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YORK REGION TRANSIT LOST AND FOUND POLICY UPDATE

(Regional Council at its meeting on September 18, 2008 adopted this Clause subject to the following additional recommendation:

- 2. Staff report back to the Transit Committee in two months on the estimated value of lost and found items based on past experience, and investigate further options for disposal of these items, including the possibility of a public auction.)***

The Transit Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, August 26, 2008, from the Commissioner of Transportation Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The revised York Region Transit Lost and Found Policy, attached to this report, be approved.

2. PURPOSE

This report advises Regional Council of recommended amendments to the York Region Transit (YRT) Lost and Found Policy, and seeks Regional Council approval to formally adopt the amended policy. (see *Attachment 1*).

3. BACKGROUND

An amalgamated YRT Lost and Found policy was adopted by Council in February 2004

A best practices review was conducted of several transit properties in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) to determine the preferred approach to managing lost articles found within the YRT system. A new YRT Lost and Found Policy was adopted by Council in February 2004.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The performance-based contracts require the YRT operating contractors to maintain a lost and found service

Lost articles may be reclaimed by the general public at the contractor's premises and a public telephone number is published for each of the contractors. All lost articles found by the contractor's employees are to be kept in an access-controlled and secured area.

The contractors maintain common hours of operation for this service (Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), and are responsible to keep a record and controlled inventory list of lost articles. All lost articles are currently kept by the contractor for 90 days, following which the disposal of the articles will be undertaken in conjunction with the Region. The contractors are required to attempt to return all lost articles.

Since the adoption of the YRT Lost and Found Policy, staff have identified changes needed to improve the handling of lost articles and our approach to customer service

Referencing other transit agencies' lost and found policies, (i.e., GO Transit, TTC, Brampton and Mississauga Transit), and considering our own operating and customer service issues, staff identified several areas of the policy requiring amendment or additional information to clarify the process. They are as follows:

- Definitions of a lost article.
- Handling of illegal drugs and weapons.
- Processing and correct storage of lost articles.
- Responsibilities of our contractor and YRT staff.
- Contractor retention period for lost articles reduced from 90 days to 30 days.
- Identifying ownership of lost articles.
- Method of disposal/donation.

The definition of lost articles was included to differentiate between articles that were considered to be of value and others that are perishable and/or items that should be disposed of immediately, including illegal drugs and weapons.

Since some lost articles have been determined to be of value, YRT is improving the process in which they are tagged and stored by the contractor and subsequently by YRT. Some identified lost articles will be required to be turned over to YRT within 24 hours if not returned to the owner. This will assist in future claims by customers who have lost articles on the YRT/Viva service that YRT and/or its contractors are responsible for while in their possession.

The contractors will still be required to maintain a lost and found operation Monday to Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., but will now be required to respond to the requests to

retrieve lost articles within 24 hours of receiving the request, with the exception being where a request is received on a Friday and/or holiday. In this case, the call shall be returned by the next business day.

In the current Lost and Found Policy, no reference is made to the ownership of lost articles, therefore, it is unclear who has the right to retain or dispose of the article. On the 31st day following the registration of the article, including currency, YRT will assume legal ownership. Unclaimed currency will be turned over to YRT's Manager of Finance. Up until that day, all lost articles will remain the property of the individual who lost the article.

Disposal of all items not deemed lost articles will be the responsibility of the contractor. These items are to be disposed of within 24 hours and include: perishables, beverages, contents of lunch boxes, illegal drugs and weapons, etc. All other items will be maintained at the contractor's facility for 30 days. On the 31st day, the contractor will be required to turn over all articles to YRT for disposal. Where appropriate, YRT will make every effort to have the articles donated to charitable organizations.

YRT staff will communicate this policy to its customers

This will include:

- YRT web site.
- On-bus information.
- YRT call centre Customer Service Representatives and on-street Customer Information Representatives.
- YRT automated customer information phone system.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the amended Transit Lost and Found Policy.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The amendments to this policy will assist our customers, the residents and businesses located within York Region's local municipalities, with the retrieval and protection of lost articles on the YRT/Viva transit system.

7. CONCLUSION

The suggested amendments to the YRT Lost and Found Policy will improve the processing and handling of lost articles and customer service. It is recommended that Regional Council approve the revised policy.

For more information on this report, please contact Ann-Marie Carroll, Assistant Manager, Operations, at Ext. 5677 or Angelo Apfelbaum, Enforcement Supervisor, at Ext. 5352.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachments referred to in this clause are attached to this report.)