

Clause 4 in Report No. 15 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on November 16, 2017.

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Ridership Growth Study

Committee of the Whole recommends:

1. Receipt of the presentation by Ann-Marie Carroll, General Manager, Transit, Transportation Services.
2. Adoption of the following recommendation contained in the report dated October 18, 2017 from the Commissioner of Transportation Services:
 1. This report be received for information.

Report dated October 18, 2017 from the Commissioner of Transportation Services now follows:

1. Recommendation

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. Purpose

This report provides information on a [Ridership Growth Study](#) (Study) completed by York Region Transit to identify factors and initiatives that influence transit ridership and support growth.

In 2015, Council requested a ridership study be undertaken. Subsequently, staff identified a ridership growth study be completed as part of the 2016 Council approved Transportation Master Plan.

3. Background

Over the last 16 years, York Region Transit has expanded service to meet the needs of a growing population, and developed into a safe, efficient and reliable mode of transportation

Since the amalgamation of five municipal transit systems in 2001, York Region Transit (YRT) has seen a significant increase in ridership. The most significant ridership growth was experienced in the start-up and rapid-growth phases of the transit system lifecycle. The growth can be attributed to regionalization of transit services; the introduction of Viva; implementing innovative technologies that improve service delivery; consistent marketing to create transit awareness and ridership; and improving accessibility for all services.

Since 2015, YRT has experienced modest ridership growth

Over the last three years, ridership has grown in direct proportion with population increases. Rapidway, roadway and subway construction may have had negative impacts on transit ridership with, on average, a 14 per cent ridership decrease on routes operating through construction corridors. Experience does indicate that ridership should recover and grow once construction is complete.

To date, Viva has reached its original projected ridership targets and continues to grow on an annual basis. Ridership in corridors with completed rapidways has seen an increase from 20 to 40 per cent, post-construction.

Broader Regional trends and initiatives create ridership opportunities for York Region Transit

Shifting trends and population growth in the Greater Toronto Area will support changing land use and growth distribution in York Region, affecting travel patterns and ridership levels for YRT.

The York Region Official Plan 2010 defines where growth will occur to 2041. It identifies centres and corridors where higher levels of employment and population densities are to be accommodated, including:

- Davis Drive Corridor
- Green Lane East Corridor
- Highway 7 East Corridor
- Highway 7 West Corridor
- Yonge Street Richmond Hill Corridor
- Yonge Street North Corridor

- Yonge Street Thornhill Corridor
- Richmond Hill / Langstaff Gateway Centre
- Vaughan Metropolitan Centre
- Markham Centre
- Newmarket Centre

Future development in these areas will accommodate moderate to high-density, mixed-use communities. They will be walkable, transit-oriented communities that support ridership growth.

The 2016 Council-approved Transportation Master Plan recommends that a Ridership Growth Study be completed. The goal of the Ridership Growth Study was to identify initiatives with the highest potential to attract more riders to YRT. Short, medium and long-term initiatives were explored.

4. Analysis and Implications

The Study helps develop an understanding of the influence policy decisions, demographic changes, technology and community development have on ridership.

The Study was completed in August 2017 and provides ridership forecasts across each municipality; analyzes population growth and future employment in York Region and identifies existing and future interregional travel patterns.

There are many provincial and Regional land-use and transportation policy documents designed to shape Regional growth. These land-use policy objectives are co-dependent on the evaluation of transportation strategies and transit as part of the sustainable future of York Region.

YRT services and expansion projects are directed by the Council approved York Region Official Plan 2010, Vision 2051 and the Transportation Master Plan. In addition, YRT develops five-year and annual plans to help reach set targets.

The Study reviewed global best practices for increasing ridership, including the challenges and successes of other Canadian transit agencies. Included in the study were stakeholder meetings and focus groups. A series of recommendations highlight initiatives YRT could undertake to increase ridership.

Many factors have been identified as impacting transit ridership in North American jurisdictions

Factors identified as having an impact on transit ridership include service quality, population and employment rates, the price of gas, the rate of inflation, demographics, income levels and the weather.

Factors citizens have reported as important to them include ease of access to services and information, frequency and span of service, service reliability, integrated mobility, cost of fares and technology.

The Study identified a number of short, medium, and long-term initiatives that have the potential of growing transit ridership in York Region

Beyond building on the already strong policy foundation, continuing to be involved in land use and transportation planning decisions, and implementing the initiatives outlined in the YRT 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, the Study outlines additional opportunities that can be implemented to encourage ridership growth.

