

ETSAB 2022 - 2023 Annual Report/Activites Report



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 virtually on a monthly basis on the last Monday of the month. 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 ETS Branch Manager
- Receive and consider information and records provided by the City Administration 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 2022- 2023 several circumstances affected ETSAB which resulted in adjusting its processes to continue its mandate. Five board members ended their involvement in

April 2022, and while there were seven vacancies on the board, newly recruited board members filled up to five of the positions. One board member resigned in the fall and one took a leave of absence. Nevertheless, both the new and continuing board members worked together to produce deliverables and engage meaningfully during meetings.

There is a noticeable increase in transit use by Edmontonians, which meant that transit use by a number of ETSAB board members increased as well. This provided ample opportunity to observe the city's transit services and provide meaningful input.

As part of the feedback from departing board members, the Annual Retreat was moved earlier, to September from February of the following year. This gave new board members an earlier opportunity to share their input in the future work of ETSAB for the upcoming year. The Chair conducted periodic one-on-one check-in meetings with both new and returning board members to strengthen their working relationship despite the predominantly virtual nature of the board's activities. The board members indicated that meeting virtually is more accessible and convenient so the monthly board meetings continue to be conducted virtually. The meetings began being live streamed in January 2023 to make it accessible to the public.

ETSAB also resumed the Annual Luncheon with City Council. The first meeting since the pandemic took place in October 2022, which was a valuable opportunity for ETSAB board members and city councillors to meet and share perspectives on public transit and the plans of the municipal government.

ETSAB's activities highlighting opportunities to improve transit services and experiences, outlined in further detail below, have been well received by Council and Administration. ETSAB looks forward to seeing many of the recommendations implemented and to continuing these collaborative efforts in 2023-24.

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.

Ten members served on the Board in the 2022-23 term: Giselle General (Chair), Serena Tang (Vice Chair), Michelle Peters Jones (Vice Chair), Bob Turner, William Agabakoba Nwachukwu (resigned September 17, 2022), Emily Batty, Zohra Jabeen, Joshua Jackman, Mudasser Seraj, Madeleine Stout.

Nine members have accepted reappointment to the Board for the upcoming term: Giselle General, (5 years of service) Serena Tang (3 years of service), Bob Turner (3 years of service), Michelle Peters-Jones (3 years of service) Emily Batty (1 years of service), Zohra Jabeen (1 years of service), Joshua Jackman (1 year of service), Mudasser Seraj (1 year of service) and Madeleine Stout (1 year of service). Recruitment is underway through the Office of the City Clerk for three new members for the 2023-2024 term.

Board Activities

ETSAB held twelve regular monthly meetings in the 2022-2023 term. Through a series of activities during and in between regular monthly meetings, the board conducted several activities in order to stay informed on transit-related matters, organize the board members, and produce deliverables to provide input on how to improve public transit in Edmonton.

Subcommittee Work

In the beginning month of the term, ETSAB continued the subcommittee work that was carried over from the previous term. These sub-committees are:

1. Financial Sustainability
2. Youth Safety and Security on Transit

The annual work plan was developed at a full-day hybrid meeting on September 10, 2022. To fulfill the work plan, the following sub-committees were formed to conduct research and provide a policy position or recommendation to the appropriate committees of council:

1. Budget
2. Mobility and Accessibility in Edmonton Winters
3. Evaluation of Community Outreach Transit Team (COTT)
4. Ridership Improvement Strategies

The subcommittees in progress are Budget and Mobility and Accessibility in Edmonton Winters. Once completed, the work on the subcommittees Evaluation of Community Outreach Transit Team (COTT) and Ridership Improvement Strategies will commence.

The activities of each sub-committee are described below:

1. Financial Sustainability

Purpose

The purpose of this subcommittee is to provide meaningful input to Edmonton City Council committees as discussions on financial sustainability from the perspective of everyday people taking transit. The pandemic impacted ETS's ability to generate revenue, while commuters continuously get frustrated at increasing fares while not seeing a tangible improvement in the transit service they received. The City is exploring additional sources of revenue and the subcommittee intends to provide feedback on the impacts of these various methods.

Activities

- Reviewing the ETS Report CO00607 Mass Transit System - Sustainable Funding and Service Growth Report that will be presented to City Council on April 13.

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- Comparing travel times for different modes of travel, to assess how Edmontonians are likely to choose one method over another, using publicly accessible online tools.
- Discussions among subcommittee members of their lived experiences traveling in Edmonton using various modes of transport.
- Drafting a letter outlining the feedback of the board members, to highlight the potential impacts of these funding options towards Edmontonians.

