

# 2022 TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE

## Questions and Answers Received during the Public Information Centre #2

Thank you to everyone who attended the meeting on October 20, 2021. More than 40 questions were received from participants. The questions and answers are grouped into the following categories:

- Public Transit
- Specific Transit Routes
- Green Initiatives
- Walking and Cycling
- Road Construction and Design
- General

### Public Transit

#### Why not make York Region Transit fares free?

York Region Council approved York Region Transit plans to achieve an annual revenue-to-cost ratio of 40 per cent for the entire transit system. This target reflects a sharing of transit costs between users (40%) and taxpayers (60%). As ridership and operational costs grow, fares are required to off-set operating costs and pay for service improvements. The 2022 budget was approved on December 21, 2021 and can be found [here](#).

#### We live in a car-based community. How do we build more confidence in using the transit system?

York Region is committed to providing cost effective, quality services that respond to growing communities. In 2019, York Region Transit carried 22.9 million passenger trips, with an additional 4.5 million passenger trips on the TTC Line 1 Subway extension in York Region. The Region continues to partner with GO Transit, facilitate service across cross boundaries, and work with the province on the future extension of the Yonge North Subway extension.

York Region Transit offers a [Travel Training](#) program where customers can be guided through the process of using York Region Transit services. For information, contact the YRT Contact Centre at 1-866 MOVE YRT (668-3978).

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**To improve transit, can we learn from other cities and regions? Ideas include on-demand transit services, covering all areas of the region and overnight hours.**

York Region engages with community partners and other municipalities to learn about transit initiatives and best practices. York Region Transit connects with other transit agencies in North America and around the world by participating in the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA), Ontario Public Transit Association (OPTA) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). For the Transportation Master Plan, York Region conducted jurisdictional scans, background studies and consults with City of Toronto, Durham Region, Region of Peel and Simcoe County as well as Metrolinx and the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario.

Mobility On-Request (MOR) is York Region's on-request ride-sharing service. MOR services are introduced in areas with low ridership demand and may replace conventional routes during low-demand service periods. In 2020, YRT introduced seven new MOR services, and there are plans to continue expanding MOR services across York Region where fixed route service may not be warranted. This can lead to expansion of service across the Region and past midnight, pending ridership demand.

**Why is transit service reduced, including prior to the pandemic, when the vision is for more people to use transit?**

York Region is committed to providing cost effective, quality services that respond to the needs of growing communities. York Region Transit continues to monitor ridership at route level and adjust service levels.

The 2021 to 2025 Business Plan describes how York Region Transit will address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Region's transit needs over the next five years. More information can be found [here](#).

**Are there plans to allow Viva buses that use centre bus lanes to go through the intersection first - before the left-turn signal?**

There are no plans at this time to change traffic signal coordination to give transit priority before advance left-turn signals. The Viva transit signals operate with the through traffic and reduces the number of conflicting movements between different vehicles and lanes.

**Are there options being considered besides limited stops along rapid transit corridors?**

Viva and conventional bus services complement each other and provide different service levels to accommodate a wider range of travel patterns. Viva routes are designed to stop less frequently, mainly at major intersections or key travel destinations. Along the same corridors, York Region Transit operates conventional service in mixed traffic lanes, serving all curbside local bus stops and the "Request Stop" program where customers can exit between stops after 9 p.m.

**Are there plans for autonomous, elevated transit systems?**

York Region has been working with various stakeholders to explore potential routes for autonomous transit vehicles to connect residents in local neighbourhoods to higher order transit, such as GO stations and bus rapid transit routes. Currently, there are no plans for elevated transit system in York Region.

**When will self-driving transit vehicles be introduced in York Region?**

York Region has been working with various stakeholders to identify potential routes to pilot autonomous transit shuttles that would service areas that would benefit from additional transit services.

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### Does York Region consider the projections made by Metrolinx? For example, transition between travel methods, maintenance, planning transit routes, etc.

