

Clause 6 in Report No. 5 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on March 26, 2015.

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YRT Dial-a-Ride Transit Service –
Proposed Contract Extension

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendations contained in the report dated February 19, 2015 from the Commissioner of Transportation Services:

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Council authorize an extension of the contract between the Region and Care Accessible Transportation for the provision of services and accessible low-floor vehicles and sedans for the YRT Dial-a-Ride Service.
2. The contract be extended for a period of two years and three months to July 31, 2017, in the estimated amount of \$942,968, on the same terms and conditions as the current contract, and to align this term with the expiry of the Mobility Plus service contract.
3. The Commissioner of Transportation Services be authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the Region.

2. Purpose

This report seeks authorization to extend the contract between the Region and Care Accessible Transportation for operation of YRT Dial-a-Ride (Dial-a-Ride) service for a period of two years and three months to July 31, 2017. This report is submitted to Council because the Purchasing Bylaw requires Council approval for extensions of contracts where the aggregate term will be greater than five years.

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3. Background

In May 2008, Council authorized, following a competitive bid process, a contract award to Care Accessible for the operation of Dial-a-Ride service for a three-year period starting in 2010

Dial-a-Ride is a demand-responsive transit service designed to provide local transit service within a community on designated routes with relatively low transit ridership. Customers call a central number and request a pick-up from their nearest bus stop. A dispatcher arranges for an accessible van or sedan to pick-up customers within a specified time frame, and drops them off at a bus stop on the designated route where regular conventional bus service operates. Conventional buses operate the designated route during periods of heavy travel and Dial-a-Ride operates on the route when ridership is lower and can be accommodated in a smaller vehicle.

Council, at its January 2013 meeting, authorized staff to exercise the option to extend the contract for an additional two-year period. The contract is scheduled to expire on April 25, 2015.

Currently, Dial-a-Ride operates during the off-peak period on the following routes:

- Route 10 – Woodbridge
- Route 31 – Aurora North
- Route 32 – Aurora South
- Route 40 – Unionville Local
- Route 41 – Markham Local
- Route 44 – Bristol
- Route 52 – Holland Landing
- Route 58 – Mount Albert
- Route 84 – Oak Ridges

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Dial-a-Ride service operating costs are approximately one-half the cost of conventional transit service

The Dial-a-Ride service model offers a cost-reduced method of providing transit by using an accessible van instead of a conventional bus to provide service to customers in low ridership areas. The hourly billable rate to provide Dial-a-Ride service is less than one-half the cost of conventional transit services. The average hourly cost to operate Dial-a-Ride is \$40.15 as compared to \$91.00 for conventional transit service. Additionally, Dial-a-Ride service provides savings in fuel consumption and improves the efficiency of operating transit service.

The proposed contract extension is required to allow time to pilot the new Dial-a-Ride service and permit the existing Dial-a-Ride service to continue operation

In order to implement and evaluate a pilot on an improved version of Dial-a-Ride, it will be necessary to extend the contract term to enable routes not involved with the pilot to continue the service. The proposed contract extension for the existing Dial-a-Ride service will also align the expiry date with the Mobility Plus service contract which will operate the pilot Dial-a-Ride service. The intent of the pilot is to improve vehicle productivity and enhance the service while reducing costs. This is accomplished by using Mobility Plus vehicles when ridership is low and combining this to operate the Dial-a-Ride service.

4. Analysis and Options

The Proposed Dial-a-Ride pilot project can achieve enhanced customer service and productivity improvements in addition to potential cost savings

A new Dial-a-Ride service delivery model was recently implemented on two existing Dial-a-Ride routes (Route 32 in Aurora and Route 84 in Richmond Hill).

The first phase of the pilot project commenced on February 2, 2015 during off-peak periods. Rather than using a dedicated Dial-a-Ride vehicle, the service utilized existing Mobility Plus sedans and vans. These vehicles will serve both Dial-A-Ride and Mobility Plus customer ride requests in that area. Based on analysis, this will reduce the number of vehicles required to provide service to this area and is expected to reduce operating costs by combining two services into one mixed-use service. There is also an environmental benefit as overall fuel consumption should be reduced with the planned improvement in vehicle productivity.

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Regular conventional buses operate on the routes during morning and afternoon rush hours when additional vehicle capacity is needed to accommodate higher ridership.

During the period of Dial-a-Ride operation, customers continue to call in to book a ride request as they do under the current Dial-a-Ride model. Customer service is improved as multiple trips can be booked in advance through one phone call. Ride requests will be managed by Mobility Plus staff using the new scheduling software to optimize trip requests for both the Dial-a-Ride pilot project and existing Mobility Plus service.

The second phase of the pilot project will provide opportunities for customers to get transit service closer to their destination

The second phase of the pilot project is scheduled to commence in the fall of 2015 and is subject to success of the first phase. The second phase improves service delivery on Routes 32 and 84 by allowing customers to be picked up and dropped off at any bus stop within a defined geographic area rather than only at an existing bus stop along the assigned route. This phase is scheduled to be completed by the fall of 2016.

