1
YORK REGION TRANSIT
ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN 2005

The Transit Committee recommends:

1. The presentation by Irene McNeil, Manager, Service Planning, be received; and

2. The recommendation contained in the following report, March 23, 2005, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works be adopted:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The York Region Transit Annual Service Plan 2005 *(Attachment 1)* be received and that the recommendations contained in the Annual Service Plan be endorsed.

2. PURPOSE

In October 2004, the draft Annual Service Plan 2005 was presented to Transit Committee for information. The draft Plan has since been circulated to a variety of stakeholders including local municipalities, other transit agencies (e.g. TTC, GO Transit and Brampton Transit) and others. Stakeholder comments have now been considered and incorporated into the final Plan.

The main objective of the York Region Transit (YRT) Annual Service Plan 2005 is to improve the quality of YRT services in order to attract new customers and thereby increase the overall transit market share. Although a Five-Year Service Plan was completed in Spring 2002 for the newly amalgamated YRT system, it is important to review services on an annual basis in order to gauge how well services are meeting longer-term goals, objectives and standards. It is also important to review services as conditions change, particularly as they relate to future rapid transit services and the impact of new development.

3. BACKGROUND

As part of YRT's Five-Year Service Plan, an annual planning cycle and consultation process was recommended. The annual planning cycle was based on well-defined service standards and objectives which were adopted by Regional Council. The recommended process included a needs identification stage, a ridership and financial performance review, a process for the development of draft proposals and a stakeholder consultation process. YRT staff have followed the approved approach, with the Annual Service Plan 2005 report being the basis for the following year's planning activities and budget *(see Attachment 1)*.

In 2003, the YRT system consisted of over 70 routes carrying over 10.2 million passenger trips, an impressive increase of 9.3% over the previous year. By the end of 2004, ridership had grown another 14%. YRT conventional services consist of core routes (operating in major arterial corridors), feeder or local routes (operating in local neighbourhoods), high school specials (focusing on specific student demand), GO train shuttles, and one community bus route (operating in Richmond Hill). Each category of routes serves a particular transit market and each route plays an important role in the success of the overall system network. Although each route is reviewed individually, YRT Service Planners consider the overall system goals when evaluating changes or improvements.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

As part of the review process, YRT staff evaluate both the effectiveness and efficiency of the YRT system. The evaluation process considers the effectiveness of not only the individual routes, but more importantly, the system as a whole. Consideration is given to the financial efficiency (revenue/cost ratio) of each route, effectiveness in terms of route/network connectivity, service area coverage and ability to meet demand.

The annual service review is an inclusive and proactive process. YRT staff take into account comments received from customers, residents, local municipal Councillors, business groups, YRT Customer Service and Operations staff, and comments from associated transit agencies.

In order to proactively engage the public, Public Information Centres (PICs) were carried out over a six-week period (May/June 2004). The PICs were held at local venues in order to solicit feedback and attract comments from those residents and customers most affected by the proposed changes. Over 300 individuals attended the PICs, with many more commenting on the proposed plans via the YRT website or by telephone.

4.1 Service Standards

There are two route-specific service standards used to ensure individual routes are designed both to be attractive to customers and to perform at a satisfactory level. Minimum service frequency and minimum performance (passenger/hour) are used to evaluate each route's operation. Each category of routes has different standards according to its role within the overall network. For example, a core route, which serves a TTC subway station, would be expected to have a higher efficiency rating than a local neighbourhood feeder route. A core route's alignment is also more direct in order to minimize travel time, whereas a local feeder route is designed to maximize customer convenience within a catchment area, thereby forfeiting some of its efficiency.

4.2 Financial Efficiency

One of the factors which measures the efficiency of a route is the cost recovery or revenue/cost ratio. The revenue/cost (R/C) is a direct reflection of a route's farebox revenue versus the total operating cost. In 2003, the YRT system had a cost recovery of 43.7%. It is estimated the 2004 R/C ratio will be 50% *(see Attachment 2)*.

Although the revenue/cost ratio is not the sole factor in determining the viability of a route, it does give a good indication of the overall efficiency of the service. The revenue/cost ratio is used to determine whether or not a route's service coverage and frequency need to be expanded, realigned, reduced or even eliminated. As part of the Council adopted Five-Year Service Plan, it was recommended that new services be given a minimum one-year trial before any major changes are made. This trial period allows customers to fully familiarize themselves with the service and provides for a trend analysis of monthly ridership.

The Annual Service Plan 2005 recommends a number of route specific improvements. These can be summarized as follows:

- Realignment of local feeder routes in the Vaughan, Newmarket, Markham and Aurora areas. The intent is to simplify the routing configuration, provide two-way service (avoiding one directional loops) and eliminate duplication.
- Improve connectivity to more frequent core routes and future rapid transit corridors.
- Route extensions to new subdivision developments in the Vaughan, Markham, Newmarket, Aurora and Richmond Hill areas, as well as a connection from the Yonge corridor to King City.
- Development of alternative service strategies including the introduction of new Community Bus and demand responsive services in select areas throughout the Region.

