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YORK REGION TRANSIT DIAL-A-RIDE PILOT PROJECT UPDATE

The Transit Committee recommends the following:

- 1. The presentation by Irene McNeil, Manager, Service Planning and Steve Baldo, Supervisor, Operations, York Region Transit Mobility Plus, be received;**
- 2. The recommendations contained in the following report, April 29, 2008, from the Commissioner of Transportation Services, be adopted.**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council endorse the continuation and expansion of the Dial-a-Ride program on York Region Transit Route Bristol-London Route 44.
2. Dial-a-Ride be expanded for use on Routes 32, 34, 40, 41, 84 and 57, effective September 2008, as outlined in this report.

2. PURPOSE

This report updates Regional Council on the progress of the Dial-a-Ride Route 44 pilot project in the Town of Newmarket. The report also identifies expansion opportunities for the Dial-a-Ride program into other areas with relatively low ridership.

3. BACKGROUND

Care Accessible Vans has been contracted to operate the Dial-a-Ride pilot in Newmarket

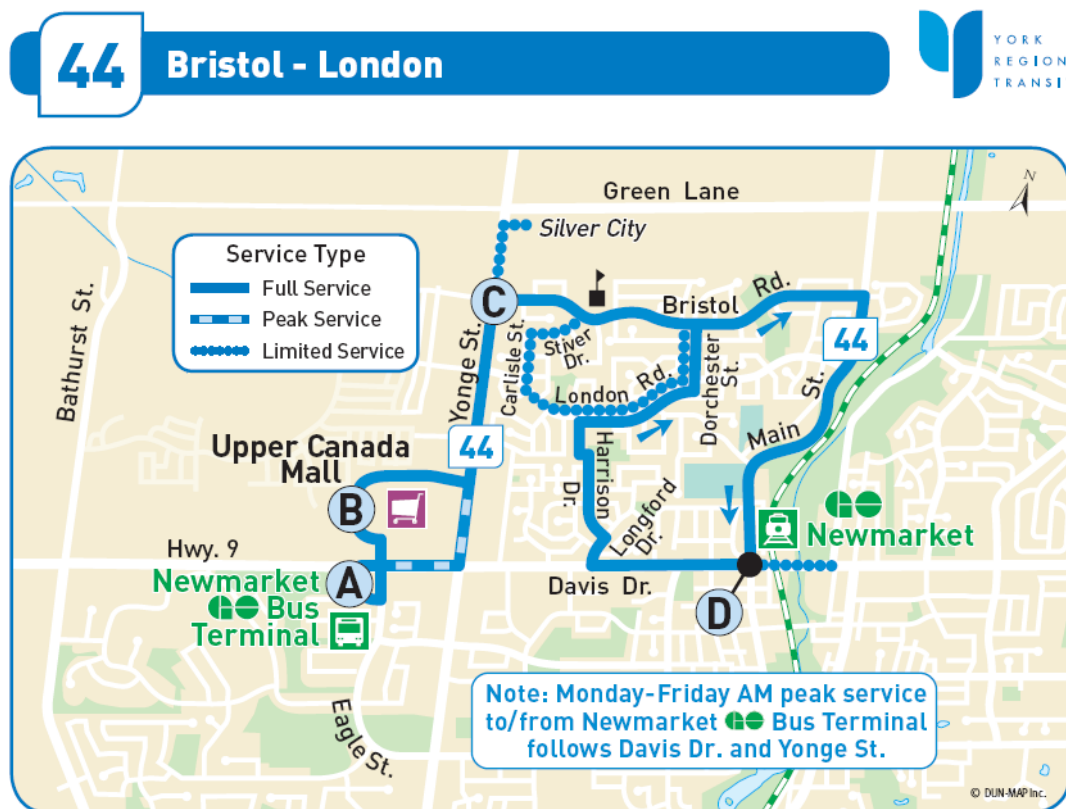
On June 21, 2007, Council authorized York Region Transit (YRT) to operate a Dial-a-Ride pilot on Route 44 in the Town of Newmarket. The contract was for a one year period (plus one year option), with a review following the first six months of operation.

The Dial-a-Ride concept falls into the category of demand-responsive transit service. It is designed to provide immediate local travel within a community with relatively low transit ridership. Customers call a central number and request a pick-up from their nearest bus stop. Dispatchers then send out an accessible vehicle, within a specified time frame, to

the customer and take them to a key destination or bus stop where regular conventional fixed-route transit services are offered. This type of service delivery model has traditionally been applied in areas where demand for transit is less than six passengers per hour and when destinations are common (eg. a GO Station, higher order transit line or shopping mall).

In the case of the Route 44, the Dial-a-Ride pilot started on September 4, 2007 using a single dedicated accessible vehicle, operated under contract by Care Accessible Vans. The Route 44 Dial-a-Ride operates between the hours of 7:00 pm and 12:00 am - Monday to Saturdays, replacing the regular Route 44 which operates during the remaining service hours.

Figure 1 – Route 44 Map



4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Dial-a-Ride pilot was a proven success during six-month pilot

The evaluation of the pilot was based on ridership, financial, and customer acceptance criteria for the initial six-month period (Sept. 07-Feb. 08). The results were compared to

the original business case presented to Council in June, 2007. Table 1 summarizes the pilot results.

Table 1
Bristol-London Route 44 Summary of Results during the Dial-a-Ride Pilot

Route 44 Operating Statistics	Before Dial-a-Ride	Dial-a-Ride Business Case	Actual Dial-a-Ride
Total annual operating cost (All day costs)	\$409,000	\$212,000	\$211,700
Dial-a-Ride annualized (late evening portion only)	N/A	\$42,000	\$41,600
Total (All day)	\$409,000	\$254,000	\$253,300
Annual Savings	N/A	\$155,000	\$155,700
Total Day-time Rides	174	168	163
Average Daily Rides (Dial-a-Ride evening)	N/A	6	9
Average Daily Ridership	174	174	173
Average Passenger/Rev Hr Evening Hrs: (7:00 pm -11:00 pm)	4	2	2
Boarding/Rev Hrs (KPI)	11	11	11
Cost/Passenger (KPI)	\$9.32	\$5.88	\$5.69

The Dial-a-Ride results clearly indicate that all expectations for this program have been met

The original business case indicated that, within the Route 44 service area, ridership would remain stable, the net cost/passenger could potentially be reduced from the existing \$9.32 per passenger to \$5.88 during the evening hours, and that there would be general acceptance by the public.

The actual results indicate that:

- Total average daily ridership has remained constant at 173.
- The net cost/passenger is \$5.69 per passenger representing a 61% improvement in financial efficiency.

- Customer feedback has been very positive; only one complaint received during the entire six months of operation.

4.1 DIAL-A-RIDE EXPANSION

YRT has identified six additional candidate areas/routes for Dial-a-Ride expansion

Based on the positive and encouraging results from the six-month pilot, additional routes have been identified for expansion of Dial-a-Ride. Table 2 lists additional routes that have similar ridership and financial characteristics to the Route 44 study area and are candidates for expansion of Dial-a-Ride:

