

Clause 3 in Report No. 12 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on September 22, 2016.

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York Region Transit (YRT/Viva) 2017 Annual Service Plan

Committee of the Whole recommends:

1. Receipt of the presentation by Ann-Marie Carroll, General Manager, Transit, Transportation Services.
2. Adoption of the following recommendation contained in the report dated August 24, 2016 from the Acting Commissioner of Transportation Services:
 1. Council approve the YRT/Viva 2017 Annual Service Plan, which is used to form the base 2017 Business Plan and Budget for all transit services. Implementation of the plan is subject to Council approval of the 2017 Business Plan and Budget.

Report dated August 24, 2016 from the Acting Commissioner of Transportation Services now follows:

1. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. Council approve the YRT/Viva 2017 Annual Service Plan, which is used to form the base 2017 Business Plan and Budget for all transit services. Implementation of the plan is subject to Council approval of the 2017 Business Plan and Budget.

2. Purpose

This report seeks Council's approval of the YRT/Viva 2017 Annual Service Plan (Attachment 1). The 2017 Annual Service Plan ("Annual Plan") supports YRT/Viva's 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan and will provide direction to staff in the planning and implementation of transit service in 2017.

2. Background

The 2017 Annual Service Plan is the second annual plan since Council approved YRT/Viva's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan in September 2015

The 2016-2020 Five-Year Service Strategy refines service guidelines and improves the communication plan to stakeholders, helping to develop service initiatives. Enhancing services to support an extensive network of base grid services, local routes and Viva corridors is being reviewed, particularly in low demand areas. YRT/Viva will be reviewing the fare structure of the entire system to identify ways to improve non-fare revenue in support of transit initiatives as part of the 2016 – 2020 Five-Year Strategy.

YRT/Viva's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan focuses on seven key strategies:

1. Service delivery
2. Customer Satisfaction
3. Innovation
4. Environmental Sustainability
5. Asset Management
6. Financial Sustainability
7. Performance Measurement

The 2017 Annual Service Plan translates the strategic direction presented in the YRT/Viva 2016-2020 Strategic Plan

The Annual Plan outlines specific actions and implementation of service initiatives that support the GTA Rapid Transit Integration Phase (Figure 1).

**Figure 1
YRT/Viva Transit Life Cycle**



Annual plans propose service initiatives that support the transit needs of the Region and consider the effectiveness of individual routes and the entire transit system. Annual service plans focus on:

- Customer needs
- Frequent Transit Network (FTN) implementation
- Accessibility
- Route restructuring
- Strengthening the grid network
- Matching service levels to meet demand
- Service reliability
- Service expansion
- VivaNext construction impacts
- Spadina Subway extension into York Region
- Viva Network Expansion Plan
- Connections with GO Transit
- Regional integration

3. Analysis and Options

In 2017, the YRT/Viva system will consist of more than 135 routes and is expected to carry an estimated 22.9 million revenue passenger trips

The YRT/Viva system provides transit services with a diverse range of route categories throughout the Region.

Route categories consist of:

- Viva Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- YRT base grid network (major arterial corridors including TTC routes)
- Local (local neighbourhoods)
- Express (Highways 407, 400, and 404)
- High school specials
- GO shuttles
- Dial-a-Ride
- Community Bus
- Seasonal

A ridership increase of two per cent is projected in 2017 as a result of implementation of recommended service initiatives and system growth. Many factors influence ridership growth including:

- Service reliability
- Route structure
- Frequent service
- Transfer connections
- Fuel prices
- Cost of fares
- Population growth
- Employment rate
- Ridership Growth Strategy

YRT/Viva's Mobility Plus ridership is expected to rise in 2017 to 435,750 revenue passenger trips; an increase of five per cent over 2016

Mobility Plus is York Region's door-to-door, shared ride, accessible public transit service for people with disabilities. Customers who are unable to use regular public transit due to a physical, cognitive, visual or sensory disability for all or part of their trip may be eligible for Mobility Plus service.

To use the service, customers must meet specific eligibility criteria. Eligibility is considered on a case-by-case basis and is not based on a particular disability, income level or lack of accessible public transit in an applicant's area.

Mobility Plus service will continue to operate using a variety of vehicle types to best service customer needs and to improve the overall efficiency of the service. It will be moving towards an on-demand service providing customers with transit options in low demand areas of the Region.

Proposed service recommendations included in the 2017 Annual Service Plan consider the system-wide effectiveness of YRT/Viva services and the performance of individual routes

As part of the Annual Plan preparation, staff analyzed the net cost per passenger for all routes and identified those routes being subsidized more than three times the average fare per passenger. YRT/Viva staff is recommending a series of service adjustments based on this net cost per passenger assessment. Most of the recommended changes are to routes significantly subsidized or duplicate service to an underlying conventional bus route. Other recommendations are intended to strengthen the grid network, match service to demand and simplify route structure to reduce one-way loops and connect key destinations such as malls, seniors' facilities and other high transit trip generating locations.

