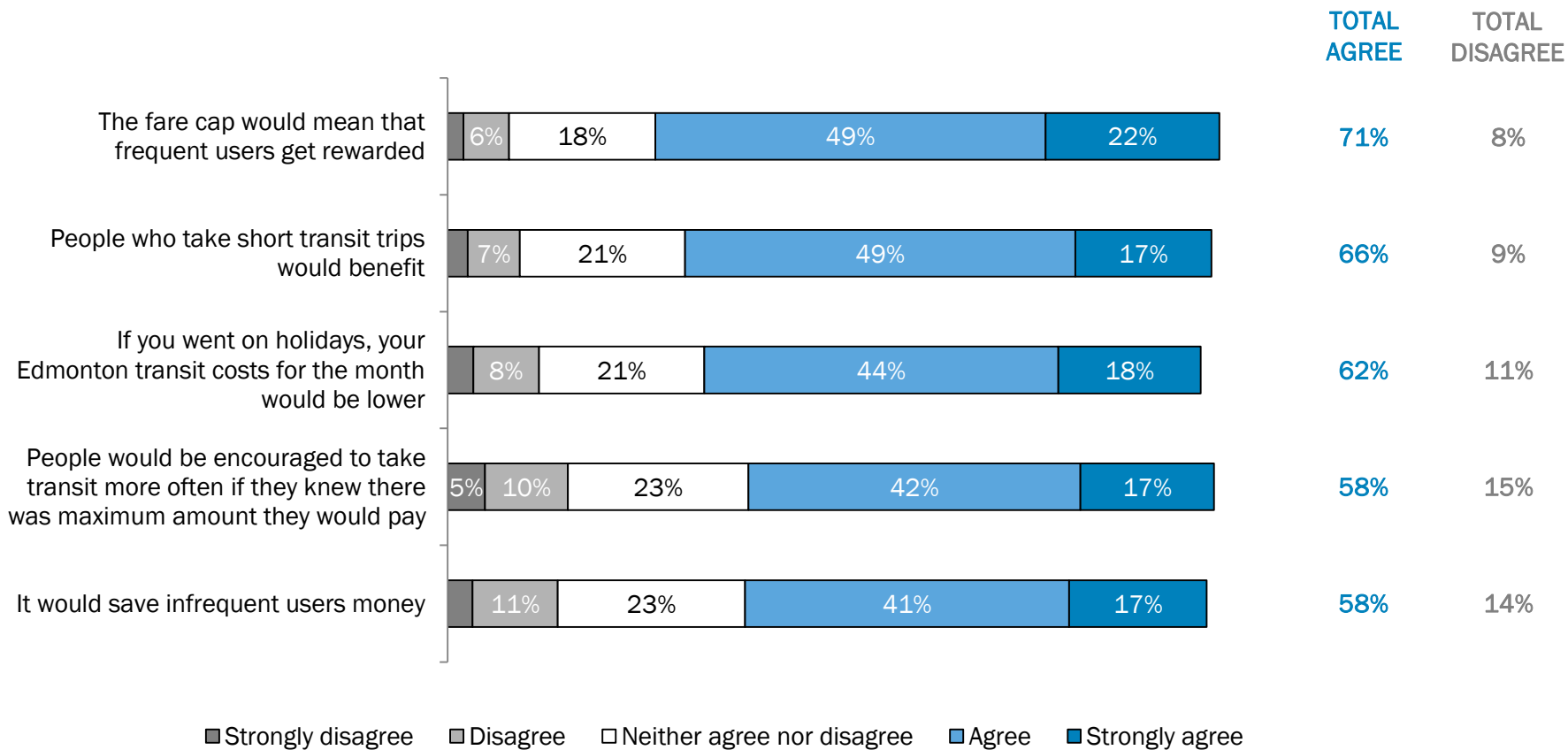
Minimum and Maximum Fares

Respondents were provided with the following information prior to responding to the statements about a minimum and maximum charge...

In future, the City of Edmonton may shift to charging people based on the distance they travel on transit. In order to ensure fairness for everyone, there could be both a minimum fare and a maximum fare set for each trip.

There could be a maximum (capped) amount a person has to pay in a month for transit that would be similar to paying for a monthly pass. Frequent transit users would reach the cap before the end of the month, and not pay more during that time frame. For people who don't use the system as often, they might not reach the cap in the month. In that case, they'd just pay for what they used.

The majority can see the benefits of the min-max model.



Base: Edmontonians (n=1,205). Mentions 3% or lower are not labeled. Don't know responses are not shown.

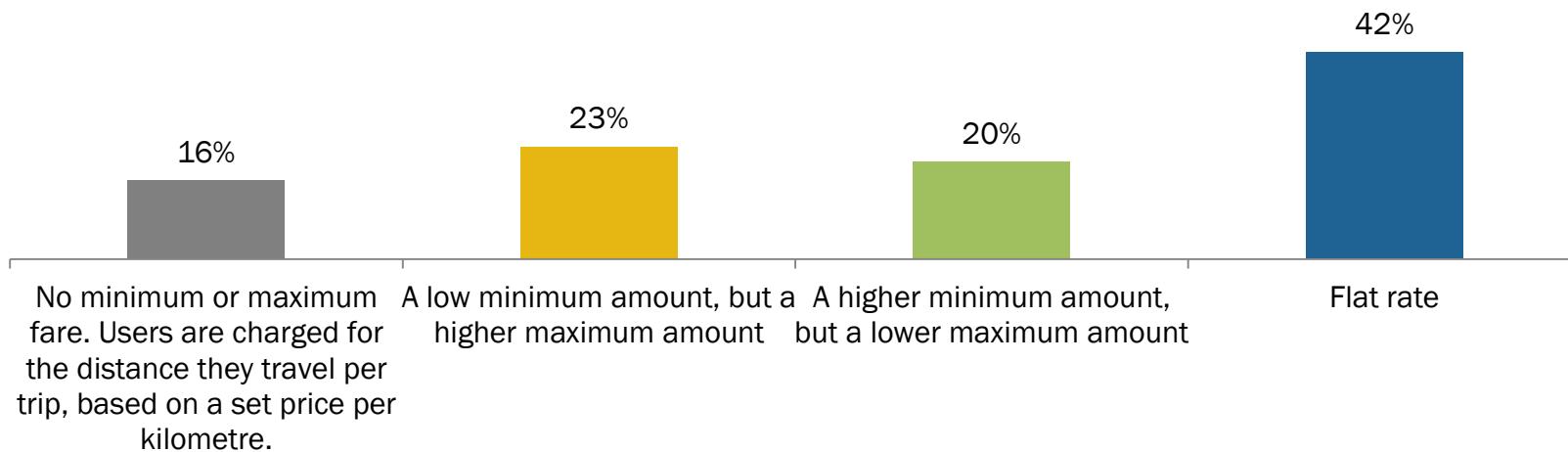
Source: General population survey

M2. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about a minimum and maximum charge?

Respondents were asked which of the following four options they prefer...

<p>Option 1</p>	<p>No minimum or maximum fare.</p> <p>Users are charged for the distance they travel per trip, based on a set price per kilometre.</p>	<p>A trip cost would range from the low price for a single kilometer (x cents/ km) of travel to a high cost based on the longest distance travelled.</p> <p>The majority of customer trips are 10 km or less.</p> <p>This scenario minimizes the cost of short trips using transit, but only limits the cost of transit service through established cost caps (i.e., monthly cap).</p>
<p>Option 2</p>	<p>A low minimum amount, but a higher maximum amount</p> <p>(e.g., *\$1 min per trip / \$5 max per trip)</p>	<p>This scenario allows transit to provide a trip cost that reflects the alternative travel options.</p> <p>A short trip (several city blocks) would have a low minimum cost; the main trip alternatives for shorter trips would be walking or cycling to a destination.</p> <p>The higher maximum trip cost offsets the low minimum cost. The alternative costs for users that reach a maximum trip cost would be driving (car, gas, parking, etc.) or taxi/ride-sharing services.</p> <p>This scenario keeps the cost of short trips low, but provides cost certainty through a maximum trip fare for longer trips.</p>
<p>Option 3</p>	<p>A higher minimum amount, but a lower maximum amount</p> <p>(e.g., *\$2 min per trip/ \$4 max per trip)</p>	<p>In this scenario, users pay a higher amount for shorter trips.</p> <p>The lower maximum cost for a trip ensures that transit is more affordable regardless of the distance travelled.</p> <p>While still using a distance based model, this scenario limits the potential cost of any single transit trip.</p>
<p>Option 4</p>	<p>Flat Rate</p> <p>Users pay the same amount per trip regardless of how far they travel.</p>	<p>Customers pays the same whether they take a short or long trip.</p> <p>This scenario eliminates any variation of single trip fares, providing cost certainty for each trip.</p>

Three-in-five (58%) Edmontonians prefer some form of distance based fare, while two-in-five (42%) prefer the flat rate.



Base: Edmontonians (n=1,205)

Source: General population survey

M3. The City is considering options for how to set single trip fares. Please keep in mind that in every case, there will be a maximum amount that a rider will pay in a month, similar to having an ETS monthly pass. Which one do you most prefer? (forced choice)

Reasons for Preference

Edmontonians who prefer the no minimum or maximum fare option	(n=187)
Fair / fairest option	33%
Best choice / option / most appealing option	14%
I like the pay-per-use idea / pay-per-use model	10%
Distance matters / should matter / ties cost to distance	8%
It makes the most sense / most logical option	4%
Best value / cost effective option	4%
Reasonable/ most reasonable	3%
It's applied elsewhere / works well elsewhere	3%
Simplest / Easiest / less hassle	3%
Benefits those who do short distance commuting	2%
Option most likely to encourage greater transit use	2%
Easily enforceable / simpler to enforce / administer	1%
Other	9%
None / Nothing	2%
Don't know / Refused	14%

Edmontonians who prefer the low minimum, but higher maximum option	(n=258)
Fair / fairest option	24%
Best choice / option / most appealing option	19%
Benefits those who do short distance commuting	13%
Option most likely to encourage greater transit use	11%
Distance matters / should matter / ties cost to distance	10%
I like the pay-per-use idea / pay-per-use model	8%
It makes the most sense / most logical option	5%
Best price / most affordable / cheapest	4%
Best value / cost effective option	4%
Benefits the most people	1%
Reasonable/ most reasonable	1%
It's applied elsewhere / works well elsewhere	1%
Simplest / Easiest / less hassle	1%
Other	11%
None / Nothing	1%
Don't know / Refused	9%

