



Office of the Commissioner  
Transportation Services

## Memorandum

To: Members of Committee of the Whole

From: Paul Jankowski, Commissioner

Date: September 7, 2017

Re: **York Region Transit's transition to paperless fare media and zone elimination update**

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This memo provides an update on York Region Transit's (YRT/Viva) transition to a paperless fare system.

On July 1, 2017, YRT/Viva successfully eliminated the sale of paper tickets and monthly passes, and started the process of switching travellers over to PRESTO, or the new mobile-fare payment app, YRT/Viva Pay. It also included eliminating zone-based payments, as previously approved by York Region Council.

Becoming a paperless transit system allows travellers to pay for transit on their own terms, and at a lesser cost than paying cash. YRT/Viva has received an excellent response from York Region citizens on this initiative, and will continue its efforts to switch all travellers over by the end of 2017.

### **Benefits of PRESTO and the YRT/Viva Pay app:**

- PRESTO cards are accepted on transit systems across the entire Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area and Ottawa; travellers can use the same card on every participating system
- Travellers simply load money onto their PRESTO card to travel; they just tap and go
- Registered cards have features such as auto-reload, and protection from being lost or stolen
- The YRT/Viva Pay app allows travellers to purchase fares anywhere, anytime through the convenience of their smart phone
- The app is available for free in the App Store (iOS) and Google Play (Android)

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- PRESTO and YRT/Viva Pay automatically deduct the one-ride ticket price, which is much cheaper than paying cash
- Both systems allow concessions to be set, i.e. child, youth, adult and senior

**Benefits of eliminating fare zones:**

- Enables travel in any direction, Region-wide, for the same two-hour fare
- Customers can travel seamlessly across the entire system without having to worry about purchasing a zone upgrade

**To ensure the success of this transition, prior to July 1, Transit staff deployed a three-month long community outreach campaign**

The campaign included traditional advertising posted on every bus, at every vivastation at all terminals, as well as the creation of multiple fare information pieces, on-bus announcements, and extensive community outreach, as outlined in Table 1. All information was also available on yrt.ca.

Both pre- and post-launch, staff greeted travellers at bus stops and terminals across the Region to answer any questions, and assist them with the transition.

**Table 1  
Communication and Outreach Activities**

<b>Communication</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
My Transit Newsletter	52,000
Yrt.ca page views	15,000
Mobility Plus News	10,000
Notices at bus stops and terminals	1,700
On-bus advertising (two per bus)	1,108
Community outreach events organized and/or attended	67
Transit social media posts	55
Staff produced videos	2
Council packages	1

**Travellers are adapting to the new fare payment options with minimal disruption or concerns**

- From mid-April until mid-July, approximately six per cent of all logged customer calls were related to the paperless transition and primarily focused on traveller education
- July 2017 PRESTO card use is estimated to be 39 per cent of revenue ridership, up from 36 per cent in June 2017
- Prior to July 1, 3,300 Mobility Plus clients were transitioned over to PRESTO
- Since PRESTO launched in 2011, YRT/Viva issued over 71,000 cards
- Since launch on July 1, the YRT/Viva Pay app has over 3,100 downloads

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**YRT/Viva has made obtaining a PRESTO card simple for all travellers, and will continue to do so with additional ticket agent locations offering PRESTO, more add-value machines system-wide and through community outreach**

- Travellers who previously had to cross two-zones are very happy with the ease of their journey, for a lesser fare
- The YRT/Viva Pay app has been a great success and customers are beginning to make the transition to this new modern, mobile payment option

**Next steps:**

Transit staff will continue to advertise paperless options and to educate travellers through community outreach events and on-street information, especially during September and the back-to-school period.

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Commissioner, Transportation Services

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