Table 2
List of Candidate Routes for Dial-a-Ride Expansion

Route Name/ Service Area	Conventional Service Hrs	Proposed Dial-a-Ride Service Hrs (Sept 08 start)	Current Avg Pass/Hr	Current Avg Cost/Pass within Dial-a- Ride Service Area	Expected Avg Cost/Pass within Dial-a- Ride Service Area	Current Avg Cost/Pass (\$)
Rte 44 Expansion to 18838 Yonge Street	As demand requires	6:00 am to 11:30 pm Mon to Fri & 7:30 am to 11:30 pm Saturday	n/a	n/a	\$19.00	n/a
Rte 57 - Mulock Stonehaven Rd area only	Peak hours only – Mon to Fri	9:00 am to 10:00 pm Mon to Sat	1	\$25.38	\$22.75	\$25.38
Rte 84 – Oak Ridges	Peak hours only – Mon to Fri No Sat	9:00 am to 2:30 pm & 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm Mon to Fri & new Saturday service	5.00 3.00 5 Sat	\$13.29	\$6.85	\$14.67
Rte 32 – Aurora South (S of Wellington)	Peak hours only – Mon to Fri No Sat	9:00 am to 2:30 pm & 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm Mon to Fri & new Saturday service	4 6 5 Sat	\$17.76	\$8.29	\$17.76
Rte 34 Industrial Parkway	No Service	Weekday peaks only 600 am to 900 am & 3:00 pm to 7:30 pm Mon to Fri	6 5	\$16.20	\$8.51	\$16.20
Rte 40 – Unionville Local	Evening service – Mon to Sat	8:15 pm to 11:15 pm Mon to Thurs; 8:15 pm to 1:15 am Fri to Sat	2 2 Sat	\$11.29	\$13.35	\$13.35

Rte 41 – Markham Local	Evening service – Mon to Sat	8:40 pm to 11:40 pm Mon to Thurs; 8:40 pm to 1:40 am Fri to Sat	3 2 Sat	\$7.14	\$8.57	\$8.57
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4.1.1 Route 44 Dial-a-Ride Expansion

YRT has received requests from York Region Community Services and Housing for service to the Transitional and Supportive Housing facilities at 18838 Yonge Street

This isolated site is located on Yonge Street, just north of Old Yonge in the Town of East Gwillimbury. YRT has reviewed the merits of re-routing the existing Route 52 Holland Landing to service this location. However, due to its remote location, the operational issues associated with the access onto Yonge Street and the added cost to extend a YRT regular route versus the anticipated limited demand, it is felt that this site would be best served by an extension of the existing Route 44 Dial-a-Ride.

With the limited two to three trip requests per day, a variation of Dial-a-Ride, whereby the service is offered on a call-in basis only, is recommended. The connecting trip would be to either Upper Canada Mall or the GO Terminal on Eagle Street. The average cost per trip is expected to be \$19.00 based on current Mobility Plus contractor rates.

