

2

YORK REGION TRANSIT YRT/VIVA CALL CENTRE STATISTICS ANNUAL REPORT - 2007

The Transit Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, January 25, 2008, from the Commissioner of Transportation Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides a summary of the 2007 York Region Transit (YRT) call centre statistics. It also provides an update on the introduction and impact of the new call centre technology, 'RideQuest – Call'.

3. BACKGROUND

Transit ridership in York Region has grown from 7.5 million to over 18 million trips per year in only seven years. As a result, the calls to the YRT/Viva customer call centre have grown by 86%. To manage growth, call centre improvements have been implemented including additional staff resources, new telephone technology, new computer software for customer service representatives, and expanded call options for customers.

Call centre statistics are collected and tracked on a monthly basis, however, call volumes are monitored daily to ensure service level standards are achieved. The complete 2007 summary is attached as *Attachment 1*.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The call centre is available seven days a week from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday to Friday, and 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekends and holidays. There are 15 permanent and casual staff working a variety of shifts in order to effectively cover the call centre hours.

The call centre technology allows staff to monitor a variety of statistics including calls offered, calls answered, calls abandoned, call wait times and ongoing service levels. In

addition, call volumes are monitored through computer technology at all times to ensure that calls are being answered in a timely manner and adjustments to staffing are made as required to meet customer needs. Call recording technology is also available to monitor and track calls to the call centre as needed.

Call volumes have increased steadily as a result of ridership and general population growth. Customer calls have increased from 108,099 calls per year in 2002 to 201,699 in 2006, and then a reduction was experienced in 2007 to 179,748 (see Table 1 below).

In mid 2005, the volume of calls to the call centre began to rise substantially as a result of the pending introduction of the Viva bus rapid transit service. In addition, customer call times were increasing due to the number of questions arising from the new service.

Table 1
Call Centre Statistics

Year	Customer Calls	Percentage Change (year to year)
2002	108,099	
2003	114,626	6%
2004	136,837	19%
2005	190,882	39%
2006	201,699	6%
2007	179,748	-11%

4.1 New Call Centre Technology a Success

In order to address the growing information needs of our customers, a new call centre technology called RideQuest – Call was launched in June 2007. This allows customers to receive automated schedule information by phone seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Since the introduction of RideQuest – Call, live calls to the Customer Service Representatives have been reduced by some 17% on a daily basis. At the same time, however, the total number of calls handled by the Ridequest – Call system and by the Customer Service Representatives has actually increased.

It is estimated that approximately 20% of all transit information calls are now handled by the Ridequest – Call system.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In order to address the growing needs of the call centre, additional staff has been required over the past few years. Due to the success of the RideQuest - Call technology, it is anticipated that existing staff resources will meet the call centre needs in 2008.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

YRT/Viva has been proactive in anticipating the transit needs in the local communities. The YRT/Viva customer call centre improvements will assist in providing advanced information for customers in all local communities.

7. CONCLUSION

YRT/Viva staff will continue to monitor call centre needs, anticipate growth, review technologies and introduce continuous improvement in order to ensure customer transit information needs are met. Statistics will be reported to Transit Committee and Regional Council on an annual basis.

For more information on this report, contact Mary-Lou Johnston, Manager of Marketing and Customer Service (ext. 5614) of the Transit Branch of the Transportation Services Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)