
EDMONTON TRANSIT HIRING PRACTICES REVIEW

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PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF EDMONTON
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The following report by PeopleWise™ represents a four-month evaluation of Edmonton Transit hiring practices. PeopleWise™ is a Vancouver-based Human Resources management consulting service focused on recruitment and selection practices, tools and training.

The review, including all consultations and development of recommendations, was conducted by Shyla Dutt, principal associate of PeopleWise™. Ms. Dutt has undertaken extensive reviews of HR systems for Canadian governments, agencies and industry.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***Introduction***

The City of Edmonton's Transportation and Streets Department has undertaken this review of hiring practices to improve its recruitment and selection processes. The Department wants to ensure that there are no systemic barriers unrelated to job requirements which prevents it from attracting a broader more diverse applicant pool for the Transit Operator/DATS Driver positions. The Department hopes that this will enable it to become a more inclusive organization as well as respond to the increasing requirements for transit service amidst a competitive labour market in Alberta.

The review found that overall, Edmonton's Transit's recruitment and selection system conforms to the standards of effective hiring practices in the industry. As a reflection of this, the Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) was recently nominated for "Best Practices in Recruiting and Hiring" by the Ottawa based HDP Group, which referred to ETS as being "a model for other organizations".

Methodology

As a first step, the relevant policies such as those related to Hiring, Equal Opportunity, Integration of Persons with Disabilities and summary information about the Aboriginal Accord Initiative were reviewed. In addition, a broad range of documentation related to the hiring processes was reviewed. These included position descriptions, job postings, web site information, advertisements, application and reference check forms, selection criteria, written and video tests, interview guides, training material for selection staff, etc.

These provided context for the one-on-one interviews that were conducted with staff in various positions to secure a variety of perspectives about recruitment and selection practices. Those interviewed included, Transit operators/DATS drivers, staff involved in hiring processes, Edmonton Transit managers, Human Resources Consultants assigned to Bus Operations/DATS, staff from Corporate

Human Resources and from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, as well as members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 569 Executive.

In addition, interviewing of candidates was observed on-site including an "in-bus" Bus Operations training session. A detailed review of training was not part of this assignment. However, its impact on selection of candidates was the subject of comment by staff during interviews, and these have been included in this assessment. To get a perspective on the hiring practices experience of other transit systems, a few were contacted and the information they provided has been included where relevant to the analysis.

Summary of Findings

The review found that the positions are posted at the City Employment Centre and on the City and ETS web sites, at the Edmonton Transit Garages and Union office, as well as sent to the Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired, to the Yellow Bus office to attract mothers who drive school buses, etc. Vacancies are also widely advertised through mainstream newspapers and through some specialized media and web sites to reach target audiences potentially interested in applying for operator positions such as students and retirees. Presentations have been made at job fairs such as Canada Career Week as well as to the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers to attract applicants from ethnic/new immigrant communities. New recruitment software is being developed to enable on-line applications in order to move to primary web-based recruitment.

The tests, interviews and reference checking, that are a part of the selection system, are structured and standardized in order to be objective and fair to all candidates. Tests include one for English comprehension and video tests to assess customer service/interpersonal competency as well as driving skills. The interviews are competency based and verified partly through behavioural interviewing of candidates by a panel including a manager, training instructor and HR Consultant in the case of Bus Operations. In the case of DATS a manager and another available staff member, and/or a HR Consultant based on availability, conduct the interviews. A reference checking guide is used to verify the performance record of candidates.

Candidates who are successful through these steps also have to successfully complete an intensive 24 day Operator Training program in the case of Bus

Operations and a 15 day training program for DATS. Candidates also have to pass a Functional Abilities Recruitment Evaluation test, medical exam and security check in order to be hired.

Some Areas for Improvement

Some suggestions have been made in keeping with the mandate of this review to identify ways of improving the current recruitment and selection system to attract a broader and more diverse applicant pool who have the qualifications to be successful in the assessment process. These are primarily designed to improve the skills and abilities of staff and the tools and support they require to carry out the recruitment and selection steps with consistency.

There are three primary areas where improvements could be made:

- ▶ Consistent training on up to date recruitment, selection techniques for staff carrying out recruitment and selection functions.
- ▶ The development and implementation of an outreach recruitment plan to reach diverse communities as part of an overall corporate recruitment outreach strategy for transit.
- ▶ Dedicated staff and material resources in the corporate Human Resources context to build and implement an effective, up to date recruitment/selection system for ETS.

Some related actions that are recommended include:

- ▶ Choosing selection panel members on the basis of the required competencies such as empathy and interpersonal understanding (including active listening skills), relationship building, communication, analytical thinking, etc. (*Please see Appendix for the Definition of a Competency*).
- ▶ Making the reference checking guide competency based and consistent with the interview guide and other tools to ensure that it verifies and supplements information from the other assessment steps.

- ▶ Involving mainstream and other agencies serving diverse communities in a partnership to leverage the City's recruitment outreach resources to promote awareness of the operator and driver positions. Examples of such agencies are those that provide employment related services to multicultural communities, Aboriginal People, women in non-traditional occupations, person's with disabilities, etc. Partnerships with them could reap benefits in terms of attracting not only a broader and more diverse applicant pool, but also one with the right qualifications by creating a greater and more realistic awareness of the rewards and challenges of being a Transit operator or DATS driver.

- ▶ Gathering data at the application stage (e.g. how they found out about the openings for the position), about the performance of candidates at various points of the selection process (who passed or failed at each stage based on group status or what they knew about the position) could greatly enhance the ability to monitor and implement continuous improvement to create a truly effective and efficient recruitment, selection system for ETS.