Reasons for Preference

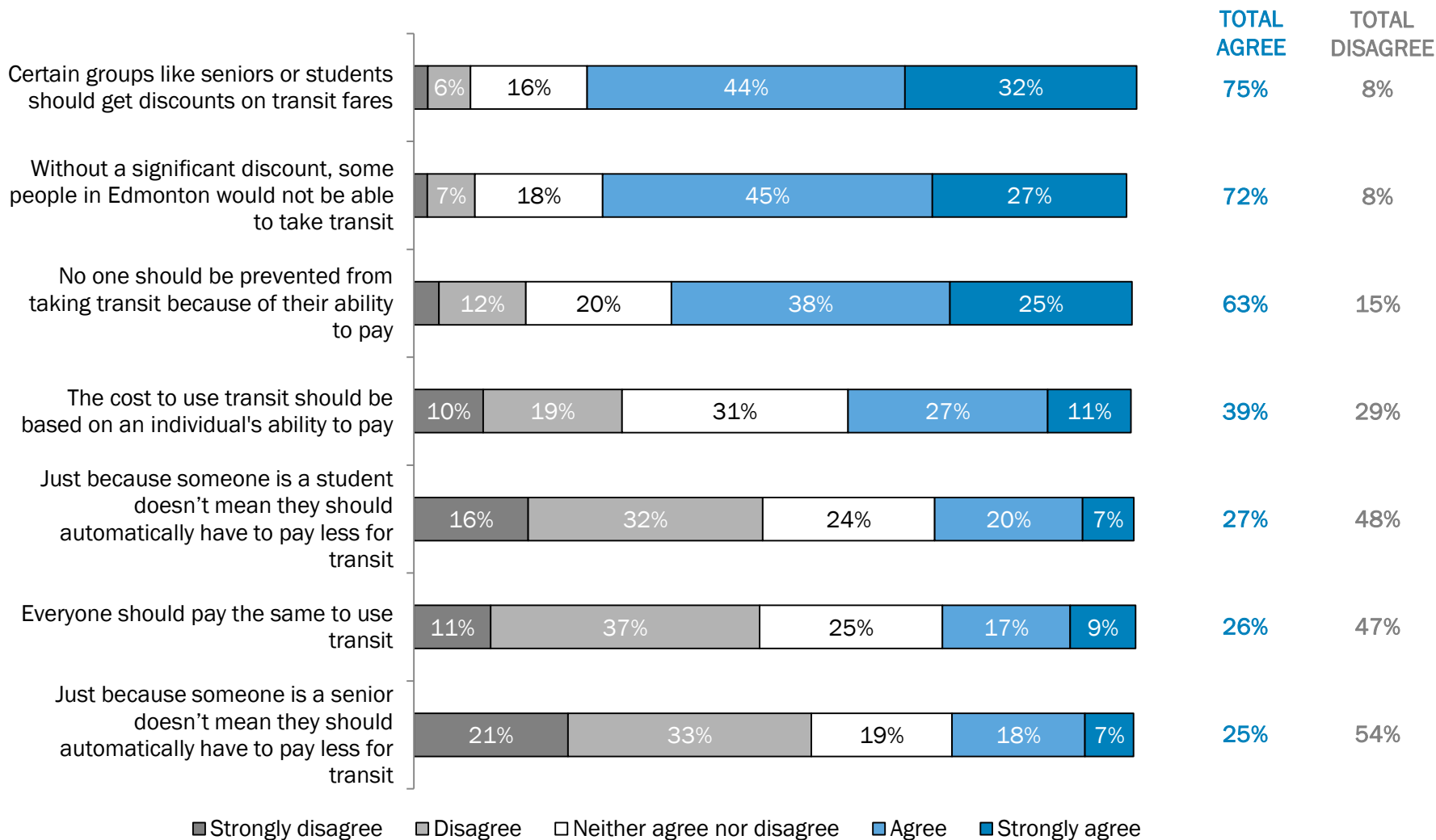
Edmontonians who prefer the higher minimum, lower maximum option	(n=219)
Fair / fairest option	17%
Balanced / more balanced option	10%
Benefits/ best option for riders travelling longer/further	7%
Option most likely to encourage greater transit use	7%
Best choice / option / most appealing option	7%
Best price / most affordable / cheapest	6%
It makes the most sense / most logical option	5%
Best value / cost effective option	5%
Discourages use for short trips / distance	2%
Reasonable/ most reasonable	2%
Distance matters / should matter / ties cost to distance	2%
Benefits the most people	1%
Benefits those who do short distance commuting	1%
Simplest / Easiest / less hassle	1%
Maximum fare would discourage people from taking long trips	1%
It's applied elsewhere / works well elsewhere	1%
I like the pay-per-use idea / pay-per-use model	1%
Other	17%
None / Nothing	2%
Don't know / Refused	12%

Edmontonians who prefer the flat rate	(n=541)
Simplest / Easiest / less hassle	31%
Fair / fairest option	18%
Easily enforceable / simpler to enforce / administer	17%
Current system works well / satisfied with the current system	6%
Best choice / option / most appealing option	5%
Distance shouldn't be tied to fare / price	3%
Option most likely to encourage greater transit use	3%
Best value / cost effective option	3%
Best price / most affordable / cheapest	3%
Balanced / more balanced option	1%
Benefits/ best option for riders travelling longer/further	1%
Benefits the most people	1%
It makes the most sense / most logical option	1%
Other	11%
None / Nothing	2%
Don't know / Refused	7%

DETAILED RESULTS

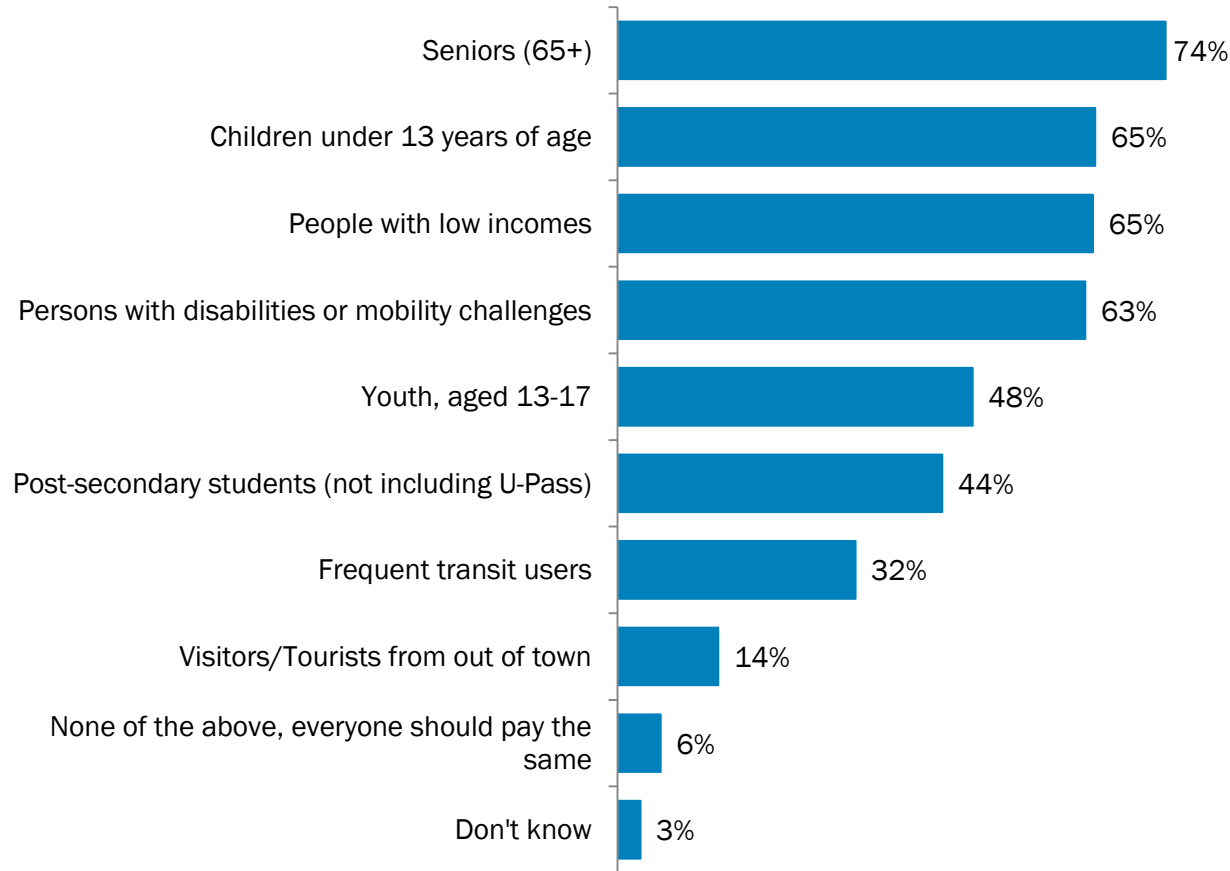
Discount Rates

There is strong support for the concept of discounted fares for some groups.



Base: Edmontonians (n=1,205). Mentions 3% or lower are not labeled. Don't know responses are not shown.
 Source: General population survey
 QD1. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements...

Most want discounts applied to seniors, children, low income, and persons with disabilities.



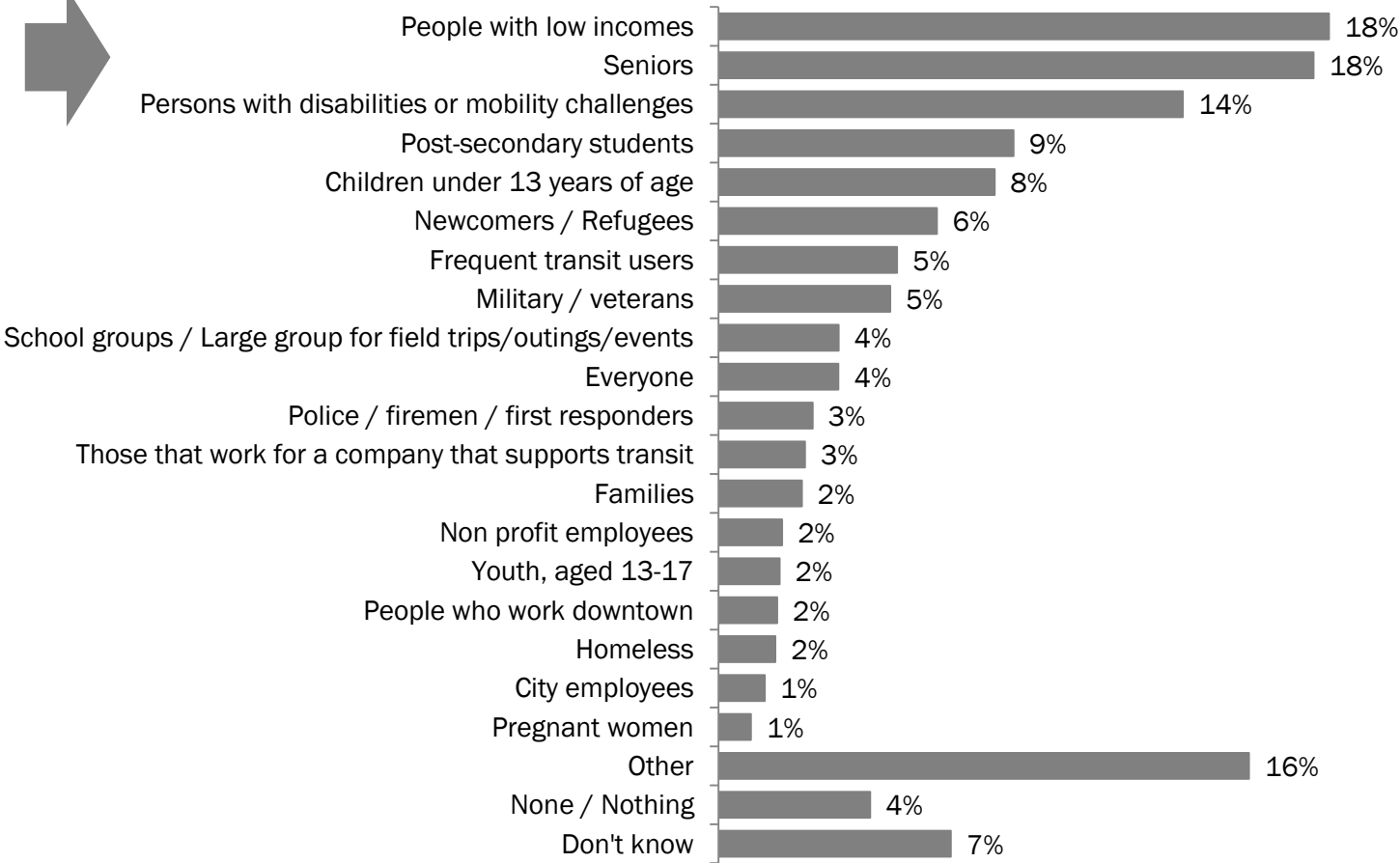
Base: Edmontonians (n=1,205)

Source: General population survey

QD2. As you may know, different groups in Edmonton get a discount on the fares they pay when using transit. Which of the following groups do you think should get a discount for using transit in Edmonton in the future?