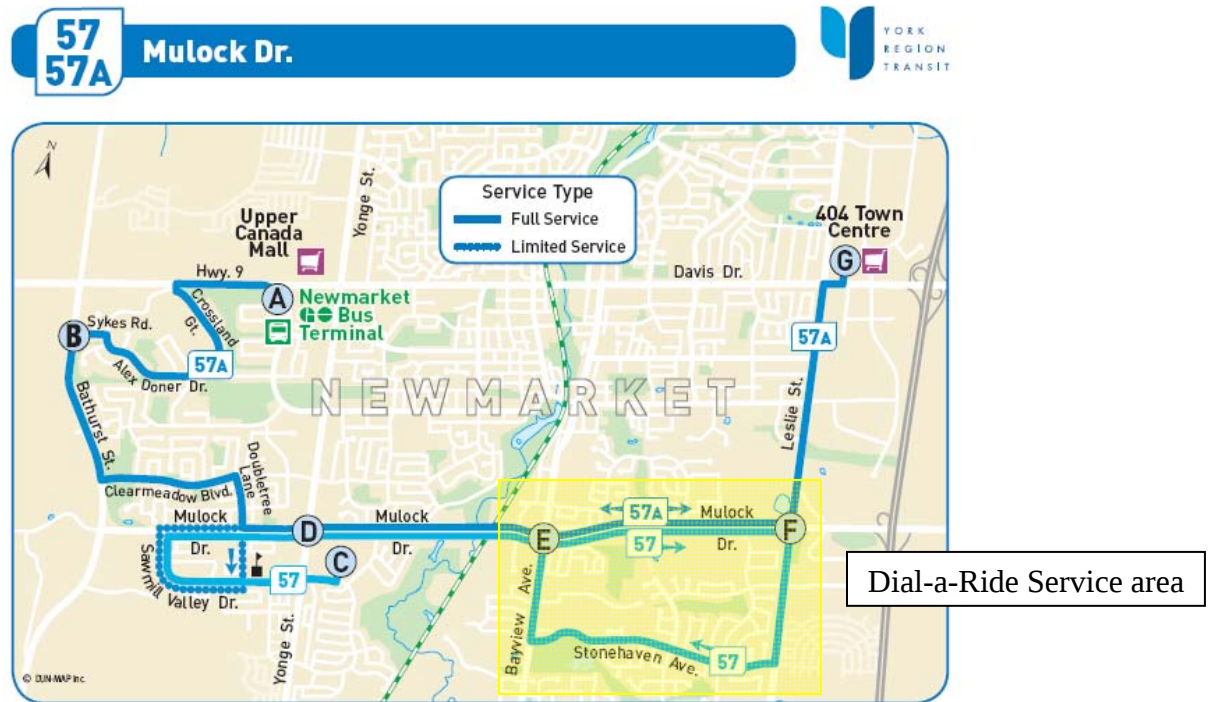
4.1.2 Newmarket Dial-a-Ride Expansion

The Stonehaven community in Newmarket is an ideal candidate area for Dial-a-Ride service

Route 57 - Mulock operates within the Town of Newmarket and services the Mulock Drive corridor and the Stonehaven community. The portion of the route bounded by Mulock Drive to the north, Leslie Street to the east, Stonehaven to the South, and Bayview to the west would be converted to Dial-a-Ride service. (Figure 2) The Dial-a-Ride service would have a dedicated vehicle stationed at the Magna Centre between the hours of 9:00 am and 10:00 pm, Monday to Saturday to accommodate trip requests. The regular Route 57/57A would be restructured to operate along Mulock Drive and Leslie Street during the Dial-a-Ride service period.

The current average passenger/hour and the average cost/passenger on this portion of the route are 1.08 and \$25.38 respectively. With the introduction of Dial-a-Ride, the average passengers/hour are expected to increase slightly to 1.52 and the cost/passenger is expected to be reduced to \$22.75, representing a 10.4% improvement in cost efficiency. The increase in the average passengers/hour is expected as a result of the increased flexibility offered by Dial-a-Ride for residents of the German Canadian Housing residence, located at 735 Stonehaven Avenue.

Figure 2
Rte 57 Stonehaven Dial-a-Ride Service Area



4.1.3 Richmond Hill Dial-a-Ride

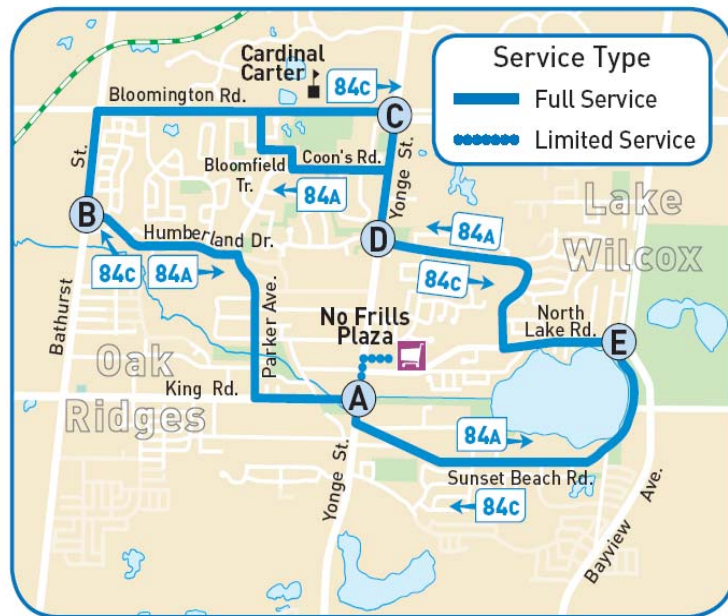
The Oak Ridges community in Richmond Hill is an ideal candidate area for Dial-a-Ride service

