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YORK REGION TRANSIT MOBILITY PLUS 2007 SYSTEM PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Transit Committee recommends the following:

1. **The presentation by Irene McNeil, Manager, Service Planning, York Region Transit, be received;**

2. **The recommendation contained in the following report, April 23, 2008, from the Commissioner of Transportation Services, be adopted.**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report evaluates the 2007 performance of the York Region Transit (YRT) Mobility Plus system. The report provides Transit Committee and Regional Council with an overview of the system's performance based on commonly used industry indicators and compares Mobility Plus performance with selected GTA and other Canadian specialized transit systems.

3. BACKGROUND

Performance monitoring is critical for system management

Performance measurement and benchmarking is used to monitor performance, enhance accountability, provide a basis for continuous improvement initiatives and provide strategic direction for the delivery of services. Although the provincial Municipal Performance Measures Program (MPMP) is specifically designed to measure conventional transit performance, the performance monitoring of specialized services for persons with disabilities is no less critical for internal administration, strategic planning, system management, and budget development and compliance.

The concept of performance measurement is not new to the transit industry. For many years, Ontario transit agencies were required to submit detailed financial and operational data to qualify for provincial subsidies. In addition, Statistics Canada, the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) and the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) collect and publish detailed annual system statistics and performance data. As a result, the public transit industry is well advanced in the development and monitoring of performance measures.

Performance of specialized transit services is commonly monitored in terms of total operating data and also separated into dedicated and non-dedicated service categories. **Dedicated** refers to service provided in vehicles exclusively dedicated to the transport of Mobility Plus passengers (e.g. small buses and other contracted vehicles with full-day run sheets). **Non-dedicated** refers to services available to Mobility Plus passengers provided by non-exclusive vehicles (e.g. sedan taxis and mini-vans) which usually operate under contract but may also provide service to non-registered passengers when not required to transport Mobility Plus clients.

Some of the more common and relevant specialized transit performance indicators include:

- **Financial Indicators –** Revenue/Cost Ratio; Total Cost/Passenger; Cost /Passenger (Dedicated); Cost/Passenger (Non-dedicated); Cost/Hour (Dedicated).
- **Utilization and Operating Performance Indicators –** Registrants/Capita; Passenger Trips/Capita; Passenger Trips/Registrant; Passenger Trips/Hour (Dedicated).

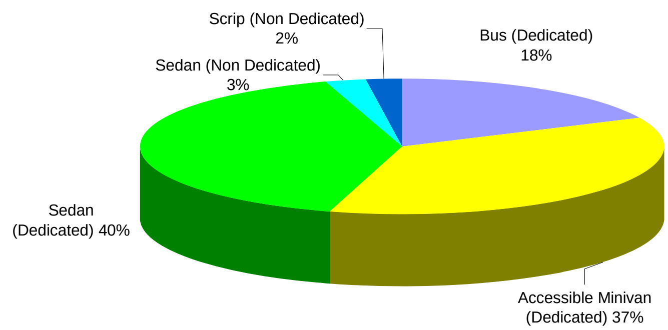
4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

New Mobility Plus operating model is based on performance-based contracts

To strengthen the quality of Mobility Plus services, YRT introduced a new service delivery model in 2006. The remaining in-house bus operation was contracted out and new performance-based contracts for the delivery of bus, accessible minivan and sedan services were introduced. Mobility Plus trips are distributed amongst the various vehicle contracts as shown in Exhibit 1. Performance-based contracts provide both bonuses and penalties aimed at improving the quality of service delivery, as is the practice with conventional transit.

Under the contract terms, contractors are also required to supply spontaneous rides (Scrip Ride), subject to vehicle availability, to registered passengers who call directly to the contractor. The passenger has to pre-purchase coupons from YRT at half the book value for the trip and the fare is based on a kilometre charge.

Exhibit 1
Mobility Plus Service Distribution (2007)



For the purposes of this report, the YRT Mobility Plus data for the year 2006 is compared to the most recent submissions made to CUTA by a select peer group. It should be made clear that some peer group comparisons are complicated because of differences in geographical service areas, rural/urban mix, population growth and age, medical trip status, extent and availability of contracted services, registrant eligibility and growth, ambulatory/non ambulatory registrant profile, trip generation, funding levels and financial reporting practices.

