

ETSAB 2021 - 2022 Annual Activity Report - Background and Overview



Background

The Edmonton Transit Service Advisory Board (ETSAB) was established in September 1994 to provide advice and recommendations to the Urban Planning Committee from a stakeholder perspective on issues related to public transit. These include ridership, servicing issues, public transit policies; repair, maintenance and accessibility issues; relationships between City projects and public transit and initiatives of other levels of government and surrounding municipalities that could affect public transit in Edmonton. ETSAB was originally established under Bylaw #12454 in 1994. The Bylaw was replaced by [16929](#) on April 22, 2015, and revised August 27, 2019, including an update to the name of the Board (from System to Service) to align with Edmonton Transit Service' recent rebranding.

ETSAB consists of 12 members, appointed by Council. The President of the Amalgamated Transit Union or a delegate may serve the Board as a liaison member. Members of ETSAB represent a variety of interests, are a positive source of informed participation, and are prepared to address issues on a City-wide basis. The criterion for selection of members is to gain representation that reflects the diversity of our citizens, businesses, labour, communities and organizations.

ETSAB meets on a monthly basis on the last Monday of the month. Since March 2020, the beginning of the pandemic, these meetings have been held online. For issues that require in-depth consideration, ad-hoc sub-committees are formed as needed. Board members are expected to serve on at least one sub-committee throughout the term, of the two that run concurrently.

In order to fulfill its mandate, ETSAB may:

- Conduct research
- Identify stakeholder groups and seek input from them
- Share information and collaborate with the City Manager
- Receive and consider information and records provided by the City Manager that relates to the Board's mandate and work plan
- Inform City Council of initiatives of other levels of government, surrounding municipalities and other local authorities and organizations that could impact public transit

Overview

In 2021-22, there were considerable challenges during the pandemic for ETSAB and a rapidly changing set of contexts that required the Board to adapt its methods and working styles to remain productive. These setbacks ranged from the reduction in transit use by many members due to the pandemic, a loss of institutional memory with the resignation of the chair in May, and the resignation of the administrative assistant in June, and challenges associated with a board who has only met online for two years, such as feeling distant from best understanding city and council priorities related to transit.

Nevertheless, in 2021-22, ETSAB made two presentations to the Urban Planning Committee, issued letters to Council in response to emerging issues, and presented at the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA). The Boards' activities to highlight opportunities to improve transit services and experiences have been well received by Council and Administration and we look forward to seeing many of the recommendations implemented. ETSAB looks forward to continuing these collaborative efforts in 2021-22.

Membership and Appointments

Members are each appointed for a one year term from May 1st to April 30th; terms may be renewed up to a maximum of six years. The expected time commitment is around 15-18 hours per month for Board-related activities.

Twelve members served on the Board in the 2021-22 term: Isabell Hubert Lyall (former Chair, resigned in May 2021), Lindsay Vanstone (Chair, following the resignation of the previous Chair), Michelle Peters Jones (Vice Chair), Serena Tang (Vice Chair), J. Philip Reid, Giselle General, William Agbakoba, Bryan Shepherd, Jarret Esslinger, Guy Milner, Bob Turner, and Mark Harvey.

Five members have declined reappointment to the Board for the upcoming term: Jarret Esslinger (3 years of service), Bryan Shepherd (3 years of service), Guy Milner (2 years of service), Lindsay Vanstone (2 years of service), and Mark Harvey (1 year of service). J. Philip Reid has reached the end of his term (6 years of service) and the seventh spot is currently vacant due to the resignation. Recruitment is underway through the Office of the City Clerk for seven new members for the 2020-2021 term.

At the March 2022 Board meeting, Giselle General (starting her 5th year of service) was elected through an acclamation as Chair, and Michelle Peters Jones and Serena Tang (starting their 3rd years of service) were re-elected also through acclamation as Vice Chairs of the Board for the upcoming term.

Activities

ETSAB held all twelve regular monthly meetings virtually in the 2021-22 term, as well as the work planning retreat virtually on May 8, 2021. The following sub-committees were formed to gather information and prepare reports and letters to UPC. The activities of each sub-committee are described in **Attachment #2**.

1. Safety and Security

2. Sustainable and Equitable Transit Funding
3. Transit and Vulnerable Populations Report (carried over from the previous term to the City postponing the presentation to council)
4. Inclusive Transit: BIPOC Experiences (carried over from the previous term due to the City postponing the presentation to council)

Communications with Council

Two reports were presented by ETSAB to Committees of Council in 2021-22, and two letters were issued to Councillors and copied to ETS Administration.

Reports:

1. CR_XXXX ETSAB Inclusive Transit: BIPOC Experiences (June 11, 2021)
2. EXTCO00535 ETSAB Transit and Vulnerable Populations Report (August 10, 2021)

Letters:

3. Renaming Grandin LRT Station (June 4, 2021)
4. Mask Mandates on Transit (March 11, 2022)

Reports and Letters in Progress:

1. Safety and Security Subcommittee
2. Sustainable and Equitable Funding Models

Councillors were also updated on selected topics that were discussed at the general monthly Board meetings via email submission of "Topics of the Night" from the Vice Chair of the Board. The selected topics for the 2021-22 meetings are listed in **Attachment #3**.

Other activities in 2021

Board members received 7 presentations throughout the year from City Administration and others (**Attachment #3**). Members had the opportunity to ask questions and offer informal feedback at each presentation. ETSAB nominated three delegates to attend the annual Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) conference in the fall of 2021 and also made a presentation about ETSAB's role and work as part of the conference.

Bi-Annual Luncheons with Councillors

ETSAB has not had the opportunity to meet with councillors since November 2019. Prior to the pandemic, ETSAB would meet bi-annually with councillors to understand the interests of councillors and key areas that ETSAB could focus on. Normally, there is a luncheon in late spring and a social in November, attended by current and past members. Members of City Council and Edmonton Transit management staff would also be invited. It is strongly recommended that these meetings restart in order to maintain the interest and motivation for ETSAB members, and to ensure the best alignment of ETSAB's work with Council's interests.

Attachment 1

Budget Projections

Budget information for the upcoming year is included in **Attachment #4**. All budget projections are included within the annual budget submission of the Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) branch of the City's Operations department.

Work Plans

Attachment #5 contains the 2021-2022 work plan. The Board plans to provide deliverables related to the topics of *Safety and Security*, and *Sustainable and Equitable Funding Models* by the end of the current term.

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