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## **IT'S FULL SPEED AHEAD FOR RAPID TRANSIT IN YORK REGION** ***\$150 Million Investment Boosts Transit Expansion***

**NEWMARKET** — The governments of Canada, Ontario, and York Region have signed formal agreements to each invest \$50 million to launch the initial phase of York Region's rapid transit network, which will provide fast, reliable and comfortable bus rapid transit to commuters in York Region.

"This is a great day for York Region commuters and the GTA," said the Honourable Joe Volpe, Minister Responsible for Ontario and Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development. "The federal government's investment in regional transit supports our commitment to communities."

"We are helping to build a quality of life in the GTA that is the envy of other cities around the world," said the Honourable John McCallum, Minister of Veterans Affairs. "Together, we are working to deliver important change."

"Quick Start" is a three-year plan that will launch the development of a rapid transit network throughout York Region. The rapid transit network will be developed over the next 20 years, and will link the urban centres of Markham, Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Newmarket along four major corridors, including Highway 7 and Yonge Street. It will also link York Region to the Yonge, Spadina and Shepherd TTC subway lines, with the Unionville, Finch and Langstaff GO Transit stations, and make connections to the Regions of Peel and Durham.

"Our government is pleased to invest in Quick Start because it will support the reduction of gridlock and promote public transit as a safe, efficient means of travel," said the Honourable Harinder Takhar, Ontario Minister of Transportation. "Improving transit is one of our priorities, because it helps build safe, strong communities that contribute to a higher quality of life."

Quick Start will provide modern buses that are fast, reliable and comfortable, and transit stops conveniently located every 1-2 km. By using the latest technology, passengers will be able to pre-purchase tickets from automated fare machines and get real time arrival information from displays at every stop.

"This is the beginning of a new era of public transit in York Region," said York Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch. "Rapid transit now becomes a reality, and that's due to the cooperative approach by all three levels of government. In order to tackle the tremendous growth we have

and continue to experience throughout the Region, it's crucial to have the financial support of Queen's Park and Ottawa.”

Construction on Quick Start is scheduled to begin in May 2004 with implementation beginning in the fall of 2005. Details of the project include:

- Vehicles: 22 18-metre buses and 55 12-metre buses;
- Facilities: new terminals and stops;
- Intersection improvements: bus bays and queue jump lanes;
- ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems): transit signal priority and off-board fare collection.

When fully implemented in 2006, Quick Start is expected to produce a 30 per cent increase in transit ridership in York Region — moving 7,000 cars a day off the road network.

The Government of Canada is providing its contribution from the *Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund* and the Government of Ontario's contribution is from its transit expansion funding program aimed at building safe and strong communities.

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