4.1 SPECIALIZED TRANSIT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS COMPARED TO PEER GROUP

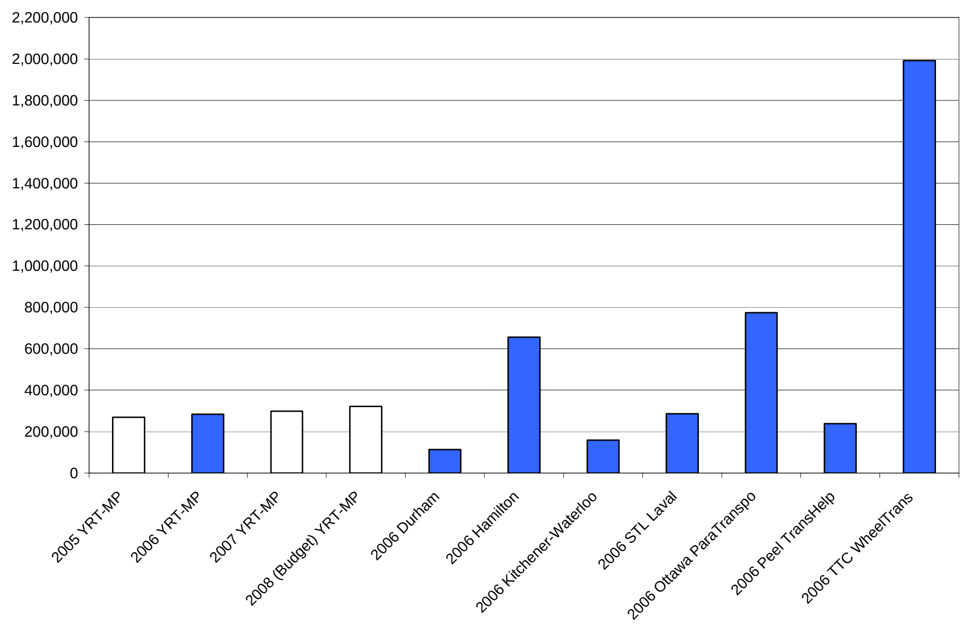
Performance statistics have been compiled for YRT Mobility Plus for the years 2005, 2006 and 2007, and for a selected peer group of transit systems for 2006 (see *Attachment 1)*. In addition to this time series data, 2008 Mobility Plus budget data is also presented. For the purpose of this report, all shaded bars are 2006 performance statistics as 2007 statistics are not yet available.

The peer group systems have been selected for a variety of reasons. TTC Wheel-Trans, Peel Transhelp and Durham Region were chosen due to their immediate vicinity to York Region. The others are comparable in terms of their scale of operations. Canada-wide average data (2006) is also included as an overall indicator for the Canadian specialized transit market.

Ridership growth has averaged 5.5% per year

Ridership is measured by revenue passenger trips including attendants/companions but does not include transfers or charter trip activity.

Exhibit 2
Ridership



Ridership growth on the Mobility Plus service averaged 5.5% per year from 2005 - 2007. This is a direct reflection of population growth within the Region as well as the aging population profile. According to the 2006 census data, the number of seniors in the Region has grown at the same rate since 2001. Exhibit 2 provides Mobility Plus ridership levels in comparison to the peer group.

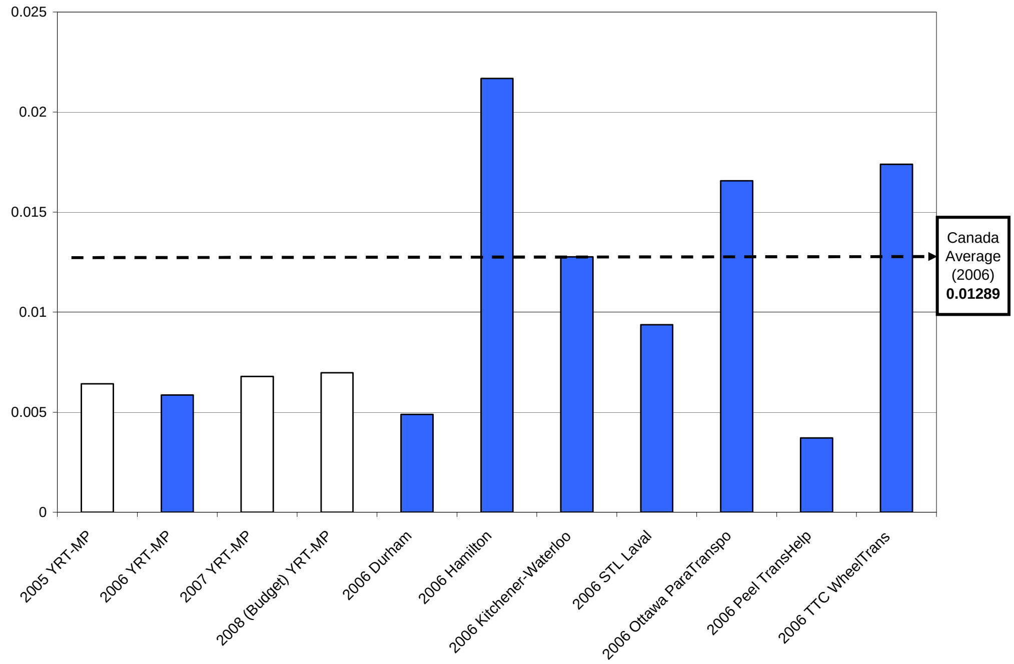
Mobility Plus has 6,674 registered users with approximately 190 new applicants approved every month