Route 84A/C - Oak Ridges operates within the Town of Richmond Hill and services the local community of Oak Ridges. The route is bounded by Bloomington Road to the north, Bayview Ave to the east, Old Colony to the South, and Bathurst Street to the west (Figure 3). The Dial-a-Ride service would have a dedicated vehicle stationed at the No Frills Plaza between the off-peak hours of 9:00 am and 2:30 pm, and 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm Monday to Fridays and from 6:30 am to 10:00 pm on Saturdays to accommodate demand. The regular Route 84A/C would be discontinued during these periods and the operational cost savings realized will be used to offset the cost of the new Dial-a-Ride service. Route 84A/C conventional service will continue to operate in the am and pm peak periods Monday to Friday as the existing ridership is above the Dial-a-Ride threshold.

The average passengers/hour and the average cost/passenger on this route are 5.0 and \$13.29, respectively. The average passengers/hour are expected to remain constant at 5.0

and the cost/passenger is expected to be reduced to \$6.85, representing a 48% improvement in cost efficiency.

Figure 3
Rte 84A/C Dial-a-Ride Service Area



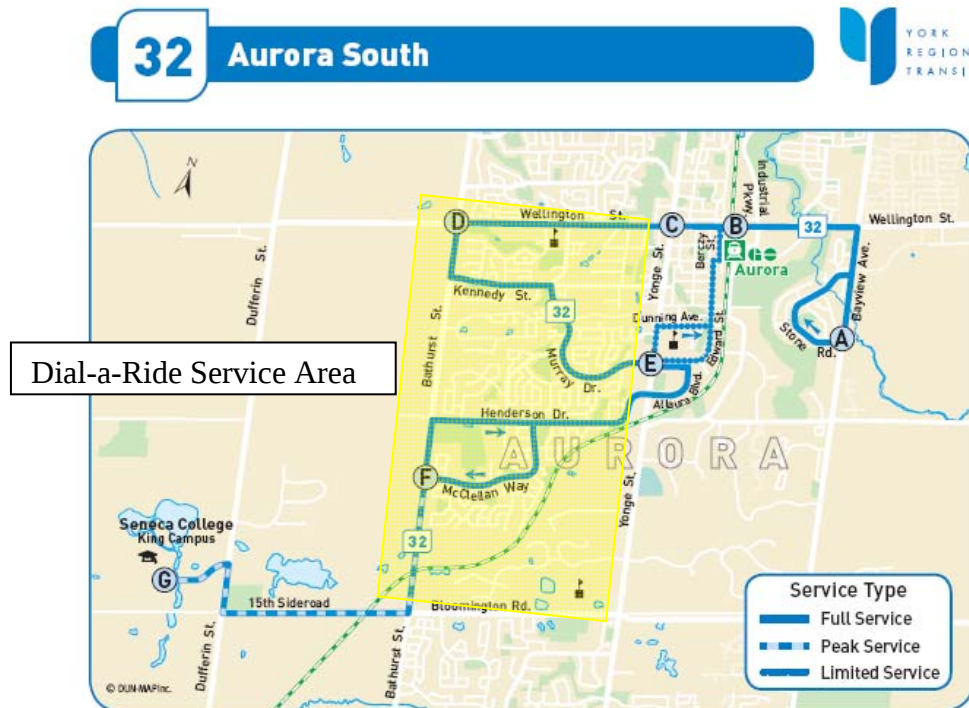
4.1.4 Aurora Dial-a-Ride

Aurora, west of Yonge Street, is another ideal candidate area for Dial-a-Ride service

Route 32- Aurora South operates within the Town of Aurora and services the local community south of Wellington Street. The area bounded by Wellington Street to the north, Yonge Street to the east, Bloomington Road to the South, and Bathurst Street to the west would be converted to Dial-a-Ride service. (Figure 4) The Dial-a-Ride service will have a dedicated vehicle stationed at the Yonge and Murray No Frills between the hours of off-peak hours of 9:00 am and 2:30 pm, and 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm Monday to Fridays to accommodate demand. The local Route 32 conventional, fixed route service will be discontinued during these periods and the operational cost savings realized will be used to offset the cost of the new Dial-a-Ride service. Route 32 conventional service will continue to operate in the am and pm peak periods Monday to Friday as the existing ridership is above the Dial-a-Ride threshold.

