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YORK REGION TRANSIT

GEORGINA FARE INTEGRATION WITH GO TRANSIT

The Transit Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, May 1, 2007, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council authorize an agreement between the Regional Municipality of York and GO Transit to permit Fare Integration on the Sutton GO Bus Route for a five-year term commencing September 2, 2007.
2. The fares accepted by GO Transit for customers travelling from the Town of Georgina reflect the YRT zone-based fare structure.
3. The Regional Solicitor be authorized to prepare the necessary agreement.
4. The Regional Chair and Regional Clerk be authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the Region, subject to review by Legal Services.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek authorization to execute a Fare Integration Agreement between the Regional Municipality of York and GO Transit. This agreement would permit the acceptance of York Region Transit (YRT) fares on the Sutton GO Bus Service for the purpose of connecting East Gwillimbury and Georgina residents to existing YRT/Viva services in Newmarket.

3. BACKGROUND

The York Region Transit Five-Year Transit Service Plan (2006-2010) identifies several key objectives, including the need to improve both intra and inter-regional transit connections, and the need to link smaller urban communities to larger urban transit service areas in the Region. In this regard, the opportunity to connect customers from Georgina to the larger urban transit service area of Newmarket was identified as one of the key initiatives.

On April 28, 2006, YRT and the Regional Municipality of York received a motion from the Town of Georgina requesting connecting service between Georgina and Newmarket

(including connections between Keswick, Sutton, and Pefferlaw). In response, YRT held an information session on May 24, 2006 to consult with Georgina residents on the various service options. (See *Attachment 1* for map depicting current routes in the Keswick area.) Topics at the information session included:

- Review of current service levels and current ridership data.
- The potential for a new YRT-operated route from Newmarket to Sutton.
- Restructuring of the local Keswick Routes 50/51.
- GO Transit fare integration option.
- Costs associated with the various options.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Two options were considered for the service improvement in Georgina. The first option, *Attachment 2*, involves restructuring local Keswick YRT Routes 50 and 51 in conjunction with the introduction of a new YRT local route between Newmarket and Sutton.

The second option, *Attachment 3*, involves the restructuring of the local routes along with a Fare Integration Agreement with GO Transit on the existing Sutton GO bus route. The current Sutton GO bus service operates from the Newmarket GO Terminal and provides local service to Keswick, Sutton and Pefferlaw. This option was based on the same principles as other fare integration agreements GO Transit has with local transit operators. A good example is the agreement with Durham Region Transit on the Port Perry, Goodwood-Uxbridge and Oshawa Hwy #2 GO bus routes.

The evaluation of the two options was guided by the service strategies and standards outlined in The Five-Year Service Plan. Specifically, the options were reviewed in the context of community connections, minimum service level standards and financial performance standards. The evaluation also took into consideration comments from Town of Georgina staff and the public consultation. Based on these criteria, the recommended strategy is to pursue Option 2 - the Fare Integration Agreement with GO Transit as it will allow YRT to address the needs and requests expressed by the Town of Georgina and meet both minimum service and financial standards. Also, the net annual operating cost for Option 2 is approximately \$150,000 which is less than half the cost associated with Option 1.

4.1 Option 1 - Restructuring and Extending YRT Routes 50 and 51

The restructuring and extension of YRT Routes 50 and 51 under Option 1 is based on the following operating terms:

- Route 50 Queensway will be extended north from Metro Road to Sutton and south from the Ravenshoe Road to the East Gwillimbury GO Station and the 404 Centre Plaza in Newmarket, Monday through Sunday.

- Route 51 Keswick Local will be re-routed and extended north to Ferncroft Drive and south to Lake Drive South, Monday to Saturday.
- A One-Zone Fare would apply on Route 50 for all travel between Sutton and Keswick and on Route 51 for local Keswick service.
- A Two-Zone fare would apply on Route 50 for travel to/from Newmarket and East Gwillimbury and Georgina.
- '50¢ to GO' Fare Integration program would apply on the new YRT Route 50 only.