Service utilization is typically measured using several indicators, including:

- Registrants per capita.
- Dedicated passenger trips per hour which measures trips per hour by passengers on dedicated vehicles only.
- Passengers per capita which is based on actual trips taken on the service.

In 2006, Mobility Plus staff updated the active registrant base and removed approximately 1,000 inactive registrants. These represent individuals who have moved, are deceased or no longer require the service for other reasons. In 2007, Mobility Plus received approximately 190 applications per month, of which 85% were approved. The increase in registrants per capita is felt to be directly related to an increase in medical and long term care services and facilities, as well as an increase in social programming within the Region (see Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3
Registrants per Capita

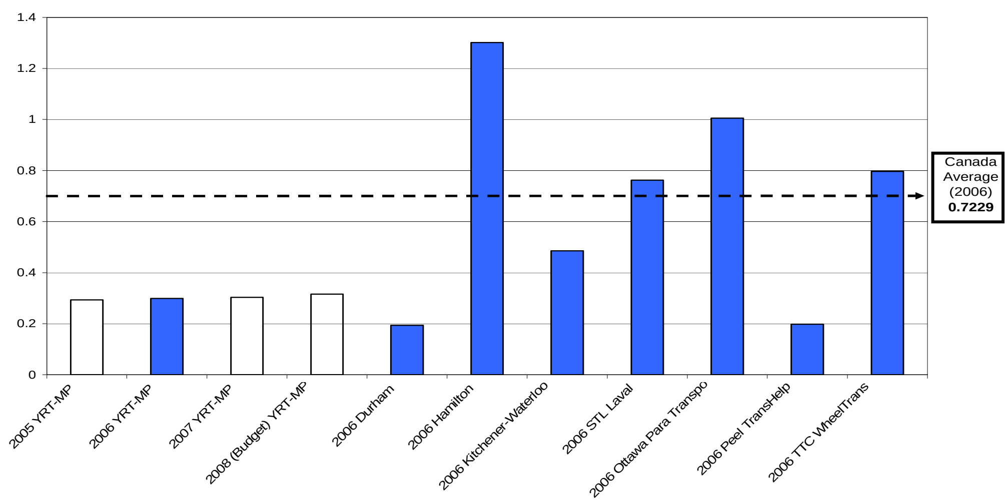


With the exception of Peel Transhelp and Durham, the Mobility Plus registrants per capita figure is below all other properties in the peer group as well as the Canadian average. This could be explained in part by the relatively younger population in the Region and is particularly evident when compared to more established communities that have a higher rate such as Hamilton and Kitchener-Waterloo. The low registrants per capita figure for Peel Transhelp and Durham is felt to be a reflection of their highly restrictive eligibility. Durham's eligibility criteria are based on a strictly physical model and only applicants who are unable to board conventional transit and unable to walk 175 metres are approved. In Peel, dialysis patients, blind persons and people with emotional and/or cognitive disabilities are not automatically approved for service unless, in addition, the applicant has a physical disability that prevents him/her from boarding conventional public transit.

Passengers per capita reflects a continued growth in trips taken on the service

While Mobility Plus ridership is increasing at a slightly higher rate than population, ridership per capita is growing much more slowly (see Exhibit 4). Several factors could contribute to Mobility Plus's low service utilization rate including the comparatively younger population base and York's higher than average household income. According to data compiled by the Regional Municipality of York, the Province of Ontario, Cancer Care Ontario and Statistics Canada, York Region residents are on average the wealthiest and healthiest in the province. According to the Community Social Data Strategy, 44 per cent of the Region's residents are upper income earners with an average annual income of more than $70,000 and are younger compared to the rest of the GTA and Canada. The age group between 35 and 54 make up 35 percent of the Region's population compared to 31.8 percent in the GTA and 31.6 percent of the Canadian population.