YRT/Viva conducted extensive stakeholder consultation and obtained valuable feedback during the development of the 2017 Annual Service Plan

The process included numerous meetings and workshops with departments within York Region, local municipalities, other transit agencies, post-secondary institutions, community agencies, transit riders, and the general public in each municipality. Stakeholder comments have been incorporated into the 2017 Annual Service Plan. During the months of February, March and April (2016), YRT/Viva staff engaged:

Municipalities (ten municipal meetings): Consultation with municipal planning and engineering staff to obtain input for service improvements and new services in their municipalities.

Public (nine Public Information Centres): Consultation forums (one per municipality) were held for York Region stakeholders and members of the public to provide input to recommended service changes for the upcoming year.

Transit Stakeholders (four Stakeholder meetings): Consultation with community agencies, business groups, transportation management associations, resident ratepayer groups, local area residents, businesses, to develop service changes, or introduce new services into their community.

Transit Providers: Consultation with neighbouring transit providers to ensure seamless services for those customers travelling beyond York Region.

To provide local municipalities with updates of all recommended service changes in 2017, YRT/Viva staff will hold additional meetings and present the approved Annual Plan to all local councils in the fall of 2016.

Comments provided by the public are considered when analyzing the 2017 proposed initiatives

To provide an opportunity for feedback on the 2017 Annual Plan initiatives, YRT/Viva staff held nine Public Information Centres throughout the Region, which attracted over one thousand people.

Some of the common/general input received included:

- Requests to improve connections
- Requests to not increase fares
- Support for restructuring proposals
- Requests for service frequency increases
- Concerns regarding delays caused by rapidway construction

The Public Information Centres also provided an opportunity for YRT/Viva staff to share information and ideas with stakeholders and customers.

The 2017 Annual Service Plan proposes select conventional routes be restructured and/or have schedule adjustments and more on-demand response services

A total of 14 service initiatives are proposed for 2017, as shown in Table 1. The implementation of the proposed service initiatives will be dependent upon approval of the 2017 operating budget.

Individual route analysis and recommendations are found in Chapter 4 of the attached 2017 Annual Service Plan. Changes will be implemented at various times throughout the year.

Table 1
Routes identified for Changes in the 2017 Annual Service Plan

<p>Aurora 31 – <u>Aurora North</u>: (Weekday evening Dial-a-Ride service) 33 – <u>Wellington</u>: (Extension to Aurora Park and Ride Facility) 222 – <u>Aurora GO Shuttle</u>: (Restructure service to St. John’s Sideroad area)</p>	<p>Whitchurch-Stouffville 9 – <u>9th Line</u>: (Restructure service to the Box Grove South area, introduce Saturday Dial-a-Ride service) 509 – <u>Stouffville Community Bus</u>: (new service)</p>
<p>King 22A – <u>King City</u>: (Additional early morning weekday service)</p>	<p>Vaughan 23 – <u>Thornhill Woods</u>: (Restructure service on new road link, discontinue service after 10 p.m.)</p>
<p>East Gwillimbury 58 – <u>Mount Albert</u>: (Restructure service in Mount Albert and Sharon)</p>	<p>Richmond Hill 244 – <u>Beaver Creek Shuttle</u>: (Merge with 320 – Express)</p>
<p>Georgina 51 – <u>Keswick Local</u>: (Route adjustment on last trip) 50 – <u>Queensway</u>: (Adjustment pending service review)</p>	<p>All Municipalities Review routes operating below cost effectiveness targets</p>
<p>Newmarket 427 – <u>Sacred Heart High School Special</u>: (Restructure service to Newmarket High School and the Copper Hills area) 421 – <u>Newmarket High School Special</u>: (Merge with 427 – School Special)</p>	

In addition to recommendations identified in the Annual Plan, other service adjustments to improve service reliability, provide necessary capacity and meet customer requests, will be made throughout the year at the discretion of YRT/Viva’s General Manager.

The VivaNext rapidway on Highway 7 between Jane Street and Bowes Road will be completed in late 2016 and Viva service on the rapidway will be reviewed as part of the 2017 budget process

The new section of rapidway on Highway 7 between Jane Street and Bowes Road (H2-VMC) will be ready for transit service by late 2016. The construction of the rapidway was initially aligned with the opening of the Spadina Subway Extension and restructuring of YRT/Viva service. The opening of the Spadina

Subway Extension has been delayed to late 2017, which has impacted the restructuring of YRT/Viva service.

As an interim measure, a branch of Viva can operate on Highway 7 between Martin Grove Road and the Promenade Terminal. This new service is identified in the 2017 Draft Operating Budget as unaccommodated and will be reviewed during the budget process.

In 2017, Mobility Plus will continue to implement improvement strategies based on sound business practices and cost-effective planning

Improving customer service, managing ridership demand, and maximizing vehicle usage are the goals of YRT/Viva's Mobility Plus service. Achieving these goals will meet the requirements of the AODA Integrated Standards that must be met in 2017. Increased use of conventional transit through the Family of Services program, investigating alternative vehicle types to make service delivery more cost-efficient, and updates to scheduling software to improve trip planning capabilities will also be the focus in 2017.

