

8

CROSS-BOUNDARY AGREEMENT WITH BRAMPTON TRANSIT

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

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council authorize entering into a cross-boundary agreement with the Corporation of the City of Brampton to operate an integrated bus rapid transit service along the Highway 7 corridor, from the York-Peel Regional boundary at Highway 50 to Interchange Way, in the City of Vaughan, south to York University. This integrated service will be operated by both the Region's Viva service and the City of Brampton's new Züm service, replacing the existing agreement.
2. The terms and conditions of the cross-boundary agreement contain language that ensures the Region is credited with ridership from those passengers boarding the City of Brampton's Züm service in York Region.
3. The Regional Chair and Regional Clerk be authorized to sign the necessary agreement, subject to review by Legal Services as to form and content.

2. PURPOSE

This report seeks authorization from Regional Council to execute a cross-boundary agreement between The Regional Municipality of York and the Corporation of the City of Brampton for the purpose of implementing an integrated bus rapid transit (BRT) service in York Region along the Highway 7 corridor from Highway 50 to Interchange Way, in the City of Vaughan, south to York University. This integrated service will be operated by both the Region's Viva service and the City of Brampton's new Züm service.

3. BACKGROUND

York Region Transit (YRT) and Brampton Transit staff have been negotiating terms and conditions to allow Brampton BRT transit services into York Region along the Highway 7-Queen Street corridor starting in September 2010

In 1989, prior to the amalgamation of the local municipal transit services, the City of Vaughan entered into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) to provide a joint through-bus service between Brampton (Bramalea City Centre) and Finch Subway. The MOA defined the terms and conditions for local transit services to be jointly operated by Vaughan Transit and Brampton Transit via the Highway 7 corridor, between Bramalea City Centre in the City of Brampton and Finch Subway Station (GO Finch Bus Terminal) in the City of Toronto. Since that time, this service has been recognized as Route 77 (Highway 7-Centre St.).

On January 1, 2001, the Region assumed responsibility for public transit services from the local municipalities. As part of the amalgamation process, the City of Vaughan MOA with the City of Brampton was assigned to the Region.

Brampton Transit is currently preparing to implement its own BRT initiative known as Züm (pronounced Zoom), which will introduce BRT services along designated corridors in Brampton, including Queen Street and Highway 7 into York Region, terminating at York University (see *Attachment 1*). Brampton Transit staff approached YRT to consider the possibility of integrating both the Viva Orange service and Brampton's new Züm service to enhance transit services along the designated corridor by eliminating the need for customers traveling in an eastbound and westbound direction across the York Region and City of Brampton boundary to transfer, and increase the frequency of transit services in York Region along the Highway 7 corridor to York University from 15 minutes to 7.5 minutes.

Both YRT and Brampton Transit agreed that if an acceptable operating arrangement could be developed, a new agreement, replacing the existing Route 77 agreement, will be necessary to detail the terms and conditions applicable to each party. This agreement would outline the roles and responsibilities of both parties in the areas of: administration, operations, security and facility maintenance, as well as jurisdiction and provision of fare enforcement.

In preparing this agreement, YRT staff will consult with a number of internal departments such as Legal, Audit Services and Risk Management branches to develop the terms and conditions of this new operating agreement.

This operating agreement will replace the existing memorandum of agreement dated October 1989 between the Corporation of the City of Brampton and the City of Vaughan, assumed by the Region in January 2001.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Existing cross-boundary local transit services provided by YRT and Brampton Transit have provided significant benefit to customers who require integrated, seamless service

The Highway 7-Queen Street corridor is currently serviced by Route 77, which provides local conventional transit service, and has been jointly operated by YRT and Brampton Transit since 1989. Route 77 currently operates between Bramalea City Centre in the City of Brampton and Finch Subway Station (GO Finch Bus Terminal) in the City of Toronto, with service frequencies ranging from 15 minutes during weekday peak periods, to 45 minutes on Sundays and holidays. YRT and Brampton Transit each operate roughly half of the scheduled service hours over the course of a week.

Under the existing agreement, vehicle resources have been pooled to enhance operating efficiency, operating costs. Revenues have been shared evenly and transfers between the two systems have been accepted. As a result, customers in this corridor have enjoyed seamless, integrated local transit service.

Customer convenience has been significantly enhanced by Route 77 cross-boundary service as transit customers can travel on a single bus, on a single fare, when traveling between the City of Brampton and York Region, thereby reducing the need for transfers. The prevailing YRT and Brampton Transit fares are applicable in the respective municipalities. The standard cash fare is \$3.25 for customers boarding in York Region, and \$3.00 for those boarding within the City of Brampton.