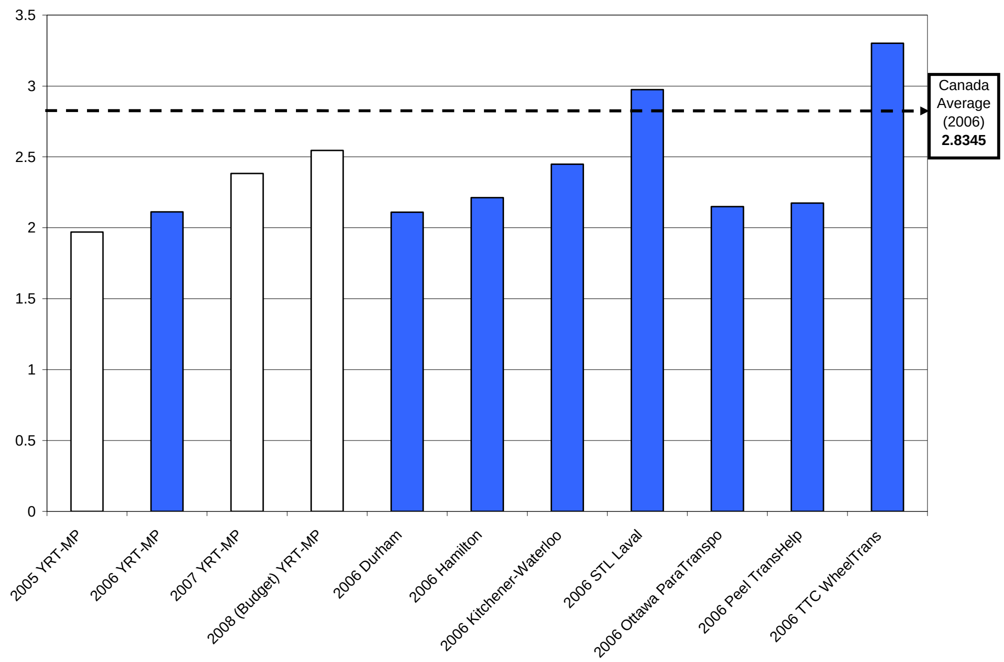
Exhibit 4
Passengers per Capita



Efficiency measures have steadily increased productivity

Dedicated passenger trips per hour have steadily increased every year since 2005 (see Exhibit 5). This reflects the Region's efforts in enhancing the efficiency of the service through the implementation of new scheduling software and other operational strategies. It is estimated that by the end of 2008, the Mobility Plus productivity rate will be closer to the Canadian average and higher than the majority of systems in our peer group.

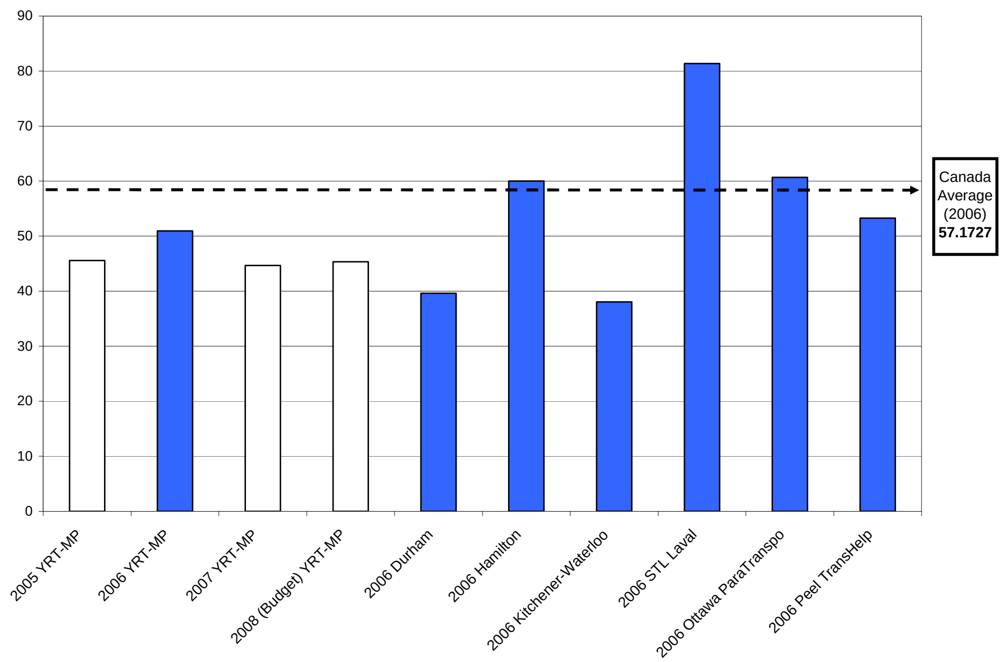
Exhibit 5
Passenger Trips per Hour (Dedicated)



