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YORK REGION TRANSIT GEORGINA MOBILITY TRANSIT FUNDING REQUEST

The Transit Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, January 26, 2006, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council approve a grant in the amount of \$32,500 for 2006 to Georgina Mobility Transit to provide “community-based” transit services as outlined in this report.
2. The Regional Chair and Regional Clerk be authorized to sign the necessary contract, subject to review by Legal Services.
3. The Town of Georgina be advised of the arrangements undertaken by the Region with respect to the funding request for Georgina Mobility Transit.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to review the results of the 2005 transit pilot project with Georgina Mobility Transit, concerning the provision of “community-based” transit services for residents of the Town of Georgina, and to address a request for continued financial support in 2006.

3. BACKGROUND

During the 2005 York Region Transit budget discussions, a request was made by the Town of Georgina for the Region to provide a matching financial grant in the amount of \$30,000 to continue the operation of Georgina Mobility Transit. The intent of the grant was to support the provision of transportation services to the residents of Georgina who are not currently able to access York Region Transit conventional and specialized services. The request was approved by Regional Council on a one-year trial basis at its February 2005 meeting.

A subsequent contractual arrangement was developed and executed to indemnify the Region from any and all costs, losses, claims and demands brought against the Region based upon or arising from the provision of funding by the Region. In addition, Georgina Mobility Transit was required to provide the Region with performance statistics on a

quarterly basis, to enable York Region Transit to assess future planning needs for conventional and specialized transit services in Georgina.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Georgina Mobility Transit provides a low cost transportation alternative to meet the community transit needs for persons who live in the rural areas of Georgina who do not have access to a conventional public transit service, or do not meet the eligibility requirements for York Region Transit's Mobility Plus service. Transit service is provided through volunteer drivers/vehicles with trip destinations both within and outside the Region. Customers are provided trips, where appropriate, to the nearest GO Transit or York Region Transit bus route. Strict avoidance of duplication of services is adhered to and monitored by Georgina Mobility Transit and York Region Transit.

This transit "partnership" is supported by York Region Transit since it addresses the requirement for a transit service to meet the needs of Region residents in a cost effective manner, which cannot currently be supported through the introduction of fixed route conventional bus services. From January to September 2005, 6,695 trips have been provided by Georgina Mobility Transit. Trip purposes include medical appointments, food shopping, social services, etc. The average cost per trip is in the \$35 - \$37 range. Based on staff assessments, this service has been shown to be of value to area residents.

Georgina Mobility Transit, in its mid-term funding report, anticipates trip demand in 2006 will grow by 8%. As a result, an allocation of \$32,500 was included in the York Region Transit's 2006 Operating Budget as the Region's share for continued support for this community transit service.

It is staff's recommendation to continue the support of this service initiative for 2006 which will permit the opportunity of measuring, over a two-year period (2005/2006), the effectiveness of the service in addressing the transit needs not only in Georgina, but also the potential application in rural communities throughout the Region. Based on the results of this review, a further report will be prepared by the Fall of 2006 recommending future action and potential application of this "community-based" transit initiative.

4.1 Relationship to Vision 2026

The financial support of an efficient and effective "community-based" transit service, in the absence of available conventional public transit service, will address the Region's goal of making transit more accessible throughout the Region.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2006 Business Plan and Budget for York Region Transit contains an allocation of \$32,500 as a grant in support of the Georgina Mobility Transit operation. The provision

of this grant, coupled with other external funding sources, will enable Georgina Mobility Transit to meet its anticipated trip demand for 2006. This grant is for the year 2006 only, and any further financial support would be subject to review as part of the York Region Transit's 2007 Business Plan and Budget process.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The provision of the requested transit grant to Georgina Mobility Transit will enable this "community-based" transit service to continue to meet the transit needs of residents within Georgina who are unable to avail themselves of conventional or specialized York Region Transit services.

7. CONCLUSION

Georgina Mobility Transit provides a valuable transit service to those rural area residents whose transportation needs cannot currently be addressed by York Region Transit's conventional or specialized transit services. By providing financial support to this "community-based" transit operation, the Region is addressing its goal of making transit more accessible throughout the Region. It is therefore recommended that Regional Council support the Transit Georgina Mobility grant request for \$32,500 in 2006. Based on formal approval by Council, staff will develop the necessary legal agreement and monitor system performance throughout 2006. A further report on the results of this test application of "community-based" transit service within Georgina and its possible application to other rural areas within the Region will be presented to Regional Council in the Fall of 2006.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.