EDMONTON TRANSIT SYSTEM ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING #10, OCTOBER 24, 2011
HERITAGE ROOM, CITY HALL

PRESENT: Brian Marcotte, Gordon Smith, John Doucette, John Vandenbeld, John Hayes, Ryan Orchard, Christopher Dulaba, Bruce Robertson, Masood Makarechian, Vaughan Hoy, Elizabeth Johnston, Leanne Landry

ABSENT: Stu Litwinowich

ETS AND CITY STAFF: Lorna Stewart (Director of DATS), Ken Koropeski (Director of Service Development),Karl Spiwek (Project Manager), Dennis Nowicki (Director of Community Relations), Vicki Luxton (Recording Secretary)

1. CALL TO ORDER

- M. Makarechian called the meeting to order at 17:30 hr.

2. SMART BUS PRESENTATION (L. STEWART)

- A handout titled ETS Smart Bus was given to all Board members in attendance and is attached to these minutes.
  - *Questions/Answers*
    - *How are the savings estimated?* We did look at literature and reports by other transit systems in terms of what savings could be realized. The one thing that we think it will achieve is increased ridership but we have not included that as a tangible benefit at this point.
    - *Your comments about the DATS implementation as to its applicability as to the rest of the system, how is it transferrable?* The one transferrable thing is the size of the bus and the LRT service are about ten times larger than DATS and the investment is about ten times and we have not really forecasted the real savings. The success story is we invested in this technology and got a pretty good return on investment. There are some features in the DATS system for managing the system and there are similar technologies in the system. We have good experience with some very similar technology which did demonstrate a prospective cost saving. *I am trying to relate it to the customer. In DATS you are very much focused on your customer. If there is a problem you are calling the customer?* Not as much as we should, but customers do call us and listen to the agents. When people call about where is their ride at DATS before this technology we would be forwarding it to dispatch and they would be calling the driver, asking the driver when the next customer will be picked up. Now the agents know all of that because the system generates an estimated pick-up. *For example I live near bus stop 1178 and I know it runs every 30 minutes so if it does not come I know it is late. But in the future when I call, that number will tell me when the next bus is in actual time?* Yes that would be the difference. Right now you get scheduled time. There are different customer options here and there is the possibility to see where the buses are along their route. I believe St. Albert has this right now knowing where the bus is and more

accurately when it will get to the next stop.

- *At the August 23rd presentation there were seven features that were listed on Smart Bus ranging from automated stop announcements to some security features and these were touched upon in your presentation. I believe J. Hayes asked the question about which of those features if any are likely to be jettisoned in the name of cost savings in the event that the City gives you $20 million and not $30 million. Do you have any ranking of these features of Smart Bus?* We have analyzed what we need to see in Phase I, Phase II and Phase III of the implementation. Phase I is the 50 buses, Phase II is rolling it out and Phase III is the planning tools and analytical BI. The whole purpose of Phase I is to assist and develop that ranking in terms of putting all the tools on the vehicle and then better assessing what solution will drive the better benefits. So if we have to go down that road of creating the top ten list, we can accommodate the top five we have funding for. *So you test out the ten and the top five are going to be the features of the Smart Bus going forward.* You were asking if we are asking for $32 million and we only get $15 million then it is through that process where we could go to get a better determination. So we have $15 million so this is what we need to do to drive the most benefit.
- *You had mentioned wayside signs?* We are initially looking at testing the two locations for wayside signs; one at Grant MacEwan college and one at University Transit Centre. *What are wayside signs?* Display signs such as LCD or digital. *In your moving forward budget how many wayside signs are approved for the whole system?* Twenty-five budgeted. The intent of the wayside signs is for transit centres where multiple buses are coming to the same location. We have had great debates about the future of wayside signs given the vast majority of the populations have smart devices. But certainly major transfer points have been the priority for the full system rollout.
- *One question that is not fully clear in my mind is with the investment of $32 million dollars if the whole thing goes forward, is that going to push any initiatives back down the line and force them to be implemented at a later date that are not in this because they are budgetary considerations too? Has ETS done a ranking on the various initiatives that could be going forward and if this is the one ETS wants first, I assume the answer is yes, why does this come ahead of something like Smart Card?* Through a couple of different exercises internally within ETS we went through a business planning exercise which involved the management team and Directors as well as all supervisory staff, Smart Card was one of the top priorities ETS had from that internal ranking. Yes we have gone through it internally, put together a business case through the capital budget process. There has also been a prioritization of the entire Transportation Department budget and this also came up with a high ranking from that. As far as Smart Card, when we did our internal ranking it was not as high as Smart Bus. In terms of the importance of Smart Bus itself, yes we feel that it is quite important and it has the real key benefits. Some of the Smart Card has moved into the Civic Card realm which created a bit of complexity for transit in terms it has been

