

2

YORK REGION TRANSIT FIVE-YEAR SERVICE PLAN (2006-2010) - FINAL REPORT

The Transit Committee recommends:

- 1. The presentation by Irene McNeil, Manager, Service Planning be received; and**
- 2. The recommendations contained in the following report, June 6, 2006, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works be adopted:**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the York Region Transit (YRT) Five-Year Service Plan (2006-2010) – Final Report be received and adopted, and that the Regional Clerk forward copies of the Plan to the local municipalities in York Region, GTA transit systems including GO Transit, the Toronto Transit Commission, Brampton Transit and Durham Region Transit, York Region School Boards, Transportation Management Associations, and Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce, for information.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Regional Council approval of the updated York Region Transit Five-Year Service Plan (2006-2010) which provides direction and guidance to YRT staff for the planning and implementation of transit services over the next five years.

3. BACKGROUND

On January 1, 2001, The Regional Municipality of York assumed responsibility for the funding and operation of public transit (conventional and specialized transit services) throughout York Region. As part of the amalgamation process, a Five-Year Service Plan (2002-2006) was developed and finalized in 2002. The original Five-Year Plan included the development of standards, strategies and processes to guide YRT through its first five years.

The new Five-Year Plan is an update to the original Plan along with a more detailed service strategy for the 2006/07 period. The new Five-Year Plan examines current application of standards and practices, provides direction for future service assessment and identifies key areas for service development within the Region over the next five

years. The result is a Five-Year Plan (2006-2010) which will provide direction regarding the planning and implementation of future services to ensure ridership growth targets are achieved.

The new Plan also identifies opportunities for service improvements including route extensions, frequency improvements, potential markets and the restructuring of services to better integrate with a broader transit network.

Whereas the first Five-Year Plan focused on network integration, standards development and introduction of services into all nine municipalities, this Five-Year Plan update focuses on reviewing and refining the original service standards, developing effective planning tools for both monitoring and adjusting services, developing a more comprehensive stakeholder consultation process, providing a basis for more innovative service delivery and finally, providing direction on both shorter term (1-2 years) and medium term (3-5) service strategies.

The new YRT Five-Year Service Plan has been prepared with the assistance of ENTRA Consultants and addresses conventional transit services only (i.e. including Viva corridors, but not Mobility Plus services).

The following major components are included in the Plan:

- Analysis of existing transit services (conventional only)
- Review of current service standards and major planning processes with the intent to update and improve
- Development of a Transit Service Guidelines Summary Report
- Review of planning and consultation process with local municipalities, stakeholders, Transportation Management Associations (TMA's), and general public
- Review of existing and future committed vehicle fleet and infrastructure from an accessibility standpoint
- Development of strategies for alternative and innovative service delivery
- Review of fare structure, fare integration, and future GTA Smart Card impacts
- Review of intelligent transit technologies and integration issues
- Development of a detailed phasing plan for both capital (fleet) and operating budget requirements for each of the next five years (2006-2010)

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The Five-Year Plan study process was guided by a technical advisory team consisting of York Region Transit staff with representation from the Region's Transportation Planning group. In addition, several consultation meetings were held with our GTA partner systems including TTC, GO Transit, Brampton Transit and representatives from Durham Region. In early November, a series of public open houses were held in Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan to present initial findings and solicit general comments from the public. Materials presented at the public information centres have also been posted on the YRT website for public review and comment.

Finally, the Plan was formally circulated to over 30 stakeholders during a two-month period (February & March 2006). All stakeholder comments have been considered and integrated into the Plan as deemed appropriate.

4.1 Plan Report Structure

The YRT Five-Year Service Plan consists of a summary section and a series of more detailed technical *Background Papers* covering the following topics:

- #1 - Service Standards
- #2 - Existing Service Review
- #3 – Planning Process and Communication Plan
- #4 – Service Strategies
- #5 – Fare Technology and Integration
- #6 – Fleet and System Accessibility
- #7 – ITS Technology
- #8 – Rapid Transit Considerations
- Transit Service Guidelines

4.2 Key Findings

The new Five-Year Plan addresses a number of key areas including the adoption of consistent service policies, standards and guidelines. The main objective of the Plan is to ensure that services are being delivered efficiently while at the same time opportunities for ridership growth are identified and implemented.