Compared to the Canadian average (see Exhibit 6), the Mobility Plus trip rate per registrant is relatively low

This could be explained by the fact that Mobility Plus approves individuals with cognitive disabilities (14% of ridership) for transportation to and from day programs and work placements only. They are not permitted to use the service for other purposes. Most other specialized transit systems, on the other hand, do not register individuals with cognitive disabilities unless they also have a physical disability.

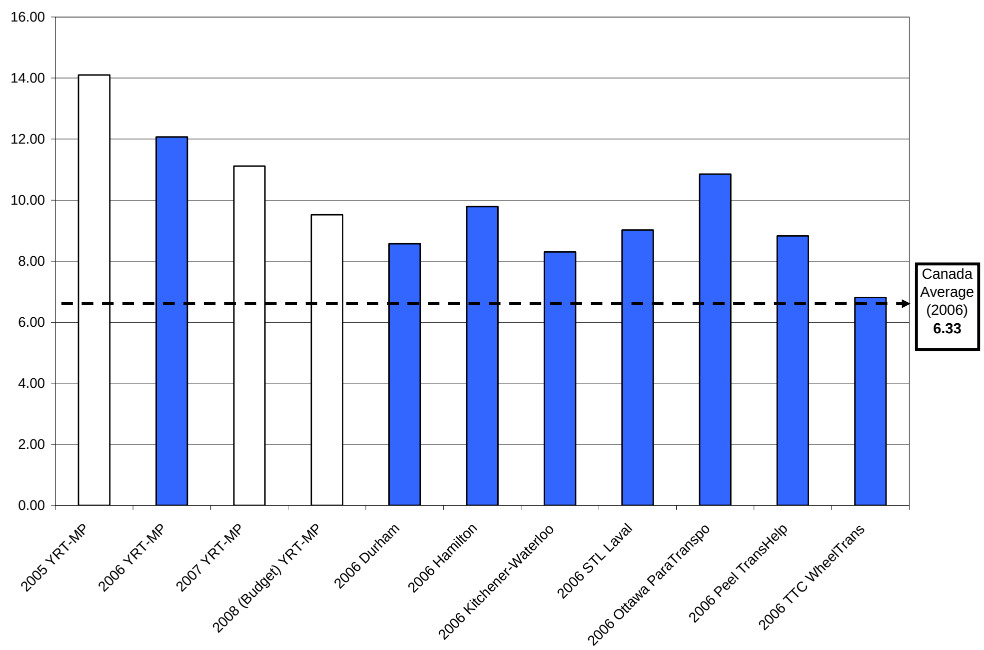
Exhibit 6
Passenger Trips per Registrant



Dedicated kilometres per passenger trip on downward trend

The dedicated kilometres per passenger trip increased steadily once passengers were allowed to travel throughout all municipalities in the Region in 2002, reaching a high of 14.1 in 2005. Since 2006, however, the average km per trip has steadily decreased (see Exhibit 7). The primary reason for this decrease is a greater use of shared ride trips resulting in an increase in vehicle productivity. There has also been a concerted effort to look at some long trips that can utilize accessible conventional public transit services for a portion of or for the entire trip.

