

### Final Recommendations for Ridership Improvement

- Our first recommendation is to reiterate that improving ridership can be achieved by effecting policy. ETS has done well by conducting bylaw reviews in the past but more has to be done here. As suggested in our review of safety and security as it pertains to ridership, the formation of collaborative working groups and structured boards and advisory committees can facilitate dialogue and propose ideas that can eventually become legislation. For example, the creation of enforceable bylaws and laws can help bring punitive measures and deter certain activities and lawlessness in ETS spaces.
- The current approach, in many organizations, seems to be soliciting feedback from the customers. This is a great model and it is something ETS does well with its annual satisfaction survey and other tools like ethnography reports and research. What about if ETS took the opposite approach? The saying, “In order to know someone, they have to know you” is a maxim that speaks volumes to a new mindset that ETS can adopt. Do more to find out what the ridership thinks about ETS and how they perceive ETS’ performance. Sometimes it is that disconnect between the customer and the organization that fuels ridership apathy, discouraging open communication and dialogue. We encourage ETS to conduct more surveys to find out what riders think about ETS and what they feel ETS should be doing better – those questions will provide a lot of value in helping provide the best solutions.
- This report is not authorized to speak on nor give advice on the current state of ETS operations. We believe that ETS has a business continuity plan and that the organization’s leaders have done their best to prepare for unforeseen events and times of local, national, and international crisis. However, there is no zenith when it comes to preparation and forecasting. ETS needs to continue preparations and plans for something that is unthinkable but reasonably foreseeable. The organization needs to invest a lot of time and care and thought into modelling scenarios and using data analytics to accurately forecast various outcomes. This has to be pushed by leadership. For example, pandemic preparedness has been front and centre in light of the recent COVID-19 pandemic. ETS leadership has to ask questions like, ‘should we be designing ETS vehicles to accommodate overcrowding and spacing, should there be a proliferation of viruses or infectious diseases in future years?’ Or, ‘how can we incorporate design and mapping and human resources in the case of scenario X happening?’ It’s an age-old adage but ‘failing to plan’ usually translates into ‘planning to fail.’
- Statistics and statistical methods are powerful tools. We are sometimes limited by the threshold of human knowledge and therefore, surveys and research studies might be our best tools to use if we can’t extract reliable, unadulterated information from the entire population. If the annual satisfaction survey is the primary method of measuring the ridership’s

satisfaction, more needs to be done to gather better information. This means having a higher sample size and doing simple things like advertising and promoting the survey as a big event. There should be more theatrics and pageantry surrounding the rollout of the survey. ETS and its advertising department are excellent at creating excitement around launches and promoting new events. Advertising and a positive and vibrant public presence are certainly some of ETS' biggest strengths; why not leverage these attributes in presenting the annual survey. It should have the thrill and intrigue of a census but in an even bigger way. Our analysis even considered that ETS could work with the City of Edmonton to find ways of asking critical questions about ETS in the census. A full review of the City of Edmonton's census and elections laws is beyond the scope of this report but subject to City of Edmonton rules and pertinent legislation, this could be an opportunity to gather feedback from the broad population. Questions in the census or exit polls at the municipal elections are effective ways to gather feedback. These are times when citizens are believed to be in a serious mindset and providing relatively accurate information that is important to themselves, their families, and their livelihoods.

- Our review of ridership and especially the satisfaction surveys found that there was not a lot of questioning related to climate action. The City of Edmonton's, "City Plan" is the foundational document that provides direction on the City's goals and vision and outlines ways that citizens and different functions of the administration can work together to achieve better outcomes and a vibrant and fulfilling life in the city. One of the City Plan's four strategic goals is Climate Resilience. If ETS wants to be aligned with the City's vision, it needs to portray more climate consciousness. We know that ETS is doing a lot to work towards carbon-neutral goals but we didn't feel that this was reflected in the survey in a tangible way.
- It is possible that ETS may not be doing a good job of communicating its progress. There are a lot of things that ETS is doing very well but we question if this is being communicated to the general public in a loud and meaningful way. All of the information and initiatives are published in the City Council reports that are accessible online via the City of Edmonton website but truly, do most people read those reports? Are they easily accessible and even if they were, how often are they read? What portion of the ridership attends City Council meetings? Yes, one has to consider promises and the backlash that comes with failing to deliver on mandates and promises communicated in a big way but it would serve ETS well to inform the public of some of the projects and initiatives that they have in progress as this may bring calm to some segment of the ridership that is misinformed or inclined to panic, hysteria, and sensationalism.