4.3 Stakeholder Comments

In addition to the comments received at the scheduled public information centres across the Region, community meetings, e-mails, etc., a number of formal stakeholder responses have been received. The following is a summary of the comments received:

- Markham – Expansion of Express type services serving businesses in the Hwy 404/7 area. Plan: Addressed with additional service and introduction of Viva.
- Georgina - Requesting service extensions from Keswick to Sutton and Newmarket, and consideration of alternative service delivery for other areas of the Town. Plan: Extension to Sutton and Newmarket to be reviewed as part of the 5-Year Service Plan; Transit Georgina subsidy being implemented.

- Newmarket - Alternative service delivery for low demand areas, rerouting or limited service on Stonehaven Avenue, retain service on Harrison Drive. Plan: Small bus strategy being developed; service on Stonehaven being reduced; removal of service on Harrison Drive being reconsidered.
- Aurora - Improved service to GO station. Plan: Improved service on Route 31/32.
- East Gwillimbury - Alternative service delivery strategy for Mount Albert. Plan: Discussions ongoing with municipality and residents.
- King – Improved service to King City and limit service on 15th Sideroad. Plan: Introduction of new Route 22 will streamline services, but still provide connection to Yonge Street along 15th Sideroad/Bloomington Road.
- GO Transit – Integration of service between GO and YRT on Highway 27 and Highway 50 (Kleinburg, Nobleton and Bolton), future services in Georgina (Sutton, Pefferlaw) and need for on-going review of levels of service in the Yonge corridor. Plan: Introduction of local Route 98 on Yonge Street (Bernard Terminal to East Gwillimbury GO Station); coordination of services in rural areas of Region to be discussed in context of 5-Year Service Plan.
- TTC – Removal of TTC 68B service from Calvert Road (Markham) due to speed humps. Plan: TTC 68B to be removed from Calvert Road and extended to Angus Glen Community Centre in September 2005.

4.4 Relationship to Vision 2026

The primary goal of an annual service plan is to ensure the transit system's goals and objectives are aligned with the predetermined longer-range strategic plan. YRT's Five-Year Plan set specific targets including an increase of annual revenue passengers from 10 to 17 million (including GO Yonge 'C' and Bayview) over the next five years. YRT's mandate also includes a major role in contributing to an increase in the Region's morning peak hour modal share from 8 to 12 percent during the same period.

Vision 2026 includes a goal statement relating to the development of 'Infrastructure for a Growing Region', which states: *"In 2026, York Region will have effective, efficient and environmentally sensitive transportation, waste management and water systems."*

To support this goal, the Region has identified specific action areas. The following action areas have been considered for this report:

- Continuing to improve service and infrastructure for a successfully integrated transit service.
- Developing an optional mix of transit service types.
- Promoting transit usage as a practical and wise alternative to private vehicle use.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations in the draft Annual Service Plan 2005 were considered at the October Transit Committee meeting and represented approximately $5.2 million of service improvements. During the budget review process, the Plan was reviewed, proposed improvements prioritized, with only the Viva related and 'Priority 1' improvements considered for 2005 implementation. The final 2005 improvements will cost approximately $2.4 million with associated revenues amounting to approximately $600,000, for a net cost of $1.8 million. All remaining improvements originally included in the Plan ($2.8 million) will be reconsidered as part of the 2006 service planning process.

It should be noted that, in addition to the funds already noted, Transit Committee requested that approximately $275,000 be transferred from the YRT Marketing & Customer Service program to directly fund other high priority service enhancements. YRT staff have implemented or are considering the following additional services for 2005:

Table 1
Additional Service Enhancements

Service	*Details*	*Start Date*	*2005 Cost (000's)*	*Priority*
Transit Georgina Request	Provide transportation support for individuals unable to access conventional or not eligible for Mobility Plus	Spring 2005	$30	4
Route 85 – 16th Ave / Rutherford	Extend Sunday service west of Vaughan Mills to Islington and east to MS Hospital	May 8, 2005	$30	2
Route 85 – 16th Ave / Rutherford	Improve evening freq (7-11 pm) from 60 min to 30/40 min	May 8, 2005	$60	2
Route 85 – 16th Ave / Rutherford	Improve Sat evening freq (7-11 pm) from 60 to 30/40 min	May 8, 2005	$10	2
Route 4 – Major Mackenzie	Extend peak period only from Warden to Mount Joy GO or MS Hospital	Sept 4, 2005	$40	2
TTC Warden 68B	Extend north to Angus Glen CC (to serve CC and TTC speed hump issue)	Sept 4, 2005	$45	3

Newmarket GO Shuttles	From Aspen Ridge & Sawmill Valley	Sept 4, 2005	$40	2
Middlefield School Special	To serve Middlefield HS (weekday peaks only)	Sept 4, 2005	$11	2
Total			**$266 K**	

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

As noted earlier in the report, a series of Public Information Centres was held across the Region. Input has been received from various stakeholder groups, residents, students, other transit agencies, local Councils, Chambers of Commerce, and Boards of Trade. YRT's Annual Service Plan 2005 recommends a number of service improvements which will impact the entire Region, as well as adjacent transit systems. As such, the plan was circulated to the local municipalities and agencies for information and comment. Stakeholder comments received by mid-December, 2004 have been given due consideration in this final Plan.

7. CONCLUSION

YRT's Annual Service Plan 2005 is a document which will guide the expansion and refining of transit services in the upcoming year. The recommendations contained in the plan provide a basis for budget development and ensure the delivery of transit services is consistent with the longer range strategic direction adopted in the Five-Year Service Plan.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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