

# Edmonton LRT Seating Engagement Summary Report

February 2026

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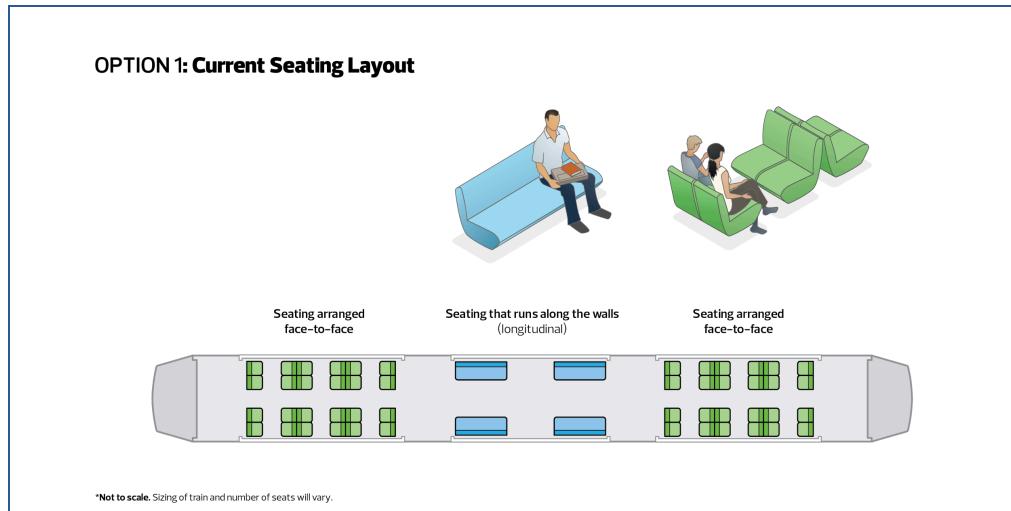
Edmonton

## EDMONTON LRT SEATING: ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

*Proactive fleet renewal helps ensure long-term service reliability. In addition, the LRT line expansion projects approved by City Council will require growth in the LRT fleet in the coming years.*

As part of the 2023-2026 Capital Budget, City Council approved the procurement of up to 53 light rail transit (LRT) trains to replace existing Siemens-Duewag U2 LRT trains which have reached their end of life, and support the growth of the high-floor LRT network. The Siemens-Duewag U2 LRT trains that currently serve the Capital and Metro Lines have been in operation for more than 40 years, and replacing them will enable the continued safety and reliability of LRT service. To help ensure the new LRT trains meet the needs of LRT riders, Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) engaged the public to provide feedback on their needs and preferences.

In March 2024, ETS conducted public engagement to support the decision on the seating layout for the new LRT trains. The public was consulted on three seating options for future LRT trains for the Capital and Metro lines:

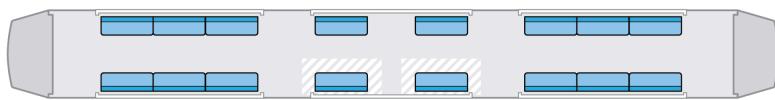


Each of the three layout options being considered by ETS has been used by LRT trains in other major cities.

#### OPTION 2: All Seating Runs Along Wall (Longitudinal)



Seating that runs along the walls (longitudinal)



\*Not to scale. Sizing of train and number of seats will vary.

The **guiding principles** to inform the best LRT seating layout are:

- accessibility
- capacity
- comfort
- safety

#### OPTION 3: Hybrid Seating



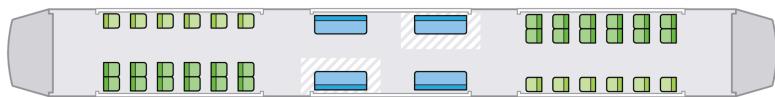
Single seating all facing the middle of the LRT train



Seating that runs along the walls (longitudinal)



Double seating all facing the middle of the LRT train



\*Not to scale. Sizing of train and number of seats will vary.

As part of the LRT seating information package, a description of the layout, advantages and disadvantages for each of the three seating options was provided. An overview of the future LRT trains' accessibility features, such as priority seating, door functionality, on-board announcements and passenger alarms, was also provided.