Edmontonians who feel other groups should get a discount provide a variety of suggestions.

14%
of Edmontonians
(n=1,205) think other
groups should get a
discount, specifically...

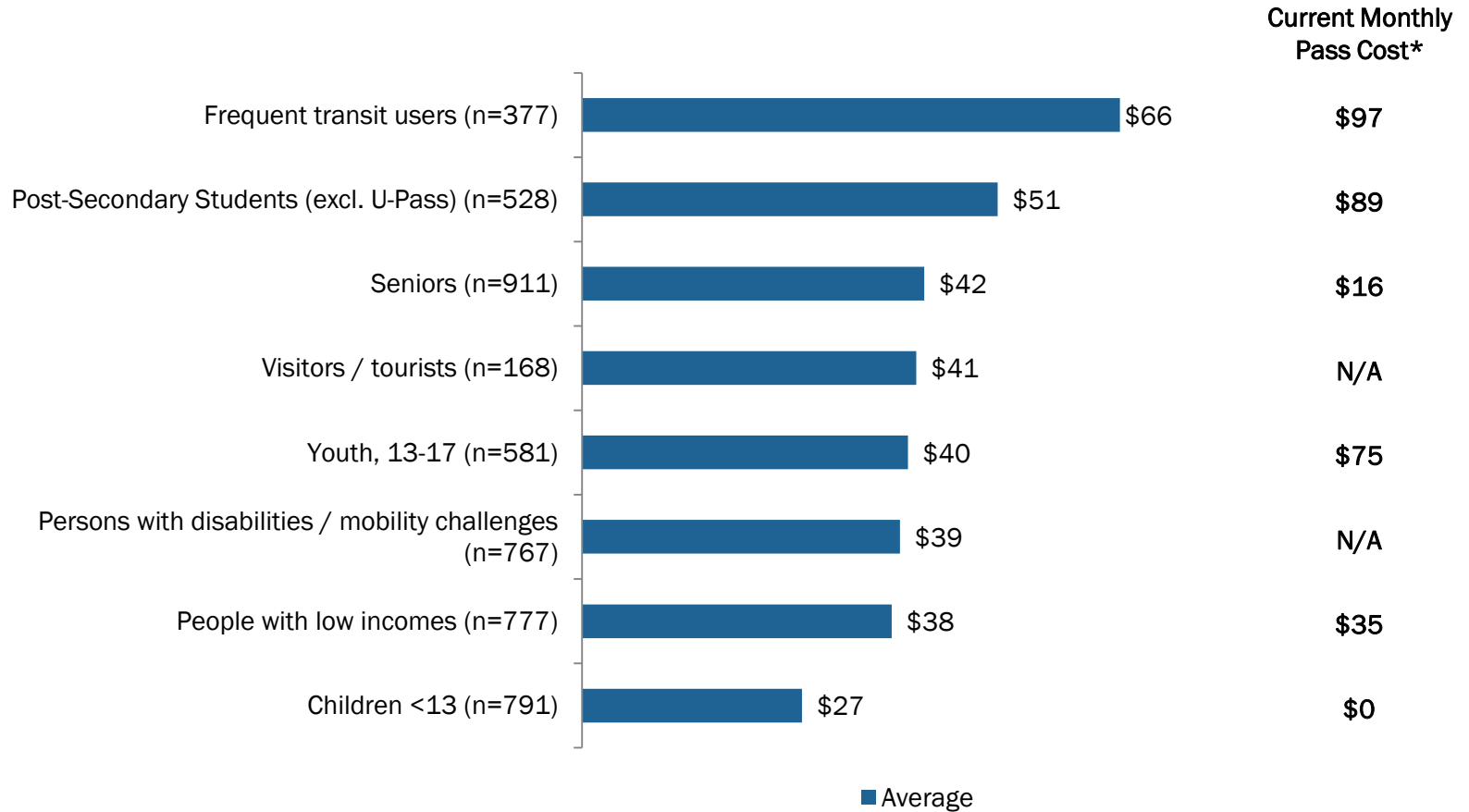


Base: Edmontonians who indicated other groups should get a discount for using transit (n=154)

Source: General population survey

QD3. Are there any other groups in Edmonton who you think should get a discount for using transit? QD4. Which other group or groups do you think should get a discount for using transit?

Among those who indicated each respective group should get a discount, every group would see a substantial discount from the adult price (if it was \$100).



Base: Edmontonians who indicated each respective group should get a discount for using transit.
 Source: General population survey. *Current monthly pass costs are rounded to the nearest dollar.
 QD5. If the regular adult monthly pass costs \$100 (for example), how much should each of the following groups pay for a monthly pass?

DETAILED RESULTS

Slider Tool

Slider Tool – Methodology and Limitations of the Analysis

Using the slider tool provided, respondents were asked to set the amount each group (seniors, youth, low income, post-secondary students excluding U-Pass) should pay for a monthly pass. As they selected different cost options for each of these groups, the adult pass price updated accordingly in real time.

To reflect the relative impact on the fare box, the impact of the reductions on the adult price was different for each group. For example, a \$5 decrease in the youth pass price resulted in an increase of \$2.28 to the adult pass price, while a \$5 decrease in the low income price resulted in an increase of \$0.57 to the adult pass price.

When analysing the results, please bear in mind the following considerations:

None of the fares for each group (except the adult) could be set at more than \$75.

The calculation assumes a static volume of users.

By imposing an upper limit of \$75 for each segment, we create an artificial distortion in the pricing distribution. For instance, the current monthly pass price for post-secondary students is \$88.50 (i.e. above the \$75 ceiling).

By consistently imposing the adult fare as the residual of the exercise (i.e., respondents could not change the adult price, only the individual group prices) there is an upward bias against the adult, as respondents never get to consciously set / manipulate the adult price.

Slider Tool – Sample Screen (Start of Exercise)

As you know, the cost of the transit service is shared among the users and the taxpayers. Most of the amount the users pay is covered by the regular adult monthly pass holders while other groups like seniors or students pay less. This means that when some groups pay less, the regular adult monthly pass has to go up to cover the shortfall.

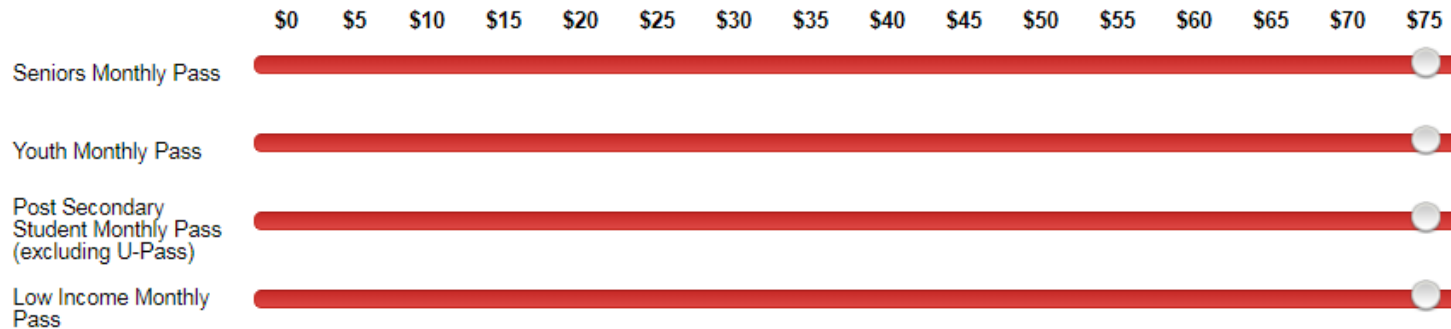
Using this tool, please set the amount you think each group should pay for a monthly pass. As you change the amount each group pays, you will see the impact on the regular adult monthly pass.

When you are satisfied with the amounts you have set for each group, click next and move on to the next question.

Note: As mentioned earlier in the survey, the revenue from customer fares covers about 40%-45% of the cost of running transit in Edmonton. If all of the groups below were to pay the same amount for their monthly pass (\$75), this amount of revenue would equal the 40%-45%.

Adult Pass Price

\$ 75.00



Slider Tool – Sample Screen (With Prices Adjusted)

In the example shown below, if the senior monthly pass price was set to \$40, the youth monthly pass price was set to \$60, the post-secondary student monthly pass price (excluding U-Pass) was set to \$55 and the low income monthly pass price was set to \$35, the resulting adult monthly pass price would be \$118 (rounded to the nearest dollar).

As you know, the cost of the transit service is shared among the users and the taxpayers. Most of the amount the users pay is covered by the regular adult monthly pass holders while other groups like seniors or students pay less. This means that when some groups pay less, the regular adult monthly pass has to go up to cover the shortfall.

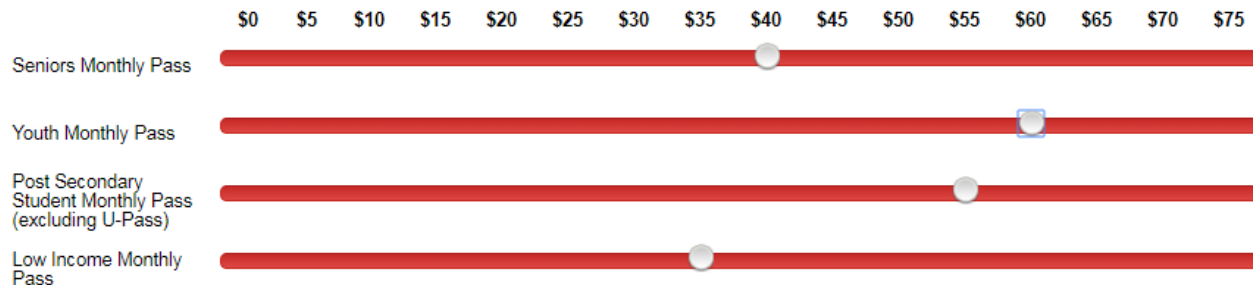
Using this tool, please set the amount you think each group should pay for a monthly pass. As you change the amount each group pays, you will see the impact on the regular adult monthly pass.

When you are satisfied with the amounts you have set for each group, click next and move on to the next question.

Note: As mentioned earlier in the survey, the revenue from customer fares covers about 40%-45% of the cost of running transit in Edmonton. If all of the groups below were to pay the same amount for their monthly pass (\$75), this amount of revenue would equal the 40%-45%.

Adult Pass Price

\$ 117.86



Key Findings

Optimal Pricing Scheme for Transit Fares

The general consensus is as follows (for the monthly pass prices)

Low Income = \$46
Youth= \$49
Post- Secondary Student = \$56
Senior = \$48
Adults = \$118

There is a polarization regarding the pricing scheme of the transit fare (adults vs other segments) due to the design.