York Region is working with Metrolinx on the Yonge North Subway Extension and GO Expansion projects to identify and address transportation needs in the Region. This includes planning and coordinating road and transit operations, ongoing maintenance and plans for future service, and facilities for transit users, pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

### Does York Region support “Option 3” for the subway route by Metrolinx?

The Transportation Master Plan identifies the need for improvements to address planned growth in the Region, such as the Yonge North Subway Extension. The plan does not study, assess or explore the requirements or design details for identified improvements to roads, transit, cycling or walking facilities, or any specific project. Details about the subway alignment and stations are addressed through the project led by Metrolinx. More information is available [here](#).

### How do I get more information about York Region and Metrolinx projects and provide feedback?

York Region’s website provides updated information on campaigns, projects and public consultations. Visit the [Public Consultation page](#) to view engagement opportunities. Current and planned transportation construction projects can be seen at [york.ca/roadconstruction](http://york.ca/roadconstruction). Metrolinx projects and initiatives can be found here: [metrolinxengage.com](http://metrolinxengage.com).

## Specific Transit Routes

### Is there consideration for a direct bus route from Markham to Newmarket along Highway 404?

Transit services are provided based on ridership demand. In September 2016, Route 320 – Newmarket-Beaver Creek Express was introduced to provide service along Highway 404 between the cities of Markham and Richmond Hill, and Town of Newmarket. As per the service adjustments identified through the 2019-2022 budget cycle, effective July 2019, Route 320 was discontinued due to low ridership. For connections between the City of Markham and Town of Newmarket, Viva bus rapid transit service is available along Highway 7 and Yonge Street.

More information about York Region Transit’s Plans and Improvements and service changes can be found [here](#).

### Taking the Viva, there is a lack of 10 to 15 minute service and decrease in Sunday service. Are there plans to increase the current level of service on Viva Orange?

York Region Transit and Brampton Transit offer integrated rapid transit services along the Highway 7 rapidway served by Viva Orange and Route 501 – Züm Queen. Highway 7 is part of the York Region Transit’s Frequent Transit Network with future plans to provide 15-minute or better service along this corridor. Ridership levels are monitored on a regular basis and adjustments are made as to balance system service levels to match passenger demand. More information about York Region Transit’s plans, improvements and service changes can be found [here](#).

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### Are there plans for increased GO Bus services for east-west trips along Highway 407?

York Region does not plan and operate GO bus services. For questions related to GO Bus service, please contact GO Transit [here](#).

The Region participates on a number of coordinating committees with the province and Metrolinx as it relates to the Highway 407 Transitway. The 407 Transitway is a high-speed interregional transit facility to be constructed on a separate right-of-way parallel to Highway 407 from Burlington to Whitby. Further information on the 407 Transitway project can be found [here](#).

### Are there plans for frequent York Region Transit Service and active transportation connections to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Vaughan?

In November 2021, York Region Transit launched a new Mobility On-Request service during weekday rush hours in the Kleinburg-Nashville community. More information can be found [here](#).

Due to the pandemic, discussions with major destinations have been put on hold and implementation of new services are pending ridership uptake. Pedestrian and cycling improvements along Regional roads will be considered in the future.

### Are there plans for transit in York Region's rural communities, specifically in King Township, to better connect with education, employment and hospital services?

York Region Transit recently implemented a new [Mobility On-Request King City GO](#) in the Township of King to connect residents to the King City GO station. More information about York Region Transit's plans, improvements and service changes can be found [here](#).

York Region Transit's Mobility On-Request Plan provides guidance on how the Region will continue to expand its Mobility On-Request service to travellers in low-demand areas (such as the communities of Kettleby, Pottageville, Schomberg, and Nobleton) and connect these areas with frequent transit service. To file a recommendation, please fill out the feedback form [here](#).

### Are there future plans for a King City local bus service?

York Region Transit currently operates bus route 96 in King City along King Road and connects travellers to Pioneer Village Station and Newmarket Terminal. Additionally, [Mobility On-Request King City GO](#) service connects travellers in King City to King City GO station. This service will continue to be expanded to low-demand areas and connect with frequent transit service.

### I don't live near the GO station in King City, are there future transit plans for Nobleton or Schomberg?

In February 2013, York Region Transit offered Route 61 – King Local during rush hours connecting Kettleby, Pottageville, Schomberg, Nobleton and King City. In June 2016, the route was converted to on-request service but was discontinued in January 2021 due to low ridership. York Region Transit is continuing to identify new service options for the communities of Nobleton and Schomberg.

