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YORK REGION TRANSIT DIAL-A-RIDE PILOT PROJECT UPDATE

The Transit Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, June 1, 2007, from the General Manager, Transit:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the one-year Dial-a-Ride pilot on the York Region Transit Route 44 as outlined in this report, effective September 2007, be endorsed with staff reporting back to Transit Committee following six months of operation.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Transit Committee and Regional Council on a new demand-responsive service delivery model (Dial-a-Ride) for York Region Transit (YRT), to address areas of low ridership within the Region. This service could potentially replace or be applied to similar market areas as appropriate throughout the YRT network.

3. BACKGROUND

On March 28, 2006, a resolution was received from the Town of Newmarket requesting YRT to develop a business case for the implementation of a Zone Bus/Dial-a-Ride pilot project and that the area currently serviced by Route 44 Bristol-London be considered the study area. The York Region Transit Five-Year Service Plan (2006-2010) identifies several categories of service delivery models as part of the YRT family of services concept including:

- Base Grid Routes (including the Viva corridors).
- Local Routes.
- Express Routes.
- GO Shuttles.
- Community Bus Fixed or Demand-Responsive Routes.

The proposed Dial-a-Ride pilot would fall within the “Community Bus Fixed or Demand-Responsive Route” category and addresses ridership demands targeted at a specific area during specific operating hours.

3.1 Study Area – Route 44

Route 44 Bristol-London is a regularly-scheduled, local, fixed route operating within the Town of Newmarket and serves the area bounded by Yonge Street to the west, Bristol Road to the North, Main Street North to the east, and Davis Drive to the south. The route provides direct access to Upper Canada Mall and the Newmarket Bus Terminal, and also provides limited service to the Newmarket GO train station and Silver City theatres.

Figure 1
Route 44
Map

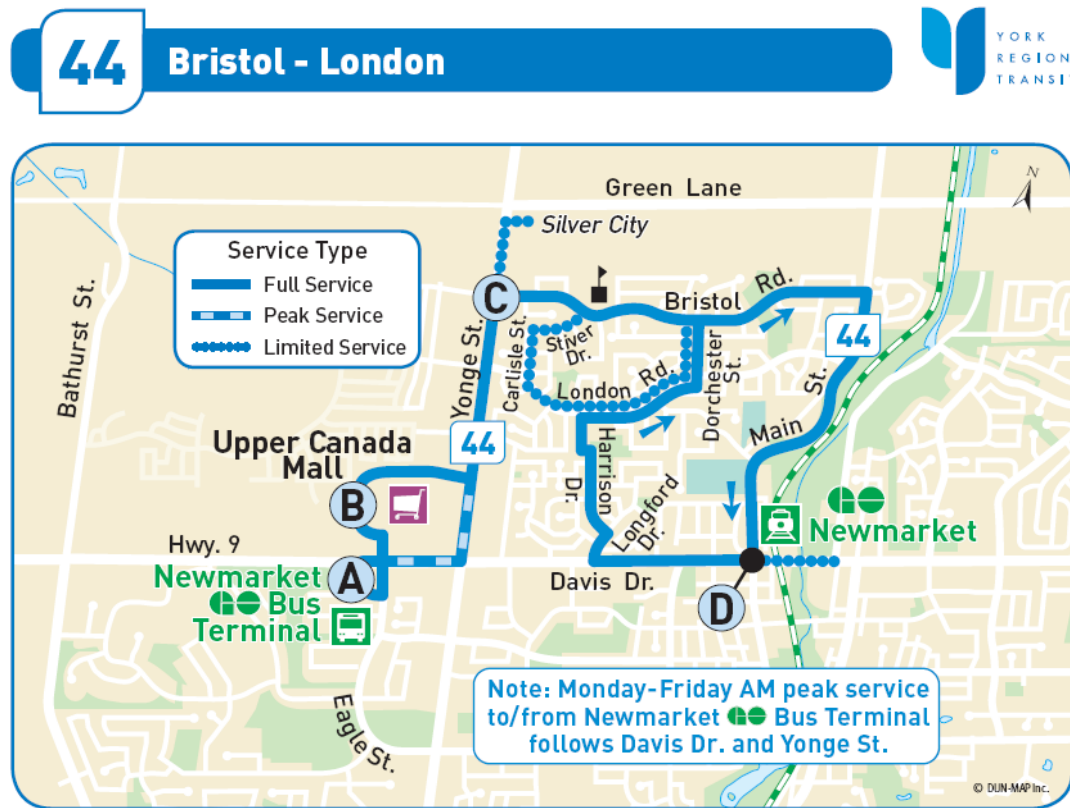


Table 1 provides operating data for the route.