pulled out of the Transportation prioritization process but with some help from the Mayor and Councillor Iveson it will get its due consideration. The number one priority of the Transportation Department is the Waterdale Bridge as well as LRT. It is just a matter of time before ETS has Smart Card and Smart Bus. ETS did a pilot with the University of Alberta with Smart Card that has now been completed with the employees of the University of Alberta. The outcome may be still coming forward.

- *I have a twelve year old that is just starting the seventh grade and we bought him a smart phone to make sure he gets home safely and does Smart Bus have some technology that will allow him to navigate his way around the city letting him know where buses are, etc.?* There are numerous cities that have an application for Smart Phones, so yes that is already out there and is part of Phase I.
- *Is there enough commonality between this Smart Bus and Smart Card initiatives that you might realize some kind of cost savings or they really independent systems?* The commonalities is really the communication network that is being implemented on the bus. So one of ETS's requirements to the vendor's community is to make sure that the solution can extend to other smart solutions on the bus. The short answer is yes. *Do you expect you might realize some kind of savings with that $32 million be somewhat less if you have Smart Cards or not really?* Marginally, some of the principles or objectives to the vendor community is ETS wants to use a communication network and not one for every solution. ETS wants to use GPS and not one for every solution. So ETS is trying to create maintainable bus network or bus architecture to support all those solutions. It might reduce the cost for Smart Card implementation.
- *There were four of us at the session presented at the DATS office and one of the questions we were all asking was it seemed to be more oriented to the administration side or maintenance side of the bus as opposed to customer related benefits. Do you know if the percentage is more eschewed to the bus side on the DATS system of the savings than it is to the customer side and will you experience that when it is transferred to the big buses?* DATS actually increased the number of trips delivered and did not have good measurement on on-time performance before the system because there were not good ways to measure it. The new system increased the number of trips and DATS has increased their on-time performance because DATS has 95% trips that are picked up before the end of the window. Our satisfaction levels have stayed around 94-95% and the very satisfied has gone up by about 20%. The savings have accrued to reduce overtime and reduce duplication of vehicles. How to relate that to the Smart Bus, the one thing we do not have on DATS is automatic vehicle monitoring. When the business case was looked at the maintenance monitoring in the literature reported by other transit systems is pretty promising in terms of the bus will report when it is sick and so there are not as many breakdowns, forecasting reduced change-over's and reduced spare ratio because we won't need as many spare vehicles.