The Study identifies a number of initiatives that are primarily in YRT's control to select and implement. Others require collaboration with other Regional Departments, employers and institutions; or require transit considerations in the Region's decision-making process.

Short-term initiatives are identified as low-cost and quick to implement

The Study confirmed many of the Region's current traveller experiences, education and service reliability actions. Transit staff is in the process of either partnering, or implementing, a number of short-term initiatives identified in the Study, including:

- A PRESTO retail network
- Improvement of wayfinding, traveller information and services identification (branding)
- A Transit Assistance Pass (TAP)
- A YRT@Work Employer Pass
- A University Pass (U-Pass)

- Open Park and Ride locations at Highway 404 and Major Mackenzie Drive and Warden Avenue and Enterprise Road

Additional short-term, low-cost initiatives identified in the study will be implemented by transit staff after further analysis

- Transportation alternatives with other Transportation Network Companies
- Active transportation infrastructure, including increasing the number of bike racks and bike shelters
- Community awareness through joint messaging with other Departments and stakeholders, and actively participate in Transportation Demand Management initiatives

Short-term initiatives identified in the Study are estimated to yield moderate ridership, representing up to 50,000 additional travellers on YRT once fully implemented.

Medium to long-term initiatives identified require more time to implement, further analysis of demand and are more expensive to implement

Many of the medium to long-term initiatives have been identified in the 2016 Transportation Master Plan. York Region Transit staff is working on the following:

- Fare and service integration with transit agencies across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area
- Integration with higher-order transit including Metrolinx Regional Express Rail

Potential ridership growth from these initiatives is expected as a result of integrated services and fares across York Region borders. Ridership gains are also expected by connecting YRT services to Regional Express Rail.

Additional long-term opportunities have been identified in the Study and the Transportation Master Plan

These additional opportunities are not solely in the Region's control to implement; however, they have the potential to increase transit ridership:

- Implementing additional High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes
- Implementing parking management/pricing strategies

- Improving and building active transportation infrastructure to connect with transit stations and terminals

Other medium and long-term initiatives identified in the Study are estimated to yield moderate to high ridership, representing 50,000 to 500,000 additional travellers on YRT once fully implemented. Staff will monitor the ridership gain contributed to the implementation of each of the initiatives.

5. Financial Considerations

Short-term opportunities for ridership growth can be implemented at low to no-cost

The short-term Ridership Growth Study initiatives can be accommodated within the 2018 outlook. Medium to long-term incentives identified in the Study will require further analysis to determine the required financial and capital resources.

6. Local Municipal Impact

York Region is committed to providing transit services in all nine local municipalities. The initiatives outlined in the Study would benefit all citizens by providing expanded transit options that work towards the goal of increasing transit ridership.

7. Conclusion

The Ridership Growth Study outlines how implementing specific ridership growth initiatives can have a positive effect on YRT ridership

The Study identifies opportunities YRT can explore to increase transit ridership. However, it is important to note there are challenges involved, and support from other Regional departments and Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area agencies is required to achieve the full potential of these initiatives.

Staff will monitor the effects of the implemented initiatives identified in the Study, and analyze the outcomes to understand the impacts they will have on the YRT system.

Ridership Growth Study

For more information on this report, please contact Ann-Marie Carroll, General Manager, York Region Transit at 1-877-464-9675 ext.75677.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

