



York Region

# **Alliance to End HOMELESSNESS**

**Transportation Working Group**

## **Highlights of a Community- Based Transportation Initiative**

Report to York Region Transit Committee – June 18, 2009

# Context



- **Homelessness Partnering Initiative Grant**
  - Federal funding administered by York Region
  - Transportation a Priority in the York Region Community Plan to Address Homelessness (2008)
- **\$65,000 awarded to YRAEH**
  - \$38,550 allocated to direct support
- **Contract Requirements**
  - Increase transportation access of 500 clients to services and supports
  - Inventory of existing transportation supports
  - 2 new sustainable transportation options

# Working Group



Inn From the Cold Inc.



# Process

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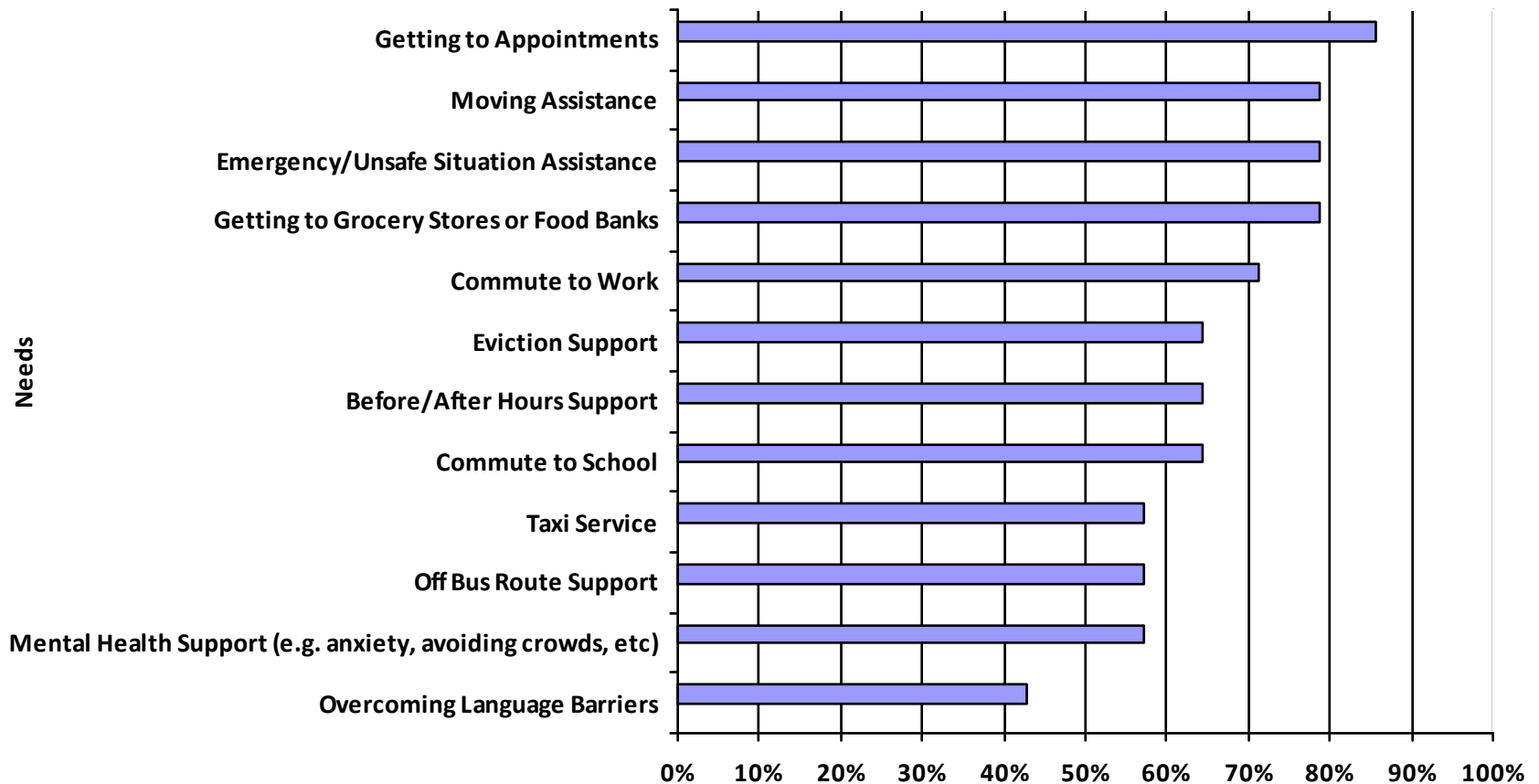
- **Transportation Working Group**
  - 12 organizations represented
- **Needs Assessment**
  - 14 Agency Surveys, 9 Community Group Surveys, 8 Focus Groups
  - Priorities: Housing, Education, Employment
- **\$38,550 allocated**
  - 10 agency recipients