The general population is more inclined to provide **larger discounts to low income**. Post-secondary students are the category where less of a discount is provided. Seniors and youth are provided with similar discounts.

Who are satisfied with this pricing?

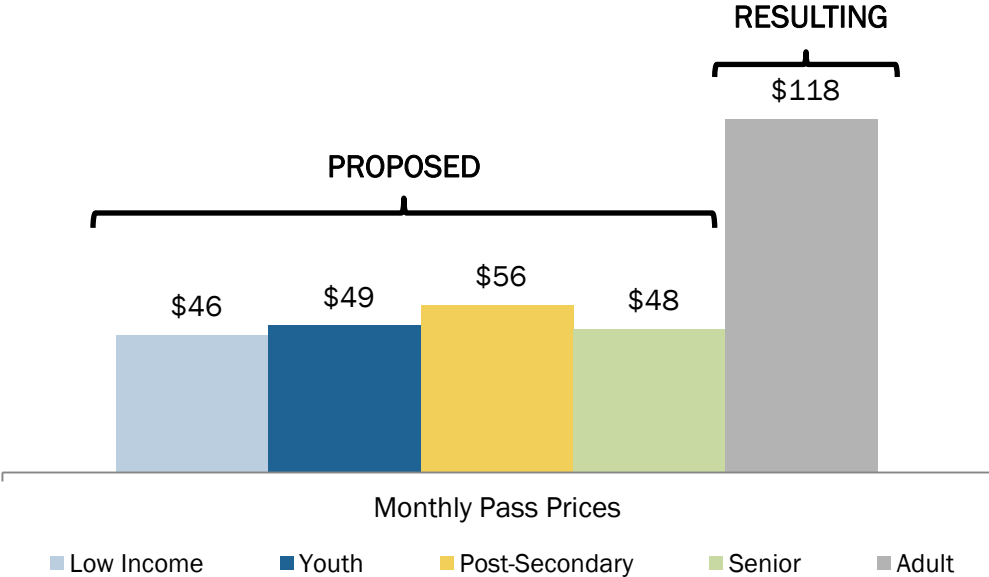
Students and Youth who will be paying less under the new pricing scheme.

14% of the respondents who chose similar optimal pricing, within a reasonable range (i.e prices that lie within the interquartile range for each fare option).

Who are the least satisfied with this pricing?

Seniors, Low Income, and Adults who will be paying more under this new pricing scheme.

Based on the average discounts assigned to each user group, there is less variance in the discount rates than currently. The impact of the average discounts for each of the groups' monthly pass prices results in an adult monthly pass price of \$118.



Based on these prices...			
Low income monthly pass	should be...	39%	...of the adult monthly pass price
Youth monthly pass		42%	
Post-secondary monthly pass		47%	
Senior monthly pass		41%	

Range:
39%-47%

Base: Edmontonians (n=1,205)
 Source: General population survey. Proposed monthly pass prices are rounded to the nearest dollar.
 F1. Using this tool, please set the amount you think each group should pay for a monthly pass. As you change the amount each group pays, you will see the impact on the regular adult monthly pass.

The proposed prices would result in an adult pass price of \$118, which represents a \$21 increase from the current price of \$97.

Monthly pass cost	Current Price	Proposed Price	Change	Current proportion of adult price	Proposed proportion of adult price	Change
Low Income	\$35	\$46	+ \$11	36%	39%	+ 3%
Youth	\$75	\$49	- \$26	77%	42%	- 35%
Post-secondary (excluding U-Pass)	\$89	\$56	- \$33	92%	47%	- 45%
Senior (65+)	\$16	\$48	+ \$32	16%	41%	+ 25%

Base: Edmontonians (n=1,205)

Source: General population survey. Figures are rounded to the nearest dollar.

F1. Using this tool, please set the amount you think each group should pay for a monthly pass. As you change the amount each group pays, you will see the impact on the regular adult monthly pass.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Respondent Profile- General Population Survey

	General Population
n=	1205
Gender Identity	
Woman	50%
Man	49%
Other	1%
Age	
18-24	10%
25-34	25%
35-44	18%
45-54	16%
55-64	15%
65-74	11%
75 or older	4%
City Quadrant	
NW	37%
NE	17%
SW	23%
SE	23%

	General Population
n=	1205
Tenure in Edmonton	
6 months to 1 year	3%
1 year to less than 5 years	11%
5 years to less than 10 years	14%
10 years or more	72%
Level of Education	
Elementary/grade school graduate	2%
High school graduate	21%
College / technical school graduate	30%
University undergraduate degree	29%
Post-graduate degree	11%
Professional school graduate (e.g. medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, optometry)	6%
I prefer not to answer	2%
Registered DATS user	(n=917)*
Yes	4%
No	93%
Don't know	2%

*Base: Edmonton transit users

Respondent Profile- General Population Survey

	General Population
n=	1205
Employment Status	
Employed full-time (30+ hours per week)	52%
Employed part-time (0 - 30 hours per week)	10%
Homemaker	4%
Post-secondary student	3%
High school student	1%
Unemployed	6%
Permanently unable to work	3%
Retired	19%
I prefer not to answer	2%
Valid Driver's License	
Yes	85%
No	14%
Prefer not to answer	1%
Primary Mode of Transportation	
Car/truck/van as a driver	64%
Car/truck/van as a passenger	7%
Public transit	20%
Walk	6%
Bicycle	2%
I prefer not to answer	1%

	General Population
n=	1205
Size of Household	
1	24%
2	37%
3	17%
4 or more	19%
I prefer not to answer	3%
Household Composition	
Children in household	22%
Under 2 years old	6%
2 to 5 years old	8%
6 to 12 years old	9%
13 to 17 years old	7%
18 to 64 years old	84%
65+ years old	20%
I prefer not to answer	5%
Household Income	
\$29,999 or less	11%
Between \$30,000 and \$49,999	13%
Between \$50,000 and \$69,999	17%
Between \$70,000 and \$99,999	18%
Between \$100,000 and \$124,999	11%
\$125,000 or more	14%
I prefer not to answer	14%

Respondent Profile- General Population Survey

	General Population
	n= 1205
City of Edmonton Employee	
Yes	5%
No	94%
I prefer not to answer	1%
Edmonton Transit Service Employee	
Yes	1%
No	98%
I prefer not to answer	1%
Own Property in Edmonton	
Yes	61%
No	36%
I prefer not to answer	3%
Responding on behalf of a business or organization	
Yes	1%
No	97%
I prefer not to answer	2%

APPENDIX

General Population and Open Link Survey Tables

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
QT1. How often do you ride public transit in Edmonton, including DATS?		
Daily or almost daily	21%	58%
About two or three times a week	8%	11%
About once a week	4%	3%
A few times per month	10%	8%
Once a month	4%	3%
Less often than once a month	30%	12%
Never	22%	4%
Don't know	1%	1%
QT2: How do you typically pay your fare on ETS or DATS?		
	(n=917)*	(n=2441)*
Using an adult monthly pass	19%	36%
Using an adult Low Income monthly pass through the RIDE Program	3%	4%
Using a monthly youth pass	2%	2%
Using a monthly seniors' pass	1%	1%
Using an annual seniors' pass	2%	1%
Using an annual seniors' low income pass	-	1%
Using a U-Pass	4%	8%
Using a post-secondary student monthly pass (not including U-Pass)	1%	-
Using a day pass	2%	-
Buy tickets	39%	28%
Pay cash	23%	8%
Some other way	2%	5%
It depends/varies	3%	6%
Don't know	-	-
T3a. How much do you pay for...		
Using an adult monthly pass (among those who typically pay using an adult monthly pass)		
	(n=153)	(n=874)
% correct (\$97)	31%	49%
% don't know	8%	11%
Using a U-Pass (among those who typically pay using a U-Pass)		
	**	(n=205)
% correct (\$170 per four month term)	**	13%
% don't know	**	41%

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
QT3c: How much is the adult cash fare for a single trip on ETS?	(n=223)*	(n=199)*
% correct (\$3.25 per four month term)	42%	60%
% don't know	27%	17%
QT4: How long does your typical trip on ETS take?	(n=917)**	(n=2441)**
Less than 10 minutes	6%	4%
10 to 29 minutes	46%	36%
30 minutes to one hour	35%	40%
More than one hour	9%	14%
Don't know/Depends	5%	5%
QT5: Do you regularly take transit to commute to and from work or school?	(n=359)***	(n=1852)***
Yes	80%	88%
No	20%	12%
QT6: Are you, personally, a registered DATS user?	(n=917)**	(n=2441)**
Yes	4%	1%
No	93%	95%
Don't know	2%	4%
QC1: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about transit in Edmonton?		
Lower fares would encourage more people to take transit		
Strongly agree	33%	49%
Agree	39%	31%
Neither agree nor disagree	15%	9%
Disagree	9%	8%
Strongly disagree	2%	3%
Don't know	1%	1%
AGREE	72%	80%
DISAGREE	11%	10%

*Base: Respondents who typically pay using cash

**Base: Respondents who are Transit Users.

***Base: Respondents who are regular (once a week or more) Transit Users.

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
Transit users should pay the whole cost to operate the public transit system		
Strongly agree	6%	3%
Agree	12%	4%
Neither agree nor disagree	20%	10%
Disagree	38%	34%
Strongly disagree	22%	47%
Don't know	2%	2%
AGREE	18%	8%
DISAGREE	61%	81%
Transit users should only have to pay for the distance they travel		
Strongly agree	10%	13%
Agree	24%	21%
Neither agree nor disagree	31%	25%
Disagree	22%	24%
Strongly disagree	10%	14%
Don't know	3%	4%
AGREE	34%	33%
DISAGREE	32%	38%
Transit is a public good (for example, it helps reduce the number of cars on the road)		
Strongly agree	40%	60%
Agree	43%	29%
Neither agree nor disagree	10%	6%
Disagree	4%	3%
Strongly disagree	2%	2%
Don't know	1%	0%
AGREE	83%	89%
DISAGREE	6%	5%

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
Municipal taxes should pay for some of the costs to operate the public transit system		
Strongly agree	22%	45%
Agree	51%	41%
Neither agree nor disagree	16%	6%
Disagree	7%	3%
Strongly disagree	3%	3%
Don't know	2%	1%
AGREE	73%	86%
DISAGREE	9%	7%
Municipal taxes should pay for the whole cost to operate the public transit system		
Strongly agree	10%	14%
Agree	15%	16%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%	22%
Disagree	32%	32%
Strongly disagree	16%	14%
Don't know	3%	3%
AGREE	24%	30%
DISAGREE	48%	46%
Everyone using public transit should pay the same amount per trip		
Strongly agree	13%	12%
Agree	23%	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	23%	17%
Disagree	29%	35%
Strongly disagree	10%	16%
Don't know	2%	2%
AGREE	36%	30%
DISAGREE	40%	51%

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
The fares should be increased to cover more of the operating costs for transit in Edmonton		
Strongly agree	5%	3%
Agree	13%	7%
Neither agree nor disagree	29%	15%
Disagree	30%	35%
Strongly disagree	20%	38%
Don't know	2%	2%
AGREE	18%	10%
DISAGREE	51%	74%
A good transit system benefits everybody - both those who use the system and those who do not		
Strongly agree	38%	57%
Agree	42%	32%
Neither agree nor disagree	12%	5%
Disagree	4%	3%
Strongly disagree	2%	2%
Don't know	1%	1%
AGREE	81%	89%
DISAGREE	6%	5%
Summary of NET AGREE		
Lower fares would encourage more people to take transit	72%	80%
Transit users should pay the whole cost to operate the public transit system	18%	8%
Transit users should only have to pay for the distance they travel	34%	33%
Transit is a public good (for example, it helps reduce the number of cars on the road)	83%	89%
Municipal taxes should pay for some of the costs to operate the public transit system	73%	86%
Municipal taxes should pay for the whole cost to operate the public transit system	24%	30%
Everyone using public transit should pay the same amount per trip	36%	30%
The fares should be increased to cover more of the operating costs for transit in Edmonton	18%	10%
A good transit system benefits everybody - both those who use the system and those who do not	81%	89%

