



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Transportation Services Committee

FROM: Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas, Commissioner of Transportation Services

DATE: September 30, 2009

RE: August Transit Ridership Statistics

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August ridership is down approximately 7.4% in comparison to August of 2008 and down 2.9% overall year to date. Ridership for other transit systems within the GTA is also on the downward trend. For the month of August, ridership for TTC has decreased by 2% and Brampton Transit has also decreased by 3.2%

The reasons for drop in ridership are same as July: unemployment, fare increase followed by the unforeseen economic downturn and the significant reduction in gas prices over the summer of 2008.

### Unemployment

Unemployment numbers specific to York Region are not available separately but are included within the unemployment numbers for the City of Toronto. The unemployment numbers are still standing at 10.0% which is 3% higher than the same time last year.

This increase in unemployment has manifested itself into fewer work related trips. The drop in work related trips is supported by the drop in ridership on several GO Shuttles that take residents into the City of Toronto to Union Station: Newmarket GO Shuttle (-31.3%) and Mill Pond GO Shuttle (-7.2%).

Ridership on several TTC routes serving the City of Vaughan is still declining, which is not surprising given that they serve mainly industrial and commercial areas. For example, ridership on Jane 35D is down 17.9%, Route 37D Islington, down 22.8% and Keele 107 down 17.6%. These routes carry a lot of cross-boundary passengers from the City of Toronto that work in York Region and with higher unemployment rates, those TTC routes are taking a large hit in ridership.

In addition, VIVA Green and Pink are also down in ridership in comparison to last year. VIVA Green ridership is down 22.5% and VIVA Pink is down 23.1% over same time last year. Route coverage could be an issue here as the VIVA Pink route is very similar to the Purple line. Lack of anticipated development along the VIVA Green line is hurting ridership as well. Overall, Viva total boardings have decreased by 5.3% for the month of August.

## **Fares**

York Region Transit's fares are now the highest in the GTA. YRT/VIVA's cash fare is \$3.25 which is the highest especially in comparison to the TTC which held the line at \$2.75 while still investing heavily into service improvements. TTC's decision to not proceed with a fare increase did not help the situation for YRT/VIVA.

## **High Gas Prices**

Higher gas prices do encourage people to shift from their cars to using transit. Gas prices have stabilized below the \$1.00 per litre mark during 2009 and this has impacted ridership negatively. Transit has to work harder on keeping those choice riders.



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Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas

Attachment

Copy to: Sabbir Saiyed, Program Manager, Service Planning.

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