A key consideration for this would be to track performance of applicants from diverse backgrounds throughout the process by collecting data on the application form about specified group status, for example, whether they are women, visible minority, other multicultural, Aboriginal or persons with disability, etc. This would enhance the ability to identify and eliminate any systems/tools that may have an adverse impact on specific groups for reasons unrelated to job requirements. It could also assist in identifying operator resources that may be useful to draw on for providing service to a diverse population, for example, in terms of multiple language abilities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Edmonton's Transportation and Streets Department is undertaking a review of its recruitment and hiring practices. The primary objective of this review as stated by the City is to identify and address any systemic barriers unrelated to occupational requirements that may be embedded within recruitment and hiring practices.

In response to increased demand for transit services and an anticipated wave of retirement of its staff over the next five to ten years, the Transportation and Streets Department, is seeking to maximize the pool of suitable candidates and attract a more diverse pool of applicants. The Department, which experiences a high volume of recruitment activity for the entry level positions of Transit operator and DATS driver, has offered to pilot this review.

The undertaking of this review is consistent with the Equal Opportunity policy of the City of Edmonton in that it was designed to identify and remove barriers to equal employment opportunities. The findings from the review are also expected to help augment strategies by the Human Resources Branch in its Corporate Workforce Planning.

The following sections present the scope of the review and its progress, the research that was undertaken, the findings and analysis and recommendations for improvement.

2. SCOPE OF PROJECT

In its Request for Proposal, the City of Edmonton had set out the following expectations of tasks that needed to be undertaken to achieve the goals of this project.

- ▶ Conduct a review of all documents related to the hiring process including job postings, advertisements, screening criteria, testing procedures and materials including videos, interview questions/process and selection standards.
- ▶ Conduct interviews with and/or meet supervisors and other staff involved with the hiring process, Human Resources and Transit Training staff.
- ▶ Conduct interviews with members of the Executive of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 569.
- ▶ Do ride-alongs and site visits as required to observe the job functions of the two identified positions.
- ▶ Observe the interview process.
- ▶ Identify and analyze systemic factors in the hiring process.
- ▶ Provide weekly updates as well as submit an interim report that includes an identification and analysis of the issues related to each step of the hiring process.
- ▶ Gather additional information if required.
- ▶ Submit final report including identification of any employment barriers due to systemic discrimination, and recommendations for improvement of the recruitment and hiring process for the two selected positions.

3. METHODOLOGY & WORK UNDERTAKEN

Approach, Methodology and Tasks

The approach and methodologies were designed to identify any recruitment and selection policies, procedures and practices that could potentially be enhanced to promote effective hiring of Transit operators/DATS drivers and/or remove unintentional adverse impact on certain groups. In undertaking this assessment, PeopleWise™ used criteria based on previous experience with similar reviews. Some of these criteria include job relatedness or measurability, objectiveness and consistency of selection criteria and assessment processes, or whether there are restrictions on who can apply. PeopleWise™ takes into account that some restrictions, even though they may have an adverse impact on some groups, are justifiable or unavoidable due to various occupational requirements such as physical demands, shift work, English language requirements, etc.

PeopleWise™ first reviewed recruitment and selection policies and procedures to gain contextual understanding of the City's employment practices and to identify any systemic barriers. Relevant segments of the collective agreements were also reviewed. Collective agreements may in some instances have an adverse impact on some groups, while it protects the rights legally acquired by employees through collective bargaining. Conversely, collective agreements may provide recourse or remedies for adverse impact that occurs due to group characteristics, for example on women of child-bearing age by providing for paid leave, etc.

PeopleWise™ reviewed demographic data that were readily available from Statistics Canada and Alberta Government web sites, to understand the demographic trends relevant to the City's recruitment planning and hiring. Data related to the occupational distribution of specific groups such as women, visible minorities, Aboriginal Peoples and persons with disabilities are useful in providing perspective on these growing, and in some instances untapped, segments of the labour force. The City is in the process of assembling labour force data from the Federal Government about the availability of members of

these groups in the transit operator occupational category. Such data could provide perspective on the diversity in the available workforce in the Edmonton area of recruitment.

The documents related to recruitment and selection that were reviewed included position descriptions and postings, advertisements, selection criteria, testing materials and procedures, interview questions and procedures and reference check guide. Competencies currently in use for the selected positions were also included in the review. In addition, concerns expressed by unsuccessful applicants were also considered. This documentation was assessed using criteria developed and used by PeopleWise™ in similar projects for other organizations, to identify ways to improve systems and/or remove unintentional systemic barriers. These criteria include legality, job relatedness, evidence of gaps, inconsistencies, errors, or adverse impact on any specific groups or practices that need to be changed.

To understand how the policies and procedures are applied during the recruitment and selection process and their impact, PeopleWise™ interviewed and/or met with ETS operators and drivers (Bus Operations and DATS) who have successfully completed the recruitment and selection process. DATS and Bus Operations staff involved in the recruitment and selection process, training instructors, Corporate Human Resources staff including the Human Resources Consultants for Bus Operations and DATS, and members of the ATU Union Local 569 Executive were also interviewed. Other Corporate staff, including those from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, were also consulted. These interviews helped to provide a balanced perspective, especially on those aspects of the selection process that were the focus of complaints or where potential systemic issues may have been observed by PeopleWise™.

Interviews were conducted using guides that were customized to relate to the Edmonton Transit work environment and for the different occupational positions of those who were interviewed, e.g. transit operators, hiring supervisors, human resources staff, training instructors, management.

Job functions were observed by doing a ride-along during an "in-bus" training session for Transit operators. However, "in-class" training was not observed, as it was outside the mandate of this review. DATS training was also not reviewed. This is due to the intensive hiring process underway within DATS and the additional stress it would create for staff to be available for this research.

However, information about training was gathered during interviews with operators, recruitment and selection staff, training instructors and members of the ATU Local 569 Executive. The orientation for Transit operators and interviews for Transit operators and DATS drivers were also observed.

