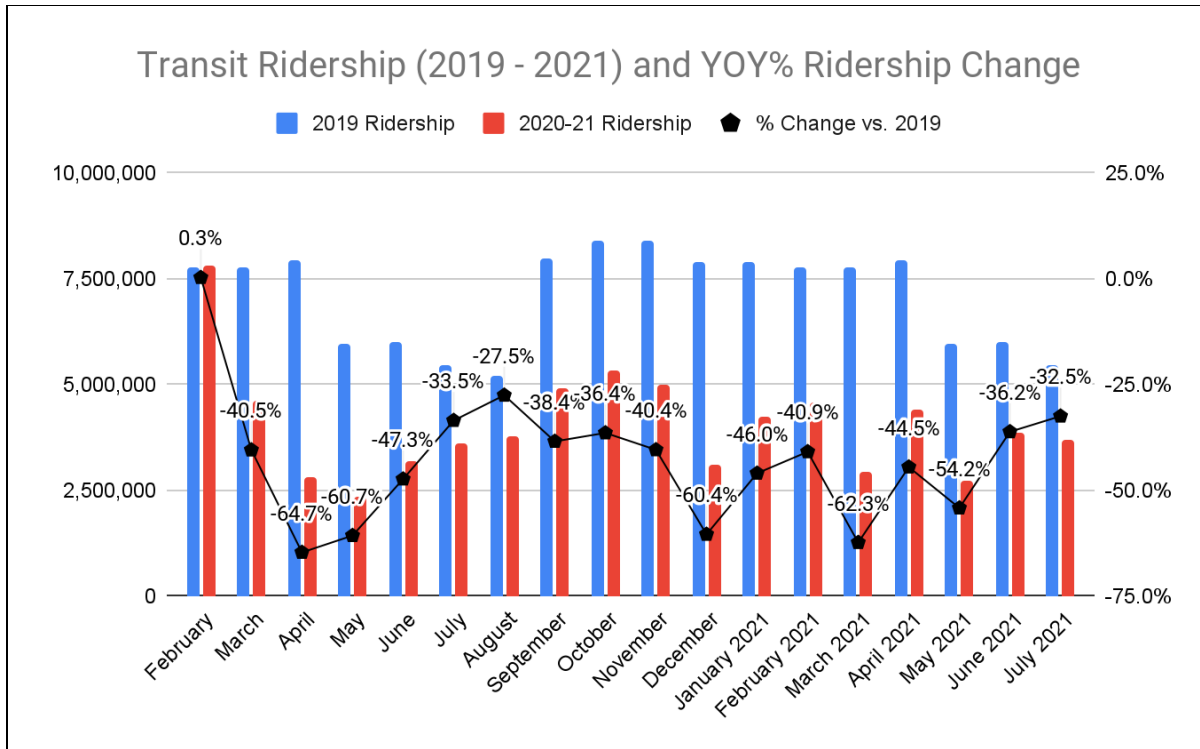


# ETS Branch Highlights Report

Date: Aug 30, 2021

## 1. RIDERSHIP



The chart above shows monthly ridership since February 2020 comparing month-over-month ridership in comparison to 2019. Ridership has shown steady growth through June and July. September is the return of a number important institutions, most notably post-secondary in-person instruction, which, in addition to the traditional vacation season, should boost ridership further. The impacts of the fourth wave and how that impacts “return to normal” behaviour may counteract this ridership return.

## 2. ETS UPDATES

### Safety on Transit Survey

On August 16, Council directed Administration to prepare potential amendments to the Temporary Mandatory Face Coverings Bylaw for August 30, as it relates to COVID-19 safety on transit.

To inform Council's discussion on August 30, Administration conducted a public survey of those who have used transit in the past three months, as well as those who are considering taking transit in the next three months. The survey was conducted between August 23 and August 26. In total, over 6,000 Edmontonians responded to the survey. The survey asked questions related to COVID-19 safety on transit, including specific questions about masks and perceptions of COVID-19 safety if provincial public health measures are lifted on September 27.

The survey was made available to Edmonton Insight Community members, as well as the general public on [edmonton.ca/survey](https://edmonton.ca/survey). The survey was also promoted through a Public Service Announcement, social media, to staff and through our union partners and media partners.

In the survey, we asked Edmontonians a number of questions about mask usage in public transit, including the direction question on this slide: **Would you feel safer if masks were required on transit until at least the end of 2021?** The results of the survey will be shared with City Council on Monday August 30.

### ETS Fall Service Changes

#### Fall Bus Service Changes

ETS will adjust bus schedules, service levels and routes to ensure we are providing the right amount of service at the right time as part of our fall service adjustments. These service adjustments regularly happen five times a year.

- **Starting August 29**, many bus routes will have schedule adjustments, including increased frequency to reflect a typical increase in ridership that happens every fall.
- Several School Special bus routes are being added or adjusted to increase service for students going to school.
- Since the launch of the bus network on April 25, nearly 1,400 Edmontonians have provided valuable feedback about what is working and what could be improved. Thanks to input from Edmontonians and Transit Operators, 17 routes will be adjusted starting August 29 to help shorten layovers, increase efficiencies in scheduling and improve connections, in addition to more than 40 other service adjustments that took effect in June.