Outcome

- A letter that was provided to City Council in April 2022 in time for ETS' presentation on Sustainable Funding and Service Growth

City Council and City Administration Response to the Subcommittee Report:

The ETS Advisory Board letter was provided to Edmonton's City Council ahead of the April 13, 2022 Executive Committee report *Mass Transit System - Sustainable Funding and Service Growth - Interim Update*. The report and supporting information are inputs for the response being developed by City Administration. The report entitled *Revenue Source for Transit - Potential, Risk and Implementation and Intergovernmental Advocacy* is scheduled to be presented to Executive Committee in Q3 2023.

2. Youth Safety and Security on Transit

Purpose

Evaluate transit safety and security from a youth perspective.

Activities

Research included:

- Review previous ETSAB Safety and Security Subcommittee reports, evaluate the recommendations and progress made on implementing these recommendations, through the lens of gender, BIPOC, and vulnerable users.
- Youth and safety on transit:
 - Evaluate city transit programmes to ensure the safety of young people (10 – 21 years) on transit. Analyze transit training for younger riders – what kind of programs exist and how can such programmes help young people feel more confident on transit.
 - Work with parents and guardians of young people, to gather information on safety best practices for young people on transit.
 - Evaluate the efficacy of the Transit Watch programme, from the point of view of young people.
 - Analyze the messaging and tools from the City on transit safety and how it can better reach out to young people.
- Mobilize ideas from other jurisdictions and cities comparable in size to Edmonton, and report on best practices on how to improve safety/security, with particular emphasis on cost.

- Use reports and statistics from ETS on ridership and security (for example: Transit Watch)
- Reaching out to the Edmonton Public and Catholic School Boards to gather data on youth transit riders.
- Using social media to reach out to communities, including Facebook Groups, Twitter, and Reddit.
- Canvass PTA groups from schools.
- Talk to student unions from universities/ colleges.
- First-hand accounts from transit riders – via unstructured interviews, if possible.
- Inviting concerned parties to future ETSAB and subcommittee meetings to offer their points of view.

Outcomes:

A report of the subcommittee recommendations was submitted to City Council. A presentation is scheduled for March 21, 2023.

3. Budget

Purpose

The purpose of the Budget sub-committee is to assess the City of Edmonton 4-year budget and all related ETS budgets with the purpose of seeking the maximum funding for ETS operations and a host of distinct initiatives.

Activities

- Phase 1: The subcommittee members reviewed the draft proposed budget that was made available to the public in November 2022. The members conducted discussions and drafted a letter summarizing the key points that ETSAB wished City Council to consider during budget deliberations. This first phase of the subcommittee work took place from October - December 2022.
- Phase 2: This work is in progress. The subcommittee members plan to analyze the decisions made by City Council during budget deliberations and provide feedback for consideration during future budget adjustment periods.

Outcomes

Phase 1: A letter provided on November 14, 2022 summarizing transit-related key points for consideration in preparation for the budget discussion.

Phase 2: This work is in progress. Make additional recommendations to the City on Budget on transit via a letter to Council after further analysis of the decisions made in December during budget discussions, which will be completed by end of March 2023.

Membership

Chair: Joshua Jackman

Members: Giselle General, Bob Turner, Madeleine Stout, Zohra Jabeen

4. Mobility and Accessibility in Edmonton Winters

Purpose

The purpose of the subcommittee is to present a review of the usability of transit after a few months of winter and identify key challenges and opportunities for improvement. The identified factors that affect mobility and accessibility in winter while taking Edmonton Transit are: cold weather, unpredictability of freeze and thaw cycles, bus stop access, safe commuting, and clear pathways.

Activities:

Commenced November 2022 - February 2023

- Observe and document their personal experiences navigating winter as transit users during this upcoming winter season. The transit journey begins when departing an indoor structure (home/building) using all infrastructure to board a transit vehicle (sidewalks, shelters, terminals), and arriving at the destination. The intention is to capture the full door-to-door experience that transit passengers have during winter.
- Consult relevant organizations and agencies in Edmonton with valuable insight about public transit, accessibility and Edmonton as a winter city. The organizations identified include but might not be limited to, the DATS Advisory Group (DAG), Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), Winter City Edmonton, and potentially others.
- If time or resources permit, the subcommittee might perform additional research on best practices by transit agencies and cities that have winter when it comes to having a good quality transit system in winter time; however, the primary goal is to conduct primary research on the winter experiences here in Edmonton.

Outcome

- Make recommendations to the City on Budget on transit via a letter/report to Council. The report will be completed by the committee by the end of March 2023.