PeopleWise™ has analyzed the information gathered from the above described steps using criteria described above, based on its experience with reviews of hiring practices and analyses of systemic barriers. These reflect industry best practices.

4. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This part of the report presents an analysis of the information gathered through the review of documentation related to recruitment and selection, on-site observation of selection interviews, one-on-one interviews with Edmonton Transit staff including operators management and training instructors, as well as with Corporate Human Resources staff including Human Resources Consultants.

To provide context for the analysis of the recruitment and selection systems, it is relevant to provide background information about some of the demographic and workforce trends and challenges facing ETS. This information may have implications for workforce planning and management, and appropriate Human Resources policies and practices.

Some Pertinent Workforce and Demographic Trends

According to the 2001 Census, 526,780 people constituted the workforce (age 15 and over) in the Edmonton CMA (see Appendix for definition of CMA and overall population statistics). Of these, 83,690 were identified as being in the trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations. Government of Alberta projections about Employment by Occupation indicate that Motor Vehicle and Transit Drivers constitute 5% of the provincial workforce in 2005, but will drop to 1.5% in 2006 and rise to 2.4% in 2007 (and in 2010).

It is projected that between 2004-2009, those between the ages of 55-64 will experience the highest average growth, while those under 45 years of age will decrease in number.

Diversity of the Edmonton/Alberta Workforce Population

As of September 2005, 3.6% (i.e. 67,600,) of Alberta's workforce population were Aboriginal People living Off-Reserve. In September 2005, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal People in Edmonton was 5.6%. This was lower than the rate of 8.3% in the rest of the province. In comparison, the overall unemployment rate for Edmonton region was 4.5%. 14.7% of Alberta's Aboriginal (Off-Reserve) employment occurs in Trades, Transportation, Operators and Related Occupations.

According to the 2001 Census, 14.6% of the Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) population of 927,000 were visible minorities up from 13.5% in 1996. One in five persons within the City of Edmonton itself were visible minorities and 4% or less in the other municipalities within the CMA. The five leading non-official languages in Edmonton in 2001 were Chinese, German, Ukrainian, Polish and Punjabi. Non-official language speakers constituted nearly 20% of Edmonton's population.

62.5% of the new immigrants to Alberta in 2003 originated from ten countries, the top three being China, Philippines and India followed by Pakistan. More than half of them had English language skills. The most common native languages of newcomers to Alberta in 2003 were Mandarin, English, Tagalog and Punjabi. Most newcomers were between 20 and 44 years of age and had university level education.

In 2001, Alberta had the third lowest disability rate in Canada of 12.5% (i.e. 354,740 persons with disabilities). At 5.7%, the disability rate was highest for Albertans with mild disabilities. Albertans with Disabilities had the third highest labour force participation rate (68.8%) and second highest employment rate (52.1%) among people with disabilities in the country. The unemployment rate for Persons with Disabilities is 24.3% - the lowest in the country. The most commonly reported disabilities were pain, agility and mobility related.

Some ETS Workforce Trends and Challenges

The Annual Operations Management Support Report (2004) provides perspective on the staffing challenge faced by ETS. Retirement and succession planning are indicated as significant issues for operator resource planning, as are new service requirements.

The report warns that recruitment is the issue that is now overtaking all others, and that shortfalls must be addressed through a permanent solution for hiring to avoid disruptions to service and/or budgeted funds.

Human Resource and ETS staff in their presentation to the National Transportation Skills Development Forum indicated that the average age of Transit Operators is 48 with 42.6% being over 50 years of age. Therefore, organizations will have to be adaptive and creative in attracting potential candidates.

It is in response to this ETS organizational need that the City requisitioned this hiring practices review in order to attract a broader, more qualified and more diverse pool of candidates for its Transit operator and DATS driver positions. The outcomes of several similar reviews for other organizations have revealed that the implementation of a carefully planned and well resourced outreach strategy, and a selection system methodically developed, standardized, clearly communicated and consistently applied by trained personnel could vastly enhance the competitive position of organizations hiring in today's tight labour market.

The time, resources and expertise applied to this review relates it to only recruitment and selection policies and practices. Job evaluation, functional testing (not the expertise of the reviewer) and basic training are not part of this review.

Like the research that was undertaken to develop the basic information for the review, this analysis begins with a review of relevant policies, then recruitment and selection practices, followed by an analysis of the limited information gathered about aspects of training that have an impact on selection of candidates.

Based on this analysis it is evident that Edmonton's Transit's recruitment and selection system is reflective of the standards of effective hiring practices in the industry. A review of this nature, is expected to identify potential areas for improvement. As such, the results of the review indicate suggestions for improvement that will make Edmonton Transit's hiring practices even more effective. These have also been included as part of this analysis section.

■ POLICIES

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>1. Hiring Policy</p>	<p>▲ It affirms the principle of staffing on the basis of job-related criteria and equal opportunity through competition and assigns roles and responsibilities specifically to management, to regulate and carry out staffing practices to ensure fairness and equal opportunity. Procedures to support this policy are also included.</p>	<p>▲ Proactive measures and tools integrating principles of job-relatedness, fairness and equal opportunity could help staff implement the policy in a consistent manner. These may include practical guidelines, or training on development of competency based recruitment and selection.</p>
<p>2, Equal Opportunity Policy</p>	<p>▲ This policy affirms the principles of equal opportunity, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment. This policy and procedure seek to facilitate the introduction of initiatives to enhance equal opportunities and procedures to remove systemic barriers. The policy provides definitions and assigns detailed responsibilities to staff at various levels and to unions and associations to facilitate implementation. They also provide for education programs to be developed. Various types of harassment are defined and investigation of harassment is provided for in this policy.</p>	<p>▲ A handbook on how to maintain a respectful workplace, including what is and is not appropriate behaviour, procedure, recourse, availability of counselling, mediation and conflict resolution, remedies and other organizational support, would help all levels of staff implement this policy.</p>