Attachment 1 depicts maps of the two transit routes that will be used in the pilot project.

During the pilot project, the current Dial-a-Ride service will continue to operate on Routes 10, 31, 40, 41, 44, 52, and 58.

It is recommended that the existing Dial-a-Ride contract be extended to continue transit service during the pilot project phase and align contract expiry dates

The pilot project will be operated by the Mobility Plus service contractor as Mobility Plus vehicles will be utilized. The current Mobility Plus operating contract was amended to include a scope change to include the Dial-a-Ride pilot project. The contract expires on July 31, 2017.

The proposed Dial-a-Ride pilot project requires time for testing and evaluation. If the pilot is successful as planned, the intent is to combine the service delivery of Dial-a-Ride pilot project service and the existing Mobility Plus service. A competitive bid process would be used to secure a contractor to operate this combined service.

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Extending the current Dial-a-Ride contract to July 31, 2017 will allow existing Dial-a-Ride service on routes not involved in the pilot project. As well, this will align the contract expiry dates for both the existing Dial-a-Ride service with the Mobility Plus service contracts.

Additional routes are planned to be added to the new service model for Dial-a-Ride should the pilot be successful

Subject to the review and findings of the pilot project, all the other existing Dial-a-Ride routes would be considered as candidates for the new service delivery model. This includes the seven routes currently operating in Newmarket, Aurora, Markham and Vaughan. Other potential routes will also be assessed.

Link to key Council-approved plans

Vision 2051

Vision 2015 speaks to prioritizing alternative modes of travel for active transportation. The Dial-a-Ride pilot is designed to address this initiative in a cost-effective manner.

2015-2019 Five Year York Region Strategic Plan

The Dial-a-Ride pilot supports the Strategic Plan by optimizing the transportation capacity in the Aurora and Richmond Hill area while conserving resources.

York Region Transit Five Year Service Plan

The YRT/Viva Five Year Transit Service and Operational Plan (2011-2015) identifies the Dial-a-Ride service as part of the family of services offered by YRT/Viva.

5. Financial Implications

The estimated cost to operate the existing Dial-a-Ride service for an additional two years and three months is \$942,968, excluding taxes, based on project service hours.

The current hourly rate of \$40.15 has been used as a baseline to estimate future year contract costs. The terms of the existing contract indicate that the rate will be increased by an amount equal to Statistics Canada's April year-over-year cumulative Consumer Price Index rate or 2.5 per cent, whichever is higher.

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Table 1 provides summary of the estimated costs for the proposed two years and three month extension of the Dial-a-Ride contract to July 31, 2017. The contractor has agreed to hold the rate for the last three months of the contract.

Table 1
Annual Costs – Proposed Contract Extension

Contract Year	Hourly Rate	Estimated Billable Hours	Annual Cost
April 2015 to April 2016	\$41.15	10,000	\$411,500
April 2016 to April 2017	42.18	10,000	421,800
April 2017 to July 2017	42.18	2,600	109,668
Total for Contract Extension			\$942,968

Approximately \$75,000 in annual savings is anticipated by combining Dial-a-Ride service and Mobility Plus service on two routes

Analysis indicates that productivity improvements can be realized by combining the Dial-a-Ride and Mobility Plus services. These efficiencies will reduce current operating costs on the two routes by approximately \$75,000 per year.

Fuel to operate the service is supplied by the contractor and is included in the hourly rate. There are provisions in the contract which require the Region to pay the contractor a fuel surcharge or reimburse the Region, depending on the average 30-day gasoline fuel price. These costs are already built into the annual cost estimate.

Sufficient funds have been allocated in the proposed 2015 operating budget to fund the contract extension.

6. Local Municipal Impact

An extension of the Dial-a-Ride operations contract with Care Accessible will provide the opportunity to implement a pilot project on a new type of Dial-a-Ride transit service. This will ensure uninterrupted transit service to York Region residents in low ridership and low density suburban/rural areas, and provide the opportunity to make improvements to the YRT/Viva system should the pilot be successful.

7. Conclusion

It is recommended that the Care Accessible contract with the Region for Dial-a-Ride services be extended for a period of two years and three months to July 31, 2017. The additional term will allow for a full assessment of the enhanced Dial-a-Ride pilot project, align expiry date of the Mobility Plus service contract and develop the specifications for a new, competitive procurement document, should it be successful.