4.2.1 YRT Family of Service

Due to the large geographic size of the Region, the varying nature of urbanization and densities and the resultant travel patterns, it is necessary to customize transit services to meet customer needs in a responsive and efficient manner. As a result, distinct service models have been identified with a series of standards and guidelines carefully developed to ensure effective service delivery. The following is a list of the service models identified:

- Base Service
- Viva Service
- Local Service
- Express Services (Commuter and Business)
- Shuttles (GO and School)
- Community Bus Service
- GO Fare Integration Services
- Small Bus Services (Zone or Dial-a-Bus Options)

4.2.2 Service Standards

A series of service standards has been updated or newly developed in order to better facilitate the analysis, assessment and recommendation for service improvements. Service standards reviewed include:

- Service levels and spans of service
- Vehicle loading
- Individual route performance
- New service criteria
- Route design guidelines (directness, bus stop location)
- Service review guidelines
- Data collection guidelines

4.2.3 Consultation Plan and Customer Guide to Service Standards

A comprehensive consultation plan has been developed including direction for stakeholder consultation, timeframes/schedule and formats. In addition, a customer guide to transit service standards has been developed with the intent to provide a “Public Transit 101” document for those stakeholders interested in understanding how a public transit system is designed, what service options are available and how standards are applied.

4.2.4 Review of Existing Services

As part of the Plan, a comprehensive review of existing services was completed with the intent of categorizing services into the new service categories, identifying those routes/services that are performing at high levels, those that are in need of performance review and opportunities/strategies for service expansion.

The Five Year timeframe was then broken down into short term (1-2 years or 2006/07) and medium term (2008-2010). Service improvement options were carefully identified based on the updated service standards and guidelines, and recommendations made, complete with operating and capital resource requirements. Fleet and system accessibility was also taken into consideration during this stage of the study.

4.2.5 Stakeholder Comments

Copies of the Draft Plan were circulated to all stakeholders at the end of January, with a two month timeline for feedback. This opportunity for comment was in addition to the Public Information Centres held in the Fall of 2005, as well as the posting of the Draft Plan on YRT's website. YRT staff made presentations to local municipal Councils and/or Committees focusing on local area initiatives recommended in the Draft Plan.

The following is a summary of some of the more significant comments received:

Town of Markham

- Confirmed Plan's recommendations to improve service levels/frequency
- Encourage collaboration with local Transportation Management Associations (TMA) and build on progress to date
- Request to make Viva extension to Cornell a priority and several requests for additional stations (eg. Chalmers/Hwy 7)
- Request to implement bike racks on buses and more bike racks at stops
- Request to explore Demand Responsive Transit in areas of low demand not currently served by public transit or where the frequency of service is low

City of Vaughan

- Request improved service frequency to Kleinburg (McMichael Gallery)
- Request clarification of YRT's role in context of newly formed Greater Toronto Transportation Authority
- Request to review the potential for Community Bus route in Vaughan area

Town of Newmarket

- Request YRT to prepare a business case analysis for the introduction of a Zone Bus/Dial-a-Bus pilot project for Route 44, as well as expand the use of smaller buses throughout Newmarket
- Request to re-route service from Prospect Street to Main Street to more directly serve the downtown business area

Town of Georgina

- Request to examine and establish service connection between Pefferlaw, Sutton and Keswick either using YRT or under a local fare agreement with GO Transit
- Fully support the establishment of a service connection between Keswick and Newmarket (asking that this be a priority in the 2007 budget process)

Town of Richmond Hill

- Encourage collaboration with local Transportation Management Associations (TMA) and build on progress to date
- Several outstanding requests for additional Viva stations (Chalmers/Hwy 7, Jefferson Forest, Stouffville Rd, Old Colony)

Township of King

- Consider the re-routing of Route 22 off the 15th Sideroad (between Bathurst and Dufferin)
- Consider the introduction of minimum level of service to Schomberg and Nobleton as soon as possible

Town of Stouffville

- Consider introduction of weekend service
- Consider limited service to Museum (Vandorf location)

GO Transit

- Consider the implementation of additional GO Shuttle services to meet GO train and train-bus schedules
- Request that GO be involved in discussion relating to Viva service expansion, especially where duplication of service may be an issue
- Interest in the development of Local Fare Strategies as identified in the Plan, however only where services currently exist or are warranted
- Reminder that GO Transit's mandate is an inter-regional service provider and as such is interested in developing further markets with local service providers to meet broader service objectives (eg. link to Pearson Airport)