In addition to the Route 77 service, this corridor is also currently serviced by Viva Orange, between Martin Grove Road and Interchange Way in the City of Vaughan, with service frequencies ranging from ten minutes during weekday peak periods, to 15 minutes during off-peak periods.

Combined, Route 77 and Viva Orange accommodate approximately 8,900 passenger boardings (5,800 on Route 77 and 3,100 on Viva Orange) on a typical weekday. Cash fares are split approximately 50/50 for Route 77 between YRT and Brampton Transit. 100% of the fare revenue for Viva Orange is retained by YRT.

To provide more customers in this corridor with the increased convenience of integrated cross-boundary transit service, Brampton Transit is currently preparing to implement its own BRT initiative, known as Züm. This will introduce BRT services along designated corridors in Brampton, including Queen Street and Highway 7 into York Region, terminating at York University.

The implementation of this new agreement means that Route 77 will no longer provide cross-boundary transit services but will be replaced by Brampton Transit's BRT service, Züm

Since 2008, Brampton Transit staff has been working with YRT staff to develop an operating model to improve customers' transit options along the Highway 7 corridor, while meeting the operating objectives of both transit agencies. Through consultation with Brampton Transit, various operating models and options were identified and evaluated.

Through the evaluation process, Option A (i.e. integration of Viva Orange and Züm, incorporating a Züm Highway 407 peak period branch) emerged as the most mutually beneficial option to be carried forward for implementation

Outlined below is an overview of the primary options that were evaluated.

Option A – Integrated Viva Orange and Züm BRT service:

- Viva Orange routing remains unchanged (between Martin Grove Road and York University).
- Züm service provided between Downtown Brampton and York University, with half of peak period trips operating along Highway 7 through the City of Vaughan, and half operating via Highway 407.
- Integration of Viva Orange and Züm service in York Region.
- Local YRT conventional service (i.e. Route 77) truncated at Highway 50, where it would meet with corresponding Brampton Transit local conventional route.

Option B – Züm “Closed Door” Operation through York Region (if agreement cannot be reached):

- Viva Orange routing remains unchanged (between Martin Grove Road and York University).
- Züm service provided between Downtown Brampton and York University, operating “closed door” service through the City of Vaughan via Highway 407.
- No integration of Viva Orange and Züm service in York Region.
- Local YRT conventional service (i.e. Route 77) truncated at Highway 50, where it would meet with corresponding Brampton Transit local conventional route.

An operating cost analysis for Viva Orange to operate to and from downtown Brampton was performed by YRT's Service Planning staff. The cost to operate this extension would be approximately \$2 million annually. In addition to the operating cost, there would be the need to construct Vivastations (\$400,000 to \$500,000/station); maintenance of the Vivastations (\$8,000 annually per station) and the purchase and maintenance of additional fleet.

In order to assess each of the options outlined above, various evaluation criteria were identified to arrive at an overall assessment. The evaluation criteria were:

- Customer impact
- Operational issues
- Technology implications
- Financial impacts
- Compatibility with existing Regional and municipal plans.

YRT and Brampton Transit staff agreed that Option A will best serve transit customers along the Highway 7 corridor, while meeting the operating objectives of both transit agencies. Some key advantages of this option are as follows:

- Consistent with YRT/Viva strategy of encouraging and developing growth in ridership, under this plan, BRT service would be extended across the full Highway 7-Queen Street corridor (i.e. between York University and Downtown Brampton), resulting in reduced customer travel time and improved convenience between these two key destinations, as well as to other intermediate destinations along the corridor.
- Service frequencies currently provided along the existing Viva Orange route would improve to 7.5-minute service during all operating periods.
- Current fare integration arrangements with Brampton Transit would continue unchanged to allow customers to travel across this corridor with a single fare.
- With YRT and Brampton Transit each providing their own respective local conventional service on either side of Highway 50, YRT Route 77 will operate all trips in York Region, and will inherit all passenger boardings in York Region that are currently serviced by Brampton Transit.

As such, the proposed BRT service concept for the corridor would be as follows:

- Viva Orange will provide 15-minute all day service on weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays.
- Züm will provide 7.5-minute frequency from downtown Brampton and then the service will divide off into two branches at Highway 407 and Highway 7. One branch will continue on Highway 7 providing a combined service frequency of 7.5 minutes when integrated with the Viva Orange service. The branch utilizing Highway 407 to York University will provide a 15-minute frequency.
- Züm and Viva Orange's midday, off-peak, Saturday and Sunday service will both operate on a 15-minute frequency to York University providing a 7.5 minute combined integrated service frequency.
- Brampton Transit and YRT/Viva will monitor the level of service and implement any required adjustments for the Züm services as needed. Viva Orange will maintain the promised 15-minute frequency, or better.