■ POLICIES

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
3. Integration of Persons with Disabilities	<p>▲ This policy also refers to access for Persons with Disabilities to employment opportunities with the City and is cross-referenced with the Equal opportunities Policy. Since accommodation for Civic staff and accessibility is outside the scope of this review, the policies covering these have not been analyzed here.</p>	<p>▲ Suggestions for improving outreach to Persons with Disabilities will be included under the recruitment part of this section of the report.</p>
4. The Aboriginal Accord Initiative	<p>▲ One of the goals of this Initiative is to increase the number of Aboriginal People employed by the City and to develop ongoing partnerships with Métis, First Nations, Inuit and Non-Status people.</p>	<p>▲ Suggestions for improving outreach to Aboriginal Peoples will be included under the recruitment part of this section of the report.</p>
5. Collective Agreements - ATU Local 569	<p>▲ The requirements for posting all vacancies and provision of postings to the Union provides transparency to the recruitment process. Preference for internal candidates or retired operators for certain positions may tend to reinforce the current level of diversity in the workforce. However, these practices based on rights gained through collective bargaining are established practice and recognized across industry sectors.</p>	

■ RECRUITMENT

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>1. Postings: Bus Operations & DATS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The Edmonton Transit postings cover all essential information. They receive wide publicity through City facilities, Garages, the Union, web sites, mainstream media and through specific organizations and their web sites. According to interviewees, the best response is elicited when postings are combined with articles as part of the recruitment effort. ▶ The poster for the DATS position appropriately asks for sensitivity to and experience with disabled transportation of persons with disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To attract a broader and more diverse pool of applicants, the City may consider sending the Edmonton Transit postings to agencies providing job search and training programs to Aboriginal, ethnocultural/ immigrant communities, women in non-traditional occupations and persons with disabilities. ▶ Since some applicants appear to neglect attaching the driver's abstract, a link to a visual of the abstract may serve to reinforce this mandatory requirement. ▶ An explanation about what constitutes the "diverse work environment" mentioned in the postings, i.e. that operators would have to provide service to a public with diverse backgrounds - e.g. of varying age, culture, race, linguistic ability, gender, young children in strollers, disability, etc. may help applicants gain a better understanding of the nature of the job. Asking for relevant diversity competencies may also help in attracting candidates who embrace working in such an environment.

■ RECRUITMENT

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>1. Postings (contd.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Postings for part-time Transit Operator positions mention how they offer the flexibility that would accommodate diverse work arrangements required by potential potential applicants. ▶ Information provided on the web is more thorough in terms of the description of the rewards and challenges of the operator positions. However, the Transit career opportunities link could be more visible. It should also be consistent in presentation with that of DATS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To help candidates better assess what is required to do the job and evaluate their own capabilities before applying, the City may consider adding a link to pages providing background information, work site/physical demands analysis and F.A.R.E. requirements. If feasible, a contact person or number to call for further information regarding these would also help. ▶ It may also be useful to review and revise the current web page to provide a more visible Edmonton Transit Career Opportunities link and a consistent layout and presentation of Bus Operations and DATS pages for ETS brand recognition.

■ RECRUITMENT

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
1. Postings (contd.)	<p>▲ As evident from interviews related to the selection process review, some candidates may not have got the message about the nature of the job involving shift work, the need to multitask, having to drive under adverse conditions and the sometimes not so pleasant encounters with the public. Other promotional material such as the periodical articles or Motor Carrier Passenger Council ads also tend to focus only on the positive aspects of the position. Currently about 7% of applicants get hired. Suggestions were made for a community liaison program to provide information about the position.</p>	<p>▲ To attract a pool of candidates that has a realistic, yet positive perspective about the job, it may be helpful to reinforce the message through repetition in many venues; as well as develop novel ways of promoting the position in a positive, yet realistic manner. Adding background information related to the F.A.R.E. test (provided on the ETS web site), as well as the diversity of the public the operators and drivers deal with and the nature of shift work, could add a touch of realism. This information could be provided through outreach presentations and the web site to help potential applicants prepare.</p>
2. Advertising	<p>▲ Currently positions are advertised in the Edmonton Journal, Sun, and occasionally in the Examiner, although there are conflicting views about whether they are cost-effective relative to other means of attracting applicants. The Journal ad invites applicants to visit the City web site. Targetted advertising is aimed at likely sources of applicants (particularly for part-time operators) such as retirees, students, etc. The most successful methods of attracting applicants are through word of mouth and more recently through the web site. The latter however precipitate many frivolous applications. For DATS drivers it is advertising through the classifieds that pays off.</p>	<p>▲ Advertising in, and sending articles to Aboriginal, ethno-cultural, disability, women and other group specific targeted publications is one means of tapping into a diverse applicant pool.</p> <p>▲ Since web sites - both City and others serving students, retirees, etc. - are important advertising venues, referring applicants directly to the ETS web site, with links to related information about what it takes to do the job, may make it easier for them to find the right information. This may help reduce applications from unqualified candidates.</p> <p>▲ Other transit systems have used test venues to ask candidates how they found out about the position opportunities and could be considered by ETS.</p>

