



Naming Committee

Honouring People and Places in Our City

THE CITY OF
Edmonton

7th Floor, 10250 - 101 Street
Edmonton AB T5J 3P4
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Kathleen Andrews

(1940 - 2013)

Kathleen Andrews (nee Smith) was born in Rochdale, England on May 17, 1940. Kathleen lived in Rochdale until she was 14 years old, migrating to Edmonton, Alberta after 3 days of sailing on the RMS Queen Mary ship from England to Canada and taking a train to Edmonton, Alberta. She attended Oliver Junior High School in 1954 and graduated from Ross Sheppard Composite High School in 1959.

Kathleen married Edward Andrews and had Brad, her first child, in 1963. She gave birth to her second child, Lisa, in 1966. Kathleen and Edward divorced in 1970, forcing her into the working world where she acquired a job with Alberta Health Care as an Administrative Assistant. In January of 1975, Kathleen joined the ranks of Edmonton Transit System (ETS) as a Bus Information Clerk making \$3.00 per hour. After five months of working in this position, she applied to be an ETS Bus Driver. After having passed the strict height and strength requirements, Kathleen became the very first female ETS Bus driver in May 1975. Her hourly wage jumped from \$3.00 to \$7.50, on par with men.



When Kathleen became Edmonton's first female bus driver, there were no female bathrooms in bus depots and no radios on the buses. She carried a dime in her pocket for emergency calls in phone booths, used the male manager's private bathroom, and picked up the tradition of waving to other passing bus drivers as a signal that she was safe. She faced drunken louts trying to pick her up, male colleagues who questioned her ability to drive, and both female and male passengers who refused to get onto her bus because she was a female driver. Kathleen stuck it out behind the steering wheel before moving up the ranks, becoming a pioneer at ETS.

After 3 years behind the wheel, Kathleen became the first female ETS Dispatcher, a job that gave her routine hours and weekends off. Eventually, Kathleen became the first female in management in charge of Special Service charter buses, staying with ETS until her retirement in 1998. Kathleen not only became the first female transit driver, but she became the first female in any non-traditional job at the City of Edmonton.

Kathleen continued to fulfill her love of driving after her retirement in 1998, taking a morning shift driving school bus.

Our "First Lady of Transit" died on November 17, 2013 at the age of 73.

Written by Lisa Andrews

Edited by Danielle Ferchoff

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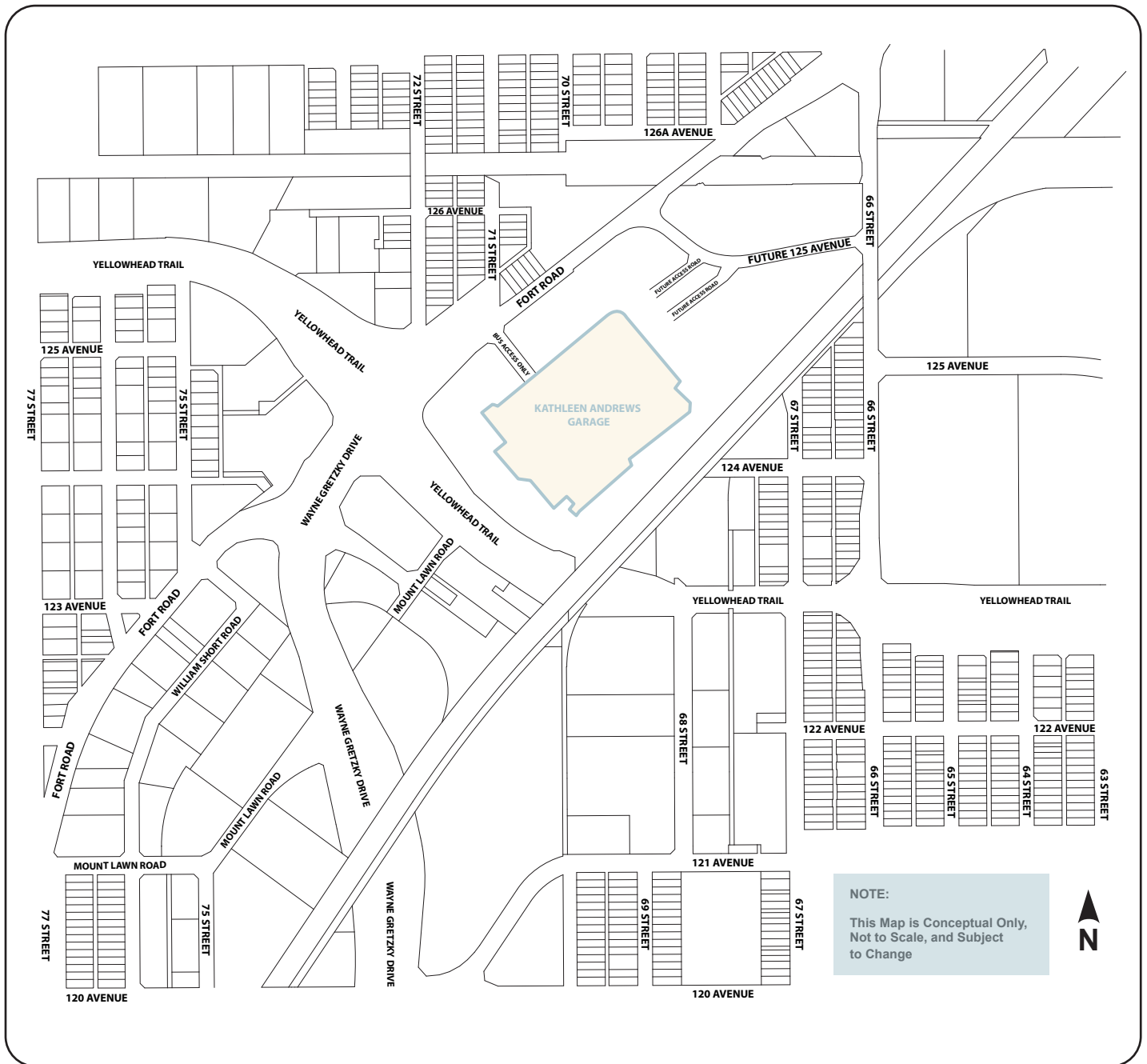
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KATHLEEN ANDREWS GARAGE

Yellowhead Corridor East

October 28, 2014
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