4.2 Option 2 - Fare Integration Agreement with GO Transit

The Georgina Fare Integration Agreement with GO Transit under Option 2 is based on the following operating terms:

- Cash fares would be accepted on the Sutton GO bus service based on current GO Transit fares.
- GO Transit would accept valid YRT passes, tickets and transfers with the appropriate zone fare supplement.
- GO transit would accept the fare integration sticker as valid form of payment for YRT '50¢ to GO' train customers. YRT would conduct a GO Monthly Pass/YRT sticker usage survey twice annually.
- The current GO Transit Keswick fare zone boundary changes at Holborne Road. The YRT zone boundary is currently at Ravenshoe Road. Since a common fare zone is needed, YRT would extend the southern fare zone boundary from Ravenshoe to Holborne to match the GO fare zone boundary. Therefore, customers travelling through the fare zones would be required to pay the two-zone YRT fare.
- Regular GO fares would apply for travel on all other GO transit bus routes operating within York Region.
- The average fare on the GO Sutton Bus Route is \$4.40/ride and would be subject to change every 6 months to reflect market conditions.
- The agreement would be for a set term of 5 years.

4.3 Relationship to Vision 2026

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, including:

- Continuing to improve service and infrastructure for successfully integrated transit service.
- Making transit more accessible throughout the Region.

The proposed service integration agreement with GO Transit supports the goal statement.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Option 1 – Restructuring and Extending YRT Routes 50 and 51

The estimated annual cost for Option 1 - to extend Route 50 north to Sutton and south into Newmarket - is based on an average daily ridership rate of 200 passengers/day on weekdays and 100 passengers/day for both Saturdays and Sundays. Annual operating cost to YRT would amount to approximately \$550,000 per year. Annual YRT revenue, based on YRT's average fare of \$2.20, would amount to \$150,000 resulting in a net annual operating cost for this program of \$400,000. This amount is in addition to two new buses that would be required to operate the new service. The cost of the Route 51 Local Keswick restructuring is included in the 2007 base budget as YRT will operate the service based on the current span of service.

5.2 Option 2 – Georgina Fare Integration Agreement with GO Transit

In order for YRT to enter into a Fare Integration Agreement with GO Transit, the Region would be required to pay the average fare (\$4.40) for each YRT customer carried on the Sutton GO Bus Route to GO Transit. These net charges total approximately \$150,000 per year for the initial five years of the agreement, and have been calculated strictly on a cost recovery basis.

The estimated annual cost is based on an average daily ridership rate of 200 passengers/day on weekdays and 100 passengers/day for both Saturdays and Sundays. Annual cost to GO Transit equates to approximately \$300,000 per year. Annual YRT revenue, based on YRT's average fare of \$2.20, would amount to \$150,000 resulting in a net annual operating cost for this program of \$150,000. Additional YRT buses are not needed to support this option.

It is estimated that Option 2 will result in a \$250,000 annual savings over Option 1 and does not require the purchase of two additional buses.

For 2007, the net annual operating cost based on a September implementation would be approximately \$50,000. This expenditure is included in the 2007 Business Plan and Budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Georgina Fare Integration with GO Transit Agreement would provide new transit service between Keswick and Newmarket, and also provide service at local YRT fares between Keswick, Sutton, and Pefferlaw, resulting in reduced overall costs for local transit trips to the residents of the Town of Georgina.

7. CONCLUSION

Direct YRT service via GO Transit to Newmarket, the restructuring of the local YRT Keswick routes, and the extension of local YRT fares to all communities within Georgina would provide access to all of Georgina in a cost effective manner. A local fare integration agreement with GO Transit is necessary to implement this service strategy.

For more information on this report, contact Irene McNeil, Manager, Service Planning (ext. 5628), Transit Branch of the Transportation and Works Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachments referred to in this clause are attached to this report.)