Table 1
Route 44 London-Bristol Statistics

	AM	Midday	PM	Eve	Total	Sat	Sun
# of Bus Trips	6	8	8	4	26	14	N/A
Daily Boardings	49	42	68	15	174	84	N/A
Frequency (Min)	30	60	30	60	N/A	60	N/A
Service Hours	3	5.5	4.5	4	17	14.5	N/A
Annual YRT Operating Cost (000's)	\$65	\$136	\$107	\$101	\$409	\$75	N/A
Annual YRT Revenue (000's)	\$29	\$24	\$40	\$9	\$102	\$9	N/A
R/C Ratio	44%	18%	37%	8%	25%	12%	N/A
Boarding/Rev Hrs	16	10	15	4	11	6	N/A
Fleet	1-30'	1-30'	1-30'	1-30'		1-30'	

3.2 Demand-Responsive Transit Service: Dial-A-Ride

Dial-a-Ride is one of a number of transit initiatives that fall into the category of demand-responsive transit service. Dial-a-Ride in North America has primarily been used for transporting seniors, persons with disabilities, and for specific target markets (e.g. employees in business parks). These services are designed to provide immediate local travel within a specific travel zone/neighbourhood in a community. Customers call a central number and request a pick-up from their nearest conventional bus stop. Dispatchers then send out an accessible vehicle, within a specified time frame, to pick up the customer and take them to a key common destination or bus stop where regular, conventional, fixed-route transit services are offered. This type of service delivery model has traditionally been applied in areas where demand for transit is less than 10 passengers per hour and when destinations are common, such as a GO Station or a shopping mall.

In the case of the Route 44 Dial-a-Ride pilot, the proposed service will have a dedicated vehicle stationed at the Newmarket Bus Terminal between the hours of 7:00 pm and 11:00 pm, Monday to Saturdays to accommodate requests. The local, conventional, fixed-route service will be discontinued during the period when Dial-a-Ride is operating.

3.3 Business Case

As part of the business case, YRT staff evaluated three different scenarios for Dial-a-Ride on Route 44 and made several key assumptions.

1. The first scenario examined the removal or cancellation of the entire Route 44 service replaced with an all-day Dial-a-Ride service.

2. The second scenario examined the removal or cancellation of the entire Route 44 midday, late-evening service replaced with Dial-a-Ride service.
3. The third scenario examined the removal or cancellation of the entire Route 44 late-evening service only, replaced with Dial-a-Ride service.

Key assumptions included:

- All existing Route 44 customers will shift to a Dial-a-Ride service.
- Most or all of the existing customers are destined to/from the Newmarket Bus Terminal, Upper Canada Mall and Davis Drive.
- Service to the customer can be accommodated within 30 minutes of a request.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The evaluation of the three scenarios was guided by the service strategies and standards outlined in the Five-Year Service Plan. They included the introduction of new service delivery models to improve low-performing fixed routes, minimum service levels standards, and financial performance standards. The evaluation also took into consideration the results of a cost-benefit analysis for all three scenarios.

The cost-benefit analysis for scenarios two and three both indicated a potential for Dial-a-Ride service. As this is a pilot, scenario three is considered large enough in scope to demonstrate the merits of Dial-a-Ride. Scenario three will be simple to communicate and it allows for a smooth transition from the conventional transit service. The results for scenario three are outlined in this report.

4.1 RFP Results

On November 20, 2006, the Region's Supplies and Services Branch released Request for Proposal (RFP) P-06-116, on behalf of YRT for the provision of Dial-a-Ride service within the Town of Newmarket. Thirty-one (31) firms were faxed a copy of the bid notice and, in addition, the project was advertised on the Electronic Tender Network. The scope of work required the contractor to supply a dedicated, accessible, low-floor vehicle and administrative services to operate the Dial-a-Ride service for a trial period of one year. The purpose of the trial period would be to ascertain whether this type of service can satisfactorily address customer trip needs within an area having low transit customer demand. Should the trial prove successful during the first nine months of operation, the Region intends to invite the successful proponent to submit a proposal for the operation of service for a further two years.

The RFP closed on January 8, 2007, with three bids being received from the following companies:

1. Scarborough City Cab.
2. Mobility Transportation Specialists (MTS).
3. Veolia Transportation.

All three bids were evaluated as outlined under the Region's Purchasing By-law. The result of this evaluation is the award of a contract to 1210670 Ontario Inc. o/a Scarborough City Cab, which was the firm attaining the highest grand total weighted score and submitting the lowest total cost. The hourly contract rate of \$32.86 was received and is based on a minimum of five hours of continuous service. This rate was then applied to update and complete the Business Case.

4.2 Preferred Service Option (Scenario 3) – Replace Route 44 Evening Service with Dial-a-Ride

Table 2 below summarizes the results of a cost-benefit analysis of switching from the current Route 44 local, fixed-route service to a Dial-A-Ride during the evening hours. The detailed analysis is presented in *Attachment 1*.

