1
YORK REGION TRANSIT
DRAFT ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN 2008

The Transit Committee recommends the following:

1. **The presentation by Irene McNeil, Manager, Service Planning, York Region Transit, regarding 'Annual Service Plan – 2008', be received; and**

2. **The recommendation contained in the following report, August 24, 2007, from the General Manager, Transit, be adopted.**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the York Region Transit Draft Annual Service Plan 2008 *(Attachment 1)* be received and that the Draft Service Plan be circulated to the local municipalities in York Region, partner transit systems including Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), GO Transit, Brampton Transit, Durham Region Transit, local Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) and York Student Transportation Services by the Regional Clerk for their review and requesting comments by October 26, 2007.

2. PURPOSE

The York Region Transit (YRT) Draft Annual Service Plan 2008 provides a framework for the next year's expansion of the transit network (coverage area and service frequency) in order to attract new customers and increase overall transit market share. A new YRT Five-Year Service Plan (2006-2010) was completed in 2006 which responded to the challenges of the next five years by refining the service standards into more effective planning tools. It also developed a comprehensive communication plan, outlined service initiatives and growth requirements, and explored new ways YRT can continue its innovative development. The Draft Annual Service Plan 2008 continues to implement the recommendations that were originally identified in the Five-Year Service Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

As part of YRT's latest Five-Year Service Plan (2006-2010), an updated annual planning cycle and consultation process was approved. For a fair and balanced appraisal of service, critical elements are followed:

- Using the well-defined service standards and objectives which were adopted by Regional Council to assess new and existing transit services.
- Conducting route assessments.
- Data collection program required to support the review process.
- Comprehensive consultation process which involves engaging local municipalities, general public, external and internal stakeholders, neighbouring municipalities, local Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) and transit providers.

YRT staff have followed the approved approach, with the Draft Annual Service Plan - 2008 being the basis for next year's planning activities and budget.

In 2006, the YRT/Viva system consisted of over 80 routes carrying over 17.1 million revenue passenger trips, and by the end of 2007, it is estimated that the YRT/Viva system will carry over 18.6 million revenue passenger trips, an impressive increase of 9% over the previous year. YRT conventional services consist of:

- Base routes (operating in major arterial corridors).
- Feeder or local routes (operating in local neighbourhoods).
- High school specials (focusing on specific student demand).
- GO train shuttles.
- Express services.
- Community bus routes.

Each route category serves a particular transit market and each route plays an important role in the success of the overall system network. Although each route is reviewed individually, YRT/Viva considers the overall transit system goals when evaluating changes or improvements.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

As part of the review process, YRT staff evaluate both the effectiveness and efficiency of the YRT/Viva system. The evaluation process considers the effectiveness of not only the individual routes, but more importantly, the system as a whole. Consideration is given to the financial efficiency (revenue/cost ratio) of each route, effectiveness in terms of route/network connectivity, service area coverage and ability to meet demand.

In order to proactively engage the public, Public Information Centres (PICs) were held on June 26 and 28, 2007, for northern and southern York Region, respectively. The PICs were held at local venues in order to solicit feedback and gather comments from those residents and customers most affected by the proposed changes. In addition, at the request of Aurora Council, a public information meeting was held in Aurora on June 4, 2007.

In addition, an overview of the draft 2008 Service Plan was presented at stakeholder meetings with staff from the local municipalities, local Transportation Management Associations (TMAs), TTC, GO Transit, Brampton Transit and Durham Region Transit.

4.1 Service Standards

There are two route-specific service standards used to ensure individual routes are designed both to be attractive to customers and to perform at a satisfactory level. Minimum service frequency and minimum performance (boardings/revenue hour) are used to evaluate each route's operation. Each route category has different standards according to its role within the overall network. For example, a base route, which serves a TTC subway station, would be expected to have a higher efficiency rating than a local neighbourhood feeder route. A base route's alignment is also more direct in order to minimize travel time, whereas a local feeder route is designed to maximize customer convenience within a catchment area, thereby forfeiting some of its efficiency.