# Needs Assessment



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## Proportion of Agencies Who Identified Specific Transportation Needs:

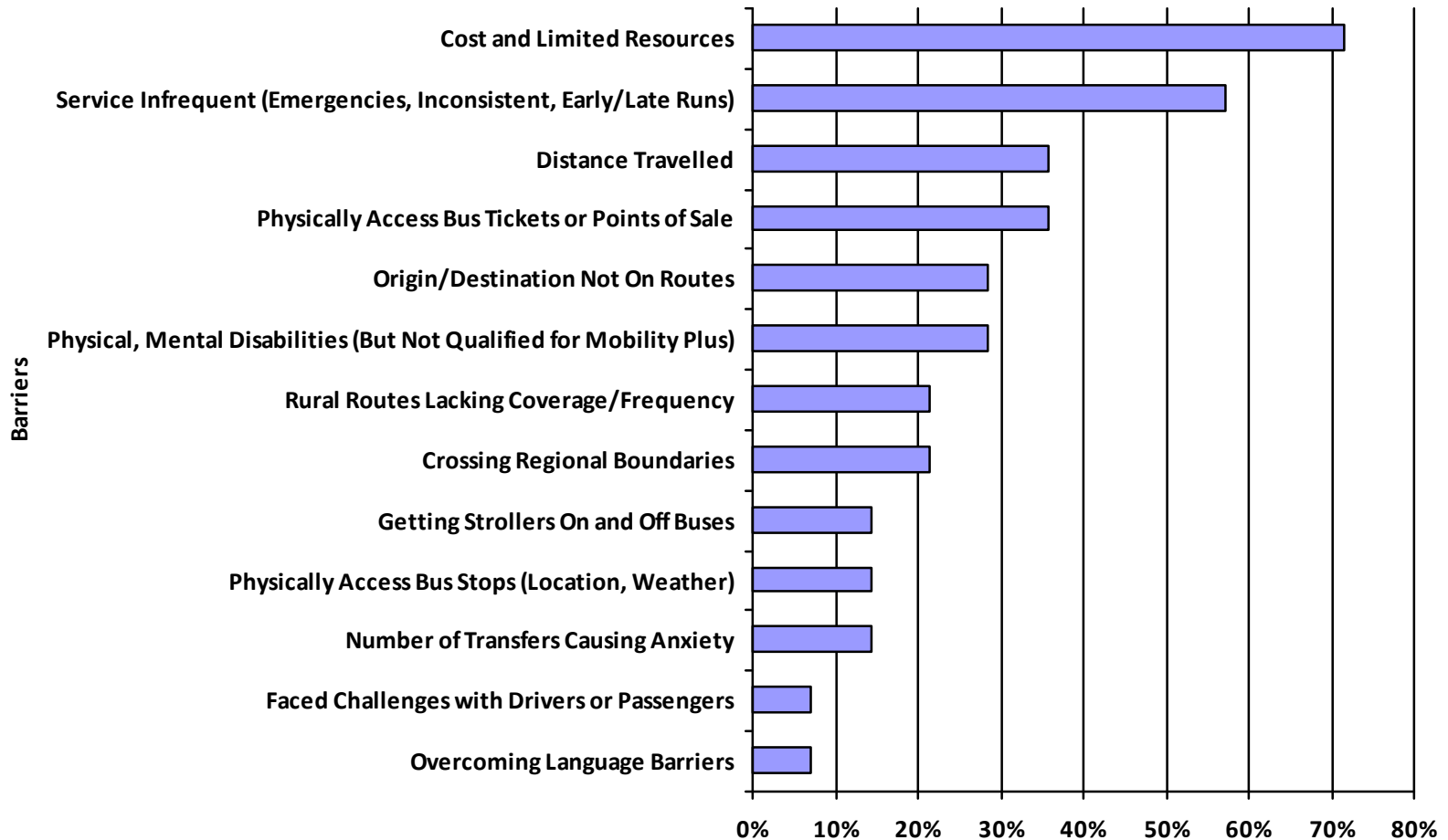


# Needs Assessment



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## Proportion of Agencies Who Identified Specific Transportation Barriers:



# Needs Assessment



## Focus Group Themes

### Priority Needs

Housing Search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commuting with children is challenging and costly</li></ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Infrequency of buses in north discouraged youth from attending school if a bus is missed</li></ul>
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cost of transportation difficult before receiving first pay cheque</li></ul>
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If discharged from hospital after 10pm, youth cannot commute from Newmarket back to Sutton</li></ul>

### Main Barriers

Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transportation money is often used for essentials like food, shelter, and clothing</li></ul>
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Walking down a long, soft-shouldered, gravel highway to access the nearest bus stop</li></ul>
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Walking long distance in hazardous conditions because buses infrequent or destination is off-route</li></ul>

# Recipient Agencies



Organization Type	Agency Name
Emergency and Transitional Shelter	Blue Door Shelters (Men, Family, Youth) Sutton Youth Shelter
Emergency Winter Shelter	Inn from the Cold Mosaic Interfaith Out of the Cold
Legal Support – Eviction Prevention	Community Legal Clinic of York Region
Support for Young Mothers	Rose of Sharon
Violence Against Women Shelter	Sandgate Women’s Shelter Yellow Brick House
Volunteer Driver Service	Transit Georgina
Youth Drop-In, Residential Support, Aftercare	Pathways for Children, Youth, and Families

# Results

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- **\$38,550 allocated to direct support**
  - 10 agency recipients
  - Focus on shelters and key drop-ins
  - Purchased YRT/Viva tickets, transit passes, mileage, taxis, moving support, 407/ETR fees
- **3132 rides provided**
  - 2145 males, 1026 females
- **Key Partnerships formed**

# Key Partnerships

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- YRT/Viva
  - York Region Alliance to End Homelessness
  - Transportation Working Group Member Agencies
- Increased Agency Collaboration

# YRT/Viva Partnership with the Alliance



- **Transportation Working Group**
  - Regular attending staff member
  - Response to Needs Assessment wish list
  - Notification of the YRT Community-Based Social Services Discount Pilot Program (15% discount to 12 programs)
- **myRide training offered to social service agencies**
  - Equipped staff to educate clients about local transit



# YRT/Viva Partnership with Member Agencies



- Bus Stops at Emergency and Transitional Shelters
  - New bus stops at shelters
  - Upgrading bus stops at shelters
- Blue Door Shelters Dial-a-Ride Pilot
  - Previously a 2 km walk on Hwy 11 to the nearest stop
  - Residents can access transportation on weekends

# Agency Collaboration



- Sandgate Women's Shelter and Transit Georgina
  - Created a partnership between neighbours
  - Children able to continue attending same schools
  - Women could more affordably attend school, search for jobs, and seek housing
  - Support for women when moving

# The Future

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- Homelessness Partnering Initiative (2)
  - Funding has been approved to extend this pilot for an additional 12 months ending June 2010
  - Beyond June 2010
    - No resources to sustain this critical initiative

# Request for Involvement



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- **YRT Community-Based Social Services Discount Pilot Program**
  - 15% Discount Pilot ending this year
- **Consideration of Best Practices**
  - Calgary: 50% subsidized (\$41.50 vs. \$83.00)
  - Regina: 73% subsidized (\$15.00 vs. \$57.00)
  - Saskatoon: 71% subsidized (\$20.00 vs. \$68.00)
  - Ottawa: 62% subsidized (\$30.40 vs. \$81.00)

# York Region Sustainability Strategy

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Ensure that all residents and employees, including new immigrants, the elderly, young people, and the disabled have barrier-free, accessible and affordable transportation.

- Action Item Under “Healthy Communities”