

Shift Flexibility for Staff with Young Children

Recommendation

That the September 30, 2019, City Operations report CR_6417, be received for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the September 10, 2018, Executive Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration work with Amalgamated Transit Union to explore providing shift flexibility for staff with young children.

Executive Summary

The Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) has two collective agreements with the City of Edmonton governing employees who work in conventional transit, transit fleet maintenance and transit security, as well as employees who work in paratransit.

There are a variety of shift options for ATU employees. Both collective agreements stipulate that shifts will be selected on the basis of seniority. Employees with greater seniority are able to select from a wider range of shift options. New employees and employees with less seniority often receive less desirable shift schedules until they work their way up in seniority.

Administration collaborates with ATU Local 569 to explore options and find solutions when employees find it challenging to select a shift that meets their family needs. Administration and the Union have also worked together to amend shift signup when identified through the Duty to Accommodate framework or for situations falling within Alberta Human Rights accommodations.

Administration engaged ATU in discussions to explore added flexibility to shift selection, specifically for employees with child care responsibilities. These discussions have yet to result in added flexibility.

Report

Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) provides transit service to Edmontonians nearly 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. Bus service, including paratransit, is deployed from

five transit garages, and LRT service from one facility. More than 1,600 Transit Operators are employed by ETS.

The Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 569 represents the following employees:

- Transit Operators
- Training Instructors
- Transit Peace Officers
- Mechanics
- Forepersons
- Scheduler/Shift Designers
- Bus Cleaners
- Security Room Monitors
- Service Persons

There are two collective agreements between ATU and the City of Edmonton, one representing paratransit and the other representing conventional transit service. Both collective agreements stipulate that shifts will be selected on the basis of seniority.

Shift Design

Some employees covered by the ATU collective agreement, such as Training Instructors and Schedulers or Shift Designers, work a daytime schedule, Monday to Friday. Other employees work in a scheduled shift environment with varied hours and days of the week.

Five times per year, Transit Operators have the opportunity to select different work locations and/or shifts. Operator shifts are designed to be varied. The majority of bus service is provided during peak hours in the early morning and mid afternoon, requiring a large number of shifts to cover those peak periods. In developing the shift sign-up, ETS balances the need to optimize shifts for bus utilization with creating shifts that support employees. This includes ensuring that there are a variety of each shift type in each facility. Shift options include straight and split shifts; under split shifts, operators might have a break between the morning and afternoon work hours. In addition, Transit Operators can sign up to cover short assignments within the sign-up period, referred to as spare board work.

Maintenance employees choose their shifts and work locations four times a year. Employees in this category work straight shifts and can choose to either work five days per week or compress their work hours to work four days per week.

Transit Peace Officers work rotating shift patterns of 11 hour shifts and choose which platoon they will work on once per year, based on seniority order.

Shift Selection

Both collective agreements are clear about how work shifts are selected and state that shifts will be selected based on seniority. The more seniority an employee has in the union, the wider range of shift options to choose from.

If an employee is having difficulty selecting a shift that meets their family needs, Administration works together with ATU Local 569 and the employee to explore options and find solutions.

The *Alberta Human Rights Act* creates a duty to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that employees are not discriminated against on the basis of their family status. In addition, Administration complies with the Duty to Accommodate Framework Agreement, endorsed in 2007 by Union/Association Leaders, the City Manager, and the Police Chief on behalf of all civic employees.

Administration and ATU 569 have worked together to amend shift signup where identified through the Duty to Accommodate framework or for situations falling within Alberta Human Rights accommodations.

Administration engaged ATU in discussions to explore added flexibility to shift selection, specifically for parents with young children. Although ATU appreciates the basis for the request, they explained the relevance and importance of seniority as a way to recognize and retain employees as they progress through their careers. It was further explained that this is a fundamental benefit that is recognized and supported at the national and international level of Amalgamated Transit Unions. .

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Condition of Success			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Employees are proud to work for the City of Edmonton.	Employee Engagement - recommend the City to a friend as a great place to work.	74.2% favourable- ETS employees (2018 results)	77%- ETS employees (2020 results)

Others Reviewing this Report

- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- K. Armstrong, Deputy City Manager, Employee Services
- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services
- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor