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VIVA/YORK REGION TRANSIT FARE POLICY

The Joint Transit and Rapid Transit Public/Private Partnership Steering Committee recommends:

- 1. The presentation by Rajeev Roy, Manager, Transit Management Systems, be received; and**
- 2. The recommendation contained in the following report, June 3, 2005 from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works and the Vice President of the York Region Rapid Transit Corporation be adopted.**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The updated Viva/York Region Transit Fare Policy framework outlined in this report be endorsed.

2. PURPOSE

This report advises Council of the changes to the Viva/York Region Transit (YRT) Fare Policy framework since the initial draft was presented in June, 2004. An updated Fare Policy document is attached to this report (*Attachment 1*).

3. BACKGROUND

The initial draft Viva/York Region Transit Fare Policy framework was presented in June, 2004. Since then, there have been minor changes to the fare policy framework which are briefly described in the Analysis and Options section.

The updated Fare Policy framework not only ensures complete integration between Viva and YRT fare collection systems, but also maintains consistency with the other transit agencies in the GTA in terms of “time-based” transfers.

3.1 Viva/YRT Fare Policy Characteristics

The following sections briefly summarise the Viva/YRT Fare Policy framework as provided in detail in Attachment 1.

3.1.1 Off-Board Fare Collection

A major feature of Viva will be off-board fare collection, with 'oneRide' and 'vivaNow' machines installed at all Viva stops and terminals. No fareboxes are needed on board the Viva buses. This is a key feature designed to significantly reduce dwell time at stops, and thus overall travel time, by allowing passengers to board or alight by any door.

3.1.2 Proof of Payment (POP)

Passengers on board Viva vehicles will hold valid passes or transfers and properly validated tickets as a proof that they have paid the appropriate fare. If asked by enforcement inspectors to show payment of fare, these fare items will serve as "proof of payment."

3.1.3 Time-Based Transfers

Viva will use time-based transfers, which allow unlimited travel on Viva or other York Region Transit routes within the allowed time.

3.1.4 Fare Zones

The Viva system will have the same fare zone structure as that endorsed in YRT's 5-Year Service Plan (Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Stouffville in a southern zone, Newmarket, Aurora and East Gwillimbury in a northern zone with an overlap in which Oak Ridges is part of both zones).

3.2 Viva and YRT Fare Integration

It is expected that a significant proportion of transit trips in York Region will start on one service and be completed on the other, although Viva will use a Proof of Payment (POP) system and YRT local bus service will continue its use of traditional fareboxes. Common Viva/YRT tickets will be accepted to start a trip on either service, as will cash fares on YRT buses, and will reflect payment for either a one zone or two zone trip. A validated Viva ticket or a transfer issued on a YRT bus will qualify as a proof of payment on Viva and must be in the possession of the rider during a complete trip. Similarly, a validated ticket will be shown to a YRT bus driver to allow for a transfer onto that bus.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Off-Board Fare Collection

Off-board fare collection machines have now been established as follows:

1. Ticket Vending Machines installed at all Viva stops and some of the terminals are established as 'oneRide' machines.

These machines would vend the following tickets:

- Validated single ride tickets. The quality of paper will be very similar to the existing transfer to avoid customer confusion.
 - Validated zone upgrade to upgrade a one zone ticket to a two zone ticket.
 - Validated Ride to GO tickets to be used with a GO Transit ticket or pass.
2. Ticket Vending Machines installed at some of the terminals are established as 'multiRide' machines.

These machines would vend the following tickets:

- Validated single ride tickets.
 - Unvalidated adult, student, senior/child 10 single ride tickets.
 - Monthly adult, student, senior/child passes.
 - Validated zone upgrade to upgrade a one zone ticket to a two zone ticket.
 - Validated Ride to GO tickets to be used with a GO Transit ticket or pass.
3. Ticket Validators installed at all Viva stops and all terminals are established as 'vivaNow' machines.

These machines would validate the pre-purchased unvalidated tickets by printing an expiry time.

4.2 Time-Based Transfers

The only major change to the Viva/York Region Transit (YRT) Fare Policy framework since the initial draft was presented in June, 2004 is regarding the "time-based" transfers. The "time-based" transfer allows unlimited transferring in any direction within a valid period of time. This time was originally proposed to be 90 minutes for a one zone ticket and 120 minutes for a two zone ticket.

It is now proposed to be 120 minutes for both one zone and two zone tickets. This is being proposed for the following reasons:

1. To maintain consistency with the other transit agencies in the GTA. Brampton and Mississauga have already implemented 120 minute time-based transfers. This would allow interoperability of transfers on Route 77 which is shared with Brampton Transit.
2. Allow the expiry time to be printed on the validated tickets so that enforcement officers and drivers can easily inspect the tickets for their validity. With two different time limits, it was not possible for the ticket validator (vivaNow) to differentiate between one zone and two zone paper tickets.

4.3 Travel Through Two Zones

In order to maintain the frequency and availability of transit service in the north where the population is smaller, a fare supplement of \$1.00 will be charged when crossing the zone boundary. The zone based system was approved by Council as part of the YRT fare policy program in 2002, and is being introduced for the first time in September, 2005 for passengers travelling on YRT services, and in November, 2005 on Viva services.

The fare zone dividing line is between the King Road and Bloomington Road stops on Yonge Street. This line was established across the Oak Ridges Moraine because it is a natural border separating the northern and southern parts of the Region. Similarly, customers traveling in the southern portions of York Region, who wish to cross the Steeles Avenue zone boundary, will still be required to pay the additional TTC fare.

While the premium has raised some limited feedback from the business community, who are concerned that employees living in Oak Ridges will pay a premium to travel to Aurora, the cost of the service is still competitive with GO Transit travel for the same distance. For only \$3.25, customers will be able to travel anywhere in York Region. This is considerably less expensive than GO Transit, which charges \$4.80 and \$5.30 from Aurora and Newmarket respectively to Finch Station.

This is only the initial introduction of zones, and when the GTA smart card is introduced in the next few years, additional zones will be introduced at that time.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The implications of the proposed integrated Viva/York Region Transit fare policy are reflected in the 2005 Business plan and budget, including the costs of fare media redesign, printing and enforcement.

Timed-based transfer policies have been introduced in several Canadian cities in recent years, including Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, London, Kitchener-Waterloo and Mississauga, among others. Although not quantitatively conclusive, the general experience, reported anecdotally, has been that transit systems enjoyed increased ridership, significant in some cases, with little or no revenue loss. Therefore, it is anticipated that there will not be any financial impact due to the introduction of “time-based” transfers.

5. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

There are no municipal impacts from the policies proposed in this report.

6. CONCLUSION

The development of a joint fare policy and service integration strategy for Viva and YRT services is an important aspect of transit service in York Region. An update to the policy and strategy framework outlined in this report will be utilized to finalize the fare policy over the course of the summer based on the input of the various stakeholders.

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