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YORK REGION TRANSIT / VIVA
2009 SERVICE PLAN (PLAN09) - FINAL REPORT

The Transit Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated March 19, 2009, from the Commissioner of Transportation Services.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The York Region Transit / Viva Annual Service Plan - PLAN09 *(Attachment 1)* be received and that the recommendations contained in PLAN09 be endorsed.

2. PURPOSE

This report presents the final 2009 Service Plan - PLAN09 taking into consideration comments from stakeholders, including all local municipalities, and 2009 Operating Budget constraints.

3. BACKGROUND

The main objective of the YRT/Viva Annual Service PLAN09 is to improve the quality of transit services in order to attract new customers, thus increasing transit market share. A Five-Year Service Plan was completed in Spring 2006; however, this annual review gauges annual service performance, refines services and assists in the development of the annual operating and capital budgets.

The annual transit planning cycle is based on a well-defined and comprehensive process

The process included the following stages:

- Individual route performance reviews.
- Needs identification (based on preliminary data and feedback).
- System ridership and financial performance review (based on approved standards).
- Development of draft proposals.
- Stakeholder consultation.
- Final recommendations.

In 2008, the YRT/Viva system operated over 120 routes and carried 19 million revenue passenger trips

Route categories consist of:
- Viva Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes.
- YRT core/base routes (major arterial corridors including TTC routes).
- Local routes (local neighbourhoods).
- Express routes (Highways 407 and 400).
- High school specials.
- GO shuttles.
- Community Bus routes (operating in Markham, Richmond Hill and Newmarket).

By the end of 2008, the system carried 18.8 million revenue passenger trips, an increase of 3.4% over the previous year.

In October 2008, the draft PLAN09 was presented to Transit Committee for information. The draft PLAN09 has since been circulated to a variety of stakeholders (including local municipalities, adjacent transit systems, business groups and school boards). Stakeholder comments have been considered and incorporated into the final PLAN09 – see Attachment 1.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The annual service review is an inclusive, proactive and comprehensive process

YRT staff have considered comments from customers, residents, local municipal staff and Councils, business groups (including Transportation Management Associations), school boards, internal YRT Customer Service and Operations staff and adjacent transit agencies.

Stakeholder Comments

Following the presentation of the Draft PLAN09 in October 2008 to Regional Council, it was circulated to approximately 20 stakeholder groups, as well as posted on the YRT website. The following is a summary of the comments received:

Town of Markham:
- Consider changing the fare policy for TTC routes servicing York Region.
- Consider semi-express services (non-stop between subway stations and Steeles Ave) for TTC Routes servicing York Region.
- Implement additional services on Route 301 – Markham Express.

- Work collaboratively with Smart Commute to promote transit services in employment areas that are operating below performance standards.

Town of Aurora:
- Route 33 – Wellington should operate via a new routing (eastbound on Wellington Street, northbound on First Commerce Drive and continue southbound on Leslie Street). Route 33 should enter the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex.
- Route 33 should be extended to Bathurst Street to the west and the Highway 404 parking lot to the east.
- YRT to provide the Town with revenue and cost information of the transit service in the Town for the last 4-5 years to increase awareness of the program/further promote to help increase ridership.
- Review services to/from Aurora GO Station with a goal of more convenient service for customers.

City of Vaughan:
- PLAN09 represents real progress in delivering transit services.
- Supports the increase in service levels and service to new subdivisions.

Town of Richmond Hill:
- PLAN09 will improve transit services for Richmond Hill.
- Notify residents of Oak Ridges about new Dial-a-Ride program before implementation.
- Town supports providing additional transit services in Elgin Mills Corridor.

Town of Georgina:
- Supports proposed shuttle service between South Keswick Commuter parking lot and the East Gwillimbury GO Station.
- Consider YRT operating Sutton GO bus service in 2010.
- Continue GO Transit bus fare subsidy; support for 3 additional weekday round trips and 6 additional Saturday round trip on Route 69 – Sutton GO Bus.

Township of King
- Supports service initiative to improve the midday service by implementing a 45 minute frequency on Route 22 – King City. Increase public awareness.
- Strongly supports the introduction of a new weekday GO shuttle between Oak Ridges and the King City GO Station.
- Continue to operate Route 22 limited weekday service to St. Thomas of Villanova College to meet student demand. King would like to explore in the future having bus service on Keele Street north of the King Road to service St. Thomas and the surrounding area. This would potentially assist the municipality in considering some additional redevelopment, infill and intensification opportunities in this area.

York Region Student Transportation Services (STS):

- Several high schools were identified as candidates for a decrease in yellow school bussing for Fall 2009.
- YRT and STS staff are working closely to identify potential capacity issues and need for YRT services to the high schools.

Toronto Transit Commission (TTC):

- Supports the overall emphasis on increasing transit services and ridership in York Region excepting any unforeseen budget or resource crisis.
- TTC expects increased services on TTC contracted routes in York Region.

GO Transit:

- All-day train service on the Stouffville GO Train line (Fall 2009) – would like to see local transit service meet all train times.

