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VIVANEXT BUS RAPID TRANSIT PARK AND RIDE STRATEGY UPDATE

The Rapid Transit Public/Private Partnership Steering Committee recommends the following:

1. **The presentation by David Clark, Chief Architect, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation, be received; and**

2. **The recommendations contained in the following report, November 6, 2008, from the Vice-President, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation, be adopted:**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council endorse the following five key principles to guide the development of the final vivaNext Bus Rapid Transit park and ride strategy.
    1. Commuter park and ride facilities are an essential of the Viva BRT system.
    2. Parking fees should be established wherever possible.
    3. Surface parking should not be located where it will frustrate transit-oriented development intensification.
    4. A preference should be given to the use of public land or shared arrangements to deliver parking.
    5. Viva should control its brand, design, service and maintenance standards, rate and revenue structures at parking lots.

2. Staff develop draft park and ride capital financing and governance model alternatives for Committee and Council's consideration and consultation with local municipalities.

3. Staff develop a timeline for the implementation of the final park and ride strategy, including financing and governance recommendations.

2. PURPOSE

This report updates Council on the development of a comprehensive park and ride strategy to support the ridership growth on the Viva Bus Rapid Transit network as it is implemented over the next decade. The report identifies interim findings and emerging principles for Council's consideration that will help frame the final outcome of the study and guide the park and ride implementation plan. The report also identifies the strategic input into the development of a park and ride strategy in support of the Cornell Terminal and the Richmond Hill terminal area.

3. BACKGROUND

A park and ride study was initiated in 2007

In June of 2007, Council authorized the York Region Rapid Transit Corporation to commence a park and ride study for the Viva Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network. The objectives of the study were to develop a strategy and implementation plan for parking facilities that would support system-wide BRT ridership growth. The 2003 Network Configuration Plan was endorsed by Council on September 18, 2003 and updated in 2007. It confirms that commuter parking is an integral component of the delivery and successful operation of the rapid transit network. Notwithstanding the essential role that commuter park and ride facilities will play in attracting and sustaining Viva ridership, a significant share of Viva ridership growth will continue to be delivered through local YRT feeder routes.

Following Council's direction, rapid transit staff, together with the Region's Owner's Engineer, developed a comprehensive work programme for the study and engaged York Consortium 2002 to undertake a number of technical support components of the plan. At the same time, the Owner's Engineer retained Ralph Bond of the BA Group, a parking expert with broad municipal experience, to work with the rapid transit office on local policy, stakeholder consultation, revenue policy and governance structure for the operation and management of Viva commuter parking facilities.

A number of major work programme elements have been completed

The study commenced in the fall of 2007 with efforts focussing on a number of major work components:

- A Technical Memorandum on Park and Ride Best Practices in North America.
- A Technical Memorandum on Site Selection Criteria and Methodology for Park and Ride Facilities.
- Initial network demand modeling for park and ride throughout the Viva network.
- Park-and-ride programme requirements to support the planning and implementation of the Cornell Terminal.
- A policy survey of relevant parking practices within the Region.
- A preliminary screen of publicly owned or controlled properties across York Region's transit corridors.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The study made a number of findings that are helping to shape the park and ride strategy

The study, to date, has identified a number of interim findings that have helped to shape subsequent activities and refine the team's thinking in delivering a comprehensive park and ride strategy. The findings are outlined in an interim report from the park and ride consultant team. The two technical memoranda are also attached for reference.

The findings from the initial technical memoranda investigation into best practices can be summarized as follows:

- Most jurisdictions exclude park and ride facilities from core "downtown" areas and other high density mixed use regional destinations (such as Richmond Hill Centre, Markham Centre, Vaughan Corporate Centre).
- Ideal stations for park and ride tend to be end stations, especially where there are little transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities and lot size is unconstrained.
- Park and ride can be integrated with TOD if properly planned (such as Cornell Terminal).
- The majority of transit systems in North America currently offer free parking for all users or exclusively for transit pass holders, although that policy is under review or changing with many transit agencies, including the TTC.
- When transit agencies charge for parking, most seek to recover operating and maintenance costs. Few agencies attempt to make money on surface lots or recover land and/or capital costs.
- There is no simple correlation between parking pricing and the extent of transit use in any particular jurisdiction.
- There is no single governance model that is used to deliver park and ride facilities, nor a need for a transit agency to own all of its parking,
- Parking resources need not be exclusive to park and ride use and can be shared-use facilities.

The study has outlined a methodology for determining the size and location of park and ride facilities

A technical memorandum has been prepared that outlines a methodology, as summarized below, to determine the size and location of park and ride facilities.