#### Engagement Approach

Methods	Participation and Outreach
Dedicated Engaged Edmonton webpage	<b>4,386 Surveys completed</b> (3,235 Edmonton Insight Community surveys and 1,151 public surveys)
Commentary opportunities on the Engaged Edmonton webpage	<b>53 comments</b> on Engaged Edmonton using the <i>Ideas</i> function
Survey shared with the public and Edmonton Insight Community members	

Methods	Participation and Outreach
<p>Social media posts on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook</p> <p><b>100</b> QR code posters were advertised in LRT trains and LRT platforms</p> <p><b>100</b> invitations for engagement sessions with stakeholder organizations serving persons with disabilities, families, youth, women, seniors, 2SLGBTQIA+, racialized/visible minorities, newcomers, and people experiencing low income</p> <p>Meetings with Council Advisory Committees</p>	<p><b>4,900</b> Engaged Edmonton page visits</p> <p><b>2</b> Meetings with Council Advisory Committees</p> <p><b>1</b> Stakeholder organization engagement session</p>

**41%** of respondents use public transit frequently (5+ trips per month)

**22%** of respondents use transit occasionally (less than 5 trips per month)

**12%** of respondents did not use the transit in the last three months since completing the survey but were planning to use it in the next three months

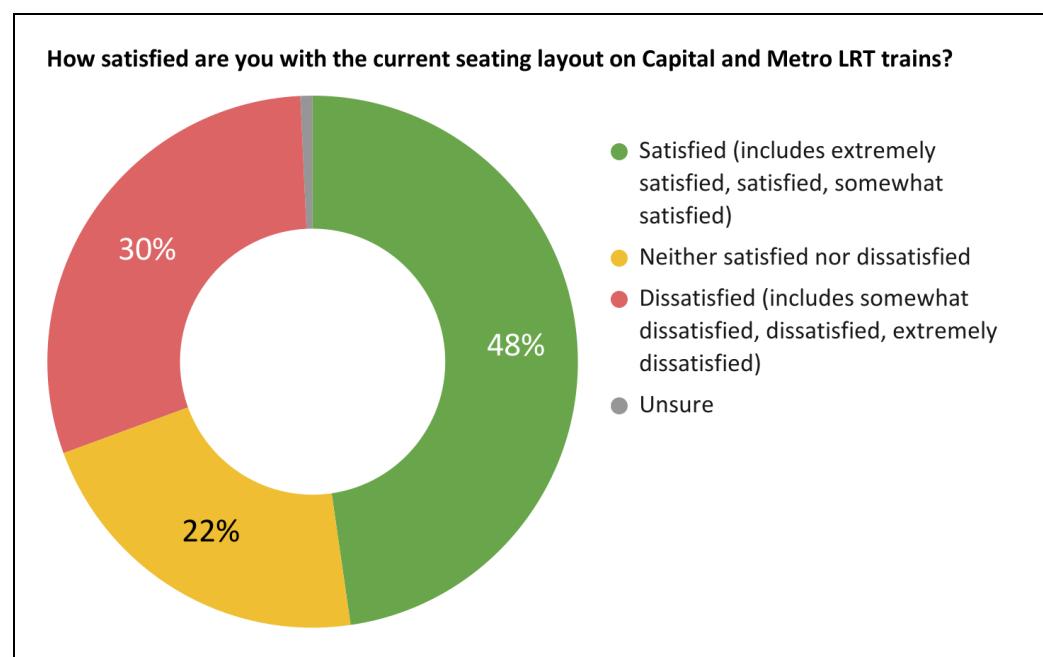
**25%** of respondents did not use the transit in the last three months since completing the survey and were not planning to use transit in the next three months

## What We Heard

We asked transit riders and non-transit riders about their satisfaction with the current LRT seating layout, support and preferences for the LRT seating options.

### Figure 1. Satisfaction with the current seating layout on the Capital/Metro LRT

N=2,576. The question was asked to respondents who indicated they used public transit in the last three months since completing the survey.





