



**FINAL Meeting Minutes**  
 Monday, July 29, 2024  
 6:00pm - 8:00pm Board Meeting Hybrid  
 Meeting No. 24.07  
 Prepared by Christy McKenzie

Members Present:

Emily Batty(Chair), Mudasser Seraj (Vice Chair), Joshua Jackman, Zohra Jabeen, Bailey Gerrits, Eugene Masahkwe, Maria Owczarek, Rebecca Hardie, Lexi McFarlane, Shalene Williams, Ken Kirk

Regrets:

Steve Bradshaw (President, ATU 569)

City of Edmonton Staff:

Councillor Erin Rutherford, ETSAB Council Advisor  
 Marc Lachance, ETS Staff Liaison  
 Christy McKenzie, A/ETSAB Admin Support  
 Tammy Bittner, Administrative Assistant, Transit Planning, Ridership and Revenue

Materials & Attachments:

- Meeting Agenda, ETS Branch Highlights Report

<b>CALL TO ORDER 6:00 PM</b> Land acknowledgement	<b>E. Batty</b> Board Member
<b>AGENDA REVIEW</b>	<b>DECISION</b>
<i>MOVED: by R. Hardie, seconded by J. Jackson to approve the July 29, 2024 agenda.</i>	<b><u>CARRIED</u></b>
<b>MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THIS MEETING</b>	<b>DECISION</b>
<i>MOVED: by M. Owczarek, seconded by K. Kirk to approve the July 2 (for June 24), 2024 minutes.</i>	<b><u>CARRIED</u></b>

<b>Presentation: Ride Transit Program Funding Gap Report Overview</b>	<b>M. Lachance</b>
<p>M. Lachance provided a summary of the content of the upcoming Ride Transit Program Funding Gap Report (CO02505) to the Executive Committee of Council on August 29, 2024, followed by a Q &amp; A session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This report was created in response to a motion by Council for ETS Administration to provide options to close a funding gap between the Ride Transit Program growth and the grant funding in place.</li> <li>• M. Lachance noted that some program changes have been put in place in the interim to reduce barriers to access:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New applicants who visit the Employee Service Center in person and provide the required information may now be provided with immediate conditional access for two months while their application is in the approval process.</li> <li>• New applicants can now submit registered Social Worker letters to be eligible for approval as well as proof of Employment Insurance.</li> <li>• Most applicants apply using their Notice of Assessment or AISH or as a new permanent resident or refugee.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

- Most applicants receive two years of approval, and then are required to reapply. Applicants on AISH receive five years of approval, and refugees and new permanent residents receive one year of approval, with the understanding that the other eligibility options would apply after the first year.
- Adult fares are scheduled to go up from \$100/month to \$102/month in 2025, which is still lower than other Transit Authorities, some of which are at \$150/month.
- If the gap is not funded through a tax levy, it can be funded by increasing transit fare rates. Three options for increasing fare rates are included in the report.
  - Increasing the price for an Arc single tap.
  - Raising the regular adult cap.
  - Aligning all programs with the existing fare policy is the third option. Seniors' fares would be most impacted by this because they are currently at \$35/month.

Questions were answered by M. Lachance Lachance on behalf of ETS Administration:

- It was confirmed that the ARC card system is expected to be fully implemented before the fare increase is launched.
- E. Batty requested the percentage increase to the tax levy. M. Lachance noted that to fund the gap, \$8M to \$10M is needed. Clr. Rutherford stated that \$17M is approximately a 1% tax levy.
- B. Gerrits asked in what ways, if any, does the program increase eligibility tied to inflation. M. Lachance noted that a revenue/cost recovery target is in place, and ETS Administration is required to recover 40 - 45% of the operating costs of the transit service. ETS is currently recovering around 32% for the current year.
- B. Gerrits requested the number of citizens requesting to access the program as permanent residents vs. refugees. M. Lachance will look up the numbers, but confirmed that the PR numbers are relatively stable year over year, and it is the number of refugees applying that has increased significantly. The Canada–Ukraine authorization for emergency travel is one example.
- S. Williams inquired about the duration of the approved grant funding, and M. Lachance confirmed it is currently in place only until the end of 2025.
- E. Batty requested if a zone system is being considered as part of the program. M. Lachance confirmed that the ARC card system was designed to be a distance-based (per km cost) system, not zone-based. Changing would require a significant amount of work/cost.
- M. Owczarek noted that in Poland and other transit systems public transit is free for seniors. M. Lachance confirmed that low income seniors receive free transit, but not all seniors, and this is based on public engagement session results and Council-directed policies.
- J. Jackman asked if the monthly increases would be permanent. M. Lachance noted that historically transit fares have increased, similar to inflation rates.
- M. Lachance confirmed at E. Batty's request that initial studies were done for a distance-based system, and resulted in a lower minimum trip rates and higher maximums. How a distance-based fare system would affect the recovery rate would need to be revisited and changes would be needed to reconfigure the smart fare system.
- E. Masahkwe asked if cash fares will go up in February 2025 along with tap fares and M. Lachance confirmed they will.
- Clr. Rutherford confirmed for E. Batty that a Board response to Council with general perspectives and option preferences and why, in relation to the program presented in this report would be appreciated, with any considerations noted.

**Presentation: City Shadows Concept (and what we can learn from this)**

**M. Owczarek**

M. Owczarek is a Board member with her PhD in Social Psychology and experience in drug addiction

therapy, especially opiates. She provided the members with a summary of the book “City Shadows - Psychological Interventions in Psychiatry” by Dr. Arnold Mindell and her key takeaways.