The methodology for locating and sizing parking facilities is a six step process that integrates parking demand modeling with policy based criteria. The six steps are as follows:

1. Run a network-wide parking demand model assuming that there is unconstrained parking at all vivastations along the corridors for the planning horizons used in the

initial ridership modeling provided to Metrolinx; 2011 (assumed as opening day for Viva in the model), 2021 (assumed Spadina and Yonge subway openings in the model), and 2031 (assumed growth target year).

2. Sort stations where parking can be accommodated through policy screening to determine compatibility with land use planning.

3. Identify specific opportunity locations at stations based on availability, performance and cost criteria.

4. Test each corridor segment to determine the impact of unavailable or constrained parking at any one station on user behaviour with respect to transit ridership on the segment and vehicle kilometers travelled to an alternative parking location.

5. Refine the evaluation of potential park and ride locations through cost/benefit analysis.

6. Rerun the parking demand model with the various locations and pricing assumptions included against the initial unconstrained model to determine how ridership and vehicle kilometers travelled are impacted and to target key station locations for parking.

The demand model has been run for the entire Viva Bus Rapid Transit network

The unconstrained model has been run for the Viva network across all segments. The preliminary findings of the model are as follows:

- Approximately 85- 90% of park and ride demand is associated with commuters headed for central Toronto whether using the subway, Viva or GO Transit.

- Of all York Region commuters headed for central Toronto, approximately 40% will choose a park and ride option. The balance of commuters are assumed to access the higher order transit systems, ie. subways, GO Transit and Viva, through local transit connections, walking and cycling.

- Notwithstanding that approximately 20% of all Viva trips will be inter–regional, the majority of riders who access the Viva network through park and ride will still be bound for central Toronto. This pattern is expected to change over time and the balance to shift to increase focus on park and ride supporting east-west movement. This pattern is expected to be sustained until post-2021 as substantive construction occurs at the major new town centers along the Highway 7 corridor.

- The unconstrained "raw" demand* for parking to support Viva BRT activities along all corridor segments is approximately 8,100 spaces in 2021 (with the subway openings) and 9,800 in 2031 through growth on the Viva network. (*"raw" demand calculates the maximum parking demand at each station on the Viva network without reference to any constraints due to planning policies, property availability, local locational attributes, land use or conflicts with existing parking facilities.

- The primary park and ride demand is on Yonge Street and is significantly higher than on Highway 7.

- The Highway 7 segments between Richmond Hill Centre and Pine Valley Drive and between Richmond Hill Centre and Markham Centre exhibit minimal park and ride demand. This assumes that if commuters from these segments are using their cars to access the subways or GO Transit to get to their primary destination in central Toronto, that they will drive directly to the subway or GO facility and not use Viva.

- Notwithstanding the above, there is a major secondary source of demand for park and ride that is generated further east on the Highway 7 corridor between Markham Centre and Cornell.

- The unconstrained "raw" demand will be refined through the six step process. For immediate planning purposes, while the study progresses, it would be prudent to assume that a parking supply of approximately 60%-75% of the 2021 "raw" demand should be targeted at this time.

Parking policies throughout the Region do not as yet consistently encourage compact urban form and transit use

Most municipal parking policies within York Region do not as yet embrace reduced parking standards in support of transit and modes of travel other than automobile with some notable exceptions. In 2005, Markham adopted a parking strategy for Markham Centre that supports maximum parking standards for residential and commercial uses, the evolution of surface parking to parking structure, and the first steps in establishing a cost equation for parking through the introduction of paid on-street parking in Markham Centre and other key areas of the Town.

Through their Transportation Master Plan updates, both Markham and Vaughan are addressing town-wide parking policies with a view to facilitating compact urban form and travel demand management. At the same time, Newmarket will review its parking polices within the Newmarket Urban Centre designation as part of a Secondary Plan process that will commence in the new year.

Commuter parking lots are not specifically described as a permitted use in any of the municipal zoning bylaws within York Region. Markham, Richmond Hill and Aurora have parking lot designations that permit paid parking in limited applications or permit parking as a stand alone use whether paid or free or parking that is not associated with a principal use.

Vaughan and Newmarket do not appear to have permissions for parking as a standalone use. With the possible exception of Markham, no parking authorities are set up at the local municipal level to manage and operate commuter parking facilities. Markham has laid the groundwork for implementing a parking authority through the development of its Markham Centre parking policy framework and roll-out of on-street paid parking in key areas of the Town. Currently, the on-street parking is managed by Town staff at a departmental level.

