

2 | Consultation Process

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2.1 | Annual Planning Process

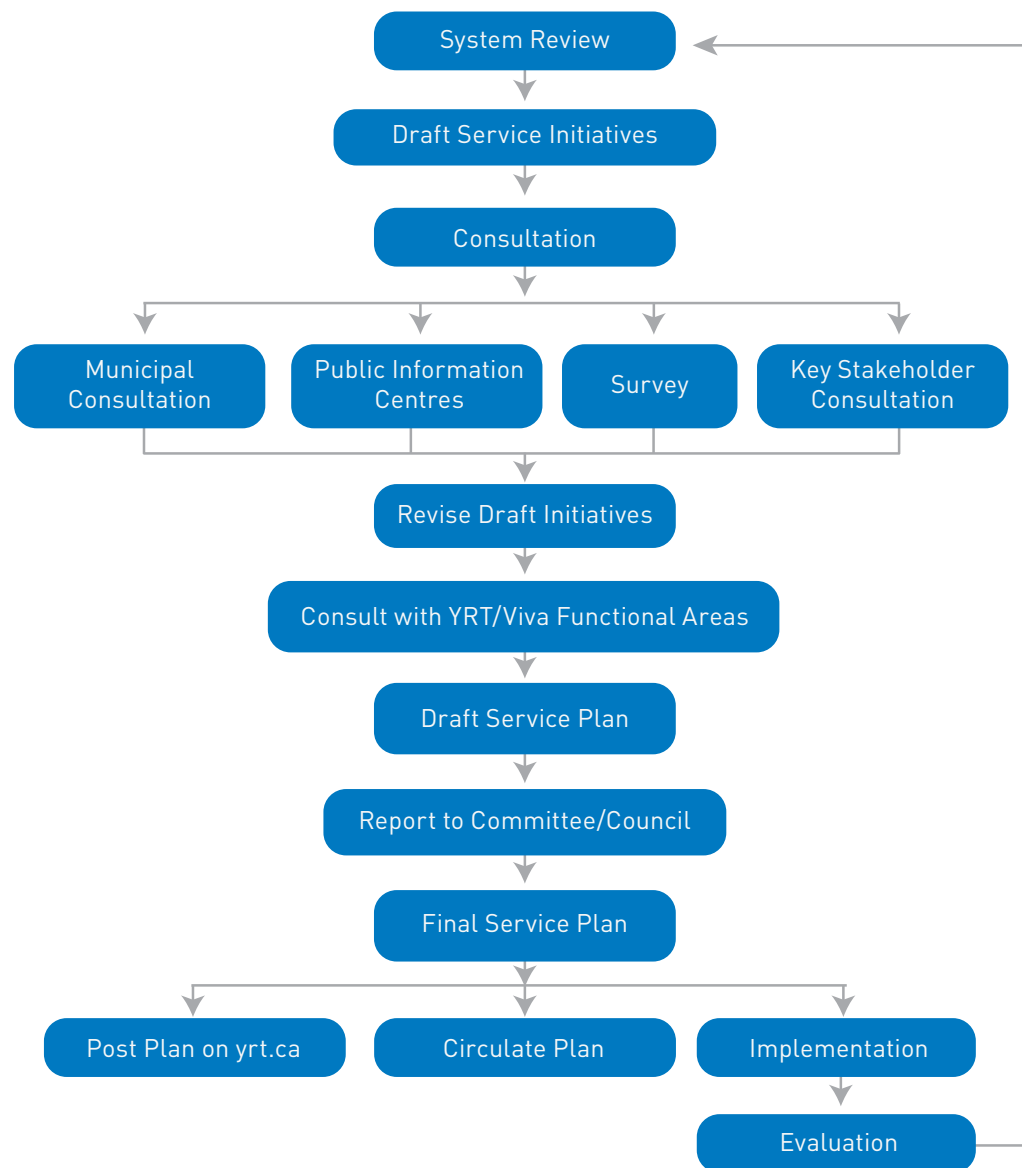
The Five-Year Service Plan forms the basis to develop each Annual Service Plan. The Annual Service Plan process is summarized in **Figure 2**.

Prior to developing an Annual Service Plan, a system review is conducted based on existing Transit Service Guidelines, key performance indicators (KPIs) and service requests. Route Assessments for the 2014 Annual Service Plan can be found in **Appendix A**. This information is used to create a Draft Annual Service Plan and a corresponding set of proposed service initiatives for stakeholder consultation.

During the consultation process, YRT/Viva staff host workshops, and a Public Information Centre (PICs) in all nine York Region municipalities to gather feedback on the Draft Annual Service Plan. Feedback from all 2014 Annual Service Plan consultations can be found in **Appendix B**. Customer surveys may be administered to supplement feedback where necessary. Customer surveys were conducted on select routes to gather further information for the 2014 Annual Service Plan.

