

# Proposed City of Edmonton Transportation Congestion Policy – Status Report

Transportation Planning Branch  
Audit Follow-up

## Recommendation:

That the November 15, 2011, Transportation Services report 2011TS8519 be received for information.

## Report Summary

**This report provides a progress report on the development of a Congestion Policy for the City of Edmonton as identified in the 2006 Transportation Planning Branch Audit.**

## Report

From the Transportation Planning Branch Audit, the Auditor noted “A congestion level policy would establish specific and clear policy direction from Council regarding acceptable congestion levels for all modes of transportation within Edmonton. Through their policy framework, some other cities have established acceptable levels of congestion for each mode of transportation. A congestion level policy will serve to establish standards for conducting traffic impact assessment reports and designing enhancements to Edmonton’s transportation network.”

It is well documented that vibrant cities will not be free of congestion. Traffic congestion in urban areas is often the

outcome of successful urban economic development, housing and cultural, policies that make people want to live and work relatively close together (European Conference of Ministers of Transport, 2007).

Many cities have recognized that it is also not affordable or sometimes possible to build enough roads or provide enough transit service to satisfy the demand. This is also referenced in *The Way We Move: As Edmonton evolves from a mid-sized prairie city to a large metropolitan area, it is inevitable that congestion levels will increase...Physical, financial and community constraints in many areas make it infeasible or even undesirable to build or expand roads to alleviate congestion therefore, Administration proposes that the direction of this policy will not be to eliminate congestion, but to measure and report congestion levels, describe a framework to analyze congestion, and to provide a toolkit for managing congestion.*

There are a multitude of ways in which congestion can be measured and no common standard by which jurisdictions are expected to measure it. Some common approaches include level of service, delay, travel times, volume to capacity ratio, speed, and queue length.

The Congestion Policy currently under development intends to:

- Confirm the acceptance of some level of congestion depending on the context (i.e. goods movement corridor vs. pedestrian environment).
- Define a measurement tool that considers all modes, time of day, network areas, and context.

- Contain a methodology to measure, monitor and report congestion on a regular basis.
- Evaluate congestion on a network basis and not for individual intersections or movements within intersections.
- Evaluate congestion for existing infrastructure and planning projects that impact existing infrastructure.
- Define at what level of congestion an assessment is required.

This Congestion Policy does NOT intend to:

- Apply to irregular incidents such as construction, crashes, weather, or special events.
- Establish an expectation that all congestion can be managed.
- Provide Policies that conflict with *The Way We Move*.

### **Policy**

*The Way We Move*

### **Corporate Outcomes**

- Citizens use public transit and active modes of transportation.
- Goods and services move efficiently through the city.
- The transportation system is integrated, safe and gives citizens a choice to their mode of movement.
- The city has well managed and sustainable assets and services.

### **Public Consultation**

*The Way We Move* development.

### **Budget/Financial Implications**

Will be identified as part of the Capital and Operating Budget process.