*"Being able to sit facing your friends in a group of 3 or 4. Good use of space."*



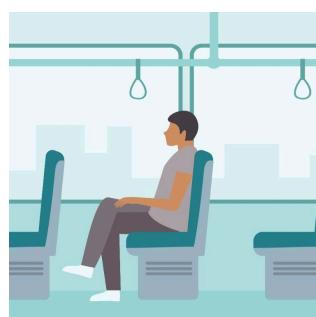
*"As someone with long legs, the seating makes it challenging when the other seats are full."*

**LRT riders were also asked to comment on what they liked or disliked about the current seating layout on the Capital and Metro LRT trains. Over 1,600 comments were shared, with common themes including:**

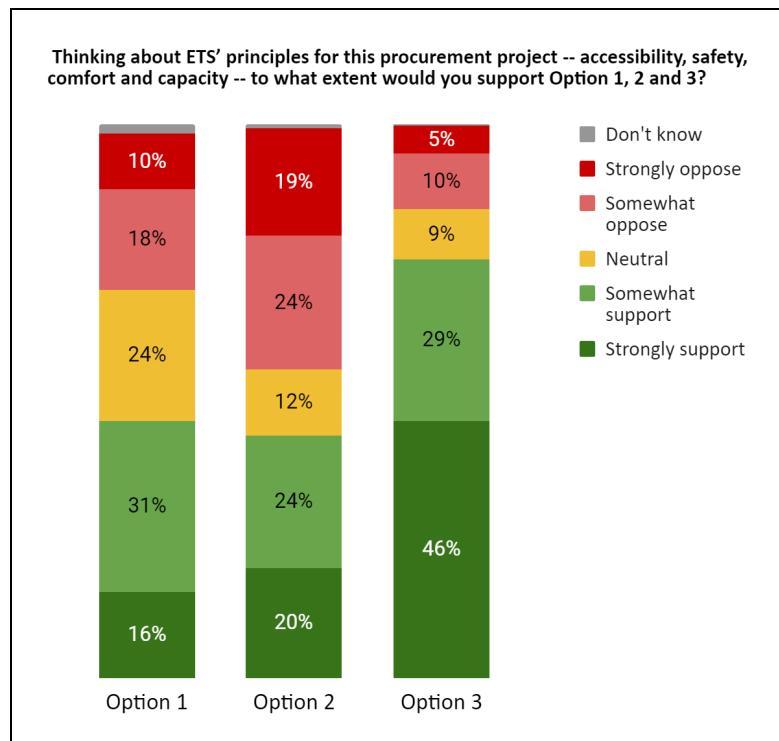
Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Face-to-face seating allows larger groups of riders to sit together and enables social interactions with friends and family.</li> <li>Longitudinal seats in the middle of the LRT train provide a good amount of space for people with bikes, wheelchairs and strollers.</li> <li>Variety of seating options available and the available space.</li> <li>Being able to sit in the direction of travel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feeling uncomfortable sitting face-to-face with other riders.</li> <li>Limited standing capacity can lead to more overcrowding in the standing spaces.</li> <li>Knees colliding and not having enough leg room.</li> <li>Some riders put their feet up on the opposite facing seats.</li> <li>Not enough space for carry-ons like bags, bikes and strollers.</li> <li>Sitting in the opposite direction of travel.</li> </ul>

**Figure 2. Support for LRT seating options**

N=3,307. The question was asked to respondents who indicated they used public transit in the last three months or planned to use the LRT in the next three months since completing the survey.



*75% of respondents who used public transit in the last three months or planned to use the LRT in the next three months since completing the survey supported LRT seating Option 3 (hybrid seating)*