Exhibit 7
Dedicated Kilometres per Passenger Trip



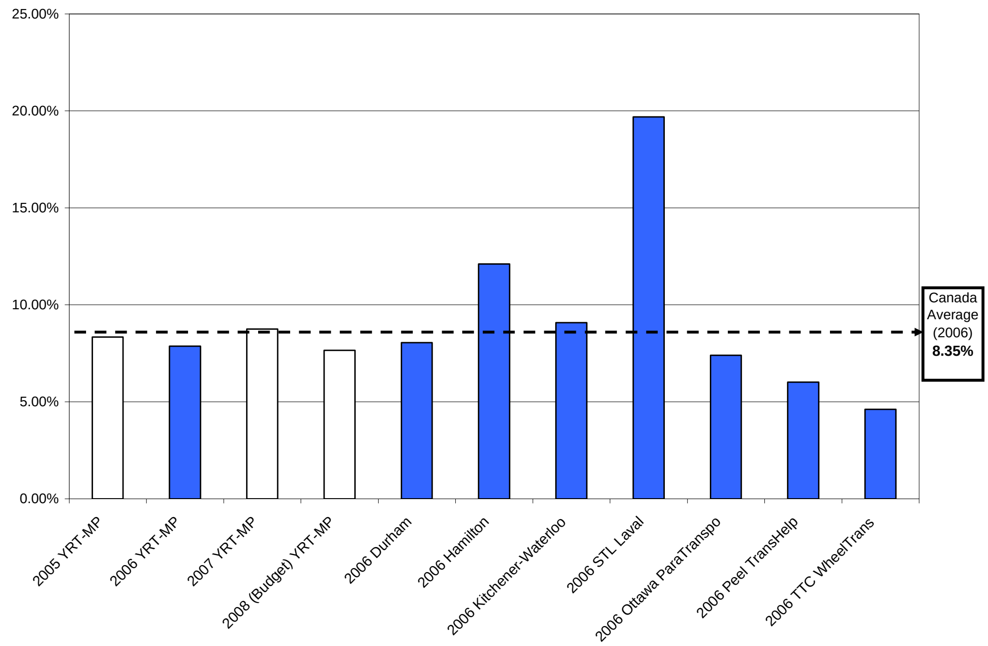
The revenue/cost ratio for Mobility Plus in 2007 was 8.75% compared to the Canadian average of 8.35%

Revenue/cost ratio is the most commonly used financial performance indicator.
A slight decrease in the revenue/cost ratio is projected for 2008. This is largely attributable to salary gapping that occurred in 2007 and new intra-departmental charges resulting from the introduction of new technologies (e.g. CAD/AVL, interactive voice response phone system, etc.).

In general, our services are operating at a revenue/cost ratio that is near the Canadian average, and at a higher level than our counterparts in Ottawa, Peel, and Toronto.

The introduction of travel training and improved conventional accessible fleet and infrastructure will further enhance the opportunities for YRT Mobility Plus customers to access conventional transit, which will further reduce the demand for Mobility Plus service.

Exhibit 8
Revenue Cost Ratio



The 2007 Mobility Plus cost per passenger was approximately $28.24 which is higher than the Canadian average although lower than the cost per passenger in 2006 of $29.84

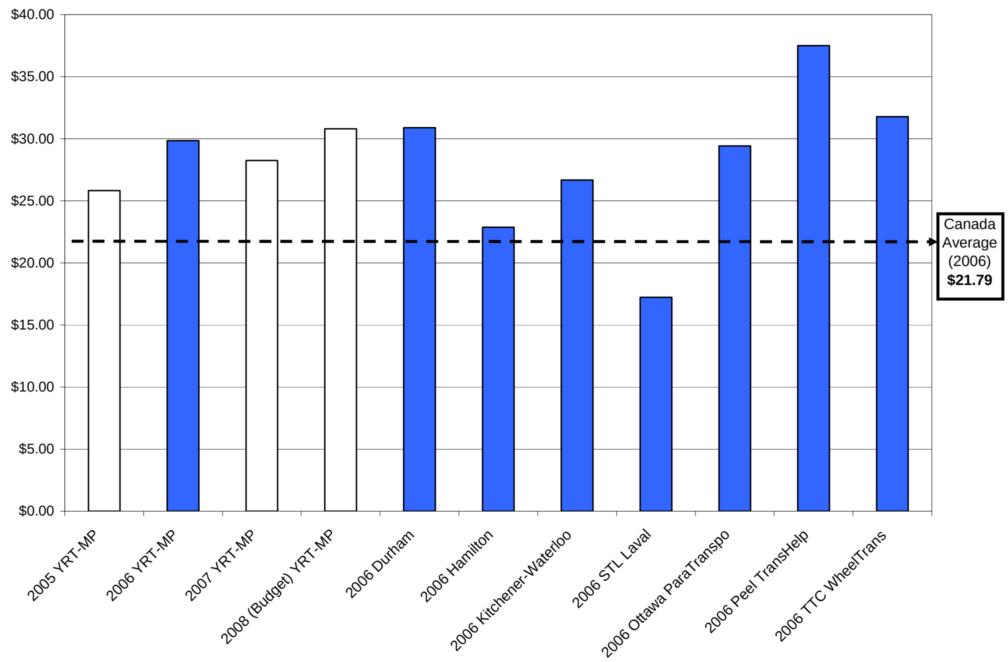
Cost effectiveness is measured by total cost per passenger (see Exhibit 9). The efficiency of service is measured by total cost per revenue hour.

