

Cell Phone and Wifi Coverage in LRT Stations and Tunnels

(D. Iveson)

Recommendation:

That the March 25, 2015, Transportation Services report CR_1505, be received for information.

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to answer the inquiry made at the July 9, 2014, Transportation Committee meeting on cell phone coverage and WiFi services in LRT stations and tunnels.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the November 13, 2014, Transportation Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That the November 13, 2014, Transportation Services report CR_1515, be postponed and that Administration work with Agenda Review Committee to determine a date to bring the report forward.

At the July 9, 2014, Transportation Committee meeting, Mayor D. Iveson made the following inquiry:

That Administration provide the following information:

What, if any, work has been done on cell phone and wifi coverage in LRT stations and tunnels and what are the opportunities and risks of enabling more coverage, particularly in the underground portion of our system?

Report

Current State

Today, cell coverage in LRT stations and tunnels is limited. ETS is currently using a lease over-holding arrangement with Bell Mobility Inc., for mobile telephone service within the Churchill and Central LRT stations. The Agreement was executed in December 2007, for a five year contract period and then was extended on a month-to-month basis. The service is only available in the immediate area of the platform to Bell customers. There is currently no WiFi coverage at any point along the LRT line.

Planning for cell and WiFi coverage

The City is in discussions with service providers that would like to extend cell and/or WiFi coverage onto LRT platforms. As part of those discussions, the City is also

exploring options to extend the coverage into the LRT tunnels themselves, thus enabling LRT riders to have continuous voice and data services through the duration of a trip.

The City is targeting to offer cell phone coverage and WiFi service in the LRT stations in the fourth quarter of 2015, and is working with providers to try to leverage existing communications infrastructure, wherever possible, to facilitate service in the tunnel areas. The City is in discussion with service providers to build and provision a single co-location solution, allowing any service provider to connect to a common carrier supported infrastructure.

The City will also be installing infrastructure onto the platforms that enables the co-location of third-party providers offering WiFi services.

Dependencies and Risks

The City needs to be vigilant that the LRT signaling system, public safety network and provider supported commercial networks do not interfere with each other's service because of overlapping frequencies and other technical requirements. The City will publish a standard technical specification for WiFi providers and cell carriers to interconnect with the common infrastructure.

Enabling provision of cell and WiFi services through a single point of presence or common infrastructure enables multiple providers to offer service and ensures building aesthetic standards and maintenance schedules are coordinated.

Corporate Outcomes

- Edmonton is attractive and compact.
- Edmontonians use public transit and active modes of transportation.

Others Reviewing this Report

K. Rozmahel, General Manager, Corporate Services