■ RECRUITMENT

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>3. Outreach/ Promotion of the positions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ It is not apparent that positions have been advertised or promoted through articles in Aboriginal, ethnic or other group specific media. ▶ Presentations made to the Mennonite Centre, and the Canada Career Week job fair, especially the latter, are well rounded. By presenting the requirements of the Position realistically, including the need for English comprehension, physical demands of the positions, the reality of shift work, and at the same time stressing the positives, this presentation seeks to attract applicants who have the right qualifications, are better prepared and therefore more likely to be successful in the selection process. ▶ The advice provided to test takers to use their own judgment rather than guessing what the ETS context might be, helps candidates to approach the video test from the right perspective and increase their chances of success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A list of organizations serving specific groups (Aboriginal, Immigrant, etc.) that has been compiled by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and PeopleWise™ is attached to this report. These organizations could be targeted for outreach in terms of presentations, providing background information to give a realistic picture of the requirements of the operator/driver positions. Partnerships with these organizations to promote the operator/driver positions could help the City leverage its recruitment resources by training their counselling staff to give future presentations and educating applicants. In this way these organizations can be a conduit for passing on information. ▶ A suggested improvement to presentations would be to include in the "How to Prepare Oneself Better for this Career" section, advice on how to prepare for the physical demands of the position and a suggestion to consider observing an operator by riding on a bus on one of the busiest routes during peak hours. This is a pre-requisite set out by one transit system. This is more feasible in the context of Big Bus operators. It would also be helpful to describe the diverse environment in which they will have to function and the competencies required. Some related information in this respect is provided in the Violence Prevention training material. ▶ Data gathering could help find, and fine tune advertising and promotional methods.

■ RECRUITMENT

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>4. Applications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ The application form appropriately asks for entitlement to work status in keeping with the Human Rights Act requirements and also provides the City web site address. ▲ The application form currently does not ask for self-identification by specific group status. ▲ It is hoped that the planned web based recruitment may help the City address many of the current stress factors on the recruitment system by making it possible to capture, organize data and streamline the process. By being able to control the information entry fields and to monitor duplications, there is the opportunity to eliminate applicants who have not provided the required documentation at each step, and also those who file multiple applications (as one interviewee urges acquaintances to do). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Consideration could be given to requesting information about skills that would be an asset for operators working with a diverse population, for instance, knowledge of different languages including sign language and diversity competency. ▲ If ETS wishes to track any trends in how applicants from specific groups (e.g. women, visible minorities, Aboriginal Peoples or others) perform during the recruitment, selection process, consideration could be given to asking for such self-identification of group status on the application form. If this information is correlated with data about successful candidates and trainees at various stages, it could also help identify any adverse impact of specific selection tools or processes on any specific group. The Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission permits the gathering of such self-identification data, provided it is done on a voluntary self-identification basis, the objectives are clearly stated, strict confidentiality is maintained and the information gathered is not used to discriminate against anyone. ▲ The City may consider trying to determine if there is a potential adverse impact of web based recruitment on applicants from specific backgrounds and how that can be mitigated before implementation (e.g. by ensuring easy access to computer terminals). At least one other transit system that has implemented this method of recruitment continues to maintain the ability of applicants to apply by submitting a hard copy.

■ RECRUITMENT

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>4. Applications (contd.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ A large volume of applications including multiple ones by the same candidates as well as others without the right qualifications places a great deal of processing stress on the recruitment resources of the City. According to staff, self-screening components would help cut down on “frivolous” on-line applications. ▲ Given that 30% of the candidates for operator positions learned of their job through word of mouth, it is significant that 78% of current ETS employees indicated they would recommend working there to others according to the Employee Engagement Survey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Investment of resources in maintaining the applicant tracking database and on-line applications, that allow candidates to proceed after required information is provided at each step, could eliminate incomplete applications and duplications and greatly improve the effectiveness of overall recruitment resources, as long as easy on-line access is provided. ▲ A possible way to attract only motivated and qualified candidates would be to provide potential applicants (and staff who provide word of mouth promotion) with insights about why some candidates choose to leave during training. E.g., in 2004, 8% (6) were released in training of whom one resigned voluntarily. In 2005, 16% (18) were released in training, of whom 6% (7) left of their own accord. Most are released due to lack of driving skills. Those who drop out voluntarily, do so because they discover that they do not like to drive the trolley or were not aware of the physical demands, need to multitask, deal with people from diverse backgrounds or people who are difficult to deal with.

■ RECRUITMENT

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>5. Some Related Issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Recruitment is being done on an assignment basis by operational staff due to the lack of permanent recruitment staff according to most interviewees. ▲ Senior management, hiring supervisors and training staff all stressed the need for a trained recruitment staff to implement a dynamic media and direct, customized outreach strategy including operator presence at job fair booths and building links with secondary & post-secondary programs. ▲ Difficulties related to minimum requirements for education, driving abstracts, other incentives, personal security issues and gender or cultural values around conflict resolution were mentioned as challenges to attracting a diverse pool of applicants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ The investment of targetted resources for trained recruitment specialist staff, within the context of the corporate human resources structure and with the significant involvement of ETS, to do outreach to the community including diverse communities could greatly enhance the size, quality and diversity of the applicant pool and reduce 'mis-applications'. ▲ Consideration could be given to developing a dedicated outreach strategy targetted to the needs of Edmonton Transit, reviewed and modified as needed, and training for staff on up to date methods of outreach to diverse communities. ▲ The City could consider establishing partnerships with Aboriginal, ethno-cultural and 'non-traditional occupations for women' service agencies to improve the outcomes of its efforts to tap into a diverse applicant pool. For instance, such partnerships could result in these agencies setting up appropriate pre-employment counselling and training that could result in a better qualified applicant pool. ▲ Training for recruitment staff on doing appropriately targetted outreach to diverse communities could also help in getting applicants with appropriate qualifications.