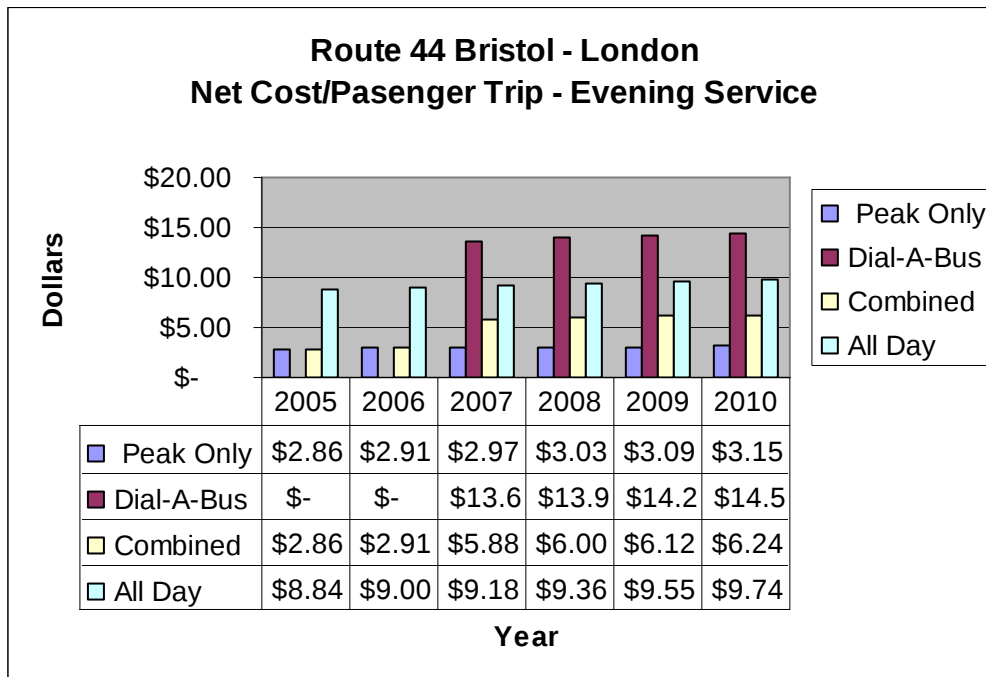
Table 2
Monthly Route 44 Dial-a-Ride Cost/Benefit Analysis Summary
Monday to Saturday Late Evening Service

	Evening (4hrs) 8:00pm - 11:00pm (\$)	Sat Evening 8:00pm - 11:00pm (\$)	Annual (\$)
Conventional Total net operating and capital cost	8,778	1,561	124,068
Dial -a- Ride Total net operating and capital cost	2,889	490	40,548
Extra cost/(savings)	(5,889)	(1,071)	(83,520)
Annual Savings	(70,668)	(12,852)	(83,520)

4.3 Key Performance Indicators

In terms of evaluating the impact of Dial-a-Ride, the savings indicated by the cost-benefit analysis were further evaluated against several key performance indicators. In this case, the financial efficiency indicator of net cost/passenger was utilized. The results indicate that within the Route 44 service area, the net cost/passenger can be potentially reduced from the current \$9.18 per passenger to \$5.88 during the evening hours. This represents a 64% improvement in financial efficiency (see *Figure 2*).

Figure 2



4.4 Relationship to Vision 2026

Vision 2026 includes a goal statement relating to the provision of an integrated, cost-efficient and accessible transit network. To support these goals, York Region Transit has identified and implemented specific strategies to achieve a balanced transportation system and reduce traffic congestion. Part of this strategy includes the use of demand-responsive services for the delivery of public transit. The recommendations of this report are consistent with the intent of these goal statements.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

According to the performance targets set out in the York Region Transit Five-Year Service Plan, the minimum cost-recovery target for local routes operating in a Community Bus Demand-Responsive application is 25%. This cost-recovery target assumes at least a one-year period of operation. Following the implementation of the evening Dial-a-Ride Route 44 pilot, overall cost-recovery on Route 44 is anticipated to increase to 28% from the current 22%. Current annual operating costs of \$485,000 are expected to be reduced by \$83,500 and combined with anticipated normal revenues of \$110,000, will result in an overall revenue/cost ratio of 28%.

Based on the current average of 174 passengers per day, Route 44 cost per trip is approximately \$9.18. With the introduction of Dial-a-Ride, the cost per trip is expected to decrease to \$5.88.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The implementation of a one-year Dial-a-Ride pilot service on Route 44 in the Town of Newmarket will address an area of low ridership and, if successful, could potentially replace or be applied to similar market areas throughout the YRT network.

7. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the Dial-a-Ride business case and the successful award of RFP # P-06-116 to Scarborough City Cab, YRT staff recommend that a one-year Dial-a-Ride pilot be implemented during the evening service period on Route 44 Bristol-London.

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

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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