YRT/Viva also hosts workshops with other transit agencies, Smart Commute, large employers, school boards, post-secondary institutions, and departments within York Region. After all stakeholder feedback is collected, reviewed, and analyzed, updates are made to the proposed service initiatives for the upcoming year.

Figure 2: Annual Service Plan Process



Following the external consultation phase, internal consultation is held between all YRT/Viva functional areas. The recommended service initiatives are prioritized based on a review of demand, route performance, potential cost recovery, and fleet availability. Once prioritized, an implementation strategy and updated Draft Annual Service Plan is developed.

The Draft Annual Service Plan and a corresponding Committee report are presented to the Committee of the Whole for approval. Once approved by Committee and Council, the Annual Service Plan is made available to all stakeholders prior to implementation and all documents can be found on yrt.ca. The approved service initiatives are implemented and monitored during the upcoming year and are evaluated for the next Annual Service Plan cycle.

2.2 | Consultation Process

The purpose of the consultation process is to ensure the Annual Service Plan initiatives are communicated to the following stakeholders:

- > **Public:** PICs (one or two per municipality) are held for York Region residents to provide input into the recommended service initiatives for the upcoming year.
- > **Targeted Neighbourhoods/Groups:** To obtain feedback from local area residents, businesses, transportation management associations, ratepayer groups, institutions, and elected representatives on service initiatives.

- > **Major Employers:** To obtain feedback from community agencies and business groups.
- > **Municipalities:** To obtain input for service improvements and new services in each municipality.
- > **Other York Region Departments:** To communicate information and identify items requiring coordination.

- > **Other Transit Agencies:** To ensure seamless services for customers travelling beyond York Region.

The 2014 Annual Service Plan consultation process is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Public and Stakeholder Consultation Process

Step	Action Step Required
1	Gather feedback from YRT/Viva functional areas (e.g. Operations, Customer Service, Marketing and Communications staff), customers and contractors
2	Undertake system performance review and input findings into the Draft Annual Service Plan
3	Host meetings to gather formal feedback from Customer Service/Operations staff and customer requests. Incorporate feedback into the Plan
4	Prepare a general consultation plan and meeting schedule
5	Prepare the Draft Annual Service Plan (including budget and fleet requirements)
6	Prepare a list of stakeholders
7	Prepare storyboards and materials for public presentations
8	Schedule meetings with Planning/Engineering staff from each area municipality
9	Prepare and implement consultation strategy: > Host workshops (e.g. Smart Commute agencies and other transit service providers) > Host Public Information Centers > Post Draft Annual Service Plan initiatives on yrt.ca
10	Update Draft Annual Service Plan as per comments received/evaluated
11	Present Final Annual Service Plan to the Committee of the Whole for endorsement
12	Circulate the Final Annual Service Plan to stakeholders and post on yrt.ca
13	Present the Final Annual Service Plan to local Councils

In February and March of 2013, YRT/Viva presented the identified 2014 Annual Service Plan initiatives to planning and/or engineering staff from all of York Region's municipalities. Comments were evaluated and considered in the development of the 2014 Annual Service Plan. Municipal consultation dates and times are shown in **Table 2**.

Table 3 outlines the dates and times YRT/Viva held stakeholder workshops to gather feedback and recommendations on the 2014 Annual Service Plan.

Table 2: Municipal Meetings

Date (2013)	Municipal Meetings
February 25 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.	Township of King
February 26 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Town of Newmarket
February 27 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Town of Aurora
February 28 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.	Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
March 1 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.	Town of Georgina
March 4 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Town of Richmond Hill
March 6 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.	City of Vaughan
March 7 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.	City of Markham
March 25 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.	Town of East Gwillimbury

Table 3: Stakeholder Workshops

Date (2013)	Stakeholders
March 8 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.	Transit Partners/ Contractors Workshop
March 11 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.	Stakeholders Meeting
March 14 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.	York Region Stakeholders Meeting



In March and April of 2013, YRT/Viva held PICs in all nine York Region municipalities as outlined in **Table 4**. The PICs provided an opportunity for residents and customers to provide feedback on the proposed service initiatives.

Outreach activities provided residents and customers with a better understanding of YRT/Viva's operations, strategies, and service initiatives to be implemented in 2014 and an opportunity to provide feedback.

Approximately 976 people attended the PICs. **Appendix B** lists comments received during the 2014 Annual Service Plan consultations. The most frequent comments received include:

- > Requests to improve connections
- > Requests to stop fare increases
- > Support for restructuring proposals
- > Concern regarding delays caused by rapidway construction

Based on route performance and feedback received through public and stakeholder consultation, a number of service adjustments have been identified. **Chapter 5** outlines the 2014 service initiatives.

