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YORK REGION TRANSIT / VIVA 2008 SERVICE PLAN - FINAL REPORT

The Transit Committee recommends the following:

- 1. The presentation by Irene McNeil, Manager, Service Planning, York Region Transit, be received;**
- 2. The recommendation contained in the following report, December 17, 2007, from the General Manager, Transit, be adopted.**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the York Region Transit Annual Service Plan 2008 (*Attachment I*) be received and that the recommendations contained in the Plan be endorsed pending final budget approval.

2. PURPOSE

In September 2007, the *draft* York Region Transit (YRT) Annual Service Plan 2008 was presented to Transit Committee for information. The draft Plan has since been circulated to a variety of stakeholders, including all local municipalities, and comments have now been considered and incorporated into the final Plan.

The main objective of the YRT/VIVA Annual Service Plan 2008 is to improve the quality of transit services in order to attract new customers, thus increasing transit market share. A Five-Year Service Plan was completed in spring 2006, however, the annual review gauges annual service performance, refines services and assists in the development of the annual operating and capital budgets.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Annual Transit Planning Cycle is Based on a Well-Defined and Comprehensive Process

The process included the following stages:

- Individual route performance reviews.
- Needs identification (based on preliminary data and feedback).
- System ridership and financial performance review (based on approved standards).
- Development of draft proposals.
- Stakeholder consultation process.

- Final recommendations.

3.2 In 2007, the YRT/Viva System Operated Over 100 Routes and Carried Over 18 Million Revenue Passenger Trips

Route categories consist of:

- Viva BRT routes.
- YRT core/base routes (major arterial corridors including TTC routes).
- Local routes (local neighbourhoods).
- Express routes (Hwys. 407 & 400).
- High school specials.
- GO shuttles.
- Community Bus routes (operating in Markham, Richmond Hill and Newmarket).

Preliminary data indicates that, by the end of 2007, the system will have carried over 18 million revenue passenger trips, an impressive increase of about 8% over the previous year.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 The Annual Service Review is an Inclusive, Proactive and Comprehensive Process

YRT staff have considered comments from customers, residents, local municipal staff and Councils, business groups (including Transportation Management Associations), school boards, internal YRT Customer Service and Operations staff, and adjacent transit agencies.

4.2 Stakeholder Comments Have Been Received

Following the presentation of the Draft Plan in September 2007 to Regional Council, it was circulated to over 20 stakeholder groups, as well as posted on the YRT website. The following is a summary of the comments received:

- Town of Newmarket: Improved weekend service frequency in the Mulock Drive corridor (Route 57); possible reduction of midday service frequencies on local routes.
- Town of East Gwillimbury: Dial-a-Ride service be considered for Routes 58/58A and 52 (Sharon, Mount Albert and Holland Landing) and Saturday service be considered in 2009.
- Town of Richmond Hill: Review of Oak Ridges services, including a public meeting; partner with YRT during Beaver Creek service restructuring; future Viva stations at Chalmers & Hwy. 7, Yonge & Jefferson, Yonge & Regatta (Oak Ridges); consideration of seniors' needs for Hillcrest Mall (Route 86).
- Town of Georgina: Improve service frequency with GO Transit fare integration (Route 69); service to Keswick Gardens (Seniors' facility on The Queensway); connection to future commuter lot in Keswick and East Gwillimbury GO station.

- Town of Aurora: Request that Route 31 reduction occur in January instead of April 2008; reconsideration of cancellation of Industrial Parkway (Route 34).
- Aurora Chamber of Commerce: Oppose cancellation of Industrial Parkway (Route 34).
- Town of Markham: Informal comments received regarding support for extension of Milliken Route 2 east of Hwy. 48; improved connections to Milliken GO station; improved frequency and extend service span after 11 pm on Route 224D Woodbine/Victoria Park.
- Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville: Service levels on Hoover Park & Millard; needs assessment for Hwy 404/Gormley business/industrial area; Main Street reconstruction and affect on transit services.
- York Region Student Transportation Services (STS): Several high schools were identified as candidates for a decrease in yellow school bussing next year. YRT and Student Transportation Services staff are working closely to identify potential capacity issues and need for additional school specials.
- TTC: Support in principle for all improvements in TTC-operated corridors.
- GO Transit: Review of Yonge Street corridor to balance demand and service levels between Yonge B service and YRT Route 98; support Highway 7 corridor review between Brampton and Finch subway to improve service reliability and provide more targeted customer service; review rural services (Bolton, Nobleton, Kleinburg, Georgina) with the intent to transfer local services from GO to YRT.
- Smart Commute - North Toronto, Vaughan: Extension of Route 27 to Vaughan Enterprise Zone; support early introduction of service to new development areas, support new Community Bus for Vaughan; need for park & ride facilities along Viva corridors; re-instatement of GO shuttle to Rutherford station; fare integration between YRT and TTC to eliminate double fare; expansion of Volume Incentive Program for monthly passes; introduction of York University and Seneca College student discounts or U-Pass program.
- General: Extension of Bayview service from Richmond Hill to Newmarket (Route 91 & 54); expanded use of Dial-a-Ride to low demand areas and specific locations (e.g. Leeder Transitional Housing – Yonge St.); improved service frequency and span of service on all core/base arterial routes (eg. Bathurst, 16th Ave., Woodbine).

