

Chapter Three

Public Transit



Viva bus on Highway 7 at West Beaver Creek Road in the Town of Richmond Hill

Public Transit System in York Region

In recent years, York Region has focused on a more sustainable and balanced transportation planning approach to accommodate population and employment growth. The balance between road and transit infrastructure was reflected in the *2002 Transportation Master Plan* that refocused the transportation system on transit. Some of the transit initiatives include:

- Base, local and express services operated by York Region Transit (YRT/Viva), Brampton Transit (Zum) and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)
- Viva bus rapid transit service operated by York Region Transit (YRT/Viva)
- Inter-regional rail and bus services provided by GO Transit
- Specialized transit services for people with disabilities operated as YRT Mobility Plus

The 2009 update to the *Transportation Master Plan* allowed the Region to address future transportation needs in an efficient and integrated manner, while meeting Provincial and Regional policies that support sustainable development. York Region's *Transportation Master Plan* process has resulted in a set of progressive transit, roadway and policy recommendations that support the Region's vision of a more sustainable transportation system.

The fast pace of growth projected in York Region between now and 2031 must be complemented by a transportation system that preserves the environment, enhances the Region's economic viability, seamlessly integrates with new and existing developments and offers more reliable travel choices for residents and employees.



YRT bus in HOV lane on Dufferin Street in the City of Vaughan

Public Transit System in York Region (continued)

The Region's sustainable transportation system includes:

- Rapid transit corridors that move more people faster and more efficiently from place to place
- Local transit services that feed into and complement rapid transit services in order to serve more communities within the Region
- Innovative technologies, such as transit signal priority and Smartcards (PRESTO), that improve the speed and reliability of transit operations
- A road system that supports existing and future public transit and cycling, through queue jump lanes, bicycle lanes, exclusive transit lanes and High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes
- Efficient use of the road network by reducing the number of single-occupant-vehicle trips through Transportation Demand Management programs, such as promotion of transit use, cycling and carpooling



Viva bus at Bayview Towers on Highway 7 in the Town of Richmond Hill

2014 YRT/Viva Annual Service Plan

In September 2013, the *2014 YRT/Viva Annual Service Plan* was approved by Regional Council, supporting the goals and objectives of the *YRT/Viva 2012–2016 Five-Year Service Plan* and building on the successes of the 2013 Annual Service Plan.

The *YRT/Viva 2012–2016 Five-Year Service Plan* focuses on a plan to mitigate the impacts of vivaNext construction (rapidways and Spadina Subway extension) on residents, businesses and communities, in an effort to maintain existing YRT/Viva service levels and ridership. A key component of the Plan is to ensure rapid transit-readiness upon completion of the rapidways in 2018 and the Spadina Subway extension in 2016.

Objectives of the *2014 YRT/Viva Annual Service Plan* include:

- 1. Strengthening the Grid Network:** Simplifying routes by travelling on arterial roads or mid-block collector roads.
- 2. Restructuring Routes:** Reducing one-way loops, connecting key destinations.
- 3. Matching Service Levels to Meet Demand:** Adjusting service along under-utilized areas of the route, or improving frequency for high performing routes.
- 4. Improving Service Reliability:** Continuing to monitor on-time performance and updating schedules to reflect actual travel times.
- 5. Mitigating vivaNext Construction Impacts:** Making schedule and operational adjustments in construction corridors.
- 6. Managing Ridership:** Implementing additional service along high demand corridors.
- 7. Preparing the Rapid Transit Network Expansion Plan:** Enhancing the existing rapid transit service by optimizing existing Viva service for operation on vivaNext rapidways and implementing new Viva services to expand and integrate the rapid transit network.