■ SELECTION

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
1. Position Descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The Transit position descriptions that were reviewed, had been updated in 1994/95. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Updating position descriptions would make them more reflective of the current requirements of the position, for instance, with respect to aspects of customer service to a commuting public that is from diverse backgrounds.
2. Transit Operator - Pre-Selection Test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The level of English capability required to achieve success in this test is reasonable in order to carry out the interaction required with Edmonton Transit customers. ▶ Inadequate testing for communications contribute to "abrupt or bad communications" resulting in issues to be deal with according to a union executive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ It may be useful to re-visit and re-assess appropriateness of the information provided in the presentation to the Mennonite Centre, in which it is stated that some of the written comprehension test excerpts are from the operator's training material. ▶ Adding an audio component and a more thorough writing test would make the test for communications competency more effective.
3. Video-Based Tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ According to interviewees and based on observation of the test, it's advantage lies in that it is an objective tool to measure customer service and driving skills. It should also be noted that grading of answers is automated and based on multiple choice responses to situations that simulate what Transit operators often face. Complaints have been made about its toughness or the shades of answers being too close to answer correctly and not being validated by subsequent performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ As mentioned elsewhere, the level of English comprehension established for the selection of candidates appears to be reasonable and a job related requirement. Since the difficulties experienced in relation to the test is anecdotal, data gathering could help in determining any trends to serve as a basis for any modification.

■ SELECTION

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>3. Video-Based Tests (Contd)</p>	<p>▲ Based on interviewee comments and viewing, some of the video test situations may evoke differing responses based on cultural values of the viewer. According to the test developer's own evaluation, for instance, test takers of Asian background had only a 41% pass rate. Some managers indicated that lack of strength in English comprehension may be one reason why some applicants find the test challenging. Suggestions have been made to lower the cut off scores.</p> <p>Also the test has not been validated based on subsequent job performance. The developer is gathering data in this respect, according to information available at the time of this review. Despite this, it must be pointed out that the strength of this test lies in it not being subjective, having consistency in its application and that it tests job related skills.</p> <p>▲ Most of the scenarios are not reflective of situations encountered by DATS drivers.</p> <p>▲ The training video uses similar situational scenarios and instruction on the key principles to use in determining the correct approach to customer relations. Those who have access to this video may have an advantage in answering some of the video test questions.</p>	<p>▲ Other city transit systems use the same test, including cities with diverse populations. However, each City has its unique demographics and therefore monitoring trends could help determine if there is any adverse impact on specific groups. There are different ways to interpret behaviour and different perspectives. It may be helpful to consider these variances in assessing candidates through this test.</p> <p>▲ More test scenarios reflective of those encountered by DATS drivers would be helpful.</p> <p>▲ Changing the approach to the video based training and ensuring it is stored in a secure place could help to maintain the integrity of the test.</p>

■ SELECTION

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>4. Transit Operator Interview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The interview is conducted using a structured guide with standardized competency based questions which therefore supports consistency in questioning. It provides a level of objectivity through standardized criteria that are rated. It asks appropriately for the ability to do physically demanding work and shift work without violating Human Rights Act protections. ▶ The interviews are conducted by a panel of three consisting of a hiring supervisor, training instructor and Human Resources Consultant, thus providing opportunities for greater balance in this segment of the assessment process. An HR representative is not always part of the panel. ▶ The selection decision is made by the panel members as a team. During interview observation it was noted that the lead interviewer also lead the rating by the team. ▶ It was indicated that panel members have not had formal, consistent training. At this time it is not apparent what selection criteria were used to choose panel members. According to interview observation and comments of operators who were interviewed, not all panel members were able to put them at ease. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The interview guide could be improved by reviewing questions on an on-going basis and revising as required based on the methodology used to develop competencies and where appropriate - behaviour verification. For example, a behaviour verification question could be asked regarding diversity skills as opposed to a skills description question. The ability to assess candidates could also be improved if the competency scales were tightened by assigning values to each indicator. ▶ The performance of the interview panel could be greatly improved if its members are chosen on the basis of the competencies required. Having an HR representative on all panels would help process monitoring for consistency. ▶ To capitalize on the strengths of team decision making, team members may consider first rating independently, before the group rating discussion. ▶ The City may wish to consider providing training material and programs to selection staff to develop comprehensive interviewing skills (including behavioural and situational), understanding competencies, and on doing assessments. Such training given on a consistent basis could greatly enhance interviewing skills and therefore consistency of the process.

■ SELECTION

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>5. DATS Driver Interview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The DATS interview panels are commendably of mixed gender. Diverse panel members are less intimidating to candidates. ▶ Like the Transit Interview Guide, the DATS Guide is also structured and uses rated criteria. It appropriately uses a mix of behavioural and situational questions. ▶ The indicators for the questions related to experience and training are appropriately rated with scaled criteria. However this is not the case with the other questions. The guide indicates selection factors, and is not entirely competency based. At the time of this review, it is not clear how the questions or competencies were developed. It includes a question about knowledge of rules and procedures. In most organizations this would be considered a trainable skill. So there may be need for clarification of this question. Since DATS is recruiting drivers with a Class 4 license and similar experience, it may be expecting candidates to already possess this knowledge, because they have to hit the ground running with only 15 days of training which includes training for Class 2 licensing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consideration may be given to going beyond gender diversity and having interview panel members of other backgrounds, where feasible. As with Bus Operations, having an HR representative on all panels will help process monitoring and consistency. ▶ The assessment ability of DATS staff selection team members could be greatly enhanced by providing consistent interviewing and assessment techniques training. ▶ Since DATS is going through unprecedented change and demand for service, it may not be reasonable to allocate the time and resources to streamline its interview guide structure, questions, competencies and rating guide at this time. It could greatly improve the effectiveness of its assessment capability if it could do so once the current intensive process is over.

