

ETSAB 2020-2021 Sub-Committees Activities and Outcomes

ETSAB held all twelve general monthly meetings in the 2020 - 2021 term. The annual work plan was developed at a half-day retreat held on 1 February 16, 2020 and revised at a similar meeting on 11 July 2020. To fulfill the work plan, the following sub-committees were formed to conduct research and provide a policy position or recommendation to the appropriate committees of Council:

- **Returning Safely to Transit after COVID-19**
- **Inclusive Transit: BIPOC Experience with Edmonton Transit Service**
- **Transit and Vulnerable Populations**
- **Transit Innovation**

The activities and outcomes of each sub-committee are described below:

Returning Safely to Transit after COVID-19

Purpose

The subcommittee began by determining what measures were being taken by transit agencies in Canada and abroad in an effort to ensure safety on their services. It was important to find how effective these measures were and examine how they were being introduced to ETS. Fortunately there was a widespread sharing of knowledge amongst transit providers and it became clear that, providing certain measures were taken that public transit could be a safe environment. These measures included wearing of masks, thorough and frequent cleaning, not crowding and good airflow.

Scope of work

The members proceeded to question how best this information should be conveyed to transit users and, more importantly, to former users who were unsure about using the service.

Once it was established that ETS were doing a very good job of implementing the above safety measures the subcommittee felt that a better and more thorough communication strategy should be employed to facilitate more user acceptance and consequently increased number of passengers. Several suggestions were put forward and were contained in their report which was presented to the Urban Planning Committee on 23 March 2021.

Outcome

The report of the subcommittee 'Returning Safely to Transit after COVID-19' was presented to the Urban Planning Committee at their meeting on 23 March 2021 and was received for information.

Membership

Bryan Shepherd (Chair), Lindsay Vanstone, Serena Tang, Isabell Hubert Lyall, Phil Reid, Bob Turner.

Inclusive Transit: BIPOC Experience with Edmonton Transit Service

Purpose

In light of the events of Black Lives Matter protests across the world in the summer of 2020 and the recent racist attacks at Edmonton transit stations against black women wearing hijabs, there is a need to better understand the lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) who have daily interaction with various aspects of Edmonton Transit Service (ETS). This also includes considering and acknowledging the lived experiences of BIPOC individuals who work for ETS. This report seeks to provide Edmonton City Council a first-hand understanding of lived experiences of BIPOC individuals while riding and/or employed by ETS, a jurisdictional scan of what other transit systems are doing to make their networks a more inclusive place for all individuals and recommendations for potential initiatives to be considered by City Council and ETS in the future.

Scope of work

The subcommittee examined reports and statistics from across the country related to allegations of racism on transit. It became clear that the number of encounters with peace officers and fare inspectors was proportionally higher for members of the BIPOC than was their percentage of presence in the community.

The subcommittee collected information regarding lived experiences of both transit users and ETS employees about their experiences when involved with the transit service.

ETS's employment and recruitment policies and procedures were examined as well as training related to dealing with minority populations.'

Outcome

The subcommittee developed a comprehensive report with recommendations around ETS employee recruitment and training, ongoing communications to Edmontonians regarding a non-tolerance stance on any form of racism on ETS

property and an emphasis away from enforcement in favour of safety and security by security staff and peace officers.

The subcommittee report is scheduled to be presented to the Community and Public Services Committee on 25 May 2021

Membership

Jarret Esslinger (Chair), Michelle Peters-Jones, William Agbakoba, Guy Milner, Bob Turner, Charles Kelly Philip Reid, Feisal Kirumira (vice-chair Anti-Racism Advisory Committee)

Transit and Vulnerable Populations

Purpose

To propose systems or processes to assist people who require help in order to introduce them to the transit system. Find out what other transit systems are doing in this regard. To determine if anything is currently being done in Edmonton to assist such potential users of ETS.

Scope of Work

The subcommittee members sought to find if there are any programmes in other jurisdictions to help vulnerable users navigate a transit system. Having found a few small programmes they set out to evaluate whether there would be interest in some community organizations becoming involved in helping administer such a programme. They felt that having the programme community based, it could be administered whenever need arose and, by being delivered by the person's peers, it should be very effective. They found that there were some seniors centres and some newcomers groups who would like to help with this. There is also an aboriginal group who are already doing something similar aimed particularly at members of their community who are new to the city.

Outcome

The subcommittee recommended that ETS set up an education programme for seniors and newcomers who are interested. The programme should contain a description of all aspects of using the transit system and would then be administered by volunteers. During the course of instruction volunteers and their students should not be charged a fare for use of the service. This report is being reviewed for approval by the Board and, when approved, will be forwarded for presentation to a committee of Council.

Membership

Charles Kelly (Chair), Isabell Hubert Lyall, Giselle General, Bryan Shepherd, William Agbakoba, Jason Pisesky (Chair Accessory Advisory Committee)

Transit Innovation

Purpose

A standing committee to focus is to foster open-ended discussions on how to improve transit. The committee looks at new technologies and trends, innovative approaches taken by other municipalities, and articles/ publications of what other transit authorities are doing.

Activities

- Meetings held were open discussions, and all members were encouraged to participate
- The Committee may invite subject matter experts and outside stakeholders to share experiences, insights and ideas on bettering public transit
- The Committee may on occasion focus on a particular subject or topic to generate ideas and support the work of other ETSAB Committees
- The Committee may suggest to the Board that a recommendation be put forward to City Administration or Council (with Board approval)
- Follow up on motions from recommendations in previous reports

The purpose of the meetings will be exclusively for team building and informal discussions, as confirmed at the Annual Work Planning Retreat in February 2020. Due to the pandemic the Board members decided to suspend these meetings until in-person meetings are permitted since the team building element was less effective in the online environment.

Membership

Chair: Jarret Esslinger

Members: All Board members