

2

YORK REGION TRANSIT BIKE RACK AND BIKE STORAGE PROGRAM

The Transit Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, May 28, 2008, from the Commissioner of Transportation Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council endorse the bike rack and storage program on the Yonge Street and Highway 7 corridors as a first priority.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides an update on the implementation of bicycle racks on York Region Transit (YRT) and Viva buses. It also provides information on a new initiative to install bicycle parking lockers at key YRT facilities.

3. BACKGROUND

YRT and Viva customers travelling with their bicycles have restrictions on when they are allowed to travel on the buses

Currently, YRT and Viva customers with bicycles are not allowed on buses during the weekday peak periods or at any other times when buses are crowded. The restriction on bicycles is necessary due to safety considerations and to maintain customer circulation inside the vehicle. When allowed on the bus, the cyclist must hold on to the bicycle as well as securing him/herself in a seated or standing position. Other customers can also be inconvenienced when customers with bikes are exiting or boarding the bus.

York Region Council at its June 2006 meeting reviewed a staff report related to bicycle racks on YRT buses and passed a resolution requesting that the Ministry of Transportation, Ontario (MTO) amend the *Public Vehicles Act* to permit the use of bicycle racks on buses crossing municipal boundaries. Further, Council requested that staff review the opportunity for bicycle racks as part of the 2007 Business Plan and Budget.

Since that time, funding for the racks was approved in the 2007 Business Plan and Budget. However, staff were unable to proceed with the program until subsequent MTO

approvals were granted to permit the use of the racks on cross-boundary routes. A new and simplified MTO application process is currently being developed and is expected to be granted in advance of the YRT launch.

Bicycle racks on buses offer a new opportunity for customers to cycle to their transit stop and take transit service anytime

Implementation of bicycle racks on YRT and Viva buses will permit bike usage across the whole system during all service hours when fully implemented. This will generate new transit ridership opportunities and encourages an environmentally-friendly means of accessing transit services. Enabling cyclists to use transit with ease also supports active transportation for peak hour and other trips. Figure 1 depicts the typical configuration of a bicycle rack on a bus.

Figure 1 – Typical Configuration of Bike Rack on Bus



YRT customers who travel with bicycles will have greater transfer opportunities with other area transit agencies. There are several GTA transit systems that have implemented or are scheduled to implement bicycle racks on buses including the Toronto Transit Commission, GO Transit, Brampton Transit, Mississauga Transit, Burlington Transit and Hamilton Street Railway. The TTC, GO Transit and Brampton Transit operate services within York Region.

Bicycle parking lockers provide a secure means to store a bicycle in a protected environment and encourage cycling to transit services

Bicycle lockers will be a new initiative for York Region Transit. The lockers provide excellent, secure bicycle parking by improving protection from theft, vandalism and

inclement weather. The lockers are designed to hold one bicycle each as well as associated gear, including helmet, panniers, locks and lights.

Similar to the bus bike racks, several GTA transit systems and municipalities are implementing the lockers, including GO Transit, TTC and the City of Toronto.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The Yonge Street and Highway 7 corridors have been identified as the locations to initiate the implementation of bike racks on buses

Bicycle racks on buses should initially be implemented on the Viva services which cover Yonge Street and Highway 7 and are the key transportation corridors in the Region.

Council's recently-adopted Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan indicates that appropriate connections to transit facilities such as bus stops and transit terminals should be provided and viewed as implementation priorities by the Region. Both Yonge Street and Highway 7 form part of the long-term Regional cycling network. In addition, they are key corridors in the Region's transit network that can provide appropriate connectivity and accessibility to support further development growth and intensification. Given the Regional-scale impact of these two transit corridors and opportunities for future cycling network connectivity, the selection of the Yonge Street and Highway 7 Viva routes for the initial implementation of bike racks is consistent with the objectives of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan.

Launch of the bicycle racks on buses is scheduled for the fall of 2008

A public procurement process is underway to purchase and install the racks. Upcoming key work activities include securing the necessary MTO vehicle permit, driver training, by-law amendments and development of a marketing campaign. As noted earlier, MTO has amended their application process and bicycle racks are now permitted through this new initiative. Formal launch of the bicycle racks on buses is tentatively scheduled for October 2008 on the Viva Blue route followed by the other Viva routes.

Following implementation in the Viva corridors, bicycle racks will be introduced throughout the YRT transit system in stages starting in 2009 following installation and training of bus operators at each of the three operations and maintenance facilities. Completion of the bike rack installation program is scheduled in 2010.

The design and location of bicycle parking lockers will be reviewed and installation considered in 2009

Bike parking lockers are typically installed at transit terminals, major bus stops, park-and-ride lots, and rail stations to allow for convenient inter-modal transfers. Staff will be

reviewing the locker design, streetscape, procurement, placement and rental management options. This process will include consultation with other agencies that offer bicycle parking facilities. It is anticipated that the implementation of the bicycle locker facilities will occur in 2009.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Metrolinx has provided approximately \$694,000 in funding to purchase and install bicycle racks on YRT and Viva buses as well as bicycle parking lockers

YRT staff made application to Metrolinx to obtain financial support through the Metrolinx BikeLinX Program to supply and install bicycle racks on buses and bicycle parking lockers. Metrolinx has approved the application and awarded the Region \$480,000 for the bicycle racks on buses and \$213,872 for the bicycle parking lockers. This funding will support the supply and installation of the bicycle racks and bike parking lockers. The unit cost for the bus bicycle rack as well as the bicycle parking locker is approximately \$1,200.

The total cost to implement both programs will be approximately \$694,000, which is equivalent to the funding provided by Metrolinx. The 2008 Business Plan and Budget includes \$298,000 to initiate the program. Additional expenditure will be needed in 2009 and 2010 to complete the program.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Cyclists in the local municipalities will be provided with improved transportation options on public transit. The bike rack and parking lockers also encourage environmentally-friendly access to the transit system.

7. CONCLUSION

Installation of bicycle racks on transit buses and bicycle parking storage provides greater flexibility to the traveling public and new ridership opportunities on YRT and Viva services. The provision of improved service to cyclists using transit encourages active transportation which is part of a balanced transportation system. Implementation of bicycle racks on buses will be phased in and scheduled to commence in fall 2008 on the Viva bus rapid transit service.

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For more information on this report, please contact Rick Takagi, Manager, Operations, at Ext. 5624.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.