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
QC2: As you may know, only a portion of the cost of operating transit is covered by the fares users pay. As far as you know, roughly what percent of the cost of running ETS is covered by the fares?		
0%	1%	-
1%-5%	1%	1%
6%-10%	3%	4%
11%-15%	4%	3%
16%-20%	6%	5%
21%-25%	7%	7%
26%-30%	9%	7%
31%-35%	7%	5%
36%-40%	6%	9%
41%-45%	6%	13%
46%-50%	9%	9%
51%-55%	4%	4%
56%-60%	2%	2%
61%-65%	2%	2%
66%-70%	2%	1%
71%-75%	2%	2%
76%-80%	1%	1%
81%-85%	1%	1%
86%-90%	1%	-
91%-95%	-	-
96%-99%	-	-
100%	-	1%
Don't know	27%	24%
Average	36%	38%
QC3: Currently in Edmonton, the revenue from customer fares covers about 40%-45% of the cost of running transit in Edmonton. The rest of the cost is covered by taxes. Do you think the amount covered by the fares should...		
Be increased (i.e. fares should cover more of the cost)	24%	13%
Be decreased (i.e. fares should cover less of the cost)	20%	37%
Stay about the same	47%	43%
Don't know	9%	6%

	General Population	Open Link
QC4:What should the percentage covered by the customer fares be INCREASED to?	(n=288)*	(n=335)*
41%-45%	6%	7%
46%-50%	10%	13%
51%-55%	14%	15%
56%-60%	13%	12%
61%-65%	7%	9%
66%-70%	10%	6%
71%-75%	15%	12%
76%-80%	7%	6%
81%-85%	4%	2%
86%-90%	3%	2%
91%-95%	1%	1%
96%-99%	-	-
100%	7%	10%
Don't know	4%	5%
Mean	66%	65%
QC5:What should the percentage covered by the customer fares be DECREASED to?	(n=224)**	(n=948)**
0%	8%	11%
1%-5%	3%	4%
6%-10%	8%	7%
11%-15%	10%	5%
16%-20%	16%	12%
21%-25%	16%	21%
26%-30%	11%	13%
31%-35%	12%	14%
36%-40%	4%	5%
41%-45%	4%	3%
Don't know	6%	5%
Mean	21%	21%

*Base: Respondents who believe the amount covered by customer fares should be increased.

**Base: Respondents who believe the amount covered by customer fares should be decreased.

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
QC6: In other Canadian cities of the same size, the customer fares cover between 40% and 60% of the cost of running the transit systems. In Edmonton the fares cover between 40% and 45%. Knowing this, do you think that Edmonton should...		
Increase the percentage that fares cover and decrease the amount taxes cover	29%	17%
Keep the current percentage covered by fares and taxes the same as now	45%	42%
Decrease the percentage fares cover and increase the percentage that taxes cover	16%	33%
Don't know	10%	8%
QM2: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about a minimum and maximum charge?		
It would save infrequent users money		
Strongly agree	17%	20%
Agree	41%	39%
Neither agree nor disagree	23%	18%
Disagree	11%	11%
Strongly disagree	3%	6%
Don't know	5%	6%
AGREE	58%	59%
DISAGREE	14%	17%
The fare cap would mean that frequent users get rewarded		
Strongly agree	22%	29%
Agree	49%	40%
Neither agree nor disagree	18%	14%
Disagree	6%	7%
Strongly disagree	2%	5%
Don't know	3%	5%
AGREE	71%	69%
DISAGREE	8%	12%

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
People would be encouraged to take transit more often if they knew there was maximum amount they would pay		
Strongly agree	17%	22%
Agree	42%	33%
Neither agree nor disagree	23%	20%
Disagree	10%	13%
Strongly disagree	5%	8%
Don't know	4%	4%
AGREE	58%	55%
DISAGREE	15%	21%
If you went on holidays, your Edmonton transit costs for the month would be lower		
Strongly agree	18%	25%
Agree	44%	42%
Neither agree nor disagree	21%	16%
Disagree	8%	7%
Strongly disagree	3%	4%
Don't know	6%	6%
AGREE	62%	67%
DISAGREE	11%	11%
People who take short transit trips would benefit		
Strongly agree	17%	24%
Agree	49%	46%
Neither agree nor disagree	21%	15%
Disagree	7%	7%
Strongly disagree	3%	4%
Don't know	4%	4%
AGREE	66%	69%
DISAGREE	9%	11%

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
Summary of NET AGREE		
It would save infrequent users money	58%	59%
The fare cap would mean that frequent users get rewarded	71%	69%
People would be encouraged to take transit more often if they knew there was maximum amount they would pay	58%	55%
If you went on holidays, your Edmonton transit costs for the month would be lower	62%	67%
People who take short transit trips would benefit	66%	69%
QM3: The City is considering options for how to set single trip fares. Please keep in mind that in every case, there will be a maximum amount that a rider will pay in a month, similar to having an ETS monthly pass. Which one do you most prefer?		
No minimum or maximum fare	16%	11%
A low minimum amount, but a higher maximum amount	23%	19%
A higher minimum amount, but a lower maximum amount	20%	27%
Flat rate	42%	44%
QM4: Why did you choose that option? No minimum or maximum fare		
	(n=187)*	(n=271)*
Fair / fairest option	33%	25%
Best choice / option / most appealing option	14%	8%
I like the pay-per-use idea / pay-per-use model	10%	13%
Distance matters / should matter / ties cost to distance	8%	10%
It makes the most sense / most logical option	4%	5%
Best value / cost effective option	4%	1%
Reasonable/ most reasonable	3%	4%
It's applied elsewhere / works well elsewhere	3%	4%
Simplest / Easiest / less hassle	3%	5%
Benefits those who do short distance commuting	2%	6%
Option most likely to encourage greater transit use	2%	5%
Easily enforceable / simpler to enforce / administer	1%	1%
Best price / most affordable / cheapest	-	8%

*Base: Respondents who selected the no minimum or maximum fare option

	General Population	Open Link
QM4: Why did you choose that option? No minimum or maximum fare (continued)		
Benefits the most people	-	3%
Benefits/ best option for riders travelling longer/further	-	3%
Would rather it was set up by zones	-	3%
Balanced / more balanced option	-	2%
Current system works well / satisfied with the current system	-	1%
Distance shouldn't be tied to fare / price	-	1%
Transit should be free (paid for through taxes)	-	1%
Other	9%	4%
None / Nothing	2%	1%
Don't know / Refused	14%	10%
QM4: Why did you choose that option? A low minimum amount, but a higher maximum amount.	(n=258)*	(n=495)*
Fair / fairest option	24%	14%
Best choice / option / most appealing option	19%	7%
Benefits those who do short distance commuting	13%	33%
Option most likely to encourage greater transit use	11%	14%
Distance matters / should matter / ties cost to distance	10%	3%
I like the pay-per-use idea / pay-per-use model	8%	1%
It makes the most sense / most logical option	5%	6%
Best price / most affordable / cheapest	4%	16%
Best value / cost effective option	4%	2%
Benefits the most people	1%	3%
Reasonable/ most reasonable	1%	3%
It's applied elsewhere / works well elsewhere	1%	3%
Simplest / Easiest / less hassle	1%	2%
Easily enforceable / simpler to enforce / administer	-	1%
Balanced / more balanced option	-	5%
Benefits/ best option for riders travelling longer/further	-	6%

*Base: Respondents who selected the low minimum amount, but higher maximum amount option.

	General Population	Open Link
Transit should be free (paid for through taxes)	-	2%
Would rather it was set up by zones	-	2%
Other	11%	3%
None / Nothing	1%	-
Don't know / Refused	9%	8%
Why did you choose that option? A higher minimum amount, but a lower maximum amount	(n=219)*	(n=679)*
Fair / fairest option	17%	14%
Balanced / more balanced option	10%	9%
Benefits/ best option for riders travelling longer/further	7%	21%
Option most likely to encourage greater transit use	7%	9%
Best choice / option / most appealing option	7%	6%
Best price / most affordable / cheapest	6%	22%
It makes the most sense / most logical option	5%	3%
Best value / cost effective option	5%	3%
Discourages use for short trips / distance	2%	-
Reasonable/ most reasonable	2%	6%
Distance matters / should matter / ties cost to distance	2%	1%
Benefits the most people	1%	3%
Benefits those who do short distance commuting	1%	6%
Simplest / Easiest / less hassle	1%	2%
Maximum fare would discourage people from taking long trips	1%	1%
It's applied elsewhere / works well elsewhere	1%	1%
I like the pay-per-use idea / pay-per-use model	1%	-
Distance shouldn't be tied to fare / price	-	1%
Transit should be free (paid for through taxes)	-	1%
Would rather it was set up by zones	-	1%
Encourages walking / cycling for short trips	-	8%
Other	17%	5%
None / Nothing	2%	1%
Don't know / Refused	12%	7%

*Base: Respondents who selected the higher minimum amount, but lower maximum amount option.

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
Why did you choose that option? Flat rate	(n=541)*	(n=1114)*
Simplest / Easiest / less hassle	31%	40%
Fair / fairest option	18%	16%
Easily enforceable / simpler to enforce / administer	17%	12%
Current system works well / satisfied with the current system	6%	4%
Best choice / option / most appealing option	5%	5%
Distance shouldn't be tied to fare / price	3%	15%
Option most likely to encourage greater transit use	3%	4%
Best value / cost effective option	3%	2%
Best price / most affordable / cheapest	3%	5%
Balanced / more balanced option	1%	1%
Benefits/ best option for riders travelling longer/further	1%	3%
Benefits the most people	1%	2%
It makes the most sense / most logical option	1%	2%
Reasonable/ most reasonable	-	1%
It's applied elsewhere / works well elsewhere	-	1%
Transit should be free (paid for through taxes)	-	2%
Would rather it was set up by zones	-	1%
Other	11%	6%
None / Nothing	2%	-
Don't know / Refused	7%	6%
QD1: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements...		
Certain groups like seniors or students should get discounts on transit fares		
Strongly agree	32%	42%
Agree	44%	38%
Neither agree nor disagree	16%	10%
Disagree	6%	6%
Strongly disagree	2%	3%
Don't know	1%	1%
AGREE	75%	80%
DISAGREE	8%	9%

*Base: Respondents who selected the flat rate option.