Viva bus on Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket



Viva bus on Highway 7 rapidway in the Town of Richmond Hill

quickfacts

- In September 2013, average weekday revenue boardings on YRT/Viva were approximately 86,000
- Also in September 2013, Mobility Plus carried approximately 28,700 passengers
- Terminals owned/maintained by YRT/Viva: Richmond Hill Centre Terminal, Bernard Terminal and Promenade Terminal

In 2013 York Region Transit (YRT/Viva) operated a total of 123 routes. This includes five Bus Rapid Transit (Viva) routes, 24 base services, 29 local routes, nine GO services, six express services, three community services, 10 contracted TTC routes, 33 school specials and two seasonal routes throughout nine local municipalities.

YRT/Viva has a fleet of 350 conventional transit buses and 128 Viva rapid transit buses, which are maintained and operated by three different private contractors. YRT/Viva also contracts services from the

York Region Transit (YRT/Viva)

Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) to extend 10 of its routes into York Region.

YRT/Viva operates into the following terminals: Promenade Mall, Vaughan Mills Mall, York University, Richmond Hill Centre Terminal, Bernard Terminal, Finch GO Bus Terminal and Newmarket GO Bus Terminal. YRT/Viva has one pedestrian bridge, 122 Viva stations and 5,088 bus stops. Approximately, 1,005 of these stops and stations are equipped with shelters. **Figure 25** illustrates the public transit service in York Region.

quickfacts

In 2013, YRT/Viva consisted of:

- Five Viva bus rapid transit (BRT) routes
- 24 base routes operating along major arterial corridors
- 29 local routes operating in local neighbourhoods
- 33 high school specials providing direct service to high schools
- Nine GO train shuttles providing direct service to GO stations
- Six express services providing direct service to subway stations or employment areas
- Three community bus routes providing service to local neighbourhoods
- 10 TTC contracted routes operating in York Region
- Two seasonal routes providing direct service to key destinations such as recreational facilities, shopping malls, and/or amusement parks
- 122 Viva stations
- 5,088 bus stops
- 86 stops equipped with bike racks
- 40 solar shelters

GO Transit in York Region

GO Transit is an inter-regional public transit system, linking the City of Toronto with the surrounding regions of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and beyond. In 2012, GO Transit carried 65.5 million passengers in an extensive network of train and bus services. GO Transit operated 240 weekday train trips and 2,414 weekday bus trips daily, carried about 251,000 passengers on a typical weekday – 187,000 by train and 64,000 by bus.

Since it began operating in May 1967, more than a billion customers have taken the GO train or bus. Now part of Metrolinx, the Provincial agency charged with planning and coordinating transit services in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA), GO Transit provides safe, convenient and efficient transportation to the communities of the GTA and beyond.

