

### ETS Excellence in Ridership Improvement

There are a number of things for which ETS has been both consistent and proficient. These actions help convince the ridership that they have the support of the organization and it can improve the perception of transit services and lead to a more engaged ridership and increased use of ETS services over time. Our summary of accomplishments is as follows:

- The deployment of the Community Outreach Transit Team (COTT) has resulted in effective and fruitful collaboration that has helped the underserved and those struggling with social and mental health issues. The program has a focus on providing support in the community and assisting vulnerable persons so that they can receive help and access services; preventing breakdown, deterioration, and eradicating hopelessness. Since its launch, the COTT program has been a success, saving the lives of all peoples from every walk of life struggling with homelessness, substance abuse, and recidivism.
- New technologies have been implemented by ETS to improve the rider's experience in many ways. New technologies aid in a convenient, user-friendly, and dynamic ridership experience. Examples include the recent launch of ARC cards for digital fare payment; high-performance hydrogen-cell and electric buses that have lower emissions than conventional diesel buses and lower carbon imprint; ergonomically conscious SMART buses that accommodate the physical challenges of those with varying levels of disability or those who need mobility aids; and offering Wi-Fi services in ETS spaces to facilitate communication channels with riders.
- Mobility Conscious features – ETS buses have a host of tools to help those with disabilities and mobility challenges. These include but are not limited to:
  - Mobility Cards, Communication Cards, and Bus Hailer Kits (<https://www.edmonton.ca/ets/customer-mobility-travel-tools>)
  - Bus and LRT features including ramps and vehicle designs to allow for easy on and off access to ETS vehicles (<https://www.edmonton.ca/ets/lrt-accessibility>) and
  - Training for those who need assistance planning, understanding, and navigating their trips. This includes but is not limited to ETS' Mobile Choices Travel Training (<https://www.edmonton.ca/ets/customer-mobility-travel-tools>)
- ETS also works with the Accessibility and Advisory Committee (AAC) to gather input and ideas to improve services for those with physical disabilities and mobility challenges. This partnership has resulted in the

exchange of ideas, awareness, and advice that has helped improve transit services and the functionality, comfortability, and lives of a valued segment of the ridership, allowing for a better transit experience. This is also a testament to ETS' commitment to diversity and inclusivity. One of the City of Edmonton's Guiding Values is the concept of, "Belong." This is communicated in the City Plan (City of Edmonton, 2020). AAC collaboration allows ETS to align with the City's vision and direction by making changes and improvements in the user experience to make the ridership feel valued, heard, and welcomed. Enhancements here will allow the ridership to feel that it belongs.

- Safety and Security has been identified as a major issue of concern for ETS' ridership. Camera installations on buses, the use of artificial intelligence (City of Edmonton, 2023), and a greater physical presence of transit peace officers, security guards, and police officers in transit spaces (City of Edmonton, 2023) have been key actions that help restore some calm to a worrisome public and a rapid rise in instances of crime and violence in ETS spaces.
- One of ETS' strengths is positivity and the spirit of vivacity. Through its communication with the public, advertising, and acknowledgement of problems and issues, Edmonton Transit Service continues to show that it is committed to its ridership and a high level of customer service. Acknowledging problems and issues and failures in the system is a humble stance that will continue to be well-received by the public and the ridership. The ways in which ETS engages and interacts with the ridership is a commitment to understanding challenges, gauging perception, and reassuring the ridership that they have a partner, a defender, and an attentive listener that is invested in its comfort and welfare. ETS has been able to connect with the ridership in a special way and our belief is that it could have something to do with leadership. Results and output can usually be attributed to good leadership and leadership can be attributed to good governance. We encourage all ETS leaders and management to continue improving and elevating their employees, improving competence and constantly strengthening the organization's corporate culture. This will help foster a work environment that is conducive to productivity and good morale and the empathy needed to consistently connect with a ridership that is constantly evolving, facing hardship, and demanding answers.