- *How does the $32 million breakdown for what it gives both on the operational side and the customer side?* The one thing you need to be aware of is we are looking for an integrated solution. So some of the things we are looking for are the ability to maintain the software and hardware on the bus as efficiently as possible. So you need to ensure that the communication works. The bus can report if it is not feeling well. In other words the hardware can report that it is not feeling well. Similarly if there are updates we can download the updates automatically. As an example the bus camera video system, the only time we know something is wrong is if security pulls a video they notice that one of the cameras is out. It is reactive maintenance rather than pro-active. One thing we have identified is to have integrated solution so we can do more pro-active maintenance. When we did the original report to TPW at the time, Bob Boutilier thought the big driver of Smart Bus was the stop announcements. These solutions are pretty mature now so there is a lot of integration that the vendors have proposed. We did talk about this at length in putting the 50 bus Phase I together. There are still vendors out there that will sell you a single source solution and we have some of those. Our APC is a single solution on the passenger counters as well as bus cameras.
- *The $32 million is over how many years?* The implementation is optimistically about three years but probably four years is more realistic. *How do we compare with cities of our size, how far behind are we?* Regina just did a big announcement about their real time information; St. Albert has next bus information. Calgary has chosen their solution with a two year implementation. Ottawa is already there, Vancouver is there, Toronto went because of the automatic stop announcements, Winnipeg have been there for a while. We are lagging. It will be 2016 optimistically before the technology is on the whole system.
- *If you buy a package with technology moving so quickly, how soon will it be out of date and will you be able to upgrade it as new innovations come out?* It is not so much as a technology we are worried about obsolescence. The DATS implemented the MVTs about five years ago; it is the data they capture. The current GPS position of the vehicle is what DATS leverages to base their better planning decisions on and they can update the software on the server. So we are not so much concerned about the hardware on the bus becoming obsolete because its functions are well defined and the life span of them is budgeted for five to seven years. We are trying to leverage the technology that is out there to provide a better service and the benefits that come from that. In terms of recovering the cost, that is not the goal here. If we want to achieve Council's vision of shifting modes we are going to have to get to the level of convenience that people are going to depend on when the bus will get there and if not then they will know when to expect it. We are estimating the operating impacts of this technology would be about $4 million a year.
- *Of the $3 million for the pilot program is their a portion of that for structure behind the scenes that the whole project needs anyway or does that breakdown to a cost to implement the technology on 50 buses?*

How would the pilot money be spent? It will provide a portion of that infrastructure for example the Mitchell Garage will be WiFi enabled so the communication network required for the full rollout at Mitchell will be there.

- *How were the two pilot routes chosen?* We wanted to make sure the buses that serve these specific routes came out of one garage. Part of it was the market as we felt we could get some good feedback from postsecondary students who were pretty familiar with their I-phones, cell phones and computers and could get some very good feedback from that group. They do serve different areas of the city and they are local routes which we really wanted to test. Route 128 goes through the University, Westmount and to Castledowns and Route 111 serves MacEwan, Downtown and West Edmonton Mall.

- *Further Discussion Following the Presentation (All ETSAB Members)*
  - (MM) A comment that K. Koropeski made – the presentation does draw attention to the cost savings and seems to lead you down that path towards assessing net costs after savings but it seems to be about service improvement both behind the scenes and the customer.
  - (LL) The Smart Bus would increase ridership knowing when the next bus was coming.
  - (JV) The presentation the members received today was not what the Marketing Task Group received on August 23rd. Today was a significantly better presentation that addressed the task members' concerns. Had the Marketing Task Group received this presentation on the 23rd, the comment that this task group presented at that meeting would not have been what it was. G. Smith and J. Hayes agreed with J. Vandenbeld. J. Hayes thought the answers given to the members today were somewhat different than the answers received last time. It was a much better presentation today. G. Smith thought the presenters this time were directly involved and were more knowledgeable.
  - M. Makarechian has concerns about the module cost of each of the services that is offered. If M. Makarechian was a member of Council, M. Makarechian would want to know of each of the seven modules how much would each one would cost. Is one of them the bulk of the total cost?
  - (JH) In terms of the costs, the first item that is bought, will include the hardware costs for all the other modules. Whatever is the first item ETS buys, it might be $20 million of the $32 million. The add-ons are not $2 million if it becomes the first item to buy, it might be $17 million.
  - J. Doucette suggested ETSAB give their comments on Smart Bus to TIC as the Topic of the Night.