The cost per passenger is expected to increase in 2008 to $30.81 due to projected ridership growth of 5.5%, cost increases in line with the CPI, a full staffing complement being achieved and a substantial increase in intradepartmental charges related to technology.

The cost per passenger of Mobility Plus trips compared to many in our peer group is felt to be higher because of higher average trip lengths in York Region.

In addition to the operational strategies implemented in 2007, it is important for Mobility Plus to continue to look for opportunities that will provide a range of potential savings while maintaining an overall high level of service quality.

Exhibit 9
Total Cost per Passenger



Dedicated cost per passenger and non-dedicated cost per passenger summaries (Exhibits 10 and 11 respectively) show similar results.

Exhibit 10
Dedicated Cost per Passenger

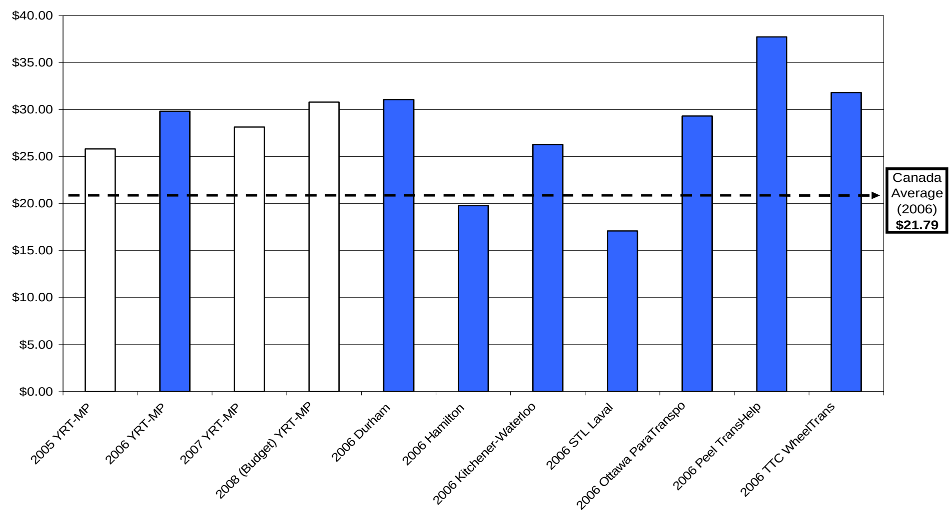
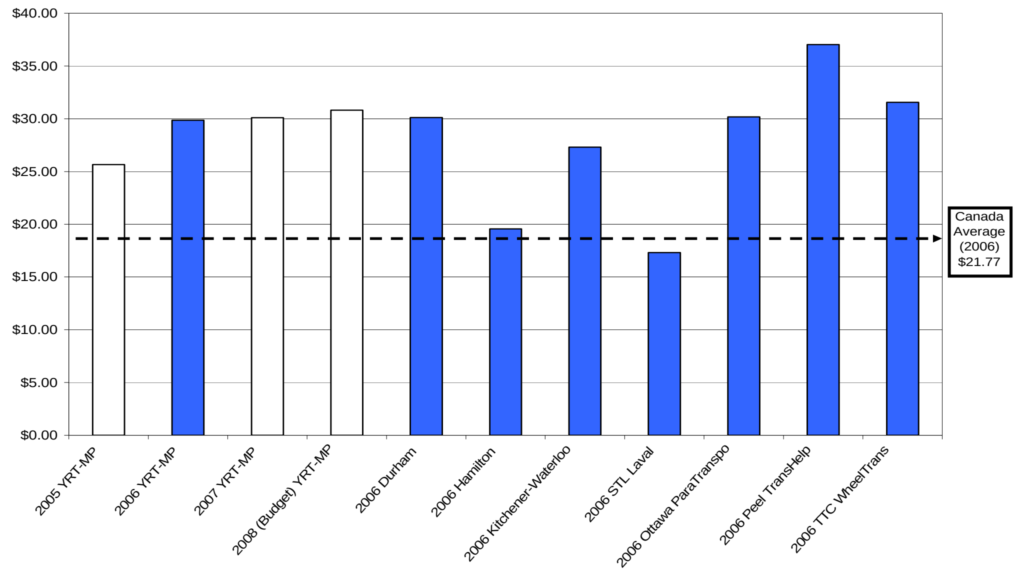