■ SELECTION

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>5. DAT 6. Driver Interview (Contd)</p>	<p>▲ The DATS interview panel members are undertaking this selection responsibility in addition to their regular positions. Due to the urgency and volume necessitated by the changes taking place in the DATS organization it may not have been possible to have provided these selection panel members with intensive interviewing training.</p>	<p>▲ DATS (as well as Bus Operations) could consider establishing a pool of designated selection panel members, selected on the basis of appropriate competencies, and then provided with training in interviewing skills. This would greatly enhance the consistency and quality of assessment of candidates.</p>
<p>6. F.A.R.E. Test</p>	<p>▲ Physical demands testing is not part of this reviewer's expertise and is not mandated under this review. Therefore the issues raised about the appropriateness of the test is not addressed here. However, it should be noted that interviewees raised issues of job-relatedness and difficulties for some women and physically diminutive candidates.</p>	<p>▲ It may be possible to address to some degree the difficulties encountered with this test on the basis of gender or other backgrounds, by creating awareness through education about the physical demands of the positions and what is involved in the testing so candidates can prepare.</p>

■ SELECTION

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
7. Reference Check	<p>▲ The City secures appropriately signed agreement from candidates to verify their background, experience and skills from current and recent employers. A structured guide is used which supports consistency. However, the open-ended question about the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate may elicit appropriate information only if the reference giver is well acquainted with the requirements of the operator/driver positions. Otherwise they might stress what is important from their perspective.</p>	<p>▲ For consistency in verifying what the other assessment tools have ascertained, it may be useful to adopt what is an industry best practice i.e. competency based, behavioural reference checking. By extension this could help in verifying information from the interview. If time and staff resources permit, a behaviour verification approach might generate a more well rounded picture of the candidate.</p>
8. Some Related Issues	<p>▲ The validity of some of the tests, particularly the video test, is being challenged by some existing staff who claim that existing operators could not pass them. Others counter that the rigorous testing has improved the quality of candidates. Nevertheless, training instructors say that some candidates with inadequate English reading and writing skills and poor driving skills are passing the selection process and getting through to training.</p>	<p>▲ As mentioned earlier, the English comprehension requirements are job related. However, it may be helpful to monitor the application of the test as well as information related to the test being provided at presentations to potential applicants to ensure the integrity of the test. Also, a more thorough communications test including written and audio components would improve this aspect of testing. Additionally, the training instructor and the rest of the selection panel could monitor this aspect of candidates' performance in the written test and during the other stages of selection to improve accuracy of selection methods. Validity of all selection tools also depends on the skill of the selection team and training could be helpful.</p>

■ SELECTION

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>9. Training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A comprehensive review of Bus Operations and DATS training is not part of this review. However, it was the subject of comments from various interviewees, including unsuccessful candidates, some of whom were visible minorities and had been released from training as well as successful operators for whom English is a second language. These indicate difficulties encountered in the course of interaction with instructors. Training staff do not appear to have received specific training on how to instruct candidates from diverse backgrounds. ▶ Several of the interviewees - operators, training instructors and union executive - recommended adding at least four days for training, especially with an Auxiliary Instructor in order to provide additional driving training. They favoured more in-bus as opposed to in-class training. It should be noted that currently 18 out of the 24 days of training allocated by Bus Operations are for "in-bus" training with 6 days in the classroom on passenger relations, safety/security issues, etc. The union supports this split in training but feels that some of this in-class instruction could be provided as follow-up training to make it easier for trainees to absorb the information. Interviewees also recommended that the wait times for training buses be reduced. ▶ The training days allocated by other Transit systems appear to range between 24 and 32 days. Some have implemented measures to improve chances of trainee success by pre-selection requirements such as ride-alongs, pre-training driving tests or by allocating the extra days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Using interpersonal competencies in addition to the technical ones being used and more formal education and training experience criteria to select instructors could help improve the training experience for both instructors and trainees. So could providing training on how to instruct and assess candidates from diverse backgrounds. ▶ Attention could be paid to reviewing the training provided to DATS drivers and enhancing it as required. ▶ As suggested elsewhere, monitoring trends and considering changes to current training days configuration, as well as considering the adoption of some of the problem solving practices of other Transit systems could help improve training outcomes.

■ SELECTION

SYSTEM RELEVANT TO PROJECT	ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>9. Training (Contd)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ DATS provides a total of 15 days of training. This includes 10 days in the classroom and five on the road which also reflects the training for Class 2 licensing. As mentioned earlier, DATS drivers are expected to have their required Class 4 license when they apply, or before training starts. DATS training was not observed and specific information related to the selection aspects of this were not gathered. However, interviewees suggested improved matching of trainees and instructors for compatibility, interpersonal skills and improved training for instructors on how to instruct. ▶ Interviewees suggested a better link between the Training Centre and the rest of the selection team to incorporate feedback by instructors, in order to help improve the selection processes. ▶ More permanent instructors and stronger selection criteria for instructors were called for by interviewees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ As suggested earlier for Bus Operations Instructors, appropriate competency based selection criteria, including interpersonal ones, and training on how to instruct candidates from diverse backgrounds could help improve the training experience. ▶ Consideration could be given to evaluating which components of training should be given during initial training and which could be provided during follow-up training. ▶ Continuous feedback about which aspects of candidates competencies are being screened effectively and which are not, as evident during the training phase, would help fine tune selection methods and improve the entire assessment process.

APPENDIX A

CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREA - DEFINITION

DEFINITION of Census Metropolitan Area (CMA):

Area consisting of one or more adjacent municipalities situated around a major urban core. To form a census metropolitan area, the urban core must have a population of at least 100,000.

The Edmonton CMA includes various counties around the City of Edmonton.