3. AGENDA REVIEW

MOVED: by J. Doucette/J. Vandenbeld to approve the October 24, 2011 agenda. **CARRIED**	Agenda Approved

4. REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER 26, 2011 MEETING MINUTES

MOVED: by J. Doucette/G. Smith to approve the September 26, 2011 minutes. **CARRIED**

Minutes Approved

5. MANAGER's REPORT (D. NOWICKI)

- *Highlights:*
  - **ETS Centennial Book**
    - There are copies of the ETS Centennial Book for each Board member as a Thank You gift from Edmonton Transit.
  - **Soft Launch of 'Foundtastic'**
    - ETS launches their lost and found application Foundtastic to the public tomorrow.
    - We have been using this application since last spring internally, and this software will enable people to check for lost articles on-line.
    - ETS is striking a balance between giving enough information versus giving so much information where there could be potential for fraud.
  - **October 18, 2011 Transportation Infrastructure Committee Meeting**
    - Report on the Transit Security Best Practices which was received for information.
    - Transit Fare Structure Senior's Report will go to Council on Wednesday, October 26, 2011.
  - **November 15, 2011 Transportation Infrastructure Committee Meeting**
    - Tentatively there are three large reports:
      1) All Night Service report
      2) Airport Service Report will be public
      3) Transit Bylaw Amendments Report
    - There are two night type services, one being the Whyte Avenue service and it is a Responsibility Hospitality Edmonton pilot project that will kick off in January, 2012 and runs Friday and Saturday night along Whyte Avenue to Southgate. The second night service is a comprehensive service consisting of three options with 5, 11 or 12 routes and this is the report going to TIC on November 15th.
  - **Scona Road**
    - Reopened in part today Route schedules are going to be confusing until the end of November because of all the scheduled shifts were designed for the anticipated service starting back the end of November. As a consequence of this, a number of routes in-bound in the morning peak will arrive early. Where the problem is going to occur is on the out-bound traffic particularly for those who would be transferring at 99 Street and Whyte Avenue because the timing will be off. The up side is there is enough frequency of buses so the wait time will not be long. Special shuttle routes 390 and 391 have been removed from service. Unfortunately ETS could not get this information out to the public until a press conference was held late last week.
  - **Ridership**
    - Ridership until the end of September is up 5.87 per cent.
  - **Budget Process**
    - October 26th – Presentation on the 2012 Capital Budget.
    - November 9th – Presentation on the 2012 Operating Budget.

- November 23rd – Non-statutory Public Hearing.
- November 25th – Budget deliberations capital.
- November 29th – Budget deliberations operating
- December 5, 6-9, 13-14 scheduled dates for Council deliberations.

- **Questions/Answers**
  - *The reason for ridership going up by 5.87 percent is that due to students returning to school.* No, it has been around that 6 per cent mark throughout the year. The upside of the growth is it is exceeding the growth of the population.
  - *On the previous notes on the Manager's Report on the fourth page it talks about the pilot project to the airport is that still going to be from Century Park?* Yes, that will be coming forward in the November 15th report. Also in this report will be the cost-sharing model and all matter of things discussed under that contract.