October 18, 2017

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request

Ridership Growth Study

Presentation to
Committee of the Whole

Ann-Marie Carroll

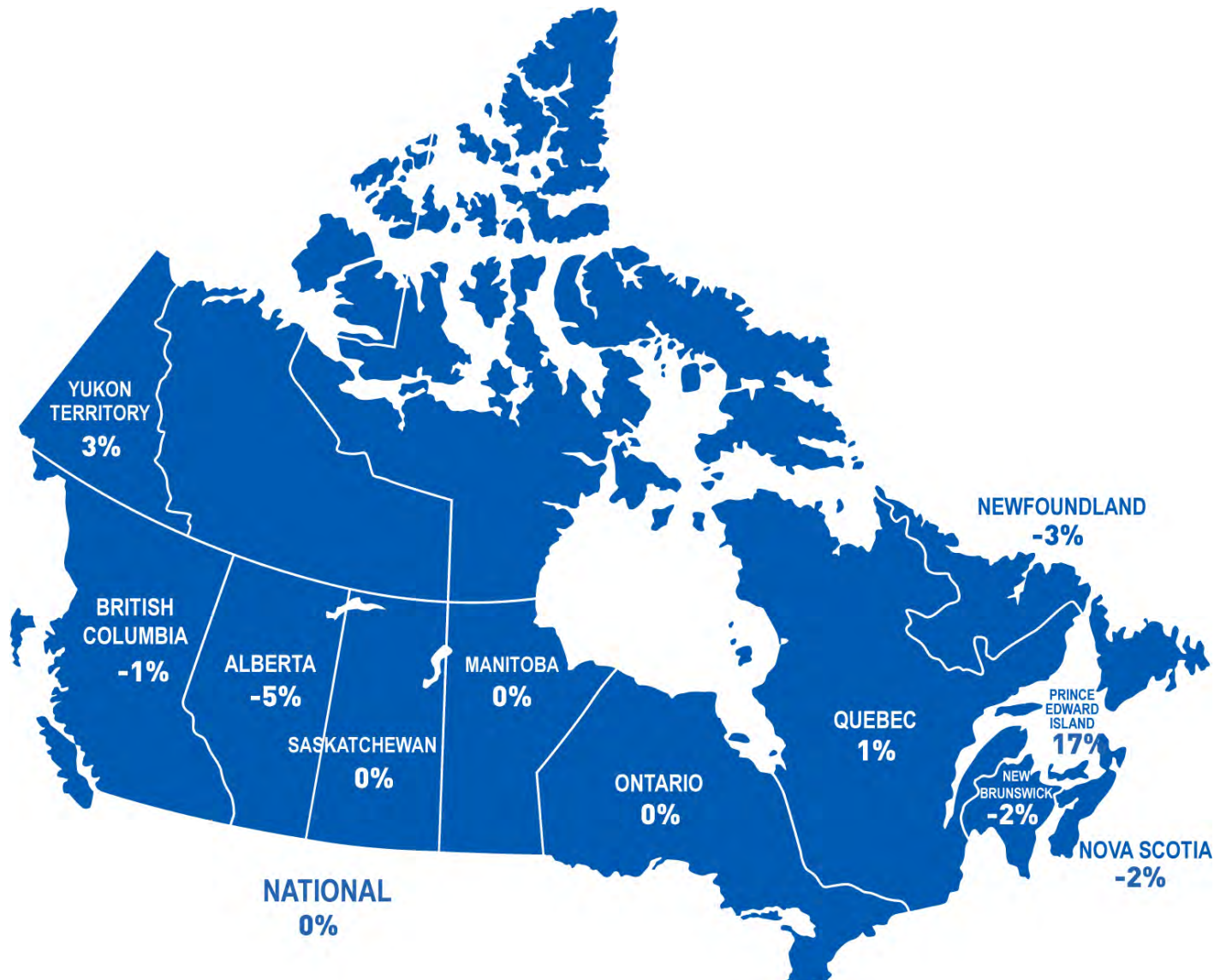
November 2, 2017



Agenda

1. Background
2. Current Ridership
3. Ridership Growth Study
4. Initiatives