The role of Mobility Plus is expanding with the implementation of the Family of Services shared ride programs and the implementation of Dial-A-Ride programs in low transit demand areas. These programs provide increased customer service, time and money savings when integrating with YRT/Viva services. In addition, Mobility Plus has the opportunity to shorten trip length on the door-to-door service, schedule multiple trip requests at the same time, provide same day service, and provide more trips with the same allocated funds.

YRT/Viva's Marketing and Communications group will develop and deliver service change communications to all local municipalities and the public prior to service change implementation

Communication material is created four to six weeks in advance of scheduled changes. Standard communication initiatives include, but are not limited to, the following:

YRT.ca - Primary online presence where customers go for up-to-date schedules, customized trip plans, alerts and detours, real-time information and transit news.

Social Media - Updates are provided before/during/after any service change takes effect, and all online customer inquiries are answered by transit staff (as per York Region standards).

My Transit customer newsletter - Distributed three weeks prior to the changes on all YRT/Viva vehicles, at municipal displays, community events, transit shelters and terminals.

Councillor Memos - Sent to the CAO, Mayor, Regional and Local Councillors of each York Region municipality five times per year, prior to each service change taking effect, and outlining upcoming transit service changes occurring in their communities.

Route Navigators - Individualized schedules/maps produced for all YRT/Viva routes available at municipal displays, events and various key destinations around York Region.

System map updates - The system map is updated three times per year; spring, fall and winter.

On-street updates and notices - On-street communication pieces are created and installed two to three weeks prior and include bus stop notices, Infopost schedules, terminal information centres and shelter displays.

Advertisements in local community newspapers - Community page and paid advertisements are placed in local newspapers throughout the nine local municipalities prior to service changes taking effect.

Special Actions and Community Outreach - Extra Initiatives (special actions) are developed to communicate service changes affecting specifically-identified areas, groups or neighbourhoods. Malls, seniors' centres, GO Stations, high schools, and post-secondary institutions are always notified of upcoming service changes affecting their clients/customers/students/staff with notices posted at specifically-identified locations, geo-targeted postal areas (mail drops), on-bus, presentation/information booths and online.

Seat Drops - Individualized schedules/maps produced for YRT/Viva routes undergoing service changes and distributed on vehicles operating the route to be changed. Passengers that will be affected by service changes are notified on the bus and can provide direct feedback to YRT/Viva staff.

In 2017, YRT/Viva will continue to pursue opportunities to be innovative

Innovation further satisfies the needs and expectation of the YRT/Viva customer, enhances service delivery and risk mitigation, and provides for environmental sustainability.

Innovation in either the development or research stages at YRT/Viva include:

Customer Service:

- Rideshare, demand responsive mobile app to support Dial-A-Ride service
- Mobility Plus trip planning and real-time monitoring app
- Presto Para Transit solution
- Mobile fare payment system
- Pilot Project to introduce Wi-Fi on bus and at all YRT/Viva terminals
- Creation of a YRT/Viva Fare Strategy

Service Delivery innovation:

- Bus operator behaviour system
- Bus health monitoring system
- Vehicle detection systems (Pedestrian safety program)
- Ridership Growth Strategy

Eco-innovation:

- Bus idling alerts
- Next generation alternative fuelled propulsion systems - electric bus technology
- Electronic (paperless) office for YRT/Viva on-street staff

Link to key Council-approved plans

This report links to the following Council-approved plans and policies:

Regional Official Plan

- To provide transit service that is convenient and accessible to all residents and workers of York Region

Vision 2051

- Includes a statement relating to the development of infrastructure for a growing Region, which states that:

“York Region is committed to providing state-of-the-art infrastructure for both residents and businesses, which are vital to maintaining and improving quality of life and economic competitiveness. These include transit, streets, water, wastewater, waste management.”

2016- 2020 Five-Year Strategic Plan

- Specific action areas have been considered for this report:
 - Making transit accessible
 - Continuing to improve service and infrastructure for successfully integrated transit service
 - Developing an optimal mix of transit service types
 - Promoting transit usage as a practical and wise alternative to private vehicle use

4. Financial Implications

2017 Annual Service Plan initiatives will be accommodated within the draft 2017 budget

The cost to operate YRT/Viva service in 2017 is anticipated to be \$118.6 million. This is a 0.5 per cent increase over the 2016 operating budget, which totaled approximately \$118.0 million. YRT/Viva will continue service rationalization and reallocation of resources in corridors experiencing high passenger demand.

5. Local Municipal Impact

The recommendations included in the 2017 Annual Service Plan will impact all nine local municipalities. Changes to service will help YRT/Viva deliver an improved and more efficient transit service to all residents in the Region.

6. Conclusion

The York Region Transit (YRT/Viva) 2017 Annual Service Plan will serve as the guiding document for the operation of transit services in York Region over the next year. It will support the direction outlined in the 2016-2020 Five-Year Strategic Plan and build on the successes of previous years. This report seeks Council approval of the YRT/Viva 2017 Annual Service Plan.

For more information on this report, please contact Ann-Marie Carroll, General Manager, York Region Transit (YRT/Viva) at ext. 75677.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

August 24, 2016

Attachments (1)

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request