6. TASK GROUP PRESENTATIONS

- *Bylaw and Mandate Review Task Group (V. Hoy)*
  - M. Makarechian and V. Hoy met with Vicki Gunderson last week to get an update on how this process was going to unfold. There is a need for all Advisory Boards to define a date to meet with the Facilitator. There was a long discussion to clarify whether all Advisory Boards want to be a board to Council or a board to administration. A lot of time was spent determining the goal of this meeting. The Facilitator has gone through and created some operational definitions for what a Council committee is and what an administrative committee is. These definitions will be presented to ETSAB at this meeting to make sure everyone is talking about the same things when those words are used. There will be a set of questions to all Advisory Boards to consider and respond to. The ultimate goal is to help ETSAB exist. All Advisory Boards have been asked to select a date for a three or four hour meeting with the Facilitator by the end of November.
  - *Questions/Answers*:
    - Saturday morning seemed to be the consensus. Saturday, November 5th was picked as the best date.
- *Marketing Standing Committee (J. Vandenbeld)*
  - The Marketing group did not meet this month but J. Vandenbeld did send a draft of summary comments from January to September as per the Board's request tailored to TIC. The Marketing group commented on four different initiatives which were circulated to the Board members. This task group received useful comments from the other Board members. In particular, one member commented that it would be beneficial for these comments to go out on behalf of the chair or someone on behalf of ETSAB instead of the Marketing group. J. Vandenbeld is open to redrafting the Marketing group's comments to say that they are on behalf of ETSAB. J. Vandenbeld did speak about the Smart Bus initiative stating that there had been a Smart Bus presentation given to the Marketing group and a second presentation to the full Board this evening. J. Vandenbeld drafted a report outlining these comments as ETSAB's topic of the night incorporating some of the concerns articulated and the overall mood of the Board.

Moved by:	J. Doucette/J. Hayes by fast action to circulate a draft of the Marketing group comments and forward this report to TIC. **CARRIED**	Motion Approved

- *Fare Policy Task Review Group (L. Landry)*
  - The Fare Policy Task group met on October 12, 2011 with J. Davidson from Business Development to go over the modified report going to Council on October 13, 2011. The task group agreed in principle to the policies presented and ETSAB wanted to thank J. Davidson for his efforts in passing this valuable information onto ETSAB. This task group wants to promote Smart Card as this card would be a very good solution to the fare policy structure.
  - M. Makarechian reported ETSAB's comments at the October 13th TIC meeting. M. Makarechian stated there was not substantial response at TIC except comments of appreciation and questions about the business case suggesting that Smart Card is the way to go. There was a lot of energy from the Mayor and Councillors to get moving with Smart Card. Essentially ETSAB's recommendation pointed to the element of the business plan on how the fare structure can be developed by the Smart Card. There were a couple of questions to administration regarding senior fares and doing some research on this fare. The Mayor communicated that Edmonton is supportive of a regional Smart Card. The first motion stated that the Mayor write a letter to the Chair of the Capital Region Board with a copy to the Minister of Transportation indicating Edmonton's desire to proceed with implementation of electronic fare payment in the City and region on an expeditious basis. The second motion stated that administration provide a report to TIC with demographic projections of the impact of an aging population along with the impact of more people working past the age of 65 years as it relates to ridership and fare strategy. ETSAB was very appreciative of being included in this discussion. There was no change in the adult fare during this meeting but it could come up in the budget and the adult fare could be raised to $3.00.

- *LRT Task Group (B. Robertson)*
  - This task group met last Thursday and discussed the Downtown LRT revised concept plan. After discussion it was decided that there would not be anything to comment on. There are a number of LRT reports going to TIC on November 1, 2011. One report that this task group should look at is the LRT Construction Governance Board report which will not be made available to the public until October 27th. The LRT task group has agreed to hold a meeting on October 27th providing this report has not been postponed again and anticipate preparing a comment to TIC.

Moved by:	J. Vandenbeld/J. Hayes that the LRT Task Group prepares a fast action comment for the TIC Meeting on November 1, 2011 on the LRT Construction Governance Board report. **CARRIED**	Motion Approved

  - *Comments/Questions*
    - A discussion followed on whether ETSAB can make a comment to a change that Council may make to an LRT route and its criteria.

- (JH) A new funding model called the Evergreen Line is being put together by the City of Vancouver. J. Hayes commented that the Evergreen Line is funded completely differently but he does not know all the details of the funding. It might be the kind of model that Edmonton could look at for their LRT.