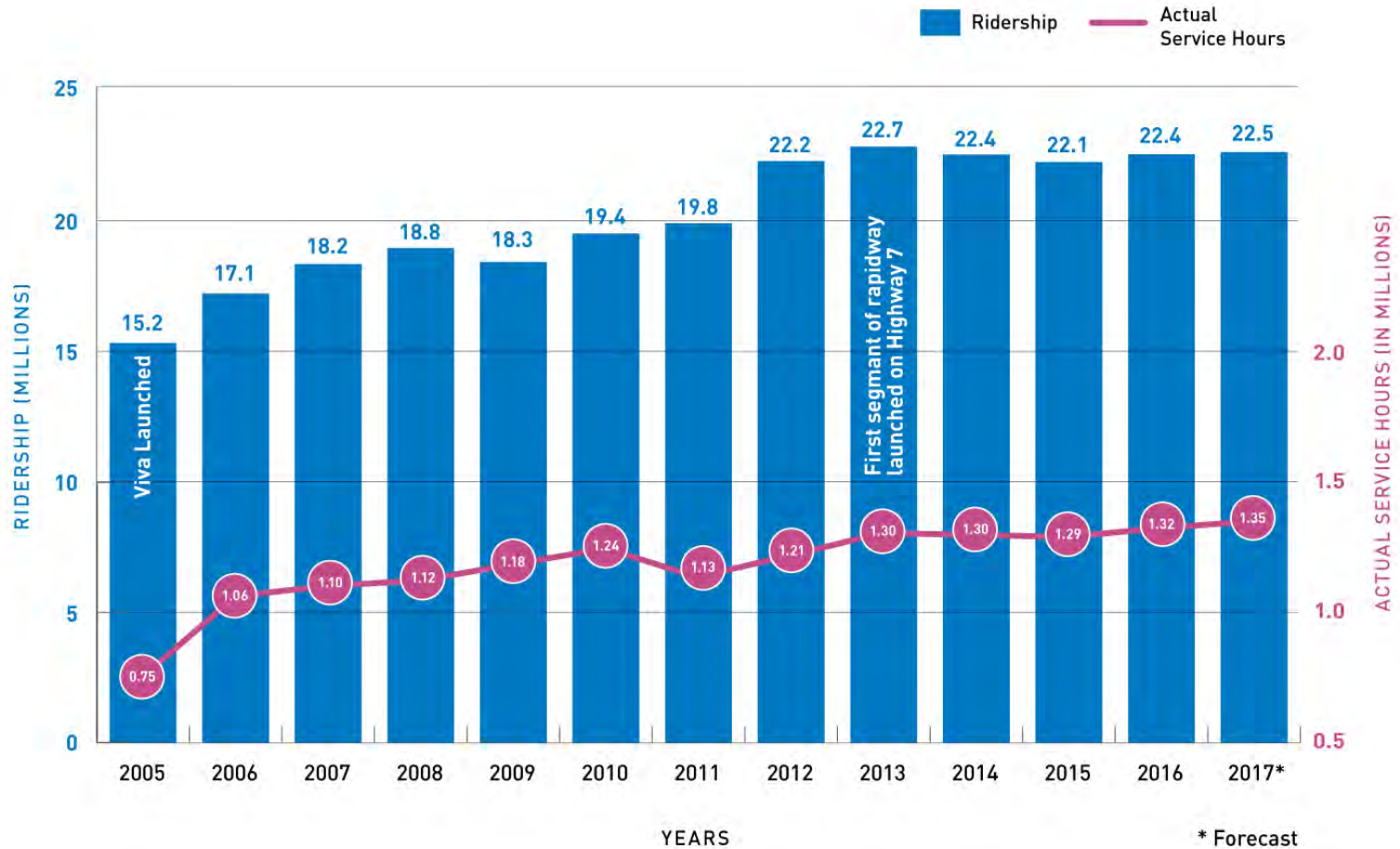
Nationally ridership growth has slowed down



Transit Service	Ridership %
Brampton Transit	9.2%
Burlington Transit	-2.7%
Durham Region Transit	-1.2%
GO (Metrolinx)	2.0%
Hamilton Transit	-1.9%
Milton Transit	8.9%
MiWay	3.0%
Oakville Transit	0.6%
Toronto Transit Commission	0.1%
York Region Transit	1.3%

