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YORK REGION TRANSIT TRAVEL TRAINING PILOT PROGRAM LAUNCH

The Transit Committee recommends the following:

- 1. the presentation by Irene McNeil, Manager, Service Planning and Piragal Thiru, Planner, Accessible Services, of the Transit Branch, be received;**
- 2. the recommendation contained in the following report, May 29, 2008, from the Commissioner of Transportation Services, be adopted.**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. This report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides an update on the York Region Transit (YRT) Travel Training Pilot Program launched in May 2008.

3. BACKGROUND

Travel training targets anyone who requires training on how to use public transit services

Travel training is a support program that prepares people to make journeys safely and confidently on their own using public transit. It responds to individual needs and abilities with services ranging from familiarization group sessions on how to use transit to intensive one-on-one sessions to impart essential skills and verify that the trainee can safely use transit independently for important regular trips.

Travel training is for people of all ages and abilities who need additional knowledge and skills in order to use conventional YRT and Viva buses effectively. The following groups are potential candidates for York Region Transit's Travel Training Program:

- Individuals with physical disabilities.
- People with certain sensory disabilities.

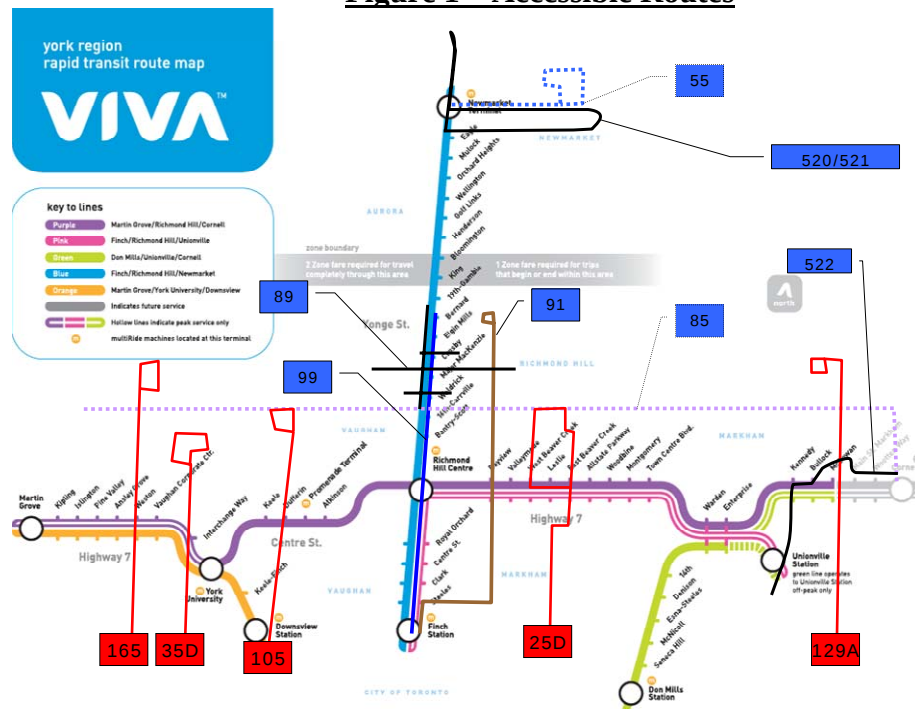
- People with cognitive or intellectual disabilities.
- Individuals with communication disabilities.
- Seniors not familiar with taking transit.
- Newcomers to the Region.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Fourteen designated accessible routes in York Region will be used for the pilot

For the purpose of the pilot program, 14 routes in the Region have been designated as accessible routes, including four TTC routes, and all Viva and community bus routes. In order for a route to be considered accessible, 100% of the buses as well as 50% or more of the bus stops on that route should be accessible.

Figure 1 – Accessible Routes



Currently, YRT's fleet is over 80% accessible. It is anticipated that by 2012, the YRT fleet will be 100% accessible. A minimum 200 stops are upgraded on an annual basis and about 35% of all stops have received an upgrade to make them accessible. With the increase in accessible stops and buses, the time to launch a Travel Training Program has never been better.

YRT has partnered with service agencies in York Region to conduct the training

YRT has partnered with service organizations across the Region that work with people with various types of disabilities, including:

- CNIB
- Ontario March of Dimes – York Region
- York South Community Living
- York Region District School Board
- York Aphasia Centre – Stouffville

Upon receiving direct training from YRT staff, the agency's trainer would carry out the Travel Training Program to their clientele. Continuous assistance and support would be provided to the trainers by providing them with materials such as trainer manuals, handouts for the trainees, and presentation materials. The trainers will update YRT with progress on the training and provide feedback on the program.

In addition, for the pilot, YRT will be providing one-on-one training to three trainees directly. This will enable YRT staff to assess the training materials first-hand.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Sufficient funding is included in the 2008 Business Plan and Budget for this program.

As more and more Mobility Plus clients are successfully given travel training and are able to access conventional public transit services, there will be a reduced demand for the higher cost Mobility Plus service. The current trip cost on Mobility Plus is approximately \$29.84 versus \$5.91 on conventional service.

In addition, the Travel Training Program provides a cost avoidance opportunity. By providing Travel Training, all transit customers would be encouraged to use the conventional service as their alternate method of travel.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Customers who currently use the YRT Mobility Plus service and others who currently do not use YRT/Viva services could have an improved quality of life if they were able to access conventional bus services for some or all of their trips.

This program will provide a higher level of accessibility for all across the entire Region.

7. CONCLUSION

With the increasing number of accessible fleet and facilities in the Region, conventional transit services are increasingly becoming accessible by all. The Travel Training Pilot Program, through its partnership with several community agencies, will enable users to utilize the conventional services confidently and independently. The results from the pilot will be assessed in early 2009.

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

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.