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
Everyone should pay the same to use transit		
Strongly agree	9%	9%
Agree	17%	11%
Neither agree nor disagree	25%	20%
Disagree	37%	39%
Strongly disagree	11%	20%
Don't know	1%	1%
AGREE	26%	20%
DISAGREE	47%	59%
The cost to use transit should be based on an individual's ability to pay		
Strongly agree	11%	19%
Agree	27%	30%
Neither agree nor disagree	31%	21%
Disagree	19%	16%
Strongly disagree	10%	11%
Don't know	2%	2%
AGREE	39%	49%
DISAGREE	29%	28%
Without a significant discount, some people in Edmonton would not be able to take transit		
Strongly agree	27%	42%
Agree	45%	39%
Neither agree nor disagree	18%	9%
Disagree	7%	5%
Strongly disagree	2%	3%
Don't know	2%	2%
AGREE	72%	81%
DISAGREE	8%	8%

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
No one should be prevented from taking transit because of their ability to pay		
Strongly agree	25%	39%
Agree	38%	31%
Neither agree nor disagree	20%	12%
Disagree	12%	11%
Strongly disagree	3%	6%
Don't know	2%	1%
AGREE	63%	71%
DISAGREE	15%	16%
Just because someone is a senior doesn't mean they should automatically have to pay less for transit		
Strongly agree	7%	9%
Agree	18%	14%
Neither agree nor disagree	19%	13%
Disagree	33%	34%
Strongly disagree	21%	28%
Don't know	1%	1%
AGREE	25%	24%
DISAGREE	54%	62%
Just because someone is a student doesn't mean they should automatically have to pay less for transit		
Strongly agree	7%	9%
Agree	20%	15%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%	14%
Disagree	32%	35%
Strongly disagree	16%	27%
Don't know	1%	1%
AGREE	27%	23%
DISAGREE	48%	62%

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
Summary of NET AGREE		
Certain groups like seniors or students should get discounts on transit fares	75%	80%
Everyone should pay the same to use transit	26%	20%
The cost to use transit should be based on an individual's ability to pay	39%	49%
Without a significant discount, some people in Edmonton would not be able to take transit	72%	81%
No one should be prevented from taking transit because of their ability to pay	63%	71%
Just because someone is a senior doesn't mean they should automatically have to pay less for transit	25%	24%
Just because someone is a student doesn't mean they should automatically have to pay less for transit	27%	23%
QD2: As you may know, different groups in Edmonton get a discount on the fares they pay when using transit. Which of the following groups do you think should get a discount for using transit in Edmonton in the future?		
Seniors (65+)	74%	78%
Post-secondary students (not including U-Pass)	44%	55%
Youth, aged 13-17	48%	58%
Children under 13 years of age	65%	71%
Frequent transit users	32%	53%
Persons with disabilities or mobility challenges	63%	72%
People with low incomes	65%	77%
Visitors/Tourists from out of town	14%	15%
None of the above, everyone should pay the same	6%	4%
Don't know	3%	1%
QD3: Are there any other groups in Edmonton who you think should get a discount for using transit?		
Yes	14%	19%
No	53%	47%
Don't know	33%	34%

All respondents	General Population (n=154)*	Open Link (n=480)*
QD4: Which other group or groups do you think should get a discount for using transit?		
People with low incomes	18%	12%
Seniors	18%	7%
Persons with disabilities or mobility challenges	14%	5%
Post-secondary students	9%	3%
Children under 13 years of age	8%	3%
Newcomers / Refugees	6%	7%
Frequent transit users	5%	6%
Military / veterans	5%	5%
School groups / Large group for field trips / outings / events	4%	1%
Everyone	4%	5%
Police / firemen / first responders	3%	2%
Those that work for a company that supports transit / Employer program	3%	4%
Families	2%	6%
Non profit employees	2%	2%
Youth, aged 13-17	2%	2%
People who work downtown	2%	4%
Homeless	2%	6%
City employees	1%	4%
Pregnant women	1%	-
Visitors/Tourists from out of town	-	1%
Students (unspecified)	-	5%
Unemployed	-	3%
Single parents	-	3%
Indigenous people	-	1%
Hospital workers	-	2%
People working at educational institutions	-	1%
Caregivers / Support workers	-	2%
Special flat rate for special events (Heritage days, concerts, football games, Canada day, etc.)	-	4%
Government employees	-	4%

*Base: Respondents who think other groups should get a discount.

All respondents	General Population	Open Link
QD4: Which other group or groups do you think should get a discount for using transit? (cont'd)		
Volunteers	-	1%
Those that commute a long distance	-	1%
Should be free for all	-	3%
Other	16%	9%
None / Nothing	4%	1%
Don't know / Refused	7%	5%
QD5: If the regular adult monthly pass costs \$100 (for example), how much should each of the following groups pay for a monthly pass?		
Seniors (65+)	(n=911)*	(n=1992)*
Average	\$42	\$40
Post-secondary students (not including U-Pass)	(n=528)*	(n=1408)*
Average	\$51	\$49
Youth, aged 13-17	(n=581)*	(n=1482)*
Average	\$40	\$38
Children under 13 years of age	(n=791)*	(n=1828)*
Average	\$27	\$21
Frequent transit users	(n=377)*	(n=1368)*
Average	\$66	\$66
Persons with disabilities or mobility challenges	(n=767)*	(n=1830)*
Average	\$39	\$38
People with low incomes	(n=777)*	(n=1981)*
Average	\$38	\$36
Visitors/Tourists from out of town	(n=168)*	(n=379)*
Average	\$41	\$42

*Base: Respondents who believe each respective group should receive a discount.

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
QSQ1: Do you live...		
Within Edmonton city limits	100%	96%
In an outlying community	-	3%
Elsewhere	-	-
I prefer not to answer	-	-
City Quadrant		(n=2457)*
NW	37%	34%
NE	17%	16%
SW	23%	22%
SE	23%	23%
Refused/ invalid FSA	-	5%
QSQ3: How long have you lived in Edmonton?		
		(n=2457)*
Less than 6 months	-	1%
6 months to 1 year	3%	2%
1 year to less than 5 years	11%	12%
5 years to less than 10 years	14%	14%
10 years or more	72%	71%
I prefer not to answer		1%
QSQ5: What age category do you fall in?		
Under 15 years of age	-	-
15-17	-	2%
18-24	10%	15%
25-34	25%	30%
35-44	18%	20%
45-54	16%	15%
55-64	15%	11%
65-74	11%	4%
75 or older	4%	1%
I prefer not to answer	-	2%

*Base: Open Link Respondents who reside within Edmonton City limits.

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
QD1A. What is your gender identity?		
Woman	50%	61%
Man	49%	31%
Other	1%	2%
Prefer not to answer	-	6%
QD1. Do you currently have a valid driver's licence – that is, are you legally able to operate a vehicle on your own without supervision?		
Yes	85%	74%
No	14%	23%
Prefer not to answer	1%	3%
QD2. What is your primary mode of transportation?		
Car/truck/van as a driver	64%	37%
Car/truck/van as a passenger	7%	5%
Public transit	20%	46%
Walk	6%	5%
Bicycle	2%	3%
Other	-	2%
I prefer not to answer	1%	2%
QD3A. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?		
1	24%	18%
2	37%	31%
3	17%	16%
4 or more	19%	27%
I prefer not to answer	3%	7%

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
QD3B. Please indicate how many members of your household fall into each of the following age categories.		
Children in household	22%	28%
<i>Under 2 years old</i>	6%	4%
<i>2 to 5 years old</i>	8%	8%
<i>6 to 12 years old</i>	9%	13%
<i>13 to 17 years old</i>	7%	12%
18 to 64 years old	84%	87%
65+ years old	20%	10%
I prefer not to answer	5%	10%
D5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?		
Elementary/grade school graduate	2%	2%
High school graduate	21%	18%
College / technical school graduate	30%	25%
University undergraduate degree	29%	31%
Post-graduate degree	11%	15%
Professional school graduate (e.g. medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, optometry)	6%	4%
I prefer not to answer	2%	5%
D6. What is your current employment status?		
Employed full-time (30+ hours per week)	52%	66%
Employed part-time (0 - 30 hours per week)	10%	9%
Homemaker	4%	2%
Post-secondary student	3%	7%
High school student	1%	1%
Unemployed	6%	3%
Permanently unable to work	3%	2%
Retired	19%	5%
Other	-	1%
I prefer not to answer	2%	4%

All respondents	General Population (n=1205)	Open Link (n=2559)
QD7. Are you a City of Edmonton employee?		
Yes	5%	12%
No	94%	84%
I prefer not to answer	1%	4%
QD8. Do you work for the Edmonton Transit Service?		
Yes	1%	4%
No	98%	93%
I prefer not to answer	1%	3%
QD9. Into which of the following categories would you place your total household income before taxes for the last year?		
\$29,999 or less	11%	13%
Between \$30,000 and \$49,999	13%	13%
Between \$50,000 and \$69,999	17%	12%
Between \$70,000 and \$99,999	18%	16%
Between \$100,000 and \$124,999	11%	11%
\$125,000 or more	14%	15%
I prefer not to answer	14%	20%
QD11. Do you own property in Edmonton?		
Yes	61%	48%
No	36%	47%
I prefer not to answer	3%	5%
QD12. Are you responding on behalf of a business or organization?		
Yes	1%	-
No	97%	98%
I prefer not to answer	2%	2%

SECTION 3: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Context and Objectives

Stemming from the Transit Strategy, the City of Edmonton needs to develop policies to guide the setting of transit fares in the future. The functionality of the policies is closely tied to the proposed introduction of the Regional Smart Fare Program.

The four draft policy pieces are:

- **Balanced cost recovery rate:** In Edmonton, 40% transit operating costs covered by rider fares and 60% by municipal taxes. In similar communities, rider fares cover 40%-60% of costs.
- **Fairness:** Fares are consistent for trips similar in nature.
- **Affordable:** Consistent fare discounts for people who need it, e.g., seniors, youth.
- **Frequent user discounts:** Encourage more people to ride transit by rewarding frequent users.

The City of Edmonton is using a multifaceted research approach to understand the opinions of Edmontonians and various stakeholder groups with respect to the draft policies. Thus far, focus groups have been conducted with transit users in general, as well as Edmontonians with disabilities (and staff members who work with them). In-depth interviews have also been conducted with DATS Advisory Group (DAG) committee members. In addition, parallel online surveys are being conducted using an open link on the City's website, and a Leger panel survey.

This report outlines the findings of the stakeholder engagement sessions, which were conducted via three workshops (two among community stakeholders, and one among internal employees of the City of Edmonton), which were designed to involve a broader set of stakeholders and a wider range of voices in the conversations about the proposed policies.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology – Workshop Details

A total of three stakeholder engagement workshops were held (two among community stakeholders, and one among internal City of Edmonton Employees). Originally, a fourth workshop was scheduled for community stakeholders, but was cancelled due to low response. One community stakeholder who intended to participate in this workshop and was unable to reschedule due to a conflict was interviewed one-on-one over the telephone.

The City of Edmonton was responsible for extending invites to community stakeholders and providing the presentation at the start of each workshop, and Leger was responsible for booking facilities, facilitating the workshops, and reporting and analyzing the findings.

Date	Time	Workshop	Participants	Number of Participants
July 18, 2018	8 am	1	Community Stakeholders	3
August 2, 2018	8 am	2	Community Stakeholders	13
August 2, 2018	1:30 pm	3	City of Edmonton Internal Employees	15

Methodology – Workshop Process

Workshop Process

Each workshop featured a presentation to familiarize attendees with the draft policy principles. Following the presentation...

