

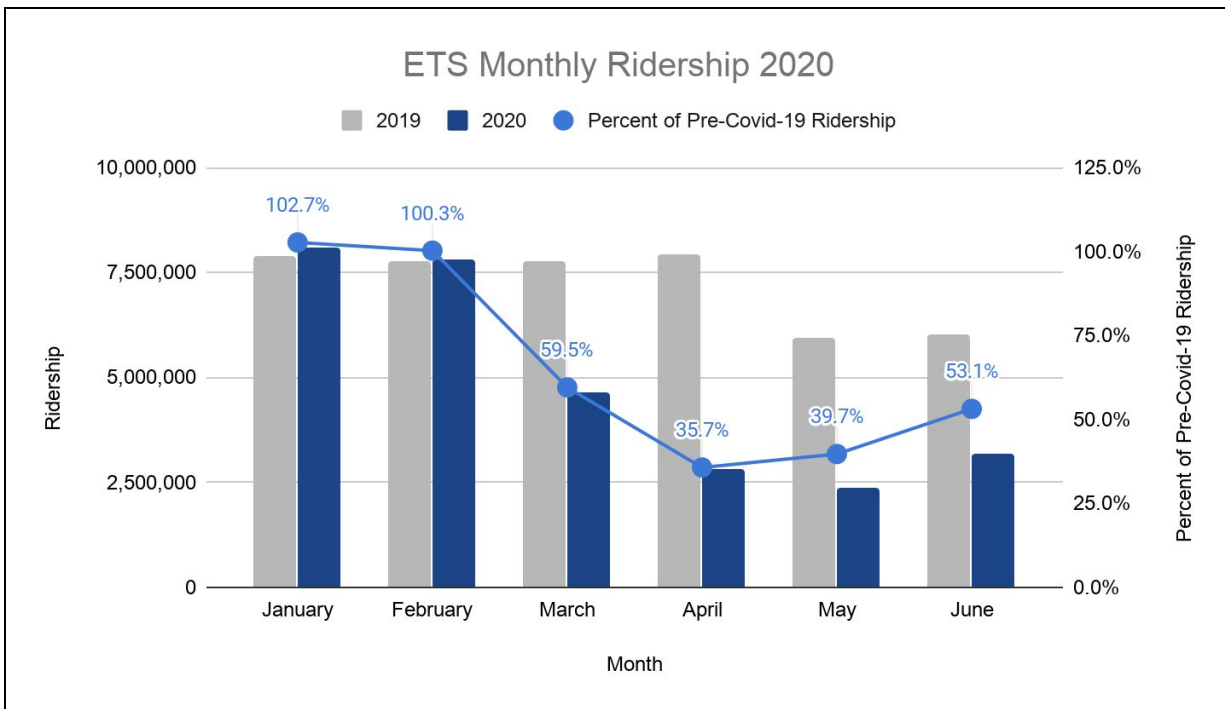
ETS Branch Highlights Report

Date: July 27, 2020

1. RIDERSHIP

Bus and LRT Ridership – June 2020

	Month	Year to Date
2019 Actual	6,020,062	43,363,454
2020 Actual	3,199,531	28,926,314



During Covid-19, ETS moved to rear door boarding to provide more distance between Operators and riders and to reduce crowding at the front of the bus during the initial months of the pandemic. As a result, fare collection was temporarily paused between March 20 and June 15. Fare purchasing normally informs ridership estimates but during this period we relied heavily on automated passenger counters on our fleet to determine ridership levels.

2. ETS UPDATES

Electric Bus Deployment

In early August, ETS will achieve a major milestone by deploying its first battery-electric buses into service. This historic moment is the result of collaboration between many City of Edmonton areas including Transit Fleet Maintenance, Fleet and Facility Services, Corporate Procurement and Supply Services, ETS, and the electric bus supplier, Proterra. ETS' 40 electric buses is one of the single largest purchases of electric buses in Canadian history. To date, 21 electric buses have arrived in Edmonton. The remaining 19 will begin arriving this fall.

