

2

YORK REGION TRANSIT FARE POLICY UPDATE

The Transit Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, August 25, 2006, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the updated York Region Transit Fare Policy be endorsed and forwarded to the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report seeks endorsement of an updated York Region Transit (YRT) Fare Policy document that brings together into one comprehensive source all current YRT fare policies, and related procedures and practices.

3. BACKGROUND

Over the last several years, YRT has been required to accommodate and manage very significant structural and dynamic changes in its environment; changes which have had a profound impact on fare related policies. These include:

- The launch of Viva bus rapid transit services and their integration with YRT's conventional bus service. The Viva oneRide and multiRide ticket vending machine system introduced a totally new fare media distribution channel. The VivaNow ticket validator added new and rigorous constraints to YRT's fare media design and procurement requirements. Viva's proof-of-payment fare process introduced a new fare payment process and created the requirement for a totally new and parallel fare enforcement process.
- YRT expanding its services to accommodate the geographic spread of the Region's population growth and the corresponding YRT ridership increase.
- The introduction of YRT Route 98 and Viva Blue services on Yonge Street which triggered the implementation of the previously approved fare zone system.
- The commitment of YRT to implement the new GTA smart card fare system in 2008 requires YRT to ensure that its current and planned fare related policies will be fully enabled by the GTA smart card business rules and municipal service provider technical specifications.

It has been YRT's practice to review its fare rates as part of its annual business plan and budget cycle, and to seek Regional Council approval for any required revisions to be

effective January 1 of each year. The fare rates reflect only the financial aspects of YRT's fare policies. There has not been a comparable practice of regular reviews and making the necessary revisions to the non-financial aspects of the fare policies. Rather, individual fare policies have been reviewed and revised on an as-required basis.

Previously, fare related policies have been documented in several ways including policy documents formally endorsed by Regional Council, fare tables approved annually by Regional Council, YRT management memoranda, YRT publications, and YRT operating practices and guidelines. With this in mind, YRT commissioned a review of all current fare policies and structures. A survey was conducted of fare policies in force at several comparable transit agencies across Canada and the USA to assess 'best practices' and 'lessons learned' elsewhere. Publications and information were collected from industry associations (Canadian Urban Transit Association and American Public Transportation Association) and available literature reviewed (US Federal Transportation Administration and Transportation Cooperative Research Board). The applicable GTA fare system business rules and municipal service provider specifications were also reviewed.

Based on this research, the attached fare policy document has been prepared. In addition, the groundwork has been laid for future efforts to update and revise the fare policies as the GTA fare system is implemented in York Region and across the GTA.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Need for Comprehensive and Consistent Document

YRT has determined a need to collect all fare related policies into one comprehensive document that becomes and remains a master fare policy document. In order for any new or revised fare policy to be applicable, it must be contained in this document. Regional Council approval of all revisions to this fare policy document will be required.

The fare policies summarized in this document will be applied consistently across the Region and across all transit services provided by the Region.

4.2 Fare Policy Content

The fare policy document contains information under the following headings:

1. FARE PAYMENT PROCESS – This section details the various payment options for customers and documents the current fare payment practice, including:
 - Pay fare on boarding
 - Pay fare before boarding
 - Fare payment options

2. FARES - Outlines the different variations in how fares are paid including zone payments, premium and discounted fares and free travel. Most policies in this section have been previously approved by Regional Council except for the property passes for YRT staff and YRT/Viva contractors while on duty, fare media prize requests and ridership development opportunities. Subject matter covered include:
 - Passenger fare classifications
 - Fare table
 - Flat fare
 - Fare payment zones
 - Premium services
 - Discounted fares including:
 - Fare classification discounts
 - Pre-purchase discounts
 - Volume discounts - pilot project
 - York Region Employee
 - York Region School Board
 - Free travel on conventional transit services including:
 - Emergency services personnel
 - YRT staff on duty
 - Persons with visual impairments
 - Travel training for persons with disabilities
 - Special dates/events
 - Prizes
 - Marketing- ridership development
3. TRANSFERS - Outlines the transfer guidelines between YRT and Viva services and other transit systems. Documents current transfer practice including:
 - Between YRT services
 - Between YRT and TTC
 - Between YRT and Brampton Transit
4. ENFORCEMENT - Outlines the key fare enforcement policies. Previously approved policies with the introduction of Viva services include:
 - Transit By-law
 - Grace Period
 - Challenge but Concede
 - Refusal of Passage
 - Penalties - Warnings, Citations and Summons

5. FARE MEDIA MODIFICATION PROCESS - Documents the fare media modification process including approvals required.
6. REFUNDS AND EXCHANGES - Outlines the policies and practices related to pass refunds and ticket exchanges. Previously pass refunds were not allowed. This policy is updated to allow refunds on a pro-rated basis.

See *Attachment 1* - York Region Transit Fare Policy for more details.

4.2 Need for Planning Framework

YRT staff have determined the need for providing a planning framework for the regular review and revision of fare policies as operating requirements evolve and as new challenges and service opportunities arise. In addition, there is a need to adopt the 'lessons learned' from efforts to launch and integrate the Viva bus rapid transit service and to implement the proposed GTA fare system. YRT is also determined to profit from the experiences of other transit agencies as they developed and implemented their fare policies and structures.

4.3 Relationship to Vision 2026

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 consolidated and up-to-date fare policy, York Region continues to develop a transit supportive environment and thus contribute to the development of a more balanced transportation network.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The impact of this recommendation is that the fare policies applied by YRT will be consistent in all municipalities across the Region.

7. CONCLUSION

By creating this document, there is now one place where all fare related policies are codified and staff will ensure that future new or revised fare policies are reflected by way of a formal revision to this document. The document is intended to properly reflect the full interests of each of the YRT program areas including conventional YRT services, Viva bus rapid transit services and Mobility Plus. It is anticipated that this document will be revised over time as its operating requirements evolve. It is recommended that Regional Council endorse this transit fare policy document.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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