



## Media Release

Monday, August 22, 2005

### **Viva tunes up in preparation for September service launch**

NEWMARKET – On Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> and Thursday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, Viva Rapid Transit Vehicles (RTVs) will be operating throughout York Region, testing various systems in preparation for the beginning of service on September 4<sup>th</sup>. The simulation, which will be conducted without passengers on board, has been scheduled to allow for any last minute adjustments and fine-tuning.

“It’s important for the dispatchers, the drivers and our other front-line staff to make sure everything works perfectly before our actual service launch,” said Regional Chair and CEO, Bill Fisch. “I know people are eager to try out the new Viva service, and they’ll be able to very soon. We need to ensure Viva is operating up to the highest standards before opening it to the public.”

The Viva service will be tested on Tuesday August 23<sup>rd</sup>, between 5:30 a.m. and 10 a.m., and on Thursday August 25<sup>th</sup>, between 2:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. During these periods, Viva RTVs will be running along Highway 7 and Yonge Street, and the fare system and global positioning system will be operational. Dispatchers and drivers will be working through various scenarios and communications systems will be tested to confirm they operate clearly in all circumstances.

“This is a critical couple of days for everyone involved since it is the first time all aspects of Viva are brought together into a single system,” said Earl Segriff, Manager of Operations, Connex. “We have been training and testing everything individually, and our progress has been outstanding. During this final phase, we will test to see that every aspect of Viva is working flawlessly, and not only meets, but exceeds, our expectations.”

The Viva service will be officially launched on Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>. There will be a two-day “dress rehearsal” on Sunday, September 4<sup>th</sup> and Monday, September 5<sup>th</sup>. On those days, passengers will be encouraged to ride the new rapid transit service and experience Viva for themselves.

Frequency will be the hallmark of Viva, with rapid transit vehicles arriving every five to 10 minutes during peak periods. New 1system fare vending machines, located at all Vivastations and Terminals, will sell tickets that can be used on both Viva and York Region Transit (YRT) with no increase in price. Tickets are valid for 120 minutes, giving passengers up to two hours to hop on and hop off to run errands. Along with this frequency and flexibility, Viva will also provide real time information so passengers know exactly when the next vehicle will arrive.

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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 Peel Region and eventually into Durham Region.

The Viva service is being rolled out in four stages between September 4<sup>th</sup> 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 in Markham.

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](http://www.vivayork.com)

For more information on the Regional Municipality of York, the services offered and links to its nine area municipalities, please visit the York Region web site at: [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

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