The current governance and land use permissions appear to have limited application to the implementation of a comprehensive park and ride strategy across the Region. It appears that paid commuter park and ride facilities will require amendment to existing zoning bylaws to be a permitted use in most municipal jurisdictions. Staff has recommended that draft recommendations on governance and zoning be prepared as a next step for Council's consideration. Consultation with the local municipalities will be warranted.

Five key principles have emerged to guide the implementation of the park and ride strategy

The study has identified a number of key principles to guide the development of the park and ride strategy and implementation plan. The principles are as follows:

1. The provision of park and ride facilities is essential to attracting and maintaining ridership on the Viva rapid transit network. There is an anticipated demand of approximately 5,000 – 6,000 spaces, in addition to subway and GO Transit, to support the full Viva network when the Yonge and Spadina subways open in 2015 and 2016, respectively.

2. A fee for parking should be established wherever possible. While park and ride should not be looked upon as a profit centre, fee schedules should, at a minimum, cover base operating and maintenance costs since ongoing O&M costs, as well as any amortized capital costs or capital replacement costs, cannot be fully recovered from fare box revenues and represent a potential burden on tax dollars. As the system matures, parking fees can be adjusted to balance the market threshold where fees continue to support ridership and are competitive with the cost of a transit pass.

3. Park and ride facilities should not be located where on surface parking will frustrate transit-oriented development or exacerbate traffic congestion. Structured commuter parking facilities should be considered where there are opportunities to integrate structured facilities with surrounding development.

4. The Region should seek to implement parking through the use of public land, shared facilities with other public or private sector partners, or through lease arrangements on an interim basis. The purchase of land for parking purposes is a potentially viable alternative to implement the park and ride strategy and should be considered as a strategic investment decision, taking into consideration the potential for enhanced future land value that can be captured through access to rapid transit.

5. Under any business or governance model there is a bundle of rights and functions that Viva will need to manage:
   - The Viva brand; ie. the right to designate and market the Viva park and ride facilities to the public.
   - Parking rate structures, brand marketing and advertising, facility design standards, facility service and maintenance standards.
   - Revenue collection or revenue share accounting.

Next Steps

As the study proceeds staff will be working to identify park and ride opportunity locations along the corridors to be taken through the evaluation screening process. Following the identification of preferred sites, the study team will begin a more detailed analysis of the potential park and ride opportunity and begin preliminary discussions with potential landowners or public partners to seek their interest. Opportunities for partnering with landowners will focus on locations where existing and projected land uses, such as retail and institutional, generate parking requirements that are compatible with commuter demand. The study team will continue to work with the Cornell Terminal design team to confirm the initial parking strategy and implementation of the first phase of the plan. At the same time, the team will work through potential business and governance models and resource implications, as well as an implementation timetable that will be brought back for Council's consideration in a future report.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Ongoing operating and maintenance costs associated with implementation of the Viva park and ride strategy are planned to be recovered through the application of parking fees. The recovery of capital replacement costs will need to be investigated as a component of the parking fee structure.

The implementation of a comprehensive park and ride strategy will require capitalization to cover the costs of land if required, capital improvements whether for surface parking or structured, as well as lease or other third party shared use arrangements. A capital strategy to implement the plan will need to be part of the study's findings and recommendations. Staff will bring back capital funding alternatives in a future report for

Council's consideration, prior to making final recommendations regarding the implementation of the park and ride strategy.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Municipal parking policies do not as yet consistently support transit use and compact urban form. While progress had been made by a number of municipalities in this regard, further dialogue and cooperation is required to ensure that a coherent and consistent parking policy framework is in place across York Region to support transit use in the urban centres and along the rapid transit corridors. As well, zoning policies may need to be fine-tuned at the municipal level to ensure that transit-supportive parking facilities are supported as a permitted use.

7. CONCLUSION

The York Region Rapid Transit Corporation has been working on a park and ride strategy to support the Viva system since the fall of 2007. The team has examined North American best practices and has concluded that a methodology should be developed for the selection and evaluation of sties where park and ride facilities. The report outlines the findings of two technical memoranda. An interim report has been prepared that outlines interim findings and emerging principles that will help guide the final recommendations of the study. Study findings thus far conclude that there will be significant demand for parking to support the Viva network once the Yonge and Spadina subways are in operation. The findings also conclude that parking fees should be established for use of the park and ride facilities, that the location of park and ride facilities should be sensitive to potential negative impacts on transit-oriented development and traffic, and that Viva should seek a variety of means to deliver the parking with purchase of land as a "last resort". Finally, the findings conclude that there are key aspects of the delivery of park and ride facilities that the York Region Rapid Transit Corporation must control to support the growth and sustainability of ridership on the Viva network.

For more information on this report, please contact Mary-Frances Turner, Vice-President, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation at (905) 886-6767 ext. 2226.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.