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MOBILITY PLUS INFORMATION CENTRES UPDATE

The Transportation Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated May 27, 2010, from the Commissioner of Transportation Services.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report updates Regional Council on Mobility Plus' progress to-date regarding the public consultation and information centres to be held in June and September.

3. BACKGROUND

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) mandates that each municipality prepare an annual accessibility plan for the purpose of improving opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the Province of Ontario.

One of Mobility Plus' strategic initiatives for 2010 was to hold public information centres in each of the nine municipalities. This would give staff the opportunity to engage with the residents for a number of different reasons:

- Information - providing news and views to people
- Consultation - inviting a response to different issues
- Communication - an opportunity for two-way dialogue
- Involvement - providing opportunities for participation

These public information centres will provide the disabled community the opportunity to voice their opinion on the Mobility Plus service and to give YRT staff ideas on how to improve, thereby providing for their involvement as stated in the ODA mandate.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Public consultation and information centres give Mobility Plus the opportunity to share information and solicit feedback

A letter, dated March 11, 2010, was sent to the Accessibility Advisory Committee in each of the nine municipalities asking for their support in this endeavour and for feedback regarding a venue. It was felt their expertise in choosing the right location would be invaluable as they would be fully aware of any potential attendee's needs and requirements.

Tell me, I forget. Show me, I remember. Involve me, I understand.

Chinese Proverb

The sessions will be called "Improving Our Services with You" to stress the importance of the public's input and contribution. In addition, these outreach activities will provide the public with means to gain a solid understanding of our operation and the strategies we plan to implement in the upcoming year.

Venues and dates have been secured for all nine municipalities

Mobility Plus felt it was important to set a positive tone for the meetings, from the planning stage, to foster interest and encourage public participation. Municipalities, through their local Accessibility Advisory Committees were asked to consider dates outside of the summer months so as not to interfere with people's vacations.

The list of venues and dates are outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1
Schedule of Information Sessions

Date	Municipality	Venue
May 31	Markham	Markham Civic Centre
June 2	Vaughan	Vellore Village Community Centre
June 3	Aurora	Aurora Public Library
June 15	Georgina	Georgina Ice Palace
June 22	King	Nobleton Community Recreation Centre
September 8	East Gwillimbury	East Gwillimbury Civic Centre
September 14	Newmarket	Newmarket Town Offices
September 16	Whitchurch-Stouffville	Nineteen on the Park
September 21	Richmond Hill	Richmond Hill Town Offices
September 28	York Region	Administrative Centre

The sessions will be advertised in a variety of ways and in a variety of places

Staff is aware of the importance of ‘spreading the word’ to the audience we hope to reach through these centres, and have taken steps to ensure this happens.

A Mobility Plus newsletter is mailed to the current ridership twice a year. The Spring newsletter, mailed in mid-May, includes the full list of sessions with date, time, venue name and address. In addition, the list will be advertised in the local newspapers and on the YRT website. Well in advance of the sessions, callers to the Mobility Plus Call centre will hear a recorded announcement of upcoming sessions with an opportunity to speak to a staff member for more information.

Stakeholders and agencies have been encouraged to spread the word to their clientele at the Mobility Plus semi-annual workshop on May 14, 2010. Flyers will be provided to the agencies for posting in their facilities and for distribution.

All announcements and media advertising will contain the purpose of the sessions, date, place, and time, as well as the telephone number of the Mobility Plus Call Centre.

Flyers will also be provided to each municipality for posting in their facilities.

Mayors, Regional and local Councillors have been informed of the session to be held in each of their municipalities

An e-mail, from the Regional Chair’s office, was sent to each elected member of each municipality on April 29, 2010, informing them of the session date and venue in their area and inviting them to attend.

Creating the right atmosphere for these sessions will determine their success

Staff believes an ‘Open House’ format will best facilitate the people we hope will participate. Mobility Plus applicants are assessed on a case-by-case basis so having enough staff in attendance to speak to people one-on-one is important to the success of the sessions. Attendees will be greeted at the door and asked to sign in so that follow-up information may be provided, if necessary.

In attendance at all meetings will be:

- The Manager of Mobility Plus.
- The Supervisor of Scheduling/Dispatch.
- The Supervisor of Contract Administration.
- The Safety and Training Co-ordinator.
- A Customer Service Representative.

- A Trip Reservationist.
- A Travel Trainer.
- A YRT/Viva spokesperson.
- A sign-language interpreter.

Story boards will be created by YRT Marketing staff and presented on easels. Topics to be addressed include:

- Eligibility criteria and levels of eligibility.
- How to apply.
- How to book.
- Transfer points with neighbouring municipalities.
- Community Bus routes.
- Family of Services.

In addition, a booth will be set up with a telephone where staff will help people attending become comfortable with the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology. This technology allows Mobility Plus clients to book, cancel and confirm rides 24/7 using their touch tone phones without having to go through the Call Centre.

Staff will take notes so the views of the people can be fully understood and allow analysis at a later date. Feedback will be provided if necessary.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The disabled community in each municipality will benefit from being able to attend these sessions in a venue they are familiar with and is close to home. In addition, their feedback will be invaluable to staff as Mobility Plus plans for the next five years.

7. CONCLUSION

Mobility Plus, with the help of the public, will continue to build and operate an innovative, reliable and courteous specialized transit system that responds to our customers' needs. These sessions are a positive step.

As Mobility Plus goes through this process, staff will reflect on any lessons learned and make changes if necessary. A further update will be provided to Council once the sessions are complete and the results have been analyzed.

For more information on this report, please contact Sharon Doyle, Manager Mobility Plus at Ext. 5634.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.