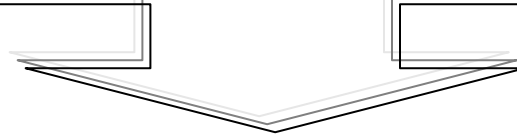
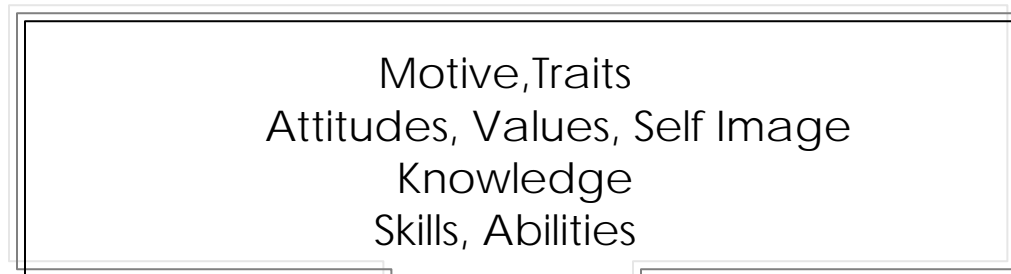
	2001	2005
Edmonton City Proper	666,104 (actual*)	712,391 (actual **)
Edmonton Metro Area	937,845 (actual*)	1,014,000 (estimate)

*2001 Canada census **2005 Municipal census

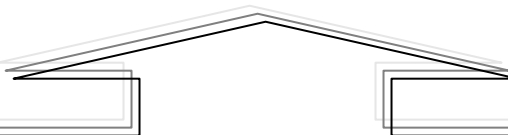
APPENDIX B

COMPETENCY - DEFINITION

COMPETENCY DEFINITION



BEHAVIOUR



JOB PERFORMANCE

Knowledge, skills and abilities are the surface competency components. They are relatively easy to acquire, most cost-effectively through training.

Motive and traits form the core of personality and are more difficult to develop. It is therefore most cost-effective to select candidates for these characteristics than try to provide training to develop them.

APPENDIX C

ORGANIZATIONS SERVING SPECIFIC GROUPS

ORGANIZATIONS SERVING SPECIFIC GROUPS - ABORIGINAL, MULTICULTURAL AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Aboriginal Learning Services
Edmonton Catholic School District**

Catholic Education Services
9807-106 Street
Edmonton, AB
T5K 1C2
Tel: (780) 441-6000
Toll Free: 1-888-441-6010
Fax: (780) 425-8759

Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association

10336 121 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5N 1K8
Phone: (780) 423-3138
Fax: (780) 425-6277

Bent Arrow Traditional healing Society

2nd Floor, 10117 – 150th Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5P 1P2
Phone: (780) 481-3451
Fax: (780) 481-3509
E-Mail: baths@bentarrow.ca

Freehorse Family Wellness Society
Suite 750, 10707 – 100 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5J 3M1
Phone: (780) 944-0172
1-800-411-9658 (Canada-wide toll-free)
Fax: (780) 944-0176
Email: general@freehorse.org

Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women

Suite 300, 10256 – 112th Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 1M4
Telephone: (780) 479-8195
Toll Free: 1-877-471-2171
Fax: (780) 471-2169

Native Counselling Services of Alberta

10975 124 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5M 0H9
Ph: (780) 451-4002
Fax: (780) 428-0187

Oteenow Employment & Training Society

Suite 202, 10470-176 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5S 1L3
Phone: (780) 444-0911
Fax: (780) 444-3477
admin@oteenow.com

ASSIST Community Services Centre

9653 - 105 A Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5H 0M3
Telephone: (780) 429 - 3111
Fax: (780) 424 - 7837

Catholic Social Services

10709 - 105 Street
Edmonton, AB T5H 2X3
Telephone: (780) 424 - 3545
Fax: (780) 425 - 6627

Changing Together - A Centre for Immigrant Women

3 floor, 10010 - 105 Street
Edmonton, AB T5J 1C4
Telephone: (780) 421 - 0175
Fax: (780) 426 - 2225

Edmonton Immigrant Services Association

Suite 201, 10720 - 113 Street
Edmonton, AB T5H 3H8
Telephone: (780) 474 - 8445
Fax: (780) 477 - 0883

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

101, 10010 - 107A Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5H 4H8
Telephone: (780) 424 - 7709
Fax: (780) 424 - 7736

Centre d'accueil et d'établissement-Edmonton

Bureau 50, La Cité Francophone
8627 rue Marie-Anne-Gaboury (91e rue)
Edmonton (Alberta) T6C 3N1
Téléphone : (780) 669-6004
Télécopieur : (780) 469-3997

Millwoods Welcome Centre for Immigrants

#335, Tower II, Millbourne Shopping mall
Millwoods Road and 38 Avenue
Edmonton (Alberta) T6K 3L6
Téléphone : (780) 462-6924
Télécopieur : (780) 466-6594

Canadian Arab Friendship Association

#18, Capital Centre (formerly Dickinsfield Mall)
9228 - 144 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T5E 6A9
Phone: 780-473-7214
Fax: 780-475-1039
Email: general@cafaedmonton.ca

Women Building Futures Society

11219 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 0L9
Shop: (780) 452-1200
Fax: (780) 452-1279
Toll-free: 1-866-452-1201
E-mail: info@womenbuildingfutures.com

Native Women Career Preparation Program

NorQuest College
10215 – 108 Street
Edmonton Alberta
T5J 1L6
Phone: (780) 415-2483/2484
www.norquest.ab.ca

Alberta Disabled Foundation

10609 101 Street NW,
Edmonton, AB T5H 2S2
Phone: (780) 424-4800

Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta

1343 61 Avenue NW,
Edmonton, AB
T6H 1M3
Phone: (780) 448-0360

The Excel Society

11831 123 Street NW,
Edmonton, AB T5L 0G7
Phone: (780) 424-4366

Chrysalis – An Alberta Society for Citizens with Disabilities

10025 106 Street NW,
Edmonton, AB
T5J 1G4
Phone: (780) 414-0372