Brampton Transit:

- City of Brampton has incorporated the Route 77 – Hwy 7 proposals into their 2009 Service Plan.
- The cost for those proposed changes will be shared between YRT and the City of Brampton. Any service changes will be subject to budget approval and allocation of resources.

Smart Commute - North Toronto, Vaughan:

- Supports service expansion into developing industrial areas (such as the Vaughan Enterprise Zone).
- Many NTV partners in North Toronto have expressed interest in the RideSaver program but are not eligible since they are located just south of Steeles Avenue. NTV recommends that the RideSaver program be extended to businesses located outside of York Region.
- Supports extending services during the evenings and on weekends.
- Supports the new weekday midday service for Route 360 – Maple Express.
- Recommends weekend express service between Yorkdale Mall and Vaughan Mills; concerns about the cancellation of Route 10 – York U-Woodbridge and Route 11 – Woodbridge.
- Supports the continued efforts of YRT to integrate with other transit services (i.e. GO Transit).
- Supports expansion and addition of YRT services that connect the Maple and Rutherford GO Stations to businesses located in Vaughan.
- Recommends Open Door policy for York University students travelling to Downsview Station.

Smart Commute – 404/7:

- Supported the cancellation of Route 210 – Lunch Express at the end of 2008; SC – 404/7 will continue to work with YRT on other initiatives that will help promote and increase future transit ridership.
- Improve service frequency and span of service on all core/base arterial routes in Richmond Hill and Markham (eg. Bathurst, 16th Ave.).

The evaluation process considered the effectiveness of not only the individual routes, but more importantly, the system as a whole

Consideration was given to the financial efficiency (revenue/cost ratio) of each route, effectiveness in terms of passengers carried and route/network connectivity, service area coverage and ability to meet demand within prescribed service standards.

All of the above comments have been given due consideration and the final recommendations reflect their evaluation in the context of approved service standards and budget.

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 mandate also includes a major role in contributing to an increase in the Region's morning peak hour modal share from eight to 12% 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 a variety or family of complementary transit services to meet the needs of our customer markets and communities.
- Promoting transit usage as a practical and wise alternative to private vehicle use.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As part of the approved 2009 Operating Budget process, only Priority 1 initiatives were approved for implementation in 2009. The gross cost for Priority 1 service improvements is approximately $1.9 million ($1.1 million net cost) for 24,660 revenue hours of service. The annualized gross cost for Priority 1 is approximately $3.7 million or 47,450 revenue hours. In terms of service hours, Priority 1 service initiatives represent an increase of 2.1%.

The remaining priority initiatives will be included as part of the 2010 Service Plan initiatives.

It should also be noted that a number of efficiencies are built into PLAN09. For example, staff have committed to find approximately $500K in scheduling efficiencies by carefully analysing routes on a trip-by-trip basis and better matching service levels with ridership demand. In addition, the conversion of selected conventional routes and/or trips to Dial-a-Ride is also expected to result in $400K in savings annually. And finally, as part of our regular review process, specific routes are targeted for detailed analysis to optimize efficiency.

Attachment 1 is the final YRT/Viva Annual Service Plan 2009. Section 7 of PLAN09, identifies all service initiatives categorized both by priority and by municipality. Individual route assessments can be found in Appendicies 1-8 and a detailed description of stakeholder feedback is included in Appendix 10.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The YRT/Viva Annual Service Plan 2009 recommends a number of route-specific improvements. These can be summarized as follows:

- Improvements intended to maintain schedule reliability on existing routes.
- Frequency/coverage improvements designed to bring services closer to standard where warranted, including route extensions into new developments.
- New route services in established subdivisions (e.g. Milliken - Markham, Queen Filomena and Upper Thornhill Village - Vaughan).
- Service to new subdivisions in Markham, Vaughan, Newmarket, Stouffville (e.g. Box Grove, Cornell – Markham; Upper Thornhill Village – Vaughan; Queen Filomena – Vaughan; Woodspring/Clearmeadow – Newmarket; Millard Street area - Stouffville).
- Expansion of Dial-a-Ride with new implementation on selected routes.
- New GO train connections in anticipation of GO Transit’s proposed new off-peak service expansion for the Barrie corridor and Stouffville corridor.
- Introduction of new limited-stop/express services on existing key corridors such as Bathurst Street.

7. CONCLUSION

For PLAN09, the total approved growth-related service initiatives for Priority 1 amount to approximately 24,660 revenue hours of service (including expanded coverage, frequency and span of service). The gross cost for Priority 1 is approximately $1.9 million ($1.1 million net).

As part of the approved 2009 operating budget, only Priority 1 received approval for implementation in 2009. The Priority 1 service increases will address the following issues:

- Existing schedule adherence and overcrowding
- Residential subdivision currently without service
- Existing latent demand (based on outstanding service requests/petitions)
- Major trip generators currently without service or minimal service

The recommendations contained in the PLAN09 provide a basis for budget tracking and ensure that the delivery of transit services is consistent with the longer range direction adopted in the latest Five-Year Service Plan (2006-2010).

For more information on this report, contact Sabbir Saiyed, Program Manager, Service Planning (ext. 5895), of the Transit Branch of the Transportation Services Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause was included in the agenda for the April 16, 2009 meeting.)