Electric buses will be able to operate on just about every ETS route, and all buses come equipped with protective Operator shields. Electric buses are roughly 30% less expensive to service and maintain than current diesel buses, plus savings on the cost of fuel. Of the 21 buses that have arrived, 14 have an eye-catching promotional wrap on the back half of the bus that clearly indicates the bus is electric. The other 7 buses are painted with ETS' traditional blue and silver brand colours.

There is a video [here](#) with additional details.

RTSC Update

The RTSC Transition Team of elected officials from the participating municipalities have officially moved into the role of Interim Board. Activities underway from June to December, 2020 are part of the pre-implementation phase to set up the Commission as an organization. Several work streams have been created to help develop plans related to finance, human resources, operations and stakeholder relations, among others.. The Board will make decisions based on these plans.. The biggest milestone for the pre-implementation phase is to hire a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the Commission by December. The CEO's first responsibilities will be to confirm the organizational structure, hire a leadership team and start w planning service delivery for regional transit routes, excluding local Edmonton service..

Enhanced and Disinfection Transit Fleet and Facilities

During the pandemic, the City enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of transit facilities and fleet vehicles including LRV and buses. The enhanced cleaning and disinfecting included using Government of Canada approved electrostatic sprayers to get to hard-to-reach areas. Going forward, the City will continue this approach to continue to keep riders and staff safe. For more details, see the ETS video posted [here](#).

Gender Based Analysis (GBA+)

Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is a tool used to better inform policies, programs and initiatives to achieve a more equitable community. GBA+ is used to assess the potential impacts of decisions or programs on diverse groups of citizens of different genders, age, level of education, language, geography, culture and income, and more. By incorporating GBA+ into our review and planning of ETS safety and security enhancements, we will be able to capture more

diverse perspectives. With a focus on making transit safer for women and girls, we can ultimately make transit safer for everyone.

The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized social issues that have always been in our community and highlights who has and who does not have access to safe spaces. To assist those agencies with a shared focus on safety & wellbeing for our most vulnerable citizens, the City set up the EXPO centre as a temporary shelter. ETS provided shuttle services to ensure those who needed assistance had access to support. GBA+ analysis is embedded in decision making during the City's upcoming relaunch, recovery and reimagine work.

Service Resumption Plans

As highlighted in the budget update presented to City Council on July 6th 2020, ETS will be moving to a regular service schedule on August 30th. The timing aligns with the annual fall service changes.. The service is most likely going to follow the level of service provided in April when post secondary institutions are not as active; this reflects the move to online learning by post secondary institutions in response to COVID-19. As part of resuming normal service schedules, Some Transit Operators who were temporarily laid off in the spring will be recalled back to work. In addition, basic Operator training has resumed to replace Operators who leave their positions due to promotions, retirements, resignations, etc. A communications plan is being developed to make Edmontonians aware of the service and staffing changes. ETS will continue with enhanced cleaning and disinfecting, as well as aligning activities with the AHS guidelines for public transit.

Transit Funding Update

On June 5th 2020, the Government of Canada announced an update to their federal funding to support the safe restart of economies in provinces and territories. The additional funding includes support for public transit. The Government of Alberta will distribute the federal funding to municipalities. Further details are forthcoming.

Both the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Canadian Urban Transit Association have been actively advocating for funding to support municipalities during the COVID-19 crisis. The funding gap for the City of Edmonton in 2020 is estimated to be \$172M, including transit-related items of \$60M in fare revenue losses, as well as an anticipated extra expense of \$6.3M for enhanced cleaning and disinfecting.

Ride Transit Pass Sales

As part of the COVID pandemic response, in-person sales channels were closed, including the Edmonton Service Centre and Community Recreation Facilities. As a result, passes were mailed free of charge to Ride Transit users who had purchased a pass in 2020 or who completed an online form to request a pass. Going forward, this approach is not sustainable and does not align with the approved Fare Policy. As a result, research and analysis is underway to identify alternatives for the short-term; the medium-term solution is to integrate Ride Transit into the Smart Fare technology for fare purchasing. Administration is planning a survey directed to Ride Transit users to ask questions about their needs so that solutions can be tailored. Using a GBA+ lens, Ride Transit users include persons with disabilities, people experiencing low income, people

who may be newcomers, people with housing instability, and/or single parent families. More details will be shared as they are confirmed.