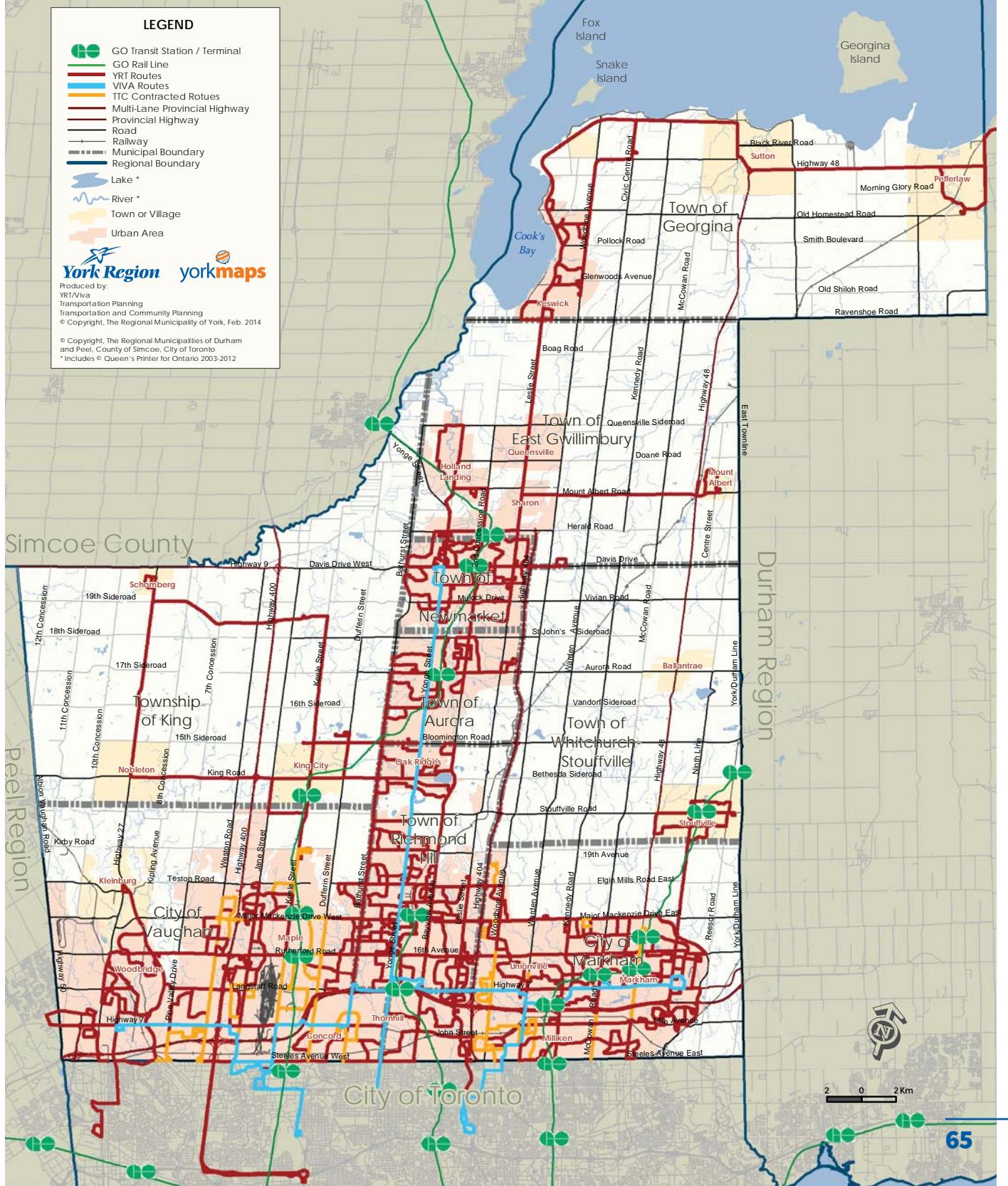
GO Transit operates three rail lines (Barrie-Bradford, Richmond Hill, Stouffville) in York Region serving 14 GO Train stations. In addition, GO Bus services three bus terminals (Finch GO Bus Terminal, Richmond Hill Centre Terminal and Newmarket GO Bus Terminal), providing inter-regional bus service to a large area of the Region.



Newmarket GO Bus Terminal on Davis Drive

Figure 25

Public Transit in York Region



quickfacts

Send an email to Nextbus@york.ca with your four-digit bus stop number as the subject line. Real-time information for the next few buses due at your stop will be emailed to you.

Transit Service Guidelines

York Region Transit (YRT/Viva) has developed minimum guidelines that are considered in developing a multi-modal transportation system. Throughout the YRT/Viva system, certain routes and services are designated as Base Services to ensure a basic level of access throughout the service area.

YRT/Viva Transit Service Guidelines apply to the YRT/Viva Family of Services to ensure its decisions, vision and mission are applied consistently across the Region. The guidelines help to make transit services convenient and easy to use for customers, and ensures services are efficient, safe and reliable.

YRT/Viva Service Guidelines address route coverage service levels and span of service and the requirement for introducing new service.

Bike 'n' Bus

Customers can use bicycle racks on the front of York Region Transit (YRT) buses only. It should be noted that each rack holds up to two bikes and is designed for easy loading and unloading. Customers can bring their bicycles with them on YRT/Viva routes and use bicycle racks on front of the buses, pay a regular fare while their bikes ride for free. Experience the ease and convenience of travelling with a bicycle on York Region Transit (YRT/Viva).