The average passengers/hour and the average cost/passenger on this route are 6.0 and \$17.76, respectively. With the introduction of Dial-a-Ride, the average passengers/hour are expected to remain constant at 6.0 and the cost/passenger is expected to be reduced to \$8.29, representing a 53% improvement in cost efficiency.

Figure 4
Rte 32 Dial-a-Ride Service Area



4.1.5 Industrial Parkway Dial-a-Ride

Dial-a-Ride is an effective alternative to complete cancellation of service in the limited-use Industrial Parkway corridor

In January 2008, Regional Council approved the 2008 YRT Service plan. Included in the Plan was a recommendation to cancel Route 34 Industrial Parkway due to low ridership and below standard financial performance. During the consultation phase of the Plan, the Town of Aurora and the Aurora Chamber of Commerce expressed concern with the loss of transit service to the employment area and requested YRT survey the Industrial Parkway employers to determine the potential transit market for services prior to any cancellation.

The subsequent employer survey results indicated general support for public transit in the area. The survey indicated that there are 56 employees using the service. In light of the

survey results, the Town of Aurora and Chamber of Commerce comments, and the results of the Dial-a-Ride pilot, Route 34 can also be considered an additional candidate for Dial-a-Ride.

Route 34 – Industrial Parkway is bounded by St. John's Sideroad to the north, Industrial Parkway to the east, Vandorf Road to the South, and Yonge Street to the west (Figure 5). The Dial-a-Ride service would have a dedicated vehicle stationed at the Aurora GO Station between 6:00 am and 9:00 am, and from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm Monday to Friday to accommodate requests. The regular Route 34 would be discontinued and replaced entirely and the operational cost savings realized would be used to offset the cost of the new Dial-a-Ride service.

The average passengers/hour and the average cost/passenger on this route are 5.2 and \$16.20, respectively. With the introduction of Dial-a-Ride, the average passengers/hour are expected to remain constant at 5.2 and the cost/passenger is expected to be reduced to \$8.51, representing a 47.5% improvement in cost efficiency.

Figure 5
Rte 34 Dial-a-Ride Service Area



4.1.6 Markham Dial-A-Ride

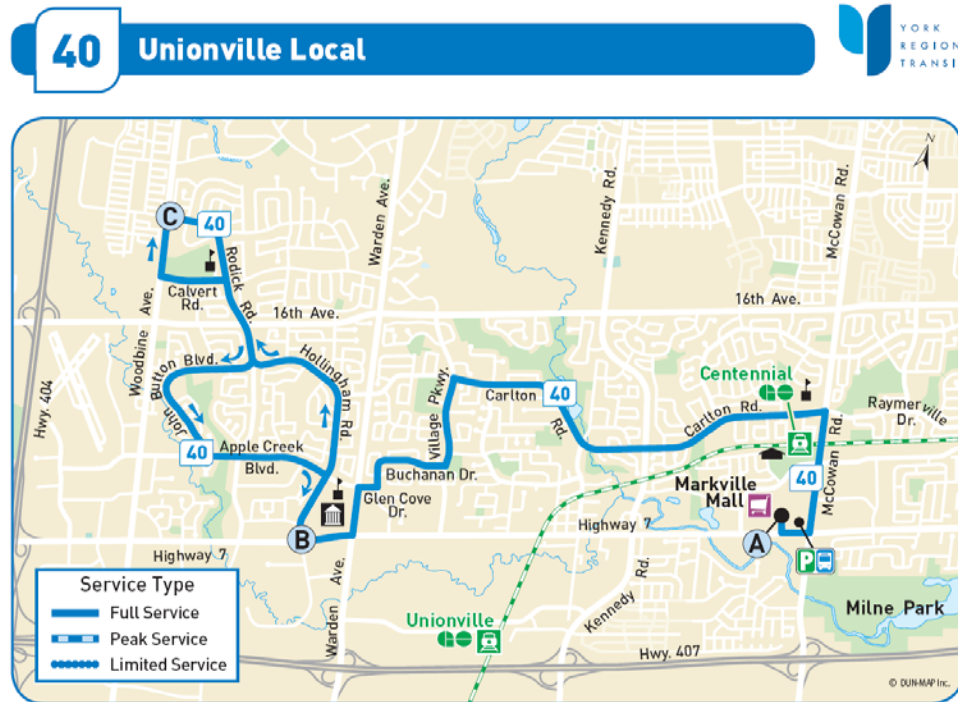
Dial-a-Ride as an alternative to yellow school buses helps to reduce the overall number of YRT service contracts