Exhibit 11
Non-Dedicated Cost per Passenger



New processes implemented to improve financial performance

Financial performance will fluctuate relative to the changes in the rates of expenditure and ridership levels.

Actual ridership in 2007 was 4% over budget. Improvements were made to the scheduling software to further improve the opportunity to link customer trips (i.e. share rides). Late Cancellation and No-Show processes were implemented to minimize the number of trips being cancelled at the time of pick-up as well as to minimize customer no-shows. (Mobility Plus is required to pay the contractors a fee for late trip cancellations and no-shows.) Before implementation of these new processes, 23% of all trips were being cancelled, with 8% of these being late cancellations and 2.3% no-shows. By September 2007, only 16% of all trips were being cancelled, with only 5% of these being considered late and 1.3%, no-shows.

In addition, the booking window was increased as well as the permitted travel time in a vehicle. This allowed Mobility Plus to provide the opportunity to link additional passengers for travel to common destinations or destinations within close proximity to one another resulting in a reduced cost per trip.

The above operational strategies provided a savings of approximately $250,000 in 2007.

4.2 RELATIONSHIP TO VISION 2026

The primary reason for undertaking a performance review is to ensure the transit system’s performance indicators are identifying trends and providing benchmarks for future strategic planning purposes. YRT's Mobility Plus Five-Year Plan (2002-2006) set specific goals and objectives and associated targets.

Vision 2026 includes a goal statement relating to the development of Infrastructure for a Growing Region, which states that:
"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 successfully integrated transit service.
- Developing an optimal mix of transit service types.

By measuring key indicators such as levels of investment (costs), returns (ridership and revenues) and various efficiency measures, York Region continues to develop a transit supportive and thus balanced transportation network.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As part of YRT's continuous improvement process, the monitoring of performance measures provides YRT Mobility Plus management and staff with tools to evaluate both the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery strategies. These measures and resulting trends can be used to develop short-term budget forecasts and longer term strategic plans. For instance, increases in the number of registered users will directly translate into an increase in the number of trips requested. This increase can be used to develop budgets, service delivery programs and options.

Efforts will continue to be directed at maintaining a high level of service quality while operating within approved financial resources. Mobility Plus will continue to seek out and implement various approved operational strategies aimed at improving the effective and efficient operation of the service.

Total Mobility Plus program costs in 2008 are budgeted at $10.9 million.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Monitoring performance measures provides YRT Mobility Plus staff with the necessary tools to make informed decisions regarding service quality and delivery. As part of the municipal and agency consultation process, stakeholder input will be sought to fully appreciate the transportation needs of the various communities.

7. CONCLUSION

Specialized transit performance indicators measure passenger registration, trips and financial performance. The following is a summary from the analysis of the performance indicators:

- Ridership continues to grow at an average of 5.5% per year.
- Service utilization continues to increase in terms of registrants per capita and passenger trips per capita.
- The volume of passenger trips per registrant has remained below the Canadian average, in part due to the concerted effort of staff to educate passengers to take a portion or all of their trips on an alternative mode within the family of transit services provided by YRT, including accessible conventional transit services.
- Dedicated kilometres per passenger trip have decreased because of the greater use of shared ride trips and again because of an effort by staff to look at longer trips that can utilize not only Mobility Plus but accessible conventional services in whole or in part.
- Financial performance shows the revenue cost ratio in 2007 was 8.7% compared to the Canadian average of 8.35%.
- The relatively high cost per trip for Mobility Plus needs to be closely monitored and operational strategies implemented to ensure the continued viability of this necessary transportation service. As previously noted, this relates to the higher than average trip lengths of our passengers, notwithstanding a concerted effort to combine or share rides.

For more information on this report, contact Irene McNeil, Manager, Service Planning (ext. 5628) or Sharon Doyle, Manager, Mobility Plus (ext. 5634) of the Transit Branch of Transportation Services.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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