

EPCOR CONTRACT EXTENSION - DISTRIBUTION & TRANSMISSION

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the actions outlined in Attachment 1 of the October 13, 2023, City Operations report CO01955, be approved.
2. That Attachment 1 of the October 13, 2023, City Operations report CO01955 remain private pursuant to sections 16 (disclosure harmful to business interests of a third party), 24 (advice from officials) and 25 (disclosure harmful to economic and other interests of a public body) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Requested Action	Council decision required		
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle	ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals		
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.	Urban Places		
City Plan Values	ACCESS		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	Community of communities	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Mobility Network
Corporate Business Plan	Serving Edmontonians		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	City Policy C539A - Transit Service Policy		
Related Council Discussions	None		

Executive Summary

- EPCOR Distribution and Transmission provides continuous, round-the-clock monitoring and remote control of the substations that provide electricity for trains operating on Edmonton Transit Service's Capital and Metro Light Rail Transit (LRT) lines.

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- This service is required to monitor the status of the LRT's electrical systems and to remotely turn on and off the power for the safety of workers and the public during maintenance, construction and during critical incidents.
- These services have historically been provided through the EPCOR Technologies agreement that has lapsed since the closure of EPCOR's Technologies division.
- The City is now seeking a five-year extension, to an existing sole source agreement, with EPCOR Distribution and Transmission for the provision of these services.

REPORT

Edmonton Transit Service has historically worked with EPCOR Technologies as well as EPCOR Distribution and Transmission (D&T) in support of Light Rail Transit (LRT) operations and maintenance. In January 2023, EPCOR Technologies closed its operations and ceased providing service. While EPCOR's field maintenance team was transferred to City Operations, the City still requires continuous monitoring and remote control services for the LRT's substation network. This report seeks approval for the coverage of these services, for a period of five years, through EPCOR D&T.

Background

Edmonton's Capital Line and Metro Line has a total of 17 traction power substations that are designed to convert power from the electrical grid to power the LRT trains. These substations contain electrical equipment that need to be closely monitored to ensure the safe and reliable function of the LRT system. For example, should an electrical breaker trip, it triggers alarms that are monitored by EPCOR, which then advises City staff of the situation. For the safety of both workers and the public, continuous, round-the-clock operations are required to manage both planned and emergency power shutdowns. Planned shutdowns are required to perform maintenance or construction on the LRT system, and emergency shutdowns are required if there is an imminent risk of contact with electrified components (e.g., trespassers during accidental catenary teardowns).

ETS conducted a poll of other LRT service providers across North America and all transit operators remotely monitor and control their substations. It is industry best practice to have the substations monitored 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week for worker and public safety.

EPCOR D&T has a control centre that continuously monitors all of the power distribution substations in Edmonton using both staff and software. A physical network connection to the LRT substations enables the required control and monitoring function.

Contract History

This service has been historically delivered through the City's service agreement with EPCOR Technologies. In this past agreement, EPCOR provided both the maintenance and operation of the LRT signaling and traction power systems, including the provision for LRT substation control and monitoring. In January 2023, EPCOR's Technologies division dissolved its operations. As a result, the EPCOR field maintenance personnel and equipment that served LRT were transferred from EPCOR to ETS; however, the LRT substation monitoring and control service remained with EPCOR D&T. EPCOR D&T remains in operation and continues to provide substation monitoring

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services for the City of Edmonton and other substations located throughout the Edmonton area. Administration is not in a position to self-monitor LRT substations at this point in time, although this is an option being explored. Because the agreement with EPCOR D&T is approaching completion, a new agreement to continue LRT substation control and monitoring is warranted. In 2023, Administration entered into a brief sole source contract with EPCOR D&T to continue these services through the 2023 fiscal year to enable additional time to assess longer term options.

Budget/Financial Implications

There is no expected impact to existing budgets for this contract. Historically, these services have been financed through the ETS operating budget allocated to the Electrical Services agreement with EPCOR Technologies.

Legal Implications

As per Bylaw 16620, procurement agreements over \$1 million that do not arise from a competitive procurement process require approval by the appropriate City Council committee.

The City is subject to trade agreements that require an open competitive process for procurements of this value, unless a trade agreement exemption applies. There is an exception for the City's procurements from EPCOR in each applicable trade agreement.

Community Insight

Service-related levers for transit ridership and mode share include service frequencies, span of service and reliability. Service reliability is a core aspect of the rider experience and a key determinant of ridership. More than 40,000 Edmontonians participated in engagement during the development of the bus network redesign and Transit Strategy and the need for transit service reliability was frequently referenced.

GBA+

The LRT network is an important means of transportation for transit riders, offering a fast and affordable travel mode for those who use transit to get to employment, education, healthcare, recreation and other opportunities. From January to August 2023, data from over 950 LRT riders was collected through the monthly transit rider satisfaction survey. Survey data showed that LRT riders include a diverse range of intersecting identities. Key demographic data on LRT riders is outlined below:

- 14 per cent of survey respondents were youth ages 15-24.
- 21 per cent of survey respondents identified as racialized/visible minorities.
- 9 per cent of survey respondents identified as Indigenous.
- 13 per cent of survey respondents identified as persons with disabilities.
- 8 per cent of survey respondents identified as LGBTQ2SA+.
- 52 per cent of survey respondents identified as women.
- 15 per cent of survey respondents indicated their household income was less than \$30,000 annually.

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- 4 per cent of survey respondents indicated they were newcomers to Canada (less than one year).

When transit reliability is diminished, this disproportionately impacts riders who are more likely to rely on transit as their primary transportation mode, including women, youth, riders experiencing low income, newcomers, Indigenous peoples, those who identify as racialized/visible minorities, seniors and persons with disabilities. This can decrease their mobility independence and contribute to higher economic inequality. An LRT network that is consistently maintained and effectively operated enables greater access to affordable mobility modes for riders who need it the most. The EPCOR D&T contract is necessary for ensuring the LRT is operating safely and efficiently, with minimal service disruptions.

Attachment

1. (PRIVATE) Private Contract Overview