### Georgina is underserved in terms of transportation. Is York Region working with local non-profits to partner on transportation?

All residential and business addresses in the Town of Georgina have access to public transit through York Region Transit Mobility On-Request, conventional and paratransit services. York Region Transit also works closely with Georgina Island and provides access to transit at the Ferry Docks. YRT is an active and proud member of Linking Georgina, which is a collective of local non-profit community partners offering services to improve quality of life. More information can be found [here](#).

Travel training and assistance with the cost of transit is also available for residents of York Region. Further information can be found [here](#).



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### **Are there plans to increase York Region Transit services from Yonge Street and 16th Avenue in Richmond Hill to Vaughan Mills and Canada's Wonderland?**

Passengers travelling from Yonge Street and 16th Avenue to Vaughan Mills Mall or Canada's Wonderland can use York Region bus routes 85 and 20. As part of the York Region Transit's Frequent Transit Network, there are plans for more direct service with a frequent service of 15 minutes or better, six days a week, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., and be complemented by other local, express, and Mobility On-Request services. For more information, please contact the YRT Contact Centre at 1-866 MOVE YRT (668-3978).

More information about York Region Transit's plans, improvements and service changes can be found [here](#).

### **Why was Leslie Street chosen over Woodbine Avenue for transit improvements as a north-south route when there is more redevelopment opportunity on Woodbine Avenue?**

Each Regional corridor is assessed in consultation with stakeholders and other municipalities. Leslie Street was identified as a future rapid transit corridor for further study with Metrolinx and the City of Toronto. Future Light Rail Transit (LRT) is planned along Don Mills Road, south of Steeles Avenue.

### **Are non-Viva buses allowed to use the centre bus lanes on Yonge Street?**

While conventional buses are allowed to use the rapidways, they typically do not due to operational constraints. Viva routes are designed to operate on rapidways along major corridors throughout the Region, such as those on Yonge Street and Highway 7. They are also designed to stop less frequently, primarily at major intersections or key travel destinations to provide quicker travel.

## Green Initiatives

### **When will York Region Transit have a full fleet of electric buses?**

In December 2020 York Regional Council approved the York Region Transit fleet electrification program, achieving full electrification by 2051. Six electric buses have been operating for over one year with an additional six entered into service in fall 2021. York Region Transit will continue to purchase a minimum of two electric buses each year between 2021 and 2029 and begin purchasing only electric buses from 2030 onward.

### **Are Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Removals targets being established? Will the public have access to this information for York Region?**

The draft York Region Climate Change Action Plan is a community-based plan and was released for public consultation in March 2020, and can be found [here](#). The plan identifies proposed actions working towards net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The York Region Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan identifies key actions implemented corporately to reduce greenhouse gas emissions also working towards net-zero by 2050. Further information can be found [here](#).

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### Are York Region's climate action and environmental goals supported in the Transportation Master Plan?

The Transportation Master Plan will support the Region's climate change goals by encouraging more sustainable modes of transportation and adoption of electric and low-emissions vehicles.

York Region increasingly recognizes the key role green infrastructure plays in mitigating and adapting to climate change and is looking at asset management and planning practices with a climate change lens.

## Walking and Cycling

### Is there consideration for dedicated bicycle and pedestrian mid-block crossings over 400-series highways?

Each mid-block crossing will have a project-specific environmental assessment study and would consider accommodation of pedestrian and cycling facilities where appropriate.

### Are you considering schools as hubs or nodes for pedestrian and cycling plans?

When planning for future cycling infrastructure, many considerations are taken into account including connectivity to community destinations such as schools, transit hubs, connectivity to other cycling infrastructure and improving safety.

### Are there plans for shared paths along the higher speed roads in Georgina and other rural communities?

Pedestrian and cycling facilities are considered where opportunities exist, including planning and where road improvements support new active transportation facilities. Pedestrian and cyclist safety is always paramount and greater separation between road and cycling facilities is encouraged where possible.

### Yonge Street serves a "main street" function in sections and multi-use pathways in place of sidewalks and separated cycling lanes will be a challenge. Are there considerations to apply a "Complete Streets" approach?

We work with our local municipalities in considering safety, community context and connectivity of active transportation routes. Yonge Street in downtown sections of Aurora and Richmond Hill are under local jurisdiction.