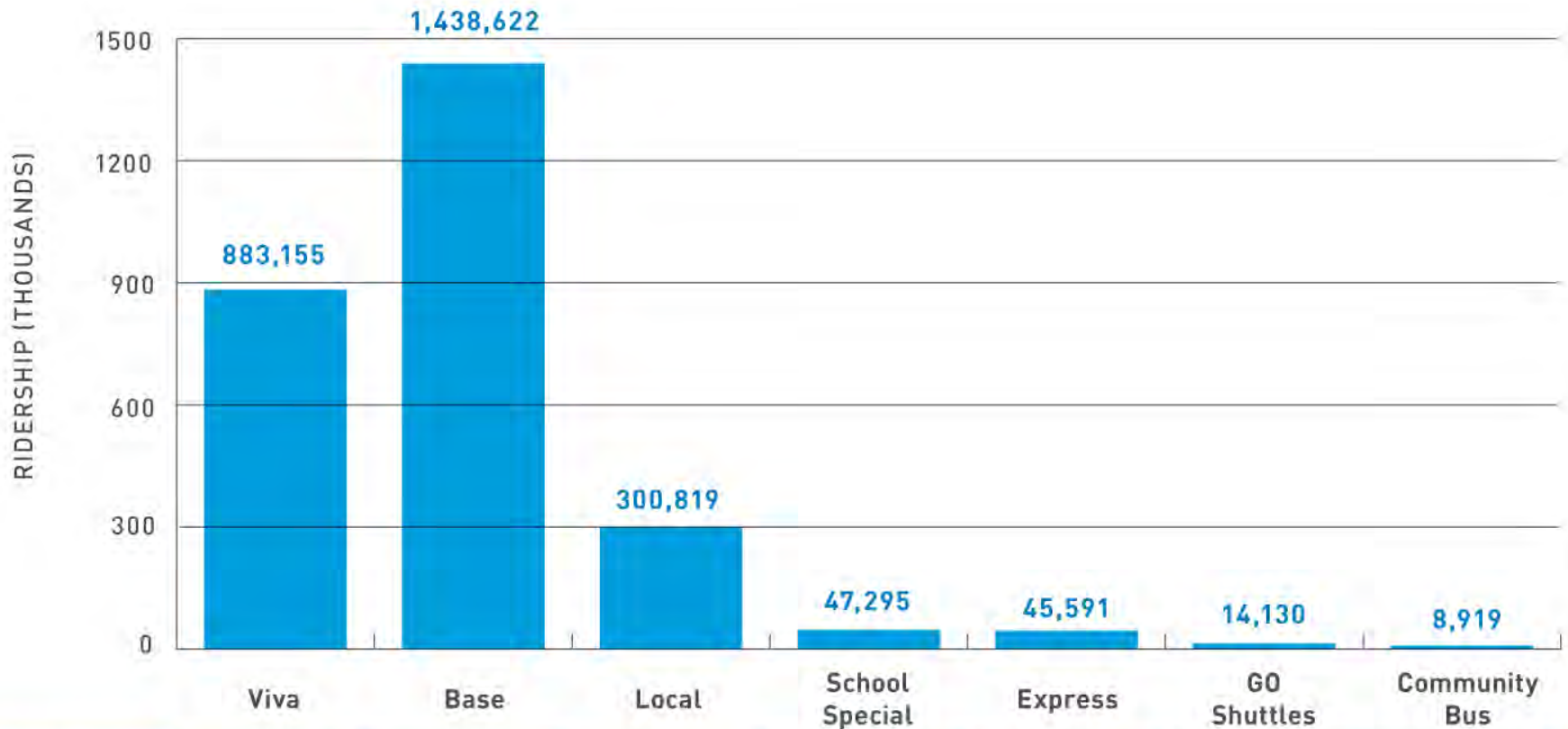
Ontario transit agencies experiencing ridership growth have launched new services

YRT Revenue Ridership



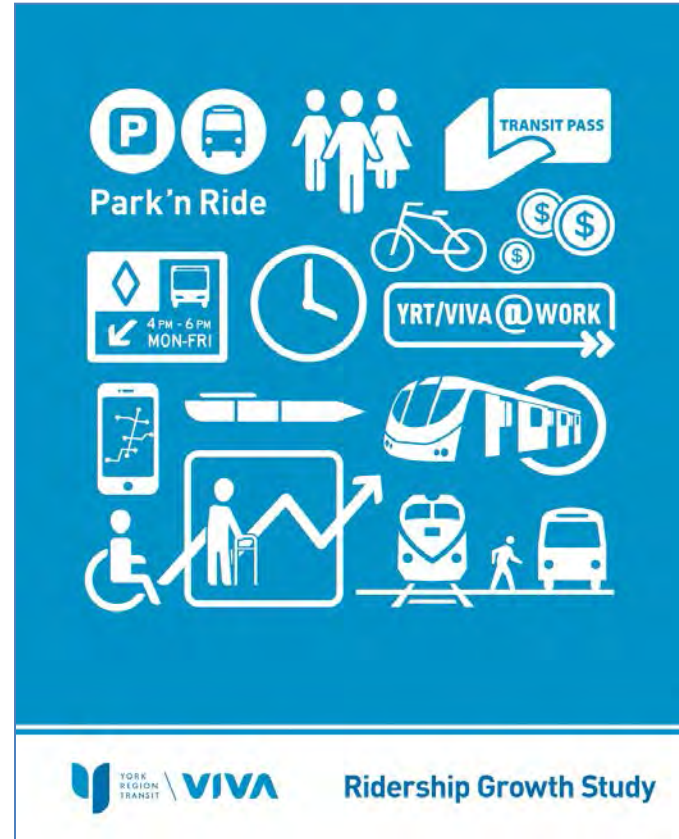
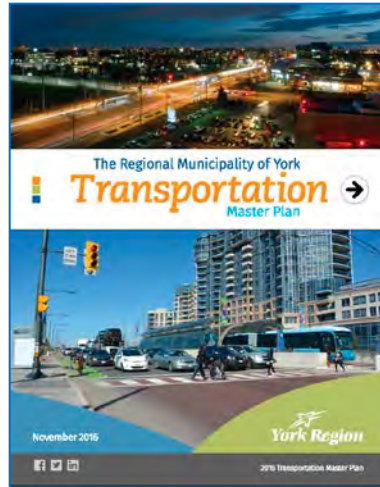
Increases in ridership and service hours have a direct correlation

