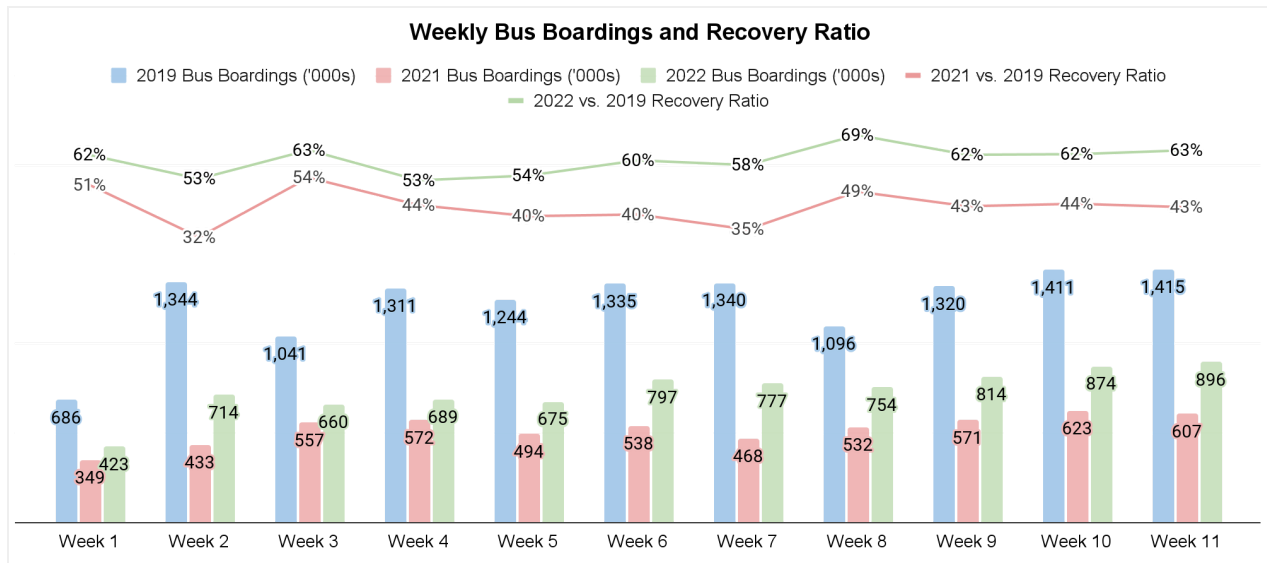


ETS Branch Highlights Report

Date: March 28, 2022

1. RIDERSHIP



Note: Weekend ridership is not included.

* Week 1: December 30, 2018 to January 5, 2019 / December 27, 2020 to January 2, 2021 / January 2, 2022 to January 8, 2022

* Week 11: March 10, 2019 to March 16, 2019 / March 7, 2021 to March 13, 2021 / March 13, 2022 to March 19, 2022

During the first week of March, ridership reached its highest volumes at 69% of pre-pandemic levels since the beginning of the pandemic. It leveled off to 62% - 63% of pre-pandemic levels in the following weeks of March. With an overall year-over-year growth of 48% in March, the rebound in ridership in recent weeks is attributed to the recent lifting of public health restrictions, lower COVID-19 cases, and the gradual return to office workplaces.

As City workers and other downtown offices have launched their return to work plans, ridership is anticipated to continue to climb above 60% of pre-pandemic levels over the coming weeks. ETS is projecting a positive outlook for ridership recovery in 2022 as the rate of return to offices increases, recreation increases, and COVID cases decline due to higher immunization.

2. ETS UPDATES

Masks on Public Transit

Face masks on transit and transit spaces, such as transit centres and LRT platforms, continue to be required after a bylaw was passed on March 22 by City Council. The decision aligns the City's rules with the mandatory mask requirements put in place by the Government of Alberta to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Under provincial rules, the mask mandate cannot be enforced by municipal peace officers. While this decision by City Council now allows tickets to be issued for bylaw infractions, an education-first approach will be taken by peace officers. The bylaw takes effect immediately and will end when the Chief Medical Officer of Health rescinds their order requiring face masks be worn on public transit.