During weekday and Saturday evenings, Route 40 - Unionville Local and Route 41 – Markham Local are operated by yellow school buses. The hourly rate for the yellow school bus services is comparable to the hourly rate for the Dial-a-Ride service. Due to the success of the Dial-a-Ride pilot, it is recommended that Dial-a-Ride be expanded to Route 40 - Unionville Local and Route 41 – Markham Local (evening service). This would provide a consistent service type for low ridership routes across the Region and reduce the overall number of YRT service contracts.

Route 40 – Unionville Local route operates within the Town of Markham and services the local community of north of Hwy. 7. The route is bounded by Hwy. 7 to the south, McCowan Road to the east, Woodbine Avenue to the west and 16th Avenue to the north (Figure 6). The Dial-a-Ride service would have a dedicated vehicle stationed at Markville Mall between the hours of 8:15 pm and 11:15 pm Monday to Thursday; 8:15 pm and 1:15 am on Fridays, and 8:15 pm and 1:15 am on Saturdays. The local Route 40, currently operated by yellow school buses, would be discontinued during these periods and the operational costs will be used to offset the cost of the new Dial-a-Ride service.

The average passengers/hour and the average cost/passenger on this route are 2.25 and \$11.29, respectively. With the introduction of Dial-a-Ride, the average passengers/hour are expected to remain constant at 2.25 and the cost/passenger is expected to be increased to \$13.35, with costs remaining at current levels.

Figure 6
Rte 40 Dial-a-Ride Service Area



Route 41 – Markham Local is a regularly-scheduled, local, fixed route operating within the Town of Markham and services the local community of north of Hwy. 7. The route, bounded by Hwy. 7 to the south, McCowan Road to the west, Larkin Avenue to the east and 16th Avenue to the north, would be converted to Dial-a-Ride service (Figure 7.) The Dial-a-Ride service will have a dedicated vehicle stationed at Markville Mall between the hours of 8:40 pm and 11:40 pm Monday to Thursday; 8:40 pm and 1:40 am on Fridays and Saturdays to accommodate demand. The local Route 41 conventional, fixed route service operated by yellow school buses will be discontinued during these periods and the operational costs will be used to offset the cost of the new Dial-a-Ride service. Since the current 7:40 pm trip carries more than six passengers, this trip will be operated by a conventional service provider.

After 8:40 pm, the average passengers/hour and the average cost/passenger on this route are 3.25 and \$7.14, respectively. With the introduction of Dial-a-Ride, the average passengers/hour is expected to remain constant at 3.25 and the cost/passenger is expected to increase to \$8.57, with costs remaining at current levels.