The bike racks are part of YRT/Viva Bike 'n' Bus program. Bike 'n' Bus is part of the Metrolinx BikeLinx program for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).



Bike 'n' Bus allows transit users to bring their bikes on YRT buses

Richmond Hill Centre Terminal pedestrian bridge to Langstaff GO Station

The Richmond Hill Centre Terminal's pedestrian bridge was built to facilitate customer movement between Richmond Hill Centre Terminal and Langstaff GO Station. Elevators at the pedestrian access bridge at Richmond Hill Centre provide a convenient connection between YRT/Viva and Langstaff GO Station services. In addition to the elevators, there are staircases on both sides of the bridge.

Contact Information

York Region Transit, Call Centre

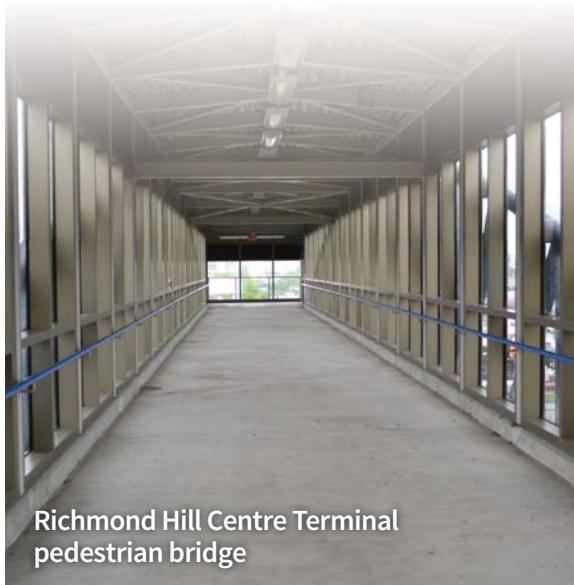
Hours of Operation:

7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Monday-Friday)

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday and Holidays)

Phone: 905-762-2100 or 1-866-move-YRT (668-3978)

Website: www.yrt.ca



Family of Services

YRT/Viva provides nine types of transit services in York Region.

Bus Rapid Transit – Viva Service:

Viva bus rapid transit (BRT) service operates along Highway 7 and Yonge Street with connections to TTC's Don Mills, Finch and Downsview subway stations. It is designed to provide frequent, limited-stop service using distinct vehicles, intelligent technology systems, off-board payment, upgraded stations and queue-jump lanes. This service is integrated with YRT/Viva conventional service.

Base Service:

Throughout the YRT/Viva system, certain routes are designated as Base Services. In urban areas, these services form a grid network of fixed routes, connecting major destinations. Base Services operate seven days a week. Base Services are designated in the major east-west and north-south travel corridors on York Region's main arterial roads.

Local Service:

Local Services are feeders to the Base Services. They operate within the various communities connecting major local activity centres or corridors to the arterial

grid network for transfers between routes. Local Services operate on minor arterial roads and collector roads to serve local transit destinations (e.g. Bernard Terminal) or a main activity centre (e.g. Beaver Creek employment area) and operate on local roads when required for operational needs (e.g. turn-around) or to serve major passenger destinations.

Express Service:

YRT/Viva operates premium Express Bus services on the 407 ETR. The Express Cash Supplement is used to board an Express service with a non-express ticket or pass.

GO Shuttle Service:

GO Shuttle Services provide local service to GO Stations and are designed to be short and direct to maximize customer convenience. They are designed to connect with GO Train times.

School Specials:

School Specials provide easier access to secondary schools when there is limited availability of existing transit routes or capacity. They focus on servicing high schools for the morning and/or afternoon bell times only.

