



Media Release

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Viva Rapid Transit offers passenger service during weekend dress rehearsal

NEWMARKET – Viva rapid transit vehicles (RTVs) will begin providing service this Labour Day weekend. On Sunday September 4th and Monday September 5th, Viva will be running along Yonge Street and Highway 7, picking up and dropping off passengers.

This two-day dress rehearsal will give people an opportunity to preview the new rapid transit service prior to Viva's official launch on Tuesday September 6th.

"I encourage everyone to leave their keys at home this holiday weekend and give Viva a try," said Bill Fisch, Regional Chair and CEO for the Regional Municipality of York. "Viva is the first rapid transit system of its kind in the GTA and I am certain people will be thrilled with this unique and comfortable transit experience."

Frequency will be the hallmark of Viva with rapid transit vehicles arriving every 5 to 10 minutes during peak periods. Viva will provide fare vending machines, allowing passengers to purchase their tickets before boarding and give them up to two hours to run errands or get out for a quick lunch. Along with this frequency and flexibility, Viva will also provide real-time information so passengers know exactly when the next RTV will arrive.

Viva will link the Region's urban centres of Markham, Richmond Hill, Vaughan, Aurora and Newmarket along four major corridors, including Highway 7 and Yonge Street. In addition, Viva will link York Region with the City of Toronto and its subway system, to GO Transit, to the transit systems in the Region of Peel and eventually into Durham Region.

The Viva service is being rolled out in four stages between September 4th and January 2006. The first leg of the service will run along Yonge Street from Finch Station to Bernard Station and along Highway 7 from York University to Town Centre Boulevard.

"This has been a remarkable project that has gone from the drawing board to the roadside in record time ... just about three years," said Town of Richmond Hill Mayor Bill Bell, Vice Chair of the York Region Rapid Transit Steering Committee. "If you are planning to climb aboard Viva this long weekend, I suggest you prepare to be moved like you have never been moved before."

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Video screens will eventually be installed on Viva rapid transit vehicles, offering passengers current news, weather, sports and entertainment information. Technology will also be installed on the vehicles and along the Viva corridors, providing passengers with Internet connectivity, allowing them to surf the Internet or send e-mails during their daily commute.

When the first phase is fully implemented in 2006, York Region estimates these initial improvements will lead to a 30 per cent increase in transit ridership or 4.5 million additional rides – moving 7,000 car trips a day off the major arterial roads.

For more information on Viva, the different stages of implementation or to take the Viva Quiz, please visit the Viva Web site at: www.vivayork.com

For more information on the Regional Municipality of York, the services offered and links to the nine area municipalities, please visit the York Region Web site at: www.york.ca

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