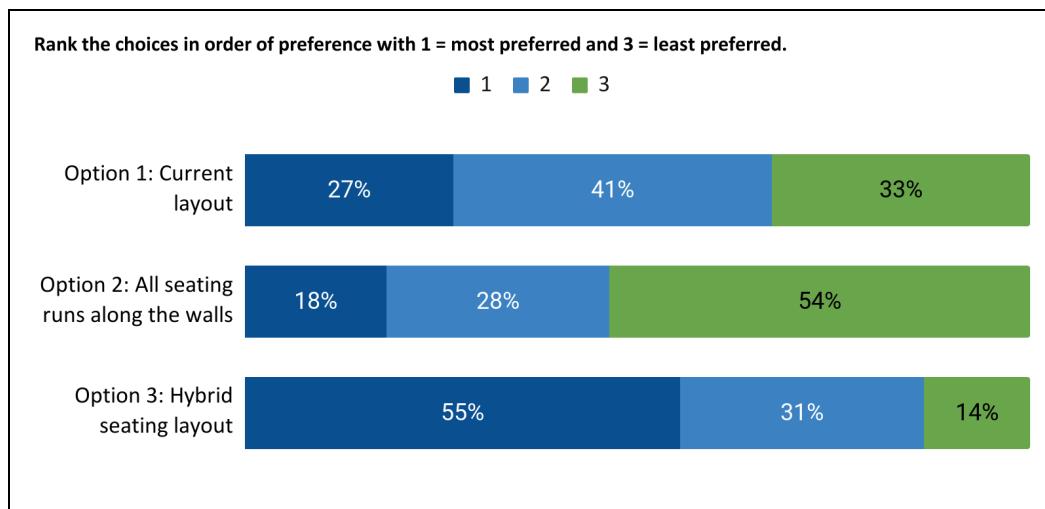




*86% of respondents who used public transit in the last three months or planned to use the LRT in the next three months since completing the survey chose Option 3 (hybrid seating) as their first or second most preferred choice*

### Figure 3. Preference for LRT seating options

N=3,307. The question was asked to respondents who indicated they used public transit in the last three months or planned to use the LRT in the next three months since completing the survey.



**We asked Edmonton Insight Community survey and public survey respondents if they had any feedback on the LRT seating options, which generated nearly 1,500 comments. Additionally, 53 comments were collected through the Engaged Edmonton webpage's Ideas function. The comments were themed into two categories:**

*"Seating should make it easy for people to get up and discourage putting feet on seats. Likewise the longitude seating is not ideal because people will sleep on them."*

#### 1. Feedback on LRT seating layout

- Option 3 seating layout (hybrid seating) may offer increased comfort and privacy for riders, especially those travelling alone.
- Option 3 seating layout offers a single seating option, which is preferred by some solo travellers.
- Option 2 seating (longitudinal) does not have enough seating space for riders with mobility challenges and riders travelling with children.
- Option 2 seating provides a better view of other riders on the train, enhancing feelings of safety.
- Consider partitions between seats if using the Option 2 seating layout to improve comfort and discourage people from lying down on seats.
- Sitting in the opposite direction of travel can cause motion sickness for some riders.
- Consider seating arrangements that are safer for emergency train evacuations.

- Prioritize safety and capacity when considering seating layout options.

## 2. Feedback on LRT trains in general

- Use fabric that is easier to clean while also having a better grip for seating - this was particularly important for those who identified as persons with disabilities and seniors.
- Consider designated spaces for riders who travel on the LRT with their bikes or scooters.
- Provide designated spaces for riders who use mobility aids (e.g. wheelchairs, walkers, or canes) and strollers on transit.



*"I have mobility issues and walk with a cane, which makes balance and standing for extended time is difficult. The more seating the better for people like myself or with walkers."*

## Equity Analysis Summary

An equity analysis was conducted to understand the unique experiences, preferences and feedback of riders from marginalized communities. The analysis was conducted on survey data as well as qualitative feedback from the engagement sessions with stakeholder organizations and Council Advisory Committees.

Survey data showed the majority of respondents across all groups supported Option 3 (hybrid) seating, followed by Option 1 (current layout). While some respondents preferred Option 2 (longitudinal) seating due to more standing capacity, overall, it was the least favoured across all groups. A summary of the unique insights from the comments in the survey by group is provided below:



*"Thinking of differently-abled people getting on and off the LRT is crucial."*

### Persons with disabilities

- Survey respondents who identified as persons with disabilities advocated for accessible handles and rails to hold on to as they are getting on or off the train, seating facing the direction of travel, clearer priority seating guidelines, space for mobility aids (wheelchairs, walkers and canes), accessibility of boarding and exiting the train, and having enough seating capacity.

### Seniors (ages 65 and over)

- Survey respondents who identified as 65 years or older advocated rider etiquette and courtesy signs on trains, space for mobility aids, accessibility in transit, and more seating capacity.