Family of Services (continued)

Community Bus Service:

Community Bus Services are fully accessible transit services typically designed for seniors and people with disabilities who can use accessible, conventional transit. Rather than follow conventional routing patterns, they are designed to provide better access to facilities oriented to these riders such as senior's residences, medical facilities, community centres and shopping areas.

Dial-A-Ride:

Dial-a-Ride is a demand-response type of transit service that provides immediate local travel within a specific travel zone, or neighbourhood, where demand for transit service is limited. Dial-a-Ride hours are different for each route and apply during specific periods.

Dial-a-Ride is operated by a marked YRT/Viva accessible van picks up and drops off customers at existing bus stops.

Customers call and request to be picked up and dropped off at bus stops along designated Dial-a-Ride routes. Dial-a-Ride is not a door-to-door service. Therefore customers cannot be picked up or dropped off at their home or anywhere outside of the route's service area.

Mobility Plus:

York Region's door-to-door shared ride accessible public transit service for people with physical or functional disabilities who may be unable to use YRT/Viva conventional or bus rapid transit services.

Contact Information

For more information on YRT Mobility Plus please contact:

York Region Mobility Plus

50 High Tech Road, 5th floor
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4N7
Phone: 905-762-2112 or 1-866-744-1119
Website: www.yrt.ca



Transit Service Performance

The high rate of transit ridership growth can be attributed to increased population and employment growth, increases in service levels, a heightened awareness of environmental stewardship, rising fuel costs and extensive marketing activities.

Figure 26 illustrates the Year End Revenue Ridership summary from 2001 to 2012 for conventional and Viva services including contracted TTC services north of Steeles Avenue.

Figure 26 - YRT/Viva Year End Revenue Boardings between 2001 and 2012

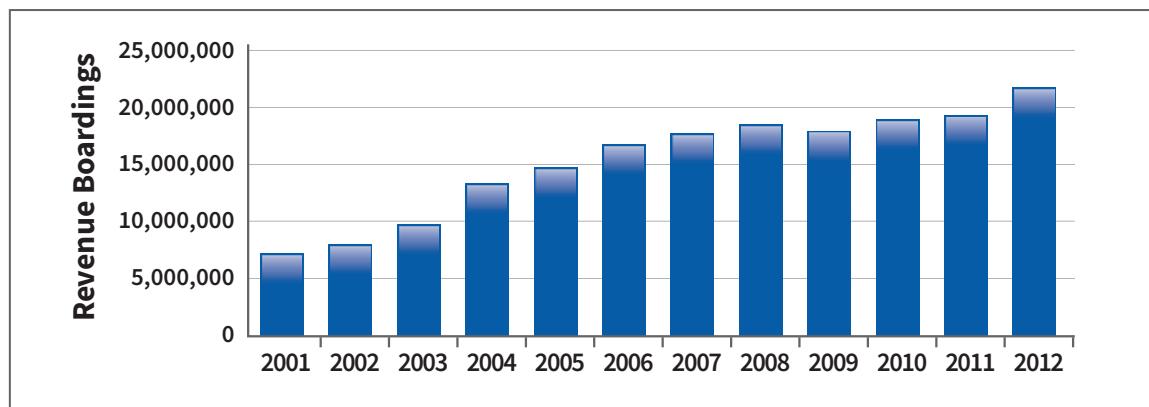
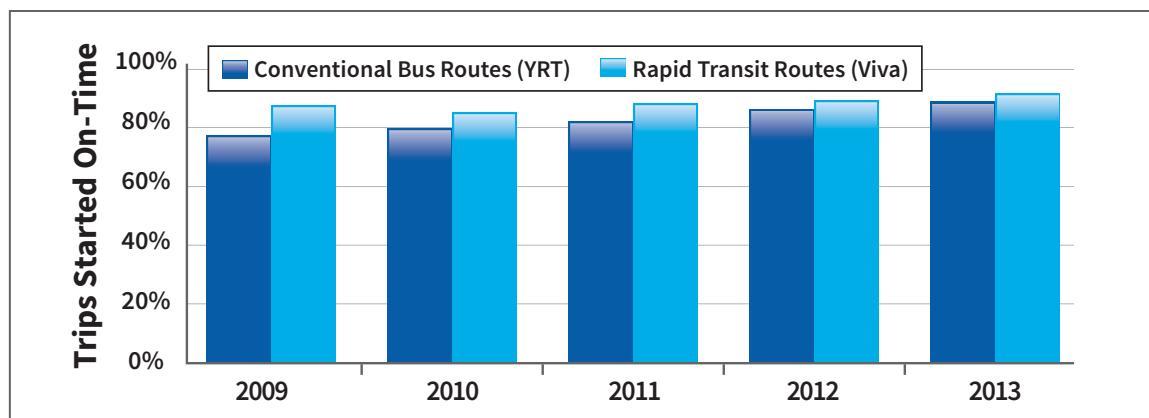