Brampton Transit

- Need for close consultation with Brampton's AccelleRide bus rapid transit program (scheduled to be launched within the timeframe of the Plan)
- Further review of transit service levels and operations in the Highway 7 corridor (Route 77) to maximize service capacity, service efficiency and meet ridership demands

All comments were reviewed and given due consideration in the context of the main goal of the Plan, which is to increase ridership and ultimately increase total transit market share. Many of the comments referred to initiatives already recommended in the Plan and thus were simply reinforced. Others requests will be considered in the context of service reviews for specific corridors or areas and will be integrated into future service changes and/or improvements as deemed appropriate considering the updated service standards.

4.3 Relationship to Vision 2026

The primary reason for developing a multi-year service plan is to ensure that transit services are monitored, adjusted and delivered in a comprehensive, consistent and systematic manner. YRT's Five-Year Plan (2006-2010) sets specific targets including ridership, service levels and service coverage. YRT's mandate also includes a major role in contributing to an increase the Region's transit market share (modal split).

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.
- Promoting transit usage as a practical and wise alternative to private vehicle use.

By endorsing a new Five-Year Plan to guide the growth of YRT family of services, York Region continues to develop a transit supportive environment and thus contribute to the development of a more balanced transportation network.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The York Region Transit Five-Year Service Plan outlines an annual service strategy complete with all associated operating costs and capital (fleet) requirements for each of the next five years. It is estimated that total operating costs for conventional (YRT) and rapid transit (Viva) services will increase from a base of \$104 million (2006) to approximately \$158 million by 2010. The fleet expansion projections are estimated to increase from the current 348 buses to over 430 buses. Table 1 illustrates current costs and service levels with projected increases over the five-year outlook.

Table 1
Cost and Service Level Outlook (2006 – 2010)

	2005 Year End	Annual Additions				
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Annualized Revenue Hours	738,979	181,730	115,470	86,400	75,600	61,800
Viva	56,319	192,700	13,800	16,400	20,600	16,800
YRT	682,660	(10,970)	101,670	70,000	55,000	45,000
Vehicles	348	10	24	18	17	15
Viva	85	5	7	5	7	6
YRT	263	5	17	13	10	9
Annual Ridership (millions)	15.3	17.5	20.1	22.4	24.7	26.9
Viva	1.1	5.0	6.3	7.6	8.7	9.9
YRT	14.2	12.5	13.8	14.8	16.0	17.0
Revenues (\$M)	\$31.2	\$41.0	\$47.0	\$55.2	\$63.6	\$69.3
Total Costs (\$M)	\$68.8	\$104.1	\$121.2	\$130.7	\$145.0	\$158.4
R/C Ratio	42.5%	39%	39%	41%	42%	42%

This increased investment in public transit services will result in a net cost per capita of approximately \$83 per capita (2010), up from the current \$66 per capita (2006). According to the latest data available from the Canadian Urban Transit Association (2004), the Canadian average net cost per capita for transit systems of our size is approximately \$75.

The achievement of these service levels will also impact property taxes in each of the future years. Over the four year period, this program will result in an increase of \$26 million or 4.4% on the Regional tax levy. The annual impacts are: 2007-1.9%; 2008-0.2%; 2009-1.0%; and 2010-1.3%. This could be mitigated slightly by the increase in provincial gas tax revenue however, that revenue is forecast to increase by only \$2.1 million annually in the period.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Local municipal Councils were requested to formally comment on the updated Five-Year Plan and comments received have been taken into consideration. YRT will continue to develop annual service plans and throughout this process consult closely with local municipalities and other stakeholders to ensure interests and comments are considered. Implementation of the strategies outlined in this new Five-Year Plan will provide improved service levels (including coverage, span of service and service frequency), thus improving the availability and access to transit services throughout York Region.

7. CONCLUSION

The York Region Transit Five-Year Service Plan (2006-2010) will serve as the framework document for guiding the direction of transit planning in York Region over the next five years with the ultimate goal of increasing ridership and, more importantly, increasing overall transit market share.

The York Region Transit Five-Year Service Plan (2006-2010) is attached and is intended for full distribution to all stakeholders.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause was included in the agenda for the June 15, 2006 Committee meeting.)