

Edmonton Transit Service Advisory Board - 2024 Annual Report

Message from the Chair

I am happy to present the annual report of the activities of ETSAB for the year 2024. This year, we had a roster of 11 board members (out of a possible 12), with four of those members being appointed in May of 2024. We elected a new Chair and Vice-Chair this year.

This was a challenging year with a turnover in leadership and adjusting to changes in legislative requirements that affected our ability to do work in sub-committees. As a result, our focus this year was on providing feedback to ongoing transit issues coming before Council, rather than proactively bringing new issues to the table. However, with the learnings from this year and improvements and clarification around administration, we are looking forward to a productive year in 2025 – especially since the majority of our members are now entering (at least) the second year of their term.

Emily Batty, Chair

On behalf of the Edmonton Transit Service Advisory Board

Purpose of the Annual Report

This annual report has been developed to meet the requirements of Bylaw 18156 - Council Committees Bylaw, which sets out the annual reporting requirements for Council Committees. Under Bylaw 18156, all Council Committees will:

- Report to Council at least annually.
- Approve a work plan that aligns with Council's strategic objectives and the Council Committee's mandate, including a reporting of what resources were provided in the previous year and the anticipated resource requirements for the upcoming year.
- During its annual report to Council, present the work plan as well as a summary of the status of the previous year's work plan.

Mandate of Edmonton Transit Service Advisory Board (ETSAB)

The mandate of ETSAB is to provide advice to Council from a stakeholder perspective on issues related to public transit, including:

- (a) ridership;
- (b) mix of vehicles;
- (c) the relationship between City projects and public transit;

- (d) reviewing initiatives of other levels of government, surrounding municipalities, and other local authorities or organizations that could affect public transit;
- (e) repair, maintenance and accessibility issues;
- (f) servicing issues; and
- (g) public transit policies.

Report on 2024 Work Plan Goals and Accomplishments

| Review of 2024 Work Plan and Goals | |
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| Goal 1 | Provide timely follow-up on key transit issues, in alignment with the ETS's reports scheduled during city council and committee meetings. |
| Key Results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established a consistent process to discuss upcoming transit-related matters scheduled to be presented at City Council or Urban Planning Committee during monthly Board Meetings, including discussion about which topics require a dedicated response from ETSAB. |
| Summary of Progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At monthly meetings, the Board reviews the calendar of upcoming transit-related presentations and discusses which ones would benefit from ETSAB input. A board member is assigned to coordinate gathering responses. • The Board will continue to improve the process, including improvements in ensuring that all Board members have a chance to lead gathering responses, ensuring that more Board members provide responses, and streamlining the submission process. |
| Goal 2 | Complete several reports conducted by subcommittees / working groups in order to provide in-depth insights on transit topics identified by the board. |
| Key Results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fare evasion letter, safety on LRT (not presented), ARC (postponed) |
| Summary of Progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board completed work on several working groups, including a letter regarding fare evasion, a report on the perception of safety on the LRT (not yet presented). • The Board had several discussions about the initiation of a working group to examine the user experience relating to the ARC card; however, due to ongoing educational campaigns being conducted by ETS, we opted to postpone the working group. |
| Goal 3 | Improve and maintain collaborative relationships with other agencies, |

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| | boards and commissions in developing transit-related recommendations to Edmonton City Council. |
| Key Results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ETSAB maintains a relationship with the Accessibility Advisory Committee. |
| Summary of Progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board nominated a new liaison to the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). Our liaison regularly attends their meetings or maintains contact with an AAC representative to bring transit related issues to the awareness of ETSAB. |

In addition, the following was also completed by ETSAB: Two members of our Board attended the Canadian Urban Transit Association conference to learn more about transit issues across Canada. They presented their learnings to the Board at a subsequent meeting.

2024 Meeting Summary – Key Topics and Motions Meeting Summary

| Meeting | Summary - Key Topics and Motions |
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| January | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ETSAB received two presentations from Daniel Vriend of ETS regarding the Transit Priority Measures Implementation Plan and the Bus Network Plan update. We hope to stay updated on these two plans after they are presented to the committee because it could lead to major improvements for ridership. ETSAB Chair Giselle General officially announced the resignation of our board member Madeleine Stout. We are grateful for the time she spent on the board and wish her the best. Board members discussed at length about what processes we could develop and implement for rapid responses to transit related topics. Our members want the ability to give our thoughts on topical transit news and information and will be discussing this further in February. Both the Fare Evasion and Perception of Safety on LRT working groups are developing the framework for their reports and gathering information from our resources. |
| February | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Chair gave an update on the ETSAB 2023 Annual Report. It was delayed due to obstacles with receiving some resources to fully fill out the report but she was able to complete it and submit them. The board expresses their appreciation for the continued hard work of Giselle General. The board voted for a new Chair and Vice-chair for 2024-2025. Emily |