For more information on this report, please contact Ann-Marie Carroll, General Manager, York Region Transit at Ext. 75677 or Rick Takagi, Director, Transit Operations at Ext. 75624.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

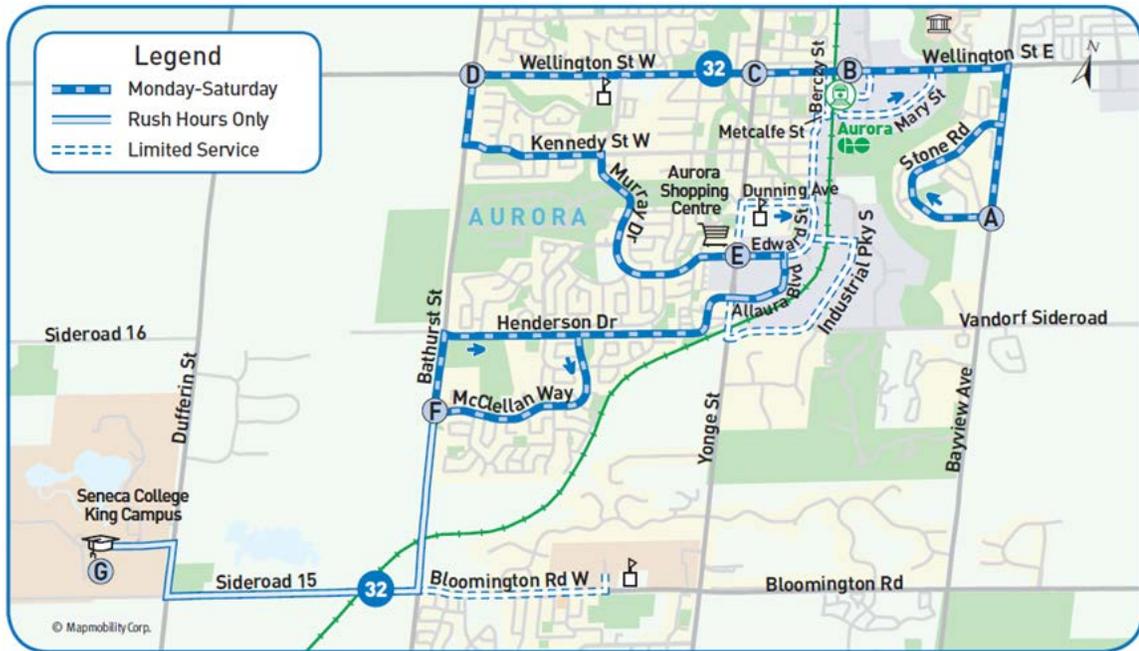
Attachments (1)

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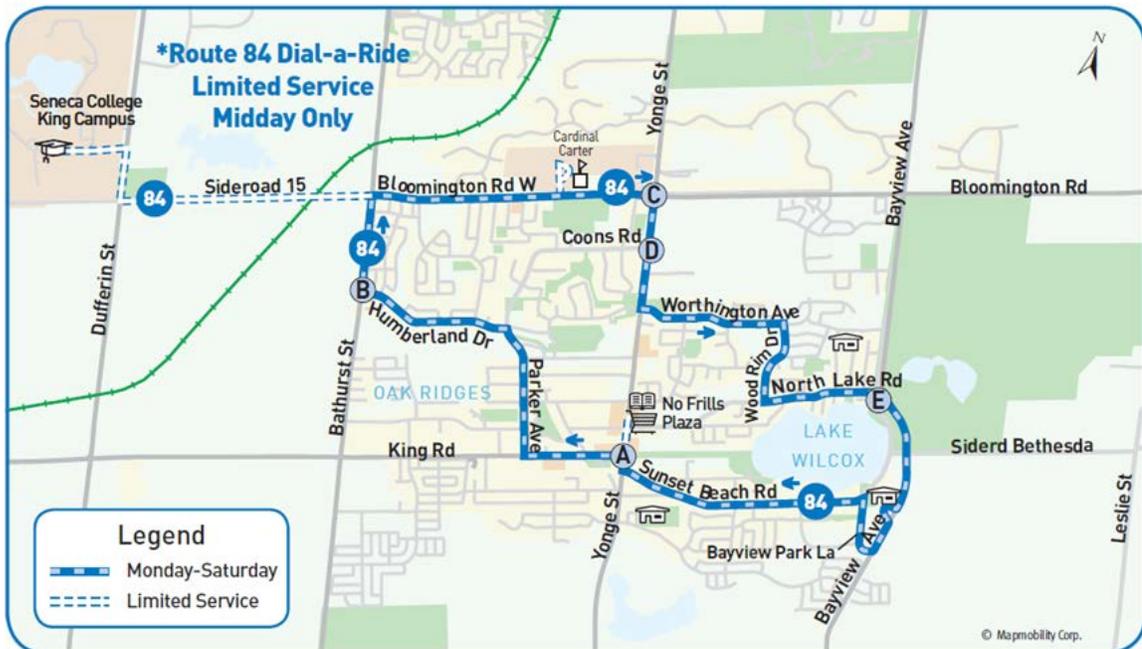
Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request

YRT/Viva Dial-a-Ride Transit Service Proposed Contract Extension

Route 32 – Aurora South Route Map



Route 84 - Oakridges Zone Route Map



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