- In the July 24 workshop, feedback was captured through a small group discussion (due to lower attendance). Participants were asked to write down their questions or concerns about the draft fare policy principles individually in silence, and then discussed these questions and concerns as a group. Each of the principles was clearly labeled (“balanced cost recovery rate,” “fairness,” “affordable,” and “frequent user discounts”).
- In both August 2 workshops, participants were first asked to write down their questions or concerns about the draft fare policy principles. In these sessions, the principles were not labeled, as during the first group, it was found that the word “fairness” was closely connected to affordability in the minds of participants. In the August 2 workshops, participants were asked to write down their individual questions and concerns in silence. Following this, a cardstorming process was used to gather feedback:
 1. First, participants were asked to discuss these questions and concerns in small groups, and identify 6-10 (dependent on the group size) questions or concerns of highest importance, which they were instructed to write down on individual sticky notes (one question or concern per sticky note).
 2. Following this, all concerns were posted on a wall and read aloud by the moderator to the group (with clarifications being made where required).
 3. After all questions and concerns were read, all participants were invited to the wall and asked to sort the questions and concerns into themes, based on commonalities. Each theme was given a short name to describe it.
 4. Following the theming exercise, the group was asked to identify any questions or concerns they felt were missing from the wall, in order to ensure all questions / concerns were captured.

Methodology – Caveat

The qualitative findings in this report provide a summary of the opinions expressed by participants in workshop discussions. These discussions are exploratory in nature with the flexibility to uncover and examine topics and issues relevant to project objectives. Due to the limited number of respondents, results cannot be generalized or quantified, but rather are to be considered in a qualitative frame of reference.

DETAILED RESULTS

Community Stakeholder Workshops

Individual Exercise - Fairness

Fares will be consistent for trips that are similar in nature. Ensure fares reflect the cost of offering transit services and encourage ridership when compared to the cost of transportation alternatives.

What this means to me: I know that fares will be based on the types of transit trips I take (i.e., distance travelled).

The large majority of questions and concerns identified among the community stakeholders with respect to the fairness principle (as part of the individual exercise) had to do with concerns about paying more to travel further, and general concerns with respect to the idea of fare by distance. Concerns with the impact of this principle on low income Edmontonians was mentioned by many participants.

CONCERNS ABOUT PAYING MORE TO TRAVEL FURTHER / FARE BY DISTANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns that paying for fare by distance could... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disadvantage low income Edmontonians • Disadvantage suburban transit users • Disadvantage those who live in a surrounding municipality, or need to travel there on transit • Dissuade people from using park and ride • Reduce ridership
OTHER QUESTIONS / CONCERNS / COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the different pieces of the transit system (bus, LRT, DATS) be integrated under this new system? • How will the system integrate with surrounding municipalities? • “Does similar in nature just mean distance? If so, just say it is by distance.” • “We need to consider the differences between who uses the service, and who chooses to use it- transit is a necessity for some.”

Individual Exercise - Affordability

Transit service will be reasonably affordable to the public, regardless of age, financial need or other potential barriers.

What this means to me: If I depend on transit, I know I'll be able to afford it and that my discount will be based on a set portion of the regular fare.

The impact on low income Edmontonians was also of primary concern with respect to the affordability principle. The general sentiment was that although the principle seems to make sense, care needs to be taken to address the needs of especially vulnerable people who struggle with the current system and may also “fall through the cracks” when the new system is implemented.

CONCERNS ABOUT IMPACT ON LOW INCOME EDMONTONIANS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is “reasonably affordable” depends on income / socioeconomic status • Is income considered with respect to affordability? • What will be done for those in poverty / without income? • Have you spoken to low income people about what is affordable? • How will the PATH/Ride Transit programs be impacted? • Some people who are low income or on AISH already struggle with the cost of a \$35 monthly pass
OTHER QUESTIONS / CONCERNS / COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Reasonably affordable” doesn’t seem like the right wording, it is unclear. “Is it affordable or not?” • How are the discounts / costs decided? Are multiple discounts possible (for example, among very low income seniors)? • A couple of participants mentioned that seniors and youth should get a discount • One person asked if it is possible to receive increased funding from the province or the City

Individual Exercise – Frequent User Discounts

Frequent use of transit will be promoted through discounted fares, rewarding individuals that choose transit as a primary means of transportation.

What this means to me: The more I use transit, the more I'll be rewarded with bigger discounts.

Generally, participants responded positively to the idea of frequent user discounts, although there was a fair amount of confusion with respect to how frequent users would be rewarded, and the logistics of how these “rewards” would work in practice and be monitored.

HOW WILL IT WORK?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will there be identifiable passes? Fobs? • Is it possible to prevent people from sharing one pass? • How will this be monitored?
HOW WILL PEOPLE BE REWARDED?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of reward is this? Is it a points card? • Could there be points or rewards for people who choose transit over other options? • One person suggested rewording the policy to “incentives will be provided for people who use transit frequently, such as discounted fares, etc.” for increased clarity- as with the current wording, what the “reward” is is not entirely clear.
FOR A FEW PEOPLE, CONCERNS ABOUT CERTAIN GROUPS UNFAIRLY PAYING MORE PERSIST, SPECIFICALLY...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less frequent travelers (including those with reduced mobility, who may not be able to travel as often- there was a concern among a couple of people that this might increase social isolation)
GENERAL POSITIVE COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One person mentioned that this type of discount doesn't penalize those who can only afford tickets • Another mentioned that discounts may encourage people to use ETS instead of their car, or to use ETS more frequently, given the idea of a reward (one participant mentioned that the idea of a reward makes her want to spend more)

Individual Exercise – Balanced Cost Recovery Rates

Fares will recover a portion of operating costs, recognizing both the individual and public benefits of transit service.

What this means to me: As a transit rider I know the proportion of my fares that directly cover the transit service. As a taxpayer I know how much I am investing in environmentally-friendly transportation and ensuring everyone has an affordable way to move around the city.

Responses to the principle of balanced cost recovery rates among community stakeholders were quite diverse. Among those who provided comments, some of the questions / concerns that emerged were...

Some participants wondered whether transit users are actually overly concerned with how the percentage is divided (between taxpayers and transit fares). Others felt that the City needs to be transparent about the proportion paid by transit users and taxpayers. One person mentioned being concerned that the proportion recovered at the fare box is lower than Calgary and other Canadian cities.

A couple of participants expressed concerns about the potential for rising costs- one was specifically concerned about operational costs, while another wondered what will happen if improvements to the transit system cost more (i.e. will the increased cost be recovered from fares or taxpayers).

A couple of people also mentioned that the transit service is not equal across the City, and that not all areas have equal access to the transit system.

Group Discussion – Summary of Themes (1 of 2)

During the cardstorming exercise, participants grouped their most pressing / important questions / concerns into five main themes: Who is missing? / Barriers, Logistics, Sliding Scale Costs, Clarity, and DATS. The following chart provides a high-level summary of the topics that emerged under each theme. Detailed themes (including all mentions which fell under each theme, based on how participants sorted their questions / concerns) can be found following this summary.

WHO IS MISSING? / BARRIERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations need to capture opinions among transit users, students (there is some sense that these groups have been left out) How will equity be ensured? Who are the high frequency users? Need to address barriers which already exist in the current system (including DATS rules, and policies on children under 12 traveling alone, as well as inconsistency in operators' decisions with respect to expired transfer time)
LOGISTICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With respect to the card (does it cost anything, is there a minimum to load, concerns with no longer having tickets to provide to low income clients, barriers to getting the card for people with disabilities) How does this work with respect to regionalization / surrounding municipalities? / How is it coordinated? Concerns about low income residents, those who have to travel further (“distance does in no way indicate consistency”), those who ride less often being unfairly impacted or penalized
SLIDING SCALE COSTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is meant by “reasonably affordable” / how is this defined? Will current programs remain (low income pass, PATH, Ride, CNIB- vision loss, free ride)? How are barriers to accessing the low income fare programs being addressed? Is there a link to income? / Was the proportion of discount based on income considered? Challenge of ridership in outer areas- paying more for less service, paying a “time penalty” (because it takes longer) as well as the cost

Group Discussion – Summary of Themes (2 of 2)

CLARITY

- Not necessarily clear how the principles intersect
- How does the fare recovery rate compare with other major Canadian cities?
- What do the different components (operating, maintenance, capital) cost? How will fare prices change when improvements / new projects happen?

DATS

- Is DATS being considered with respect to regionalization?
- Is DATS captured in these policies?
- Will policies be consistent across bus, LRT, DATS?

Note: Questions / concerns about DATS were also discussed as part of the “Who is missing? / Barriers” theme.

Group Discussion – Detailed Themes

The following section details the most pressing / important concerns / questions identified by the participants in their groups, as well as the themes that were identified to describe each group of concerns / questions. These items are reported verbatim (i.e. exactly as the participants wrote them). Questions / concerns marked with an asterisk (*) identify those which were mentioned to be missing from the wall during the group discussion (which followed the “theming” exercise). These questions / concerns are summarized in the moderator’s words.

WHO IS MISSING? / BARRIERS

- Most/all input opportunities have not captured feedback from single largest users: STUDENTS (they are away on summer vacation)
- If “the public” is everyone, define “everyone”- what about homeless?
- The people you need to talk to are the ones who use the transit system, go to Bissell Centre, Jasper Place Health & Wellness – talk to the people
- How will this be calculated to ensure equity between groups?
- Who are the high frequency users?
- There is a great deal of discrimination among users- addressing barriers:
 - *If you are disabled and your child is not- how to coordinate the systems?
 - *On DATS, if a disabled parent has a child, that child is not allowed to ride. How does their parent get to appointments?
 - *If you apply to DATS and say you need someone to come with you, they say that you need that person to come every time (even if they might not be needed)- it is an “all or none”
 - *Children under 12 can ride transit for free with an adult, but what if the adult can’t go? Make it easier for low income children under 12 to travel alone.
 - *Inconsistency in decisions with respect to expired transfer time (i.e. some operators will let people on the bus with an expired transfer while others will not)
- *Look at barriers existing in previous policies

Group Discussion – Detailed Themes (cont'd)

LOGISTICS

- May limit exploration of the City / possibility for social isolation in some areas
- Could this be used to reward certain types of use (people riding downtown to reduce congestion, etc.)?
- Does the distance travelled mean within Edmonton, within the region, or both?
- “Encourage ridership” could also say “encourage full participation in community” + increases access to services and resources
- Discounts are good as long as it doesn't penalize people riding less often, or those who can't afford monthly passes
- There should be no distinction between distance and similar in nature- no way to monitor this
- *Distance does in no way indicate consistency
 - *For example, students in the Southwest portion of the City may need to travel 15km to the closest school- may result in them being unfairly penalized
 - *Someone may be travelling to the Ice District to attend a hockey game, but may also be going to a medical appointment (also, doctors may move their practice)
- *Does it cost anything to get the card?
- *Concern with no more tickets- accessibility for clients who receive free tickets through organization
- *Ease with which people with disabilities can physically get their pass / barriers related to this (passes used to be mailed)
- *How much (in terms of range of costs for different distance trips)?
- *Will the CNIB card still be valid?
- *Does the card have a minimum to load on it (e.g. \$5, \$15, \$25...)
- *An unintended consequence might be people sticking to their “zone” because that's what they know
- *Would like to see an increase in the transfer time
- *Coordinate / consult with St. Albert, Sherwood Park, Leduc
- *What about people who are low income, but not on social assistance?
- *The fare strategy, smart card, and service review should be tied together- it may impact responses

Group Discussion – Detailed Themes (cont’d)

SLIDING SCALE COSTS

- Ensure linkage between distance and individuals’ income limitations and old discounts (CNIB / vision loss- free ride)
- What does “reasonably affordable” mean?
- Was proportion of income discount considered? How will reasonably affordable be defined?
- What discretion do operators have when users can’t pay fees? Is there consistency?
- How will this encourage ridership in outer areas? Challenge of paying more for less service.
- Electronic identifiable pass (“smart fare”) would be beneficial
- Is the low income transit pass still going to be part of the policy?
- Will the PATH program remain?
- Will the Ride program remain?
- How are we addressing barriers to accessing the low income fare programs (i.e. taxes done, address, ID)?
- *Distance / time to travel- feels like a double penalty, it takes a long time, and then there’s the cost
- *Suggestion: could you rack up points if you use frequently, and get a discount the next month?