The provincial requirement for masks on public transit is expected to be lifted when Alberta enters Step 3 of its reopening plan. A survey conducted among 200 ETS riders during late February found that 70% of respondents stated they would still wear a mask for the foreseeable future if the mask mandate on public transit was lifted, while 15% were unsure if they would still wear a mask for the foreseeable future.

Regular Weekday Bus Service

March 18 marked the end of temporary bus service changes implemented on February 6 due to decreased staffing levels related to the Omicron variant. Regular weekday bus service resumed on March 21, as ETS workforce levels have returned to normal. Transit riders were made aware of these adjustments through various communication tools, including 311, edmonton.ca, and ETS social media accounts. ETS remains committed to providing a safe and reliable source of transportation, connecting people to each other, their community and the places they need to go.

Stadium LRT Station

Construction of the Stadium LRT Station which began in May 2020 is expected to be complete early 2022. Work in 2022 includes completing the new heated shelters, constructing the public plaza between the station and Commonwealth Stadium, and adding landscaping. The station will be enhanced by planting 159 new trees to replace 69 trees that have been removed. The redeveloped Stadium LRT Station is expected to improve perception of safety with its open design, increase in accessibility with barrier-free access, and enhancements to the overall experience of transit riders commuting to and from the station. Stadium LRT Station serves as a major destination for an assortment of sports fans, particularly football and soccer, as well as some major concert tours.



Bus Network Redesign Expansion Opportunities

Following the launch of the new bus network in April 2021, ETS has made numerous no-cost and low cost adjustments and improvements to the bus network based on rider feedback. Additional service enhancements to the bus network were also identified as part of the 2022 Annual Transit Service Plan ([Attachment 2, item 6.1](#))

ETS identified expansion opportunities within the conventional bus service. Since the activation of Valley Line Southeast in 2022 will replace the need for the existing precursor bus service, tax-levy funding would be required to support the expanded conventional bus service. The current precursor bus service is funded on a one-time basis from the LRT reserve. Administration has also planned numerous enhancements to the bus network, including bus rapid transit, in alignment with the Mass Transit Plan for a city of 1.25 million residents.

The motion approved by Committee directs Administration to bring forward a budget service package for Council's consideration during the 2023-2026 budget discussions this fall.

Regional Transit Service Commission Update

On March 14, the Edmonton Metropolitan Transit Services Commission (EMTSC) updated Edmonton City Council with their approach and work plan for 2022. Local transit service will continue to be provided by municipalities in a business-as-usual manner over the course of 2022 while work necessary to stand up the Commission is underway. With an anticipated roll-out of regional services in 2023, the goal of the EMTSC is to create one integrated regional transit solution between eight member municipalities capable of providing more local and inter-municipal routes.

The Commission is currently working on defining its opening day service plan. ETS will continue to work with EMTSC to support their planning and bring forward a report to Council in the fall. Council approved a motion to direct ETS' work on analyzing the phase one service plan:

That Administration report back with a summary of the Edmonton Metropolitan Transit Services Commission phase one service plan and operational analysis of the plan's impacts on:

- 1) *ETS transit network, neighbourhoods served and transit riders, including a Gender Based Analysis;*
- 2) *ETS transit ridership and fare revenue;*
- 3) *City of Edmonton transit fleet, equipment and other related assets;*
- 4) *The City's workforce; and*
- 5) *The ETS branch operating budget, to inform Council decision-making and the City of Edmonton's 2023-2026 operating budget.*

4. ETS COUNCIL REPORT TRACKING - 2022

Report #	Report Title	Meeting Date*	Committee*
Reports being led by ETS:			
CO00607	Mass Transit System - Sustainable Funding and Service Growth	April 13, 2022	Exec
CO00576	Transit Fare Fines - Repayment Options	Jun 13, 2022	CPSC
TBD	Regional Transit Service Commission Update	Sep 26, 2022	CPSC
TBD	Evaluation of On Demand Transit service delivery	Fall 2022	Exec
TBD	Ride Transit and Leisure Access Program review	Fall 2022	Exec
Other reports of interest:			
CO00778	Snow and Ice Control - Options to Increase Service Standards	Apr 25, 2022	CPSC
CS00751	Amendments to Bylaw 14614 Public Places Bylaw - Restorative Justice Practices	April 25, 2022	CPSC
OCM01136	Amendments to Bylaw 8353 Conduct of Transit Passengers	August 22, 2022	CPSC

*Subject to change

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