



May 7, 2004

## YORK RAPID TRANSIT BACKGROUNDER

### York Rapid Transit

The York Rapid Transit Plan is a progressive three-phase approach to providing rapid transit services over a 20-year period. It proposes to link Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan along four key transportation corridors (Yonge Street, Highway 7, Markham North-South Link and Vaughan North-South Link). Once completed, the plan is expected to help reduce travel times by 25% - 40% during peak periods.

### Phase 1 – Quick Start (Funding confirmed today)

The Quick Start phase is designed to provide early benefits to a region where over 25% of major regional arteries are plagued by gridlock during much of the day. Most people commuting to or within York Region rely on the private automobile as the primary mode of transportation, while less than 8% of peak period trips are made on public transit.

Quick Start will provide modern buses that are fast, reliable and comfortable, and conveniently located transit stops 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.

York Region's rapid transit system will provide for connections to the Regions of Peel and Durham, and to the Toronto Transit Commission's Yonge, Spadina and Shepherd subway lines.

When fully implemented, Quick Start is expected to help increase all-mode transit by 30% in the affected corridors, moving 7,000 cars a day off the major arteries.

The Government of Canada is contributing \$50 million to Quick Start under the *Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund (CSIF)*, and the Government of Ontario is providing \$50 million from its transit expansion funding program.

The funding for Quick Start includes:

- \$54 million for vehicles and related expenses
- \$38 million for transit stops and terminals
- \$41 million for the Intelligent Transportation Systems and roadwork
- \$17 million for engineering and project management

York Region is also investing an additional \$14.4 million for land and project development costs.

Crews from Bell Canada, Enbridge Gas, and local cable and hydro companies are currently working to relocate some of their lines. The utilities are expected to finish this work in May before construction on the rapid transit system begins.

## **Phase 2**

Phase 2 of York Region's rapid transit plan includes the construction of a full Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System by 2011. Dedicated transit lanes would be built, separating the rapid transit vehicles from mixed traffic. This will allow them to move quickly and reliably, any time of the day or night, in any type of weather. This phase also calls for larger, more elaborate terminals, with a variety of services and new park-and-ride facilities.

All major BRT facilities and systems being contemplated for Phase 2 will be planned and designed from the beginning to allow for conversion to light rail transit when there is a justification to do so.

## **Phase 3**

In Phase 3, Light Rail Transit (LRT) and subway extensions could be built and/or Bus Rapid Transit could be expanded. A decision to proceed will be based on a major review of the York Rapid Transit Plan and system performance in 2009.

## **The Urban Renaissance of York Region**

Rapid transit will allow for more strategic planning and the development of intensive-mixed use communities. Emerging policies dealing with York Region's centres and corridors will promote sustainable development and protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as the Oak Ridges Moraine. Sustainable development and further investment in public transit go hand-in-hand. Rapid transit will serve as a cornerstone of the Region's growth strategy.

## **Public-Private Partnership**

York Region decided to enter into a unique public-private partnership (P3) to speed implementation of its proposed rapid transit network. In 2002, following a worldwide competition, an agreement was signed by York Regional Council and York Consortium 2002. This is the first P3 in Canada for a rapid transit project of this magnitude and there are a variety of benefits. York Region will retain control of all the assets, including the vehicles and the terminals, as well as control of public policy, including the determination of fares.

## **Sources of Federal Funding**

Through the \$4-billion Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund (CSIF), the Government of Canada works with provincial, territorial and municipal governments, as well as with the private sector, to meet strategic infrastructure needs throughout the country. The CSIF supports large-scale strategic infrastructure projects that improve quality of life and further sustainable economic growth. The fund also supports the Government of Canada's "New Deal for Communities", through which it wants to become a world leader in developing vibrant, creative and prosperous cities and communities. Since 1994, the Government of Canada has committed \$12 billion to over 20,000 infrastructure projects in Canada's communities. This will leverage over \$30 billion from all partners.

## **Sources of Provincial Funding**

The McGuinty Government is following through on its commitment to improve transit in the Greater Toronto Area by providing funding to York Region's "Quick Start" program. The strength of York Region depends on an efficient, effective public transit system. The McGuinty Government is making strategic investments in transportation infrastructure to increase public transit ridership, reduce commute times and emissions, and make a real difference in building strong and safe communities.

## **Vehicle Purchase**

Van Hool NV of Belgium has been selected to build rapid transit vehicles for the initial "Quick Start" phase of York Region's rapid transit network. These latest state-of-the-art rapid transit vehicles are distinctive and passenger friendly. They are quiet, with a modern, comfortable interior, and low emissions. Van Hool has agreed to supply 55, 12.2 metre vehicles, and 22, 18 metre vehicles. The cost of the vehicles, including related expenses, will total \$54 million.

An exhaustive worldwide vehicle procurement process was developed collaboratively by members of York Regional Council, Regional staff and the York Consortium. The evaluation team was determined to acquire a vehicle that was high quality, yet distinctive. They studied all vehicle aspects, including exterior and interior design, emission levels, performance and the purchase price.

To ensure fairness and impartiality, an independent auditor from Price Waterhouse Coopers was appointed to oversee the process from start to finish. York Regional Council approved the decision to purchase the vehicles from Van Hool.

Van Hool is a family-owned company located in Lier-Koningshooikt (near Antwerp) Belgium. It has a worldwide reputation for quality and service. The company has been building transit buses and highway coaches for over 50 years, exporting 85 per cent to cities around the world including Montreal and Oakland, California. They follow rigorous engineering, design and testing procedures to ensure durability and long life.

For more information contact:

Mary Johnson  
Office of the Minister of State (Infrastructure),  
Ottawa  
(613) 952-1684

Danna O'Brien  
Office of the Ontario Transportation Minister  
(416) 327-1815

Patrick Casey  
Acting Director, Corporate Communications  
The Regional Municipality of York  
(905) 830-4444 ext. 1235

Bob Nichols  
Communications Branch  
Ontario Ministry of Transportation  
(416) 327-1158

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