4.2 Financial Efficiency

One of the factors which measures the efficiency of a route is the cost recovery or revenue/cost (R/C) ratio. The revenue/cost ratio is a direct reflection of a route's farebox revenue versus the total operating cost. In 2006, the YRT system had a cost recovery of 40.1%. It is estimated the 2007 R/C ratio will be 38% (revised forecast).

Delaying initiatives outlined in the Five-Year Service Plan has resulted in lower than forecasted revenue riders. Due to the Transit Pass Tax Credit offered on monthly passes, the average fare per passenger was adjusted by -$0.10/passenger. The revised ridership forecast and the lower average fare will impact the 2007 R/C ratio. In order to maintain transit costs and revenues within the approved 2007 budget envelope, the cost mitigation strategy as outlined in the YRT/Viva 2007 Ridership Forecast and Related Service Adjustments report (June 14, 2007 - Transit Committee) was implemented.

Although the revenue/cost ratio is not the sole factor in determining the viability of a route, it does give a good indication of the overall efficiency of the service. The revenue/cost ratio is used to determine whether or not a route's service coverage and frequency need to be expanded, realigned, reduced or even eliminated.

4.3 Relationship to Vision 2026

The primary goal of an annual service plan is to ensure the transit system's goals and objectives are aligned with the predetermined longer-range strategic plan. YRT's mandate also includes a major role in contributing to an increase in the Region's morning peak hour modal share from 8 to 12 percent during the same period.

Vision 2026 includes a goal statement relating to the development of 'Infrastructure for a Growing Region', which states: *"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 a successfully integrated transit service.
- Developing an optional mix of transit service types.
- Promoting transit usage as a practical and wise alternative to private vehicle use.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

During the budget review process, the 2008 Draft Plan will be reviewed and final recommendations approved for implementation in 2008. The total estimated gross cost of all service improvements in the Draft Annual Service Plan 2008 is approximately $6.1 million. However, as part of the preliminary 2008 budget process, a number of initiatives have been deferred to 2009 (see Section 10 – Summary of Recommendations). The remaining proposed 2008 initiatives will amount to approximately $4.3 million with associated revenues estimated to be $1.35 million, for a net cost of $2.97 million. The proposed services represent about 5% of total 2008 direct operating costs.

Attachment 1 is the Draft YRT/Viva Annual Service Plan 2008. In section 10 of the Plan, individual draft service initiatives are identified. Approval of the draft service initiatives and 2008 Business Plan and Budget should be completed in December 2007.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

As noted earlier in the report, Public Information Centres (June) and stakeholder meetings were held. Input has been received from various stakeholder groups, residents, students, other transit agencies, local municipal staff and local Transportation Management Associations (TMAs). YRT's Draft Annual Service Plan 2008 can now be circulated for final review.

YRT's Draft Annual Service Plan 2008 recommends a number of route specific improvements. These can be summarized as follows:

- Viva purple extension to Cornell (east Markham).
- Service to new subdivisions in Richmond Hill, Markham, Vaughan, Newmarket, Stouffville (e.g. Inspiration subdivision at Yonge/Jefferson/Stouffville/Bathurst – Richmond Hill; Bridlewalk – Markham; Upper Thornhill Village, Dufferin Woods and Vellore Park – Vaughan; Woodspring and Aspenwood – Newmarket; Lebovic - Stouffville).
- Corridor improvements (e.g. Bathurst, Leslie, Dufferin, Weston, Rutherford/16th, Woodbine, Highway 27, Markham Road, Major Mackenzie, etc).

7. CONCLUSION

For the 2008 operating year, the estimated growth-related service initiatives amount to approximately 51,500 revenue hours of service (including expanded coverage, frequency and span of service).

The proposed service hour increases are based on the following criteria:

- Current schedule adherence and overcrowding.
- Residential subdivision currently without service.
- Existing latent demand (based on outstanding service requests/petitions).
- Major trip generators currently without service or minimal service.

YRT's Draft Annual Service Plan 2008 is a document which will guide the expansion and refining of transit services in the upcoming year. The recommendations contained in the plan provide a basis for budget development and ensure the delivery of transit services is consistent with the longer range strategic direction adopted in the latest Five-Year Service Plan (2006-2010).

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 was included in the agenda for the September 20, 2007 Committee agenda.)