The evaluation process considered the effectiveness of not only the individual routes, but more importantly, the system as a whole. Consideration was given to the financial efficiency (revenue/cost ratio) of each route, effectiveness in terms of passengers carried and route/network connectivity, service area coverage and ability to meet demand within prescribed service standards.

All of the above comments have been given due consideration and the final recommendations reflect their evaluation in the context of approved service standards and budget.

4.3 Relationship to Vision 2026

The primary goal of an annual service plan is to ensure the transit system's goals and objectives are aligned with the predetermined longer range strategic plan. YRT's mandate also includes a major role in contributing to an increase in the Region's morning peak hour modal share from eight to 12 percent during the same period.

Vision 2026 includes a goal statement relating to the development of 'Infrastructure for a Growing Region', which states: "*In 2026, York Region will have effective, efficient and environmentally sensitive transportation, waste management and water systems.*"

To support this goal, the Region has identified specific action areas. The following action areas have been considered for this report:

- Continuing to improve service and infrastructure for a successfully integrated transit service.
- Developing a variety or family of complementary transit services to meet the needs of our customer markets and communities.
- Promoting transit usage as a practical and wise alternative to private vehicle use.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

During the budget review process, the 2008 YRT/Viva Plan will be reviewed and final recommendations approved for implementation in 2008. The total estimated gross cost of all service improvements in the Annual Service Plan 2008 is approximately \$4.3 million (see Section 10 – Summary of Recommendations), with associated revenues estimated to be \$1.35 million, for a net cost of \$2.97 million. The proposed services represent about 5% of total 2008 direct transit operating costs.

Attachment 1 is the final YRT/Viva Annual Service Plan 2008. In section 10 of the Plan, individual service initiatives are identified.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The YRT/Viva Annual Service Plan 2008 recommends a number of route-specific improvements. These can be summarized as follows:

- Viva purple extension to Cornell (east Markham).
- Service to new subdivisions in Richmond Hill, Markham, Vaughan, Newmarket, Stouffville (e.g. Inspiration subdivision at Yonge/Jefferson/Stouffville/Bathurst – Richmond Hill; Bridlewalk – Markham; Upper Thornhill Village, Dufferin Woods and Vellore Park – Vaughan; Woodspring and Aspenwood – Newmarket; Lebovic - Stouffville).
- Corridor improvements (e.g. Bathurst, Leslie, Dufferin, Weston, Rutherford/16th, Woodbine, Highway 27, Markham Road, Major Mackenzie, etc).

7. CONCLUSION

For the 2008 operating year, the estimated growth-related service initiatives amount to approximately 51,500 revenue hours of service (including expanded coverage, frequency and span of service). The proposed service hour increases will address the following issues:

- Current schedule adherence and overcrowding.
- Residential subdivisions currently without service.
- Existing latent demand (based on outstanding service requests/petitions).
- Major trip generators currently without service or minimal service.
- A focus on improved efficiency including alternate service delivery models (e.g. Dial-a-Ride and reduction in off-peak service levels on lower demand local routes (e.g. Sunday service).

The recommendations contained in the 2008 Plan provide a basis for budget tracking and ensure that the delivery of transit services is consistent with the longer range strategic direction adopted in the latest Five-Year Service Plan (2006-2010).

For more information on this report, contact Irene McNeil, Manager, Service Planning (ext. 5628), of the Transit Branch of the Transportation Services Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause was included in the agenda for the January 17, 2008 Transit Committee meeting).