3. ETSAB INFORMATION REQUESTS

Saturday Service Level and the Impact on Ridership

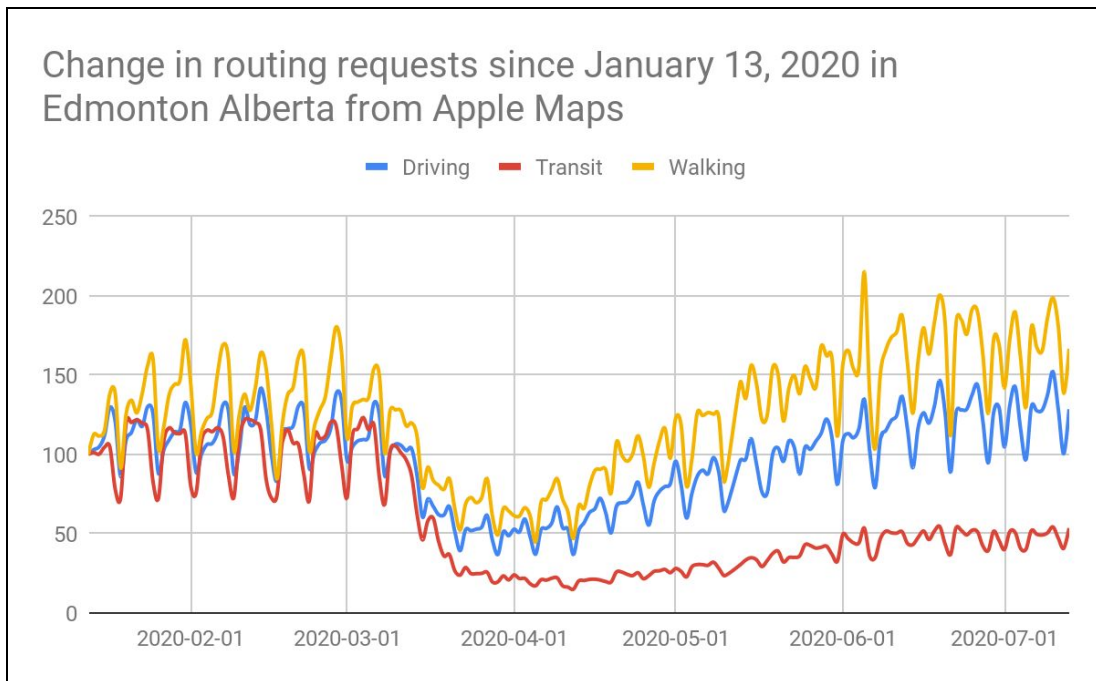
The largest factors resulting in the ridership reduction were the closures of most businesses, schools, post secondary institutions, rec centers and facilities, and cancellation of sports and festivals, as this resulted in a considerable drop in travel demand and economic activity. Ridership is expected to slowly increase as these reopen and restore to full capacity.

Mandatory Masks on Transit and in Public - Engagement by the City of Edmonton

Edmonton City Council has recently discussed masks and has decided to make them mandatory in City of Edmonton buildings and property such as transit. There was also a survey being run about masks in public in Edmonton through Edmonton’s Insight Community to better understand preferences for mandatory mask usage. A future bylaw is being considered for other public buildings.

Relationship between Decline in Transit Ridership and Alternate Modes of Travel

Some third-party apps have released data on trip requests across different modes that identify some travel trends before and during the pandemic. Most notably the graph below provided by Apple Maps shows shifts in walking activity, a return to “normal” or increased driving activity, and depressed transit activity. Google provided a similar report but for Alberta, not specifically for Edmonton.



ETS is working with City Planning to understand some broader changes in transportation that could impact future transit scheduling and routes. Preliminary observations include changing commuting patterns that have shifted vehicle traffic levels away from peak times and increased mid-day traffic.