- Dr. Mindell is a psychotherapist from Oregon, and founded Process-Oriented Psychology. He applied Carl Jung’s shadows concept in his work.
- M. Owczarek provided an excerpt from the book - Page 171, including Dr. Mindell’s letter “To the Client”.
- M. Owczarek shared images of famous people who have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives, and noted that they exist in all cities and are a measure of the health and well-being of cities.
- Questions and Comments:
  - E. Batty noted the relation with the Board’s recent Perception of Safety working group, and the need to show people that we are listening and trying to understand why they are struggling, rather than just treating the symptoms, such as visible drug use.
  - L. McFarlane shared that the presentation was insightful, as it provided a new concept which showed different perspectives on the issue.

**New Business/Updates:**

**a) Councilor Emerging Issues Update (Councilor E. Rutherford)**

- Clr. Rutherford shared [the link](#) to the July 3, 2024 meeting of City Council, highlighting her reference to the ETS Advisory Board in relation to the Motion by Clr. Hamilton regarding Amendments to Bylaw 18155 - Council Procedures Bylaw, item 2 “that administration prepare amendments to Bylaw 18155, Council Procedures Bylaw, to change the distribution date for agendas from 10 clear days prior to the meeting to the Thursday prior to the meeting.” The motion was passed. (Item discussed starts at 16:40:45 - last item of the meeting).
  - E. Batty expressed appreciation for the Board representation.
- Clr. Rutherford noted that Council is now in recess and upon reconvening, the Council committee membership will be rotating for the final time before elections. Clr. Rutherford will be Chairing the Public Services Committee.

**b) Sub-Committee topic for 2024: Arc Card System Review**

- E. Batty confirmed that the Arc Card System Review, from a user perspective, will be the 2024 sub-committee topic, as it was selected by members at the planning retreat held earlier this year. Board members are expected to serve on one committee per year, but since there is only one this year, not everyone will be required to serve on it, although everyone is welcome. This report could be ready to submit by March of 2025. E. Batty will send out a sign up, select a Chair and Vice Chair, and terms of reference will be drafted. M. Lachance noted that a sub-committee meeting date could be possible in September.
- E. Batty confirmed that up to four new topics will be selected by members during the February 2025 Annual Work Planning Retreat, with up to two working groups active in each half of next year.
- E. Masahkwe inquired about the date that ETS’ Arc Card report is due to Council. M. Lachance will provide this when available.

**c) Public Spaces Bylaw Survey Response**

- E. Batty reminded members to provide feedback to the sixteen questions in the Public Spaces Bylaw Survey by the end of the week, either by adding bullet points under each question, for compiling into a combined response, or to advise if they respond directly.

**d) Accessibility Survey** - E. Batty acknowledged receipt of the Accessibility Survey via the ETSAB\_Chair email account, which she confirmed has been distributed to all members, and she encouraged members to respond to the survey by the deadline provided.

<b>Working Groups</b>	
<b>Fare Evasion Policies</b>	<b>M. Seraj</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M. Seraj noted that B. Gerrits has drafted a formal response capturing the group’s work on the topic of fare evasion policies. The draft will be distributed to all members shortly for additional feedback and comments, and the final draft of the letter to Council will be ready to present to the Board for approval at the August General Meeting of the Board. The letter will be sent September 17, 2024 to align with the date Administration’s Infrastructure Enhancement for City Transit Facilities (ETS Fare Gates Pilot) report is presented to Council. B. Gerrits noted she will connect with M. Lachance to confirm some references.</li> </ul>	

<b>External Updates</b>	
<b>ETS Branch Highlights Report</b>	<b>M. Lachance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M. Lachance presented the ETS Branch Highlights report. Question and Answer period followed:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>R. Hardie and E. Masahkwe requested information related to the section on ARC Updates - Next Phases. It was confirmed that “open payment” refers to the use of fare payment by tapping credit cards. It was confirmed that the price per fare using credit cards for payment would be priced at \$2.75 and not \$3.50 (cash fare rate), since it does not involve cash handling.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Accessibility Advisory Committee - AAC Liaison Update</b>	<b>Z. Jabeen</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Z. Jabeen confirmed the liaison role has been transferred to J. Jackman, with introductions to contacts. She provided an overview of the role and responsibilities. J. Jackman confirmed he has received the AAC monthly General meeting invitations for September onwards.</li> </ul>	

<b>Topics of the Night</b>	<b>M. Seraj</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M. Seraj identified the topics of the night:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ride Transit Program Funding Gap Report: M. Lachance Lachance presented an overview and led a discussion on potential solutions and recommendations that the city is considering. Also, Councillor Rutherford suggested that our insights could be valuable to the councils in addressing this issue. ETSAB members are committed to sharing some structured thoughts on this topic in the coming weeks.</li> <li>Arc Card Review Working Group: We discussed the formation of our next working group focused on reviewing the Arc Card system. Our goal is to initiate this group promptly to ensure timely progress.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

- Fare Evasion Working Group Update: The Fare Evasion working group presented a draft letter outlining their findings and recommendations regarding fare evasion on our transit system. Currently, we are seeking input from all ETSAB members, before forwarding it to the council for their consideration. Our goal is to finalize and approve the letter at our next meeting, ensuring that it accurately reflects the collective views of the working group and ETSAB.

**Motion to Adjourn**

**CHAIR SIGN-OFF**  Signed by:  
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