- To accommodate Valley Line West construction, the West Edmonton Mall Transit Centre is temporarily moving to the mall's overflow parking lot at 90 Ave and 175 St, adjacent to the West Edmonton Mall Inn. The interim transit centre will be in place for several years before it returns to its permanent location on 87 Ave when Valley Line West opens. Several route and schedule adjustments are being made to accommodate the move. We will also have staff on site to assist riders during the transition.

#### LRT Frequency and Metro Line Route Changes

To provide more service for transit riders, ETS will also increase LRT service in the downtown core and northeast Edmonton **starting August 30**. That became possible due to the successful implementation of an alternate signaling system.

- Transit riders will be able to board a Capital Line train downtown every 5 minutes during weekday peak hours (6 - 9 a.m. and 3 - 6 p.m.), including between Churchill and Clareview.
- To enable increased frequency in the downtown core and northeast Edmonton, Metro Line trains will only run between NAIT and Health Sciences/Jubilee stations, as was originally planned for Metro Line. Transit riders boarding Capital Line trains south of Health Sciences/Jubilee station will need to transfer to Metro Line if they need access to MacEwan, Kingsway/Royal Alex or NAIT stations.

#### Bikes on LRT and Improved Access to Drinking Water

To help integrate active modes of transportation and make the rider experience more convenient, **starting August 30**, transit riders can now bring their bikes on LRT at any time, and using their own padlock, secure their bikes inside new metal storage lockers at Century Park and Belvedere LRT stations. Six lockers (one bike per locker) are available at each location, on a first come first served basis. There is no fee to use a locker. ETS is also reviewing feedback about the lockers as part of the pilot, to adjust as needed. Additional lock mechanisms will be added to provide a second lock option inside the storage locker, as an example, based on user feedback.

New refillable water bottle stations will also be installed at major transit centres and LRT stations by the end of September giving transit riders and the broader community more access to drinking water. In total, 24 locations across Edmonton will have the stations installed. The style of the water station is similar to those used in airports.

### Safety Improvements

In addition to the numerous safety and security measures in place on transit, a new collaborative approach will be launched later in September to assist individuals in need of specialized support while in the transit system. More information will be shared in the September monthly report.

We continue to encourage riders to report safety concerns like harassment, disorder or suspicious behaviour by texting or calling Transit Watch at 780-442-4900. Our enhanced security measures, including additional onsite security guards at many transit centres and LRT stations, and joint patrols involving transit peace officers and police officers, also remain in place.

### Outreach for Fall Service Changes

ETS looks forward to welcoming citizens back to transit as schools, workplaces, and other areas open back up leading into the fall. This means there will be many customers experiencing the new bus network since the April 25 launch as well as numerous safety and service changes and improvements. As a result, we are planning to have Street Teams at selected transit centres and LRT stations (during the AM peak times) to educate customers on the changes, improvements and tools available From August 30 to September 7. ETS will also have booths set up at post-secondary campuses during their respective week of welcome activities.

## **U-Pass & Smart Fare Implementation**

Arc cards will be distributed to participating post-secondary institutions in the U-Pass agreement as part of implementing Smart Fare payment technology in the region. Students will be able to use their cards this fall to tap on and off buses and LRT as they use transit. Until all of the Arc cards have been distributed, students can use their student ID card as valid fare.

## **3. ETSAB INFORMATION REQUESTS**

### **On-Demand Service**

On Demand service has had a successful launch in tandem with ETS' Bus Network Redesign, and is showing positive growth in ridership. Since April 25 On Demand Transit has completed over 35,000 rides for over 3,200 unique riders. Ridership has shown an overall positive growth trend since launch, with an upward trend from May until the end of June, a slow week over the Canada Day long weekend, and growth throughout the summer months.

So far, over 3000 ride ratings have been submitted following completed trips. On average, the service is rated 4.79 / 5.0 stars, and a full 93.5% of ratings are 5.0/5.0 stars.

Changes and update to service have included:

- 2 new stops added in Breckenridge Greens due to a detour on Route 922 (effective Aug 9),
- 1 new stop added in Brookside to reduce walking distance in the southern end of the neighborhood (effective Aug 16),
- Reduction in allowable walk distance in Seniors Zones. This change makes it so that the bus will come to the stop closest to the request from the rider, rather than telling them to cross the street, or walk to a nearby stop.

Looking forward to the fall months, ridership is anticipated to continue to grow with a return to regular school and work schedules, and the continued relaxation of Covid restrictions. ETS will continue to monitor ridership and customer feedback, and will consider further adjustments and improvements if feasible.

**4. ETS COUNCIL REPORT TRACKING - 2020-21**

<b>SIRE</b>	<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Committee</b>
CO00605	Bus Network Redesign - Interim Review	Oct 1	EC
CR 8198	Bus Network and On Demand Service Implementation Update	Oct 1	EC
CO00607	Mass Transit System - Sustainable Funding and Service Growth	Q1 2022	EC
CO00574	Access to Supports and Services Within Transit Stations - Program and/or Delivery Proposal(s)	Q1 2022	CPSC
CO00576	Transit Fare Fines - Repayment Options	Q1 2022	CPSC
COXXXX	Transit Annual Safety & Security Update	2022	TBD

\*Not an ETS lead report

AC = Audit Committee

CC = City Council

CPSC = Community and Public Services Committee

Exec = Executive Committee

IRCD = Inter-municipal and Regional Development Committee

UPC = Urban Planning Committee