41 Markham Local

YORK REGION TRANSIT

Map showing the route of Markham Local bus 41. The route is indicated by a blue line with stops A, B, and C. Key locations and roads include:

- Stops:** A (Markville Mall), B (Larkin Ave.), C (Markham).
- Roads:** Highway 48, Highway 7, Hwy. 407, Markham Rd., McCowan Rd., Stone Mason Dr., Raymerville Dr., Parkway Ave., Wootton Way, 9th Line.
- Landmarks:** Centennial, Mount Joy, Markham, Milne Park.
- Other features:** 16th Ave., Fincham Ave., Markville Mall, Markham Rd., Highway 407.

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The unique branding of Dial-a-Ride will complement the existing YRT family of services

4.3 RELATIONSHIP TO VISION 2026

Vision 2026 includes a goal statement relating to the provision of an integrated, cost-efficient and accessible transit network. To support these goals, YRT has identified and implemented specific strategies to achieve a balanced transportation system and reduce traffic congestion. Part of this strategy includes the use of demand-responsive services, such as Dial-a-Ride, for the delivery of public transit. The recommendations of this report are consistent with the intent of these goal statements.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Expanding the Dial-a-Ride program will result in a net \$75,000 in savings in 2008 and will improve overall cost efficiencies on the designated routes

According to the performance targets set out in the YRT Five-Year Service Plan, the minimum cost-recovery target for local routes operating a Community Bus / Demand-Responsive service is 25%. This cost-recovery target assumes at least a one-year period of operation. Assuming a September 2008 expansion of the Dial-a-Ride program to Route 32, 34, 40, 41, 57 and 84, overall cost-recovery will be as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
2008 Budget Impact with Dial-a-Ride Expansion

Route	Annual Cost Conventional (\$000)	Annual Cost Dial-a-Ride (\$000)	2008 Savings (\$000)	Annualized Savings (\$000)	Existing R/C Ratio (%)	Projected R/C Ratio (%)
32	740	582	(52)	(158)	14.7	28.4
34	170	79	(30)	(91)	9.2	32.4
40	73	84	3.5	11	16.3	16.3
41	54	62	2.5	8	23.5	23.5
57	17	143	42	126	22.3	24.6
84	546	423	(41)	(123)	13.2	28.3
Total	1,600	1,373	(75)	(227)		

Current annual operating costs for the combined Routes (32, 34, 40, 41, 84 & 57) total \$1,600,000 and are expected to be reduced to \$1,373,000. When combined with anticipated normal revenues of \$349,000, there are overall savings to the 2008 budget of \$75,000 and annualized savings of \$227,000.

All of Dial-a-Ride costs are based on the current contractor rate established during the pilot program. Should the rate change, the business case for each candidate area will have to be re-evaluated. A new Dial-a-Ride tender will be required, since the contract for the pilot does not include a major expansion of the program as outlined in this report. The submitted bids will need to be compared to current conventional transit contract rates in order to establish the cost-effectiveness of an on-going Dial-a-Ride program.

The current 2008 budget does not include funding for Route 34 Dial-a-Ride as it was anticipated that the route would be cancelled. Based on the continuation of conventional service from January to September 2008, followed by the conversion to Dial-a-Ride in September, the additional net operating cost is expected to total \$131,000.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The expansion of Dial-a-Ride services is being proposed on:

- Mulock Route 57 (Newmarket).
- Aurora South Route 32.
- Industrial Parkway Route 34 (Aurora).
- Unionville & Markham Local 40 & 41.
- Oak Ridges Route 84 (Richmond Hill).
- Expansion of Route 44 Dial-a-Ride to Emergency Shelter (North Yonge St).

The continuation and expansion of Dial-a-Ride is a cost-effective way of delivering transit service to local communities with relatively low transit demand. Staff will continue to monitor service demands on an on-going basis across the Region and recommend Dial-a-Ride in communities where the demand characteristics suit this service.

7. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the Dial-a-Ride pilot, YRT staff recommends that the Dial-a-Ride program be expanded to service the local communities noted above in Section 6.

For more information on this report, please contact Irene McNeil, Manager, Service Planning (ext. 5628) in the Transit Branch of Transportation Services.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.