Table 4: Public Information Centres

Date (2013)	Public Information Centres	Municipality
March 18 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.	Newmarket GO Bus Terminal	Town of Newmarket
March 19 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.	Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville (Lobby)	Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
March 20 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.	Aurora Public Library (Front Lobby)	Town of Aurora
March 21 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.	Township of King (King City Plaza)	Township of King
March 26 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.	Richmond Hill Centre Terminal	Town of Richmond Hill
March 28 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.	Ice Palace/Georgina Public Library (Keswick Branch)	Town of Georgina
April 3 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.	Markham Civic Centre (Great Hall)	City of Markham
April 4 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.	Vaughan Mills Mall (Grapevine Court)	City of Vaughan
April 9 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.	East Gwillimbury Sports Complex (Canada Hall)	Town of East Gwillimbury

* A sign language interpreter was available at each Public Information Centre.

2.3 | Marketing and Communications

Each initiative in the 2014 Annual Service Plan will be implemented during a board period. To advertise the service changes, YRT/Viva Marketing and Communications coordinates, designs, and executes communication strategies before every board period takes place (there are five board periods per year and multiple mid-board periods as required).

Each strategy is created four to six weeks in advance of the service changes to communicate to customers. The following outlines standard communication initiatives prior to every board period. When warranted, other communication initiatives will also be implemented.

YRT.ca

YRT/Viva's primary online presence is yrt.ca where customers go for up-to-date schedules, customized trips plans, alerts and detours, real-time information, and transit news. Over 4.6 million unique visitors visited yrt.ca in 2012; an increase of 10 per cent over 2011.

Four weeks prior to a board period taking affect, a customer-friendly, detailed summary of changes are posted on yrt.ca. Scheduled trip planning information is available three weeks prior, and printable schedules are available one week prior.

Social Media

YRT/Viva launched its own social media strategy in 2013 with Facebook (facebook.com/YRTViva) and Twitter (@YRTViva) accounts. Updates are provided before and after any service change takes affect. All on-line



customer inquiries are answered by transit staff (as per York Region standards).

MyTransit customer newsletter

MyTransit is a newsletter created five times per year to advertise upcoming service changes. It is distributed three weeks prior to the changes on all YRT/Viva vehicles, at municipal displays, community events, transit shelters, and terminals.

Councillor Memos

Memos are sent to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and mayors of each York Region municipality five times per year outlining upcoming transit service changes occurring in their communities. Accompanying each memo is the most current edition of the MyTransit newsletter.

Route Navigators

Route Navigators (individualized schedules/maps) are produced for Base routes, Local routes, High School Specials, GO Shuttles,

Express routes, Community Bus routes, and Seasonal routes. Route Navigators are updated as required and are available at municipal displays, events, and various destinations around York Region. Printable versions of all Route Navigators are also available on yrt.ca.

Viva Information

Viva first/last departure times and frequencies are available to assist customers in their travel planning. These printed sheets are updated prior to any changes taking affect and are available on yrt.ca, at municipal displays, and events.

System Map Update

The YRT/Viva system map is updated three times per year in the spring, fall, and winter. Maps are available on all YRT/Viva vehicles, at select shelters, all vivastations, at municipal displays, on yrt.ca and at various destinations and events.

On-Street Updates and Notices

To advise customers about service changes, on-street communication pieces are created and installed on-street two or three weeks prior to the change and include bus stop notices, infopost schedules, terminal information centres and shelter displays.

Special Actions and Community Outreach

Extra initiatives (special actions) are developed to communicate service changes affecting specifically-identified areas, groups, or neighbourhoods. Shopping malls, seniors centres, GO Stations, high schools, and post-secondary institutions are always notified of upcoming service changes affecting their clients/customers/students/staff. Notices are posted at specially-identified locations, geo-targeted postal distribution (mail drops), special notices placed on-bus, presentations/information booths and online information.

Advertisements in Local Community Newspapers

Community page and paid advertisements are placed in local newspapers throughout the nine municipalities prior to service changes taking affect. Advertisements outline service changes specific to the community, and when space permits, are also posted on municipal websites and community boards.

Bus Operator Updates

Bus Operator information sessions are held at each contractor's facility prior to a board period. Staff provide service change information, operational updates and answer Operator questions and concerns. In addition, each

contractor receives updated Route Navigators, maps and MyTransit to display on buses. Each Operator also receives updated information for their Bus Operator Information Kit that they are required to carry with them when operating a transit vehicle.

Seat Drops

To provide information directly to customers, individualized schedules/maps are produced for YRT/Viva routes undergoing service changes and distributed on vehicles operating the route. Passengers that will be affected by these changes are notified on the bus and can provide direct feedback to YRT/Viva staff.

Terminal Station/Automated Announcement

Automated announcements will be programmed and used to inform customers of service delays when travelling using transit. The announcements can be programed to play at certain terminals and stations when delays to routes occur therefore, providing up-to-date information to customers.

Improving Communications

YRT/Viva staff will be improving the communication strategy to the public by reaching out to local councils and customer earlier throughout the year. Transit staff will present all preliminary recommendations to local councils for input into the plan before it is approved. Communication to customers that will be potentially affected by service changes will be surveyed on-bus to provide feedback on any proposals for the next Annual Service Plan.