### Are there plans to extend the protected bicycle lane on Yonge Street, north of Gamble Road?

Yonge Street, north of Gamble Road has been designated as a future Viva Rapidway corridor which may include the extension of bike lanes. However, this segment is currently unfunded.

### A staircase was proposed to be constructed from Red Maple Road to 16th Avenue in Richmond Hill for access to transit service on Yonge Street. However, it was not completed due to costs. Can safety be reconsidered over the cost requirement?

The staircase is an In-boulevard pedestrian facility, which is typically under local municipal jurisdiction. We will follow-up with the City of Richmond Hill on the status of this project.

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### Langstaff bicycle lanes were well-used prior to Highway 427 construction. Can the Region ensure that pedestrian and cyclists be accommodated during the construction phase?

To ensure safer travel through construction areas, lane closures are sometimes required as part of stages of work and for equipment/materials storage. Accommodation of all road users is considered where possible.

### Do pedestrians have right-of-way on shared pathways and trails?

Etiquette is always encouraged on shared pathways. Bicycles are considered vehicles. Bicycles are the faster means of travel and should give right-of-way to pedestrians.

### Are paths maintained for pedestrians and cyclists during the winter months?

All on-street bike lanes on Regional roads are plowed at the same time as plows clear snow from traffic lanes.

## Road Construction Design

### Why is 16th Avenue being widened?

York Region has conducted Environmental Assessment Studies to assess transportation system alternatives to address future growth. The preferred alternative identified road improvements on 16th Avenue from Yonge Street to Woodbine Avenue (Study A) and Woodbine Avenue to York/Durham Line (Study B). Further study details can be found [here](#).

### When is construction of the bridge over Highway 400 (mid-block crossing) between Major Mackenzie Drive and Teston Road in Vaughan to start?

A new mid-block crossing is being led by City of Vaughan with funding from York Region, with an identified start of construction in 2022. City of Vaughan project updates can be found [here](#).

### Is there a focus on designing roads for lower speeds rather than relying on speed limit signs and enforcement?

York Region follows best practices to ensure the safety of all road users and considers the roadway right-of-way in planning and design. York Region's "Designing Great Streets Guidelines" provides further details [here](#).

### Are there any future plans for a St. John's Sideroad/Highway 404 interchange?

The Transportation Master Plan study identifies an interchange at this location for future consideration. York Region's 10-Year Roads and Transit Capital Construction Program provides information on current and upcoming road improvement projects. At this time, York Region's capital program does not identify a planned interchange at St John's Sideroad and Highway 404 within the 10-year horizon. Future work would require coordination with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and their highway improvement programming as Highway 404 is a provincial highway. More information on Regional road improvement projects can be found [here](#).

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### Do you consider the health and safety of existing residents during construction and operations?

Health and safety are always a priority with the design and operations of our transportation networks. York Region follows set procedures and best practices. The Region's Construction and Design Guidelines and Standards can be found [here](#).

## General

### How do I get information on York Region's annual budget?

Every year, York Regional Council approves the capital budget and operating budget for the next year. The operating and capital budgets outline how York Region will deliver essential services to citizens. Further information is found on the York Region website [york.ca/Budget](http://york.ca/Budget).

### Are elected officials involved in the planning and decision-making process?

The Transportation Master Plan is reviewed and endorsed by Regional Council. Council sets policies, directions and budgets to ensure long-term success and a high standard of living for York Region.

### How are goods movements by trucks balanced with safer roads and walkable communities?

York Region designs its roads to accommodate all road users in consultation with local municipalities.

### What kind of traffic control systems will be used before 2051 to better coordinate traffic signals and improve traffic flows during rush hours?

The technology and planning of signalized intersections are reviewed each year to determine travel needs. Currently, vehicle detection, traffic cameras, Bluetooth sensors and signal prioritization (pre-emption) are used. York Region follows provincial guidelines. Further information can be found [here](#).

### Why do I encounter frequent red lights along Yonge Street?

For Regional road intersections, traffic signal coordination requires balancing the needs of traffic flow, pedestrians, emergency vehicles and other users. York Region strives to coordinate signals as best as possible to reduce delay while optimizing safety.