*"Current layout is certainly better for parents with kids so that they can ideally all sit together, and the children can be properly supervised."*

### Riders who are expecting a child, travel with young children and/or use strollers on transit

- Survey respondents in this group emphasized the importance of having space for full-sized strollers, and while most preferred Option 3, some mentioned the benefits of Option 1 (current layout) as being more family-oriented and a better option for parents/guardians to supervise young children.

### Engagement Sessions with Organizations and Council Advisory Committees

Approximately 100 email invitations for engagement sessions were sent to organizations in Edmonton representing accessibility, persons with disabilities, youth, seniors, Indigenous peoples, racialized/visible minorities, newcomers to Canada, lower-income families, 2SLGBTQIA+, and more. A link to the public survey was also shared in the invitation email. One organization - the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) - responded to the invite. The LRT Seating Project team also attended two Council Advisory Committee meetings to collect feedback from the ETS Advisory Board (ETSAB) and Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). Some of the common feedback themes from the sessions included:

#### Seating

- Increase priority seating capacity for riders with mobility challenges.
- Seats facing in one direction can be easier for wayfinding and knowing which direction to board or exit the train.
- Ensure there is space under priority seating areas for guide dogs.
- Use a more grip-friendly seat material as some riders can slip off the seats.
- Option 3 (hybrid) seating was preferred as this allows for more aisle standing capacity, reducing crowding near LRT train doors to enable a smoother boarding and exit experience for riders with mobility challenges.



#### Other

- Prioritize safety-related and stop location audio announcements; too many announcements can result in some riders who depend on them missing their stops.
- Explore ways to improve direction and wayfinding on transit for riders with disabilities, particularly around station/train entrances and exits.
- Consider increasing LRT train door opening timings to improve access for riders using wheelchairs and mobility aids.

## Next Steps

In addition to insights from other LRT systems around the world, the feedback from the public engagement was used to finalize the seating arrangement specifications for the new high-floor LRT trains. The City initiated the procurement process for the design and manufacturing of the high-floor LRT trains in late 2024 with a Request for Qualification, followed by invitations to participate in Request for Proposals in 2025. In January 2026, the contract for the design and manufacturing of 40 high-floor light-rail vehicles was awarded to Hyundai Rotem Company. The new trains will begin to arrive in 2029 and 2030.



## Demographic Data

N=4,386 for all questions (all survey respondents)

Unique needs (more than one selection)	% of Respondents
I use transit with a child (12 years old or under)	10.3%
I often carry a bike on transit	9.9%
I use transit with mobility aid (e.g. wheelchair, walker, crutches, cane etc.)	5.1%
I often use a stroller while on transit	3.8%
I am expecting a child	1.3%
I use transit with a service dog	0.5%
Other	6.5%
None of the above	68.8%
Prefer not to answer	2.1%

Age range	% of Respondents
Under 25	9.7%
25-44	34.2%
45-64	27.6%
65 and over	24.5%

Annual household income (last year)	% of Respondents
Under \$30,000	7.4%
\$30,000 to \$59,999	12.1%
\$60,000 to \$99,999	19.2%
\$100,000 and over	38.8%
Other/Prefer not to answer	22.4%

Gender	% of Respondents
Woman	49.4%
Man	41.9%
Gender minority (includes transgender, non-binary, two spirit and others)	2.6%
Prefer not to answer	6.1%

Identity (more than one selection)	% of Respondents
Persons with disabilities	12.2%
2SLGBTQIA+	12.2%
Racialized/visible minority	11.7%
Born outside of Canada	9.1%
Indigenous	2.5%
New to Canada (less than 5 years)	1.1%

Employment status	% of Respondents
Employed	58.6%
Retired	23.3%
Student	8.1%
Not employed	5.3%
Other/Prefer not to answer	4.7%

Primary transportation mode	% of Respondents
Car/truck/van/motorbike	68.4%
Public Transit	19.6%
Walk/Bike/Scooter/Mobility aid	10.0%
Taxi / Rideshare	0.2%
Other/Prefer not to answer	1.8%

Secondary transportation mode	% of Respondents
Car/truck/van/motorbike	40.3%
Walk/Bike/Scooter/Mobility aid	31.6%
Public Transit	20.0%
Taxi / Rideshare	3.0%
Other/Prefer not to answer	5.1%