CLARITY

- Principles seem disconnected- will need information about how they intersect
- How does Edmonton’s fare recovery rate compare with other major Canadian cities?
- What do the different components cost (i.e. operating, maintenance, capital)?
- Could be advantage/disadvantage- how will fare prices change when improvement initiatives, new projects bring new cost?
- *If fares go up, will low income folks’ income come up to meet them?

DATS

- Is DATS being considered along with plans for regionalization?
- Is DATS captured in these policies? Example: single parent wheelchair user not being able to bring child on DATS
- Will this be consistent between forms of transport (LRT vs. Bus vs. DATS)?

DETAILED RESULTS

Internal Employee Workshop

Individual Exercise - Fairness

Fares will be consistent for trips that are similar in nature. Ensure fares reflect the cost of offering transit services and encourage ridership when compared to the cost of transportation alternatives.

What this means to me: I know that fares will be based on the types of transit trips I take (i.e., distance travelled).

During the individual exercise, the following questions and concerns emerged among internal employees with respect to the fairness principle...

DOES THE PRINCIPLE UNFAIRLY DISADVANTAGE CERTAIN USER GROUPS?

- Concerns that this principle may unfairly disadvantage...
 - Those with a low income
 - People who need to travel further on transit
 - Those who live in the suburbs
 - Those who need to travel to and from surrounding municipalities
 - Visitors to our City who are travelling to and from the airport

LOGISTICS

- How will this principle integrate with the new bus/LRT routes? (following the redesign)
- How do the new route types (e.g. neighbourhood, crosstown) tie together? Will you have to pay again when switching between these transit types?
- How will this interface with the regional transit system?
- Will the fares be calculated differently for bus vs. LRT?
- How will this work with transfers?
- How is similarity determined / what does this refer to / mean?
- How is distance determined (kilometres, number of stops, etc.)?
- How will the fares be calculated, monitored, determined?
- Is there a cap on the amount?

OTHER QUESTIONS / CONCERNS / COMMENTS

- This needs to be communicated well and clearly to the public
- A couple of participants specifically mentioned liking the fare for distance idea

Individual Exercise - Affordability

Transit service will be reasonably affordable to the public, regardless of age, financial need or other potential barriers.

What this means to me: If I depend on transit, I know I'll be able to afford it and that my discount will be based on a set portion of the regular fare.

The main questions and concerns stemming from the affordability principle in the employee workshop were with respect to what is meant by affordable/reasonably affordable, and what happens to the existing pass / fare system.

WHAT IS "AFFORDABLE" / "REASONABLY AFFORDABLE"

- What does this mean?
- What is it based on?
- What is the baseline data?
- How is it decided?
- Who decides on the definition / reasonably affordable to whom?
- What is affordable or reasonably affordable can depend on perspective (e.g. for some, even a discounted fare is not affordable).

WHAT HAPPENS TO EXISTING PASSES / FARES?

- Concerns about what different user groups will pay under the new system
 - Seniors (a couple of participants mentioned being concerned about backlash if there is a fare increase)
 - Children under 12 (who currently ride free)
 - Low income users
 - Youth (a couple of participants mentioned youth should be lower cost)
 - AISH/DATS users
 - A couple mentioned that some groups should be free
- Accessibility is important (some people are dependent on transit)

OTHER QUESTIONS / CONCERNS / COMMENTS

- A couple of people mentioned that equity does not mean equality
- A couple also mentioned they love this principle

Individual Exercise – Frequent User Discounts

Frequent use of transit will be promoted through discounted fares, rewarding individuals that choose transit as a primary means of transportation.

What this means to me: The more I use transit, the more I'll be rewarded with bigger discounts.

Participants in the employee workshop provided diverse feedback with respect to frequent user discounts, as follows (with each of the items below being mentioned by approximately one to two participants each)...

- Concerns about various user groups:
 - What about people who can't afford the monthly cost of an up front pass?
 - Will it penalize infrequent users or visitors to the City?
 - How will this fit with the PATH program?
- One participant wondered whether rewards from those with privilege could be used to help the marginalized
- How will “frequent” be decided / what are the categories to determine reward?
- Will there be a monthly cap?
- Could there be a connection to other municipalities, or incentives for those who use transit to get to work?
- More frequent users theoretically have more of an impact on maintenance for transit
- One question regarding whether the City has considered decreasing fares to increase ridership
- Hopes that this will encourage greater usage of transit

Individual Exercise – Balanced Cost Recovery Rates

Fares will recover a portion of operating costs, recognizing both the individual and public benefits of transit service.

What this means to me: As a transit rider I know the proportion of my fares that directly cover the transit service. As a taxpayer I know how much I am investing in environmentally-friendly transportation and ensuring everyone has an affordable way to move around the city.

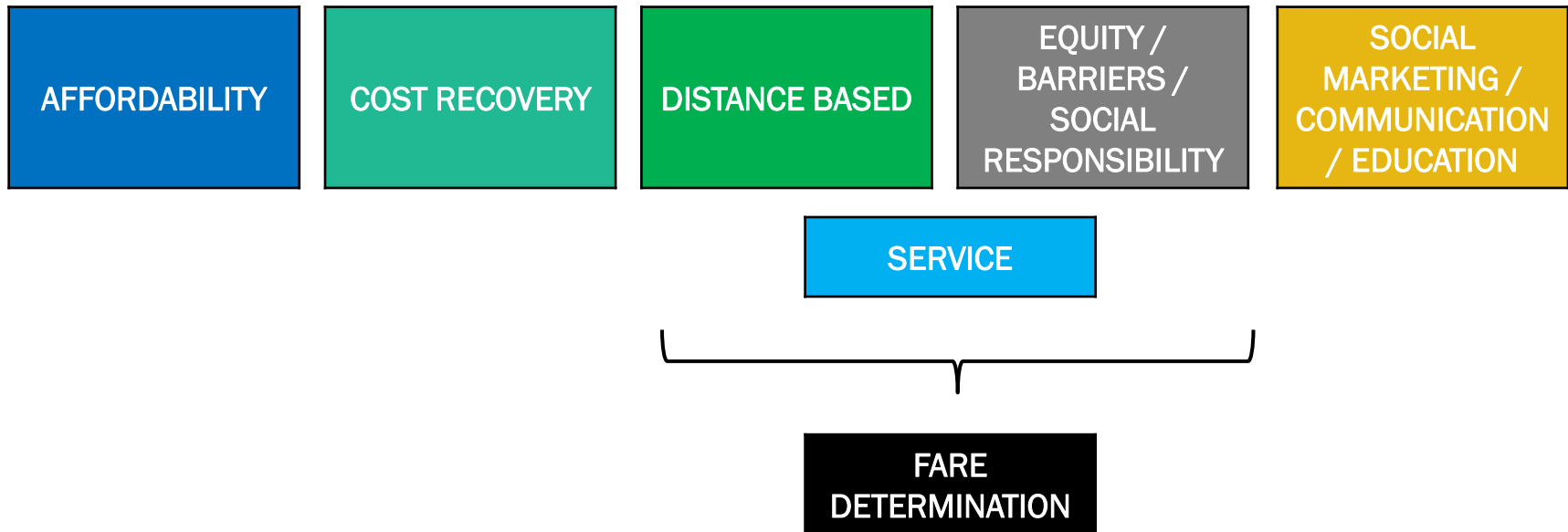
During the individual exercise, the questions / concerns provided were also quite diverse, with employees mentioning the following...

COST RECOVERY PROPORTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is 40% too ambitious / unrealistic? (a couple of mentions) • What is the ideal proportion? • How do we compare to other cities? • What is the actual proportion covered by fare / taxpayers?
OTHER QUESTIONS / CONCERNS / COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the cost recovery percentage fixed or variable? • Is this short or long term (i.e. is it approved by council and revisited annually, or every 4 years?) • How will this impact my taxes? • Need to be transparent • Needs to be well communicated (through a strong social marketing campaign) • Transit is good for the City / stimulates businesses / provides a social benefit • One person mentioned that the transit service in the Southwest is limited

Group Discussion – Detailed Themes (1 of 3)

The following section details the most pressing / important concerns / questions identified by the participants in their groups, as well as the themes that were identified to describe each group of concerns / questions, reported verbatim.

During the employee workshop, participants noted that mentions within their “service” theme were related to both the “distance based” and “equity / barriers / social responsibility” theme, and all three of these themes fell into a broader theme, identified as “fare determination.”



Group Discussion – Detailed Themes (2 of 3)

The following section details the most pressing / important concerns / questions identified by the participants in their groups, as well as the themes that were identified to describe each group of concerns / questions.

AFFORDABILITY

- What does reasonably affordable mean?
- 'reasonably affordable' who sets this standard? When is this standard revisited?
- Who defines 'reasonably affordable'?
- Need to link capped rates to 'affordability'. Must be affordable to those that are on a limited or fixed income.
- How will discount programs work?
- My discount will be based on set portion of the regular fare??????? This makes no sense.
- Impact of current discount on monthly/annual, etc. discounted rates?

COST RECOVERY

- Are there targets for recouping costs? How will they be determined? (In consideration of newer subsidized programs)
- What is the target cost rec. rate? Determined by council.
- Why do we ask for cost-recovery for transit but not road maintenance?
- 40% recovery rate may be too ambitious if we want to change culture and behaviour around transit. Aim for lower to make ridership more desirable.

DISTANCE-BASED

- Clarification on fares by distance cap/max?
- How will fare policy impact first km/last km travel options?
- DATS trips – impacts re: distance based fares
- Balance cost benefit to those that live/work central with financial limits to those that live/work/commute to/from suburbs
- Need to ensure that distance fares will not impact whether a rider chooses a destination
- Do distance-based fares limit people/constrict them to certain areas they can afford? Negative impacts, e.g. Limited access to fresh or affordable food.
- Are certain people (income, age groups) negatively impacted by distance-based fares on their location of residence, work, home, etc.

Group Discussion – Detailed Themes (3 of 3)

EQUITY / BARRIERS / SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Criminalization of poverty – how to change system so this doesn't happen?
- The multi-use discounted fares are a luxury. Many people can't afford a monthly pass up-front but can only pay trip by trip.
- Regardless of age sounds dismissive, using "inclusive of all ages, financial needs, or other potential barriers" – this doesn't sound right.
- Transportation as key to economic/social well-being of individual families

SERVICE (LENGTH, TYPE, WHERE GOING, LONG / SHORT)

- How will frequency be determined? By month? Week? Etc.?
- Trips 'similar in nature' would this be distances, stops, etc.?

SOCIAL MARKETING / COMMUNICATION / EDUCATION

- How are we educating the public?
- How are we addressing NIMBYism?
- Needs to be accompanied by a really good social marketing plan
- Communicating new fare policy to various groups (ie. Newcomers, elderly, visitors)
- 40% recovery rate may be too ambitious if want to change culture and behaviour around transit, aim to for lows to make ridership desirable (this was also noted under the "Cost Recovery" theme)
- Missing opportunity to use transit as economical tool

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