7. INFORMATION SECTION

- *DAG Report (E. Johnston)*
  - The new Transportation Guide from AMA that was sent to DAG was very much appreciated. Thank you very much.
- *ATU 569 Report (S. Litwinowich)*
  - No report.
- *December Meeting (M. Makarechian)*
  - A discussion was opened as to whether the Board should hold a meeting in December.
  - M. Makarechian prefaced the Board members about a conversation he had with Councillor Iveson. In August at TIC Councillor's Breakfast meeting it was discussed that ETSAB may want to consider synchronizing their work cycle with TIC's appointment cycle. ETSAB could have their planning session in mid-October when new Councillors are appointed to TIC and select their work topics synchronized with TIC members. M. Makarechian asked if TIC members would be guests at ETSAB's planning session. Councillor Iveson stated that at this stage October is too late. Councillor Iveson suggested that ETSAB think ahead to the next TIC and talk to the members far in advance and arrange a meeting in mid-October as soon as TIC members have been appointed. However, Councillor Iveson could imagine one or two members of TIC coming to ETSAB's January session in 2012. If the members are interested in that idea, ETSAB can email TIC for no more than two members attending as three members attending would result in an official meeting.
  - D. Nowicki advised the members that one of the challenges of that approach is ETSAB's new members appointed in January will not have any part in the discussion with TIC about electing work topics.
  - J. Vandenbeld thinks it is wise to do planning in January because that allows ETSAB to comment in the spring and summer when ETSAB's issues can actually make it into the budget process. J. Vandenbeld is hesitant on some levels to involve TIC in that because J. Vandenbeld views ETSAB as a public board and not to do TIC's bidding. As a public board, J. Vandenbeld thinks ETSAB would be betraying the trust of citizens of Edmonton.
  - M. Makarechian stated that there has been much discussion about not getting enough direction from TIC which is one of the challenges facing ETSAB. If TIC members were present and to let ETSAB know what is on their minds, ETSAB still retains the right to choose their topics, the members could elect to do that.
  - *Comments*
    - M. Marcotte reminded the members that ETSAB can only speak to TIC and not in front of Council. TIC members given the rules that they work under, there would be no contribution at ETSAB's January retreat because only two TIC members would attend. At the end of the day, ETSAB would still be free to make the decision of what issues to pick from. Administration

also gives us their input, but M. Marcotte sees this as being very positive because the biggest weakness ETSAB has had in the past is lack of input from TIC to anything ETSAB does. B. Marcotte still wonders why ETSAB exists as an advisory committee to TIC when there is nothing that TIC wants ETSAB to advise them on. B. Marcotte stated in his whole career anytime there was a citizen's advisory board created; it generally was in response to something that Council wanted input on or the Minister of Transportation. These TIC members and the four previous TIC members never asked ETSAB for any input.

- ❖ M. Makarechian wants all members to think about this. But a decision needs to be made quickly to extend an invitation to TIC. M. Makarechian polled the members as to their receptiveness to having two TIC members attend ETSAB's January retreat for a limited amount of time. It was decided that M. Makarechian will extend an invitation for two TIC members to attend ETSAB's retreat in January for thirty minutes to one hour of time. B. Marcotte suggested it would be an unofficial invitation and not a written letter from the Chair, just leave it with Councillor Iveson to decide which members would come.
- ❖ J. Hayes recommended that the agenda for January should show the rescheduling for the year following. That would be to decide in January if ETSAB should have an October meeting that mirrors the January one. Perhaps there should be an orientation meeting in January to replace the Saturday session for the new appointees. ETSAB would establish their twelve month work plan in October and be synchronized with TIC and orientate the new appointees in January.
- ❖ It was decided to have a social on December 12th which allows ETSAB to invite the new appointees.

- *Budget Presentation Date* - Thursday, November 17th.

10. TOPIC(S) OF THE NIGHT

- Marketing comments drafted by J. Vandenbeld.

MOVED: by B. Robertson/L. Landry to adjourn the ETSAB Meeting at 20:02 hours. **CARRIED**	Motion Approved

Next meeting: Monday, November 28, 2011 in Heritage Room, City Hall