- Given that new, continuous BRT service would extend from Bramalea City Centre to York University, local Route 77 would be restructured to create separate eastern and western segments, to be operated exclusively by YRT and Brampton Transit, respectively, on either side of Highway 50.
- Both the Viva Orange and Züm BRT services will operate within the bus rapid transit corridor once constructed.

The key customer advantages of Option A have been identified above. However, there are other customer impacts that are acknowledged and will need to be addressed by Brampton Transit and YRT.

For example, in terms of transferring between the separated eastern and western segments of Route 77 conventional service, customers will need to transfer at shared on-street stops along a common portion of those route segments. YRT and Brampton Transit will work together to provide the most convenient schedules possible to minimize the transfer wait time. At the initial implementation phase, there may be limited amenities at the common stops, such as shelters and concrete waiting areas for customers.

Also, for any customers boarding from a BRT (Züm or Vivastation) stop who want to alight at a local (non-BRT) stop, such customers would be required to transfer from Züm/Viva to Route 77, or vice-versa. However, this is not unlike similar situations in York Region where passengers must transfer between local and BRT services.

With respect to fares, customers will have the same fare payment options available to them as they currently have on Route 77. For example, they will be able to continue boarding Züm, Viva or Route 77 buses by means of cash fare, or through the use of tickets, passes and transfers issued by either YRT or Brampton Transit. However, since Züm service will require on-board fare payment (as opposed to Viva's off-board fare payment), staff from both YRT and Brampton Transit will work together to educate customers of this difference both prior to, and during, implementation of the integrated BRT service.

To meet the Region's interests and requirements, the new cross-boundary agreement will need to contain stipulations ensuring the Region is credited the ridership numbers

As a result of the revised service delivery model, the balance of boardings serviced by YRT/Viva and Brampton Transit will be redistributed. For example, with YRT Route 77 assuming the responsibility to operate all local conventional transit service east of Highway 50, it is foreseen that YRT's share of ridership on this route will increase. With BRT service proposed to be integrated between Martin Grove Road and York University, it is estimated that ridership on Viva Orange would be reduced. With respect to cost, although Viva-related operating expenses are expected to decrease, the cost to operate

Route 77 local conventional service are planned to remain unchanged, i.e. due to the reduced length of Route 77 and adjusted frequencies. The estimated financial impact of the cross-boundary service is outlined in Table 1 below, which indicates that on an overall basis, the Region can expect to incur an estimated net annual savings of approximately \$105,000.

Table 1
Estimated Financial Impact of Cross-Boundary Viva-Züm Service

	Before Zum (a)	After Zum (b)	Impact Fav/(Unfav) (c=b-a)
Revenue Impact			
<i>Impact on Viva Orange</i>			
Boardings per weekday	3,095	1,548	(1,548)
Boardings per Saturday	1,503	752	(752)
Boardings per Sunday/holiday	997	499	(499)
Annual boardings	918,913	459,457	(459,457)
Average revenue per boarding	\$1.79	\$1.79	\$1.79
Annual fare revenue	\$1,644,854	\$822,427	(\$822,427)
<i>Impact on Route 77</i>			
Boardings per weekday	2,890	3,590	700
Boardings per Saturday	1,201	1,821	620
Boardings per Sunday/holiday	0	760	760
Annual boardings	790,732	1,045,732	255,000
Average revenue per boarding	\$1.79	\$1.79	\$1.79
Annual fare revenue	\$1,415,410	\$1,871,860	\$456,450
Total Revenue Impact			(\$365,977)
Cost Impact¹			
<i>Impact on Viva Orange</i>			
Number of peak buses required	10	7	3
Annual revenue service hours	47,309	41,261	6,048
Annual contractor cost	\$3,690,102	\$3,218,358	\$471,744
<i>Impact on Route 77²</i>			
Annual revenue service hours	24,610	24,610	0
Annual contractor cost	\$2,091,850	\$2,091,850	\$0
Total Cost Impact			\$471,744
Net Cost Impact			
Net Cost Impact for Viva Orange	(\$822,427-\$471,744)		(\$350,683)
Net Cost Impact for Route 77			\$456,450
Total Net Cost Impact			\$105,767

Note:

1. Assuming no impact on non-contractor costs.
2. No cost impact as existing resources will be used to run the new Route 77.