Membership

Chair: Serena Tang

Members: Madeleine Stout, Emily Batty, Giselle General, Mudasser Seraj

Quick Response to Emerging Items

The board provided feedback on several transit related items on the City Council's agenda, where a quick turnaround was required. These topics were:

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- June 2022: Amendment of the Transit Bylaw 8353
- September 2022: Presentation by EMTSC on the routes under the Phase 1 regionalization proposal

Feedback on these topics were compiled and provided directly to Councillor Rutherford, the City Council Liaison for ETSAB, who took them in consideration during city council meetings.

General Meeting Presentations and Topics of the Night

Below is the overview of the different presentations scheduled during ETSAB board meetings. Some of these presentations are for educational purposes for the board, while some presentations were organized by City of Edmonton departments on various topics where input of ETSAB board members were solicited.

2022	ETSAB General Meeting Presentations
January	Bus Rapid Transit/Mass Transit Network (Pablo Orozco, Dallas Karhut)
February	Snow and Ice Service Standards (Andrew Grant, Aurea Siemens)
March	Women & Transit (Priyanka Babbar)
April	<i>No Presentation</i>
May	Edmonton Metro Transit Services Commission (Paul Jankowski)
June	Mass Transit: Implementation for 1.25 Million Project (Bryan Whited)
July	<i>No Presentation</i>
August	<i>No Presentation</i>
September	Governance Review of Advisory Committees (Mollie Everett)
October	History of ATU/Union Fundamentals (Steve Bradshaw)
November	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. UPE (Urban Planning and Economy Department) - Climate adaptation and energy transition (Juan Monterrosa)2. Bystander Awareness Campaign (Robin Butterworth)
December	An Overview of DATS, Edmonton's paratransit service (Paul Shmold)

Below is the outline of the 'Topics of the Night' for each board meeting in 2022. This summary of the activities that took place in every board meeting was also provided to City Council and related stakeholders shortly after the board meeting.

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2022	ETSAB General Meeting Topics of the Night
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 presentations - Mass Transit, Bus Rapid Transit and planning for 1.25 million ppl • Snow and Ice control program: a stakeholder presentation • ETSAB members approved terms of reference for the Sustainable and Equitable Funding Model committee. • Updates from Safety and Security sub committee • Members introduced themselves to Clr Rutherford and received her ideas of emerging issues
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on Snow and Ice Removal - discussions on snow clearing and priorities • Masking on ETS - board will draft a letter to City Council outlining position on issues • G. Milner and M. Peter Jones shared some information from the Safety and Security meeting they attended • Terms of Reference were approved for Safety and Security Sub Committee • Updates from Sustainable and Equitable Funding Model Sub Committee • M. Lachance shared that COTT has been approved for 3 year pilot to expand program • Clr Rutherford funding for ETS and other transit issues
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation from Priyanka Babbar on Women in transit research. • ETSAB had their executive positions elected for 2022-2023 - Giselle General (Chair), Michelle Peters-Jones (Vice Chair), and S. Tang(Vice Chair) • Discussed ETSAB's role to be more involved in Regional Transit Service
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report presented to Council • Onboarding new members • Annual retreat plan • Recommendations for future ETSAB years
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We had our first official general meeting with our new advisory board members, and introduced them to existing members and other ETSAB support such as our ETS liaisons, ETS Branch manager, and our Councillor liaison. • Paul Jankowski and Katie Soles gave a presentation on the Edmonton Metropolitan Transit Service Commission and what they are working towards in the next couple of years. • The advisory board began our discussions about planning our annual retreat, and are aiming to set a date in September dedicated to picking our next sub-committee topics.
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation from Bryan and Dallas Mass transit implementation project feedback through jam board • ETSAB finalized Annual Retreat September 10 in downtown area • Discussed speaking as a group on mask bylaw. A statement will not be issued. It will be a good discussion to think about this announcement as a collective.
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal for new Liaison roles • Finalizing youth safety report

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More updates regarding ARC card and implementation phases were requested.
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Last meeting before the Annual Retreat• Annual Retreat dietary restrictions• Approval of Youth Perceptions of Safety report• ETSAB-Councillors luncheon
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation on Governance review on advisory committee discussion opportunity to meeting mandate more successfully• debrief of annual retreat• Signing sheet is available for the 4 sub committee topics• voted to adjust October meeting date to accommodate halloween
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board was able to approve both Terms of reference for the two sub committees• Announced leave of absence for board member M. Peters-Jones• Steve Bradsahw presented on the history of Unions
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 presentations Carbon Budgeting and Bystander Awareness Campaign• Received updates from Budget sub committee, letter will be sent to Councillors
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DATS presentation• ETS related budget items• Subcommittee timeline council feedback• Update Mobility and Accessibility Committee to finalize how to collect data