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| | <p>Batty has been voted in as our upcoming Chair and Mudasser Seraj will be our new Vice-chair.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The board discussed and agreed to give feedback on the three reports that are to be presented to the Urban Planning Committee on March 19, 2025. When the documentation is made public before the meeting, we will review them and compile our feedback. ● Both the Fare Evasion and Perception of LRT Safety working groups have started the framework of their report after gathering their resources. |
| <p>March</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The board received a presentation on City-led rezoning of priority growth areas. We had an in-depth question period, and the board hopes that we have the opportunity to give more feedback in the future as this project develops. ● We are continuing succession planning for the new executive roles as the current executive members are finishing their terms on the board. ● Both working groups have had a busy month but want to push forward to meet their timelines to have reports for the end of April. ● The board will consider giving rapid feedback on the Ride Transit Program Funding Update report when it will be made public in the near future. |
| <p>April</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The board received a presentation by Bryan Whited and Dallas Karhut on Mass Transit implementation. They covered the work that they've done so far, and board members asked about more emphasis on East/West connections, and how the recent Alberta rail plan could integrate with this mass transit plan. ● The board is hoping to give feedback on the delayed Ride Transit Funding Update when the report is made available. ● ETSAB will be welcoming four new board members, and we look forward to having our new members join us in discussing transit related matters. We recognized our departing board members - Chair Giselle General, Vice-Chair Serena Tang, and Bob Turner. We are appreciative of their time that they dedicated to the board, and hope that their future endeavours go well. ● For the working groups, the Perception of LRT Safety working group has internally reviewed the report draft, and are preparing the report to be voted on. The Fare Evasion Policy working group refined the structure of their report and will continue working on it. |
| <p>May</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Members of ETSAB were presented with different seating options and features for new light rail vehicles. We also talked about ways to make |

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| | <p>these new trains easier for everyone to use, focusing on accessibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At their first monthly meeting, new ETSAB members were welcomed and given a general overview of the board's activities. |
| <p>June</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a presentation summarizing the upcoming report by ETS Administration (Report CO02262 - Infrastructure Enhancement for City Transit Facilities - Urban Planning Committee - September 17, 2024), members provided initial feedback. A more detailed response will be provided in the coming weeks, as this topic aligns with the work of a current ETSAB working group focused on fare evasion policies. The date for the ETSAB Annual Work Planning Retreat has been finalized for Saturday, February 8th, 2025. This ensures the plan can be incorporated into the Annual Activity Report presented to Council in March. |
| <p>July</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ride Transit Program Funding Gap Report: Marc Lachance presented an overview and led a discussion on potential solutions and recommendations that the City is considering. Also, Councillor Rutherford suggested that our insights could be valuable to Council in addressing this issue. ETSAB members are committed to sharing some structured thoughts on this topic in the coming weeks. ARC Card Review Working Group: We discussed the formation of our next working group focused on reviewing the ARC Card system. Our goal is to initiate this group promptly to ensure timely progress. Fare Evasion Working Group Update: The Fare Evasion working group presented a draft letter outlining their findings and recommendations regarding fare evasion on our transit system. Currently, we are seeking input from all ETSAB members, before forwarding it to Council for their consideration. Our goal is to finalize and approve the letter at our next meeting, ensuring that it accurately reflects the collective views of the working group and ETSAB. |
| <p>August</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of the draft Fare Evasion Policies letter to Council. The letter will be sent September 17, 2024 to align with the date of Administration's Infrastructure Enhancement for City Transit Facilities (ETS Fare Gates Pilot) report. ETSAB Ride Transit Funding Rapid Response Letter in response to administrations Ride Transit Program Funding Gap Report being presented August 28. The Office of the City Auditor is carrying out an audit of the efficiency/effectiveness of the DATS service and requested to meet/engage with ETSAB. Bi-Annual luncheon invitation to be sent to councillors, for the board to |

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| | meet with UPC membership after the standing committee rotation (late October or November UPC meeting day). |
| September | (No meeting) |
| October | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Board decided to postpone the renewal ARC card review committee due to low sign-up and ongoing work by ETS to improve education about the ARC card.• The Board received updates from J Jackman about the Accessibility Advisory Committee. |
| November | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Board discussed providing additional feedback to Council regarding the upcoming Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustments.• The Board received updates from members that attended the CUTA conference. |
| December | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Board welcomed Councillors Rutherford, Wright and Rice to join them for a winter social event. We discussed overall transit concerns and upcoming issues. |

Membership and Appointment Information

| Edmonton Transit Service Advisory Board (ETSAB) 2024-25 Membership List | | | |
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| Name | Appointed | Term Ends | Max Term |
| Emily Batty - Chair | May 1, 2022 | Apr 30, 2026 | 2030 |
| Bailey Gerrits | May 1, 2023 | Apr 30, 2026 | 2031 |
| Rebecca Hardie | May 1, 2024 | Apr 30, 2026 | 2032 |
| Zohra Jabeen | May 1, 2022 | Apr 30, 2026 | 2030 |
| Joshua Jackman | May 1, 2022 | Apr 30, 2026 | 2030 |
| Ken Kirk | May 1, 2024 | Apr 30, 2026 | 2032 |
| Eugene Masakhwe | May 1, 2023 | Apr 30, 2026 | 2031 |
| Lexi McFarlane | May 1, 2024 | Apr 30, 2026 | 2032 |
| Maria Owczarek | May 1, 2023 | Apr 30, 2026 | 2031 |
| Mudasser Seraj (Vice-Chair) | May 1, 2022 | Apr 30, 2026 | 2030 |
| Shalene Williams | May 1, 2024 | Apr 30, 2026 | 2032 |

Reports and Communications

Reports by ETSAB to Council:

1. [Postponed from September 17, 2024], Urban Planning Committee, EXT02558, Edmonton Transit Service Advisory Board: Perception of LRT Safety

Correspondence submitted to Council:

1. Bus Network Service Plan - feedback provided to Urban Planning Committee on March 19, 2024
2. Public Spaces Bylaw - feedback submitted to City Administration on August 2, 2024; additional feedback provided to Council on February 10, 2025

3. Fare Evasion - letter to council August 26, 2024
4. Transit Service Needs to Meet Population Growth - feedback provided on October 9, 2024

ETSAB requests to speak to a Standing Committee of Council:

1. None

Concluding Remarks

As noted above, we are looking forward to a productive year with the experience that our members and leaders have gained over the past year. We recently conducted our annual retreat to develop our work plan for the year and are excited and enthusiastic about the transit issues we plan to explore.