Ridership by Service Type (September 2017)



R/C Ratio Rush Hour	62%	48%	29%	52%	45%	24%	—
R/C Ratio Non-Rush Hour	63%	34%	29%	—	—	—	10%

Ridership Growth Study



The Ridership Growth Study follows established York Region policies and guidelines

Themes of the Ridership Growth Study

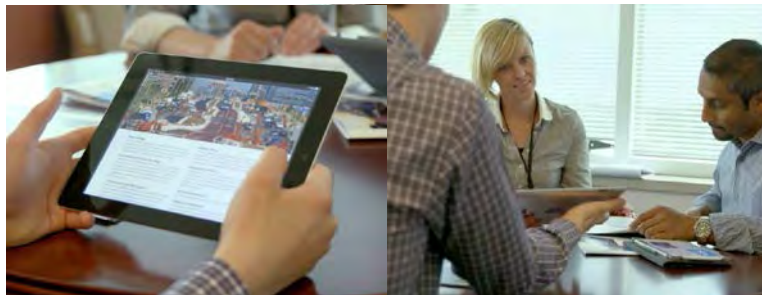
Stay on Track

Communicate

Collaborate

Change Attitudes

Raise Community Awareness



The Ridership Growth Study outlines initiatives with varying potential to attract travellers to the YRT system

Ridership Growth Opportunities

- Connections with GO Transit
- Service quality and frequency
- Park and Ride
- Information systems
- Promotion of transit
- Integrated land use and transportation planning
- Shared mobility and new technologies
- Improving active infrastructure



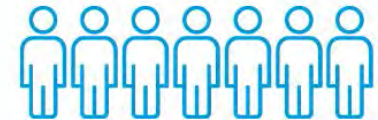
Partnerships and collaboration are needed to implement ridership opportunities

Ridership Initiatives: short-term

- Expand the PRESTO retail network
- Improve wayfinding and traveller information
- Implement special pass programs
- Expand on-demand services
- Expand bike racks and storage options
- Expand community outreach
- Expand park and ride options



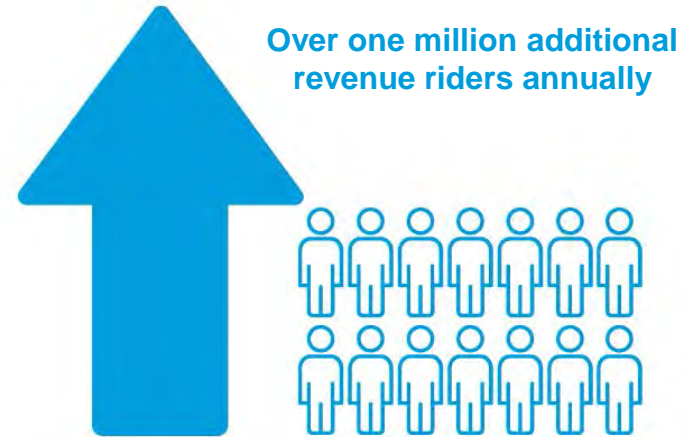
Up to 500,000 additional revenue riders annually



Short-term initiatives are identified as low-cost and quick to implement

Ridership Initiatives: medium and long-term

- Integrate higher-order transit options
- Implement high-occupancy vehicle lanes
- Implement a parking strategy
- Integrate GTHA fares and service
- Improve active transportation infrastructure



Medium and long-term initiatives require partnership and significant additional capital investment

Conclusion