It is foreseen that Option A would benefit the majority of transit users along the Highway 7-Queen Street corridor as a result of reduced travel time and more frequent BRT service. However, under this proposed concept, some existing customers (such as those in Brampton destined to Finch Subway Station, for example) would be required to transfer onto YRT Route 77 to complete a trip that currently does not require a transfer. However, ridership data indicates that this segment of the customer base does not represent the majority of existing users.

Brampton Transit staff surveyed customers to determine the final impact on customers who will need to adjust to the provision of BRT service in Highway 7-Queen Street corridor. For some affected customers currently destined to locations in the City of Toronto, this planned service model would provide the option for existing customers to make their connections into Toronto at York University, in addition to Finch Subway Station.

In order to facilitate customers' understanding of the planned new service model, YRT/Viva staff will need to develop a customer communication plan in consultation with Brampton Transit

To facilitate customers' use of the planned integrated service, YRT/Viva Marketing and Customer Service staff, in conjunction with their Brampton Transit colleagues, will need to identify potential customer questions and concerns. Both agencies will need to develop an effective informational strategy and corresponding timeline to communicate with customers about the new service, and provide them with information and marketing materials to make any adjustments as simple as possible.

Staff will negotiate key principles of this new agreement between the Region and the City of Brampton, for implementation in September 2010

The new agreement, among other things, clarifies the terms and conditions relating to operations, revenue and cost allocation, preservation of YRT/Viva ridership, and auditing and insurance responsibilities of YRT and Brampton Transit. The new agreement will include terms and conditions pertaining to:

- Operating requirements for Viva Orange, Brampton Transit's Züm service and Route 77 currently operated by both agencies.
- Ridership retention for YRT/Viva.
- Cost-neutrality to the Region which will require the City of Brampton to compensate the Region for any costs incurred due to the implementation of their new Züm service.
- Facility installation and maintenance.
- Future use of the Region's rapidway infrastructure.

- Implementation and utilization of advanced technical/technological issues (e.g. agreement on transit signal priority systems, passenger information systems, fare equipment).
- Service scheduling and design.

By addressing these matters in the cross-boundary agreement, the Region will be able to ensure that existing customers will generally benefit by an improved level of service, and that the Region would experience growth in ridership, while maintaining cost neutrality. The proposed cross-boundary agreement would be executed in time to reflect planned implementation in September 2010.

Relationship to Vision 2026

The continuation of cross-boundary BRT services between The Regional Municipality of York and the City of Brampton supports Vision 2026 in the “Infrastructure for a Growing Region” goal area by:

- Making transit accessible.
- 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.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is YRT’s expectation that the implementation of Brampton’s new Züm will be at no additional cost to the Region

Upon implementation of integrated Züm and Viva service through the Highway 7 corridor, YRT/Viva will likely experience a decrease in fare revenue estimated at \$365,977 annually. This should be offset by operational cost savings of \$471,744, as shown in Table 1. The Region will see net annual savings of approximately \$105,000 considering the changes to the Route 77 service.

If more than fifty percent (>50%) of existing Viva Orange customers migrate to Züm there is a possibility the Region will lose more revenue than is being offset by operational cost savings. If this is the case, the Region will have the option of renegotiating the terms of the agreement or terminating the agreement with the City of Brampton given six months notice.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The proposed BRT service concept that will be reflected in the corresponding updated operating agreement will help to deliver to a higher level of transit service within the Highway 7-Queen Street corridor. To establish ongoing success and to continue meeting the demands of its customers, YRT/Viva recognizes that it will need to work closely with its colleagues at Brampton Transit to ensure that their respective services will jointly operate in an effective and efficient manner.

7. CONCLUSION

For over 20 years, YRT (and the City of Vaughan prior to amalgamation) has been jointly operating cross-boundary local transit service with Brampton Transit to provide essential connections between York Region and the City of Brampton. The provision of convenient and reliable transit services is critical to achieving greater balance in the Region's overall transportation system by increasing the transit modal share. The introduction of integrated Viva and Züm BRT services along the full Highway 7-Queen Street corridor will provide more customers with the increased convenience of integrated cross-boundary BRT service. It is therefore recommended that a new operating agreement be executed with the City of Brampton, based on the planned operating model agreed to by YRT/Viva and Brampton Transit.

For more information on this report, please contact Ettore Iannacito at Ext. 5628.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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