Lessons Learned from Kinsmen and Expo Centre Shuttles

ETS recently concluded shuttle service for the vulnerable population between the Expo Centre day program and overnight facilities downtown and at the Kinsmen Centre. One of the key learnings was the value of the cross-functional team to support these efforts, with representation from ETS, Community Standards, Corporate Security, Social Development and external agencies. Another lesson that could be applied in the future, is using one facility to provide both day and night programs, in order to reduce the need for transportation and reduce potential exposure to illness.

ETS Capacity to Increase Service in Response to Demand

ETS is currently planning on restoring most of the weekday level of service in September. We will continue to monitor ridership to determine priorities for upcoming service adjustments. At times during the pandemic, ETS has responded to crowding on buses by providing additional capacity to certain routes. These changes can be made on relatively short notice. ETS is also encouraging off-peak travel to more evenly distribute ridership throughout the day.

Route 747 for Non-Travellers

As part of our COVID-19 safety response, Route 747 remains suspended for airline travellers until further notice. Passengers with travel luggage are denied boarding and those carrying travel luggage are presumed to be traveling and are not allowed to board the ETS bus. However, service remains in place for all other passengers, including regional, airport, outlet mall, and area employees, as well as residents wishing to access shopping or commuting to and from Leduc. For the time being, buses are marked 'Special' instead of 747.

Ridership Impacts of Non-collection of Fares / Free Fares

Typically, fare increases result in ridership declines and vice versa. A frequently used rule of thumb, known as the Simpson-Curtin Rule, is that each 3% fare price increase reduces ridership by 1%. However, this elasticity value varies by demographics, transit modes, location and time frames.

The ETS report to council CR_7128 showed that, in a non-pandemic situation, ridership could increase by as much as 28% in a no-fare or free fare environment. This could raise the mode share in Edmonton of transit from 9% to 12%. However, it comes with a significant loss of revenue.

The Covid-19 pandemic and temporary cancellation of fares presented a unique situation whereby customers priorities and needs for transit shifted dramatically. Although ridership declined by as much as 70% during March 2020, there is a chance that some riders took advantage of the lack of fare collection who would have not otherwise used the service. For example, there was a visible increase in non-destination riders, especially later at night. Fares are only one factor determining someone's likelihood of riding transit. During Covid-19, there has been a dramatic shift in many of these factors including the need to commute or travel, desire to travel, feelings of safety in

confined spaces, etc. ETS is continuing to monitor these factors and their possible impacts over the short and long-term.

Mask Usage on Transit

ETS d plans to conduct observational research on transit and transit properties in August 2020 to better understand how customers are using transit during Covid-19, including use of masks.

The City of Edmonton is currently running a “Masks in Public” survey through the Insight Community as well to understand perceptions of mask usage in Edmonton, though not specific to ETS.

Bus shields and LRT cabs provide excellent protection so Operators do not need to wear masks when in a shielded area. However, Operators and other public facing transit employees currently must wear masks when going into public areas.

Air Flow on Current ETS Fleet

All ETS buses use standard HVAC systems, which includes future purchases. These systems are standard across the industry.

The bus has separate heating and ventilation for the Driver’ compartment and the passenger compartment. The two distinct zones help ensure the windshield and driver side windows are properly defrosted in cold climates. The passenger compartment uses one fan system to move either warm or cold air.). Edmonton Operators have been requested to use both the front and rear roof vent to allow for more air circulation in the bus. The front roof vent should be set , to allow air to be scooped into the bus when it drives forward, while the rear roof vent is set to allow air to exit from the rear of the bus.

Operators cannot adjust the temperature controls on ETS buses. They have a TS specific set point for either heating or air conditioning. The Operator has the ability to adjust fan speed on our diesel fleet. The new battery electric buses adjust fan speed automatically based on temperature in the bus.

ETS Citizen Dashboard

The Citizen Dashboard is being updated with new data from 2019.

4. ETS COUNCIL REPORT TRACKING - 2020-21

Council Reports

During Covid-19 and the local state of emergency, the focus of City Council narrowed to face the challenge of the pandemic and the various impacts to city services, employees, and the public. Scheduled council reports were postponed or cancelled. Future report dates are to be confirmed.

SIRE	Report Title	Meeting Date	Committee
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*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