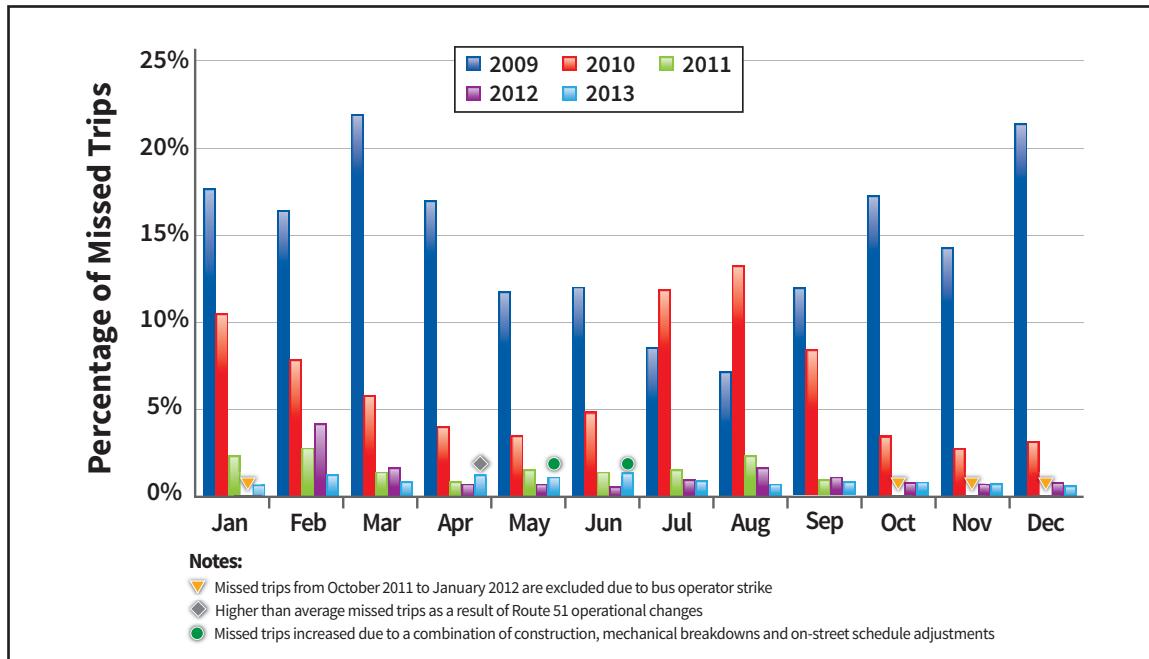
Figure 27 illustrates the on-time performance for Viva routes and conventional routes trip starts between 2009 and 2013.

Figure 27 - On-Time Performance Viva (Rapid Transit Routes) and Conventional Routes Trip Start Time



This graph shows the percentage of trips starting on-time (departing from the first stop of the trip) for all the trips for conventional and Viva routes. On-time means departing no later than five minutes after the scheduled departure time.

Figure 28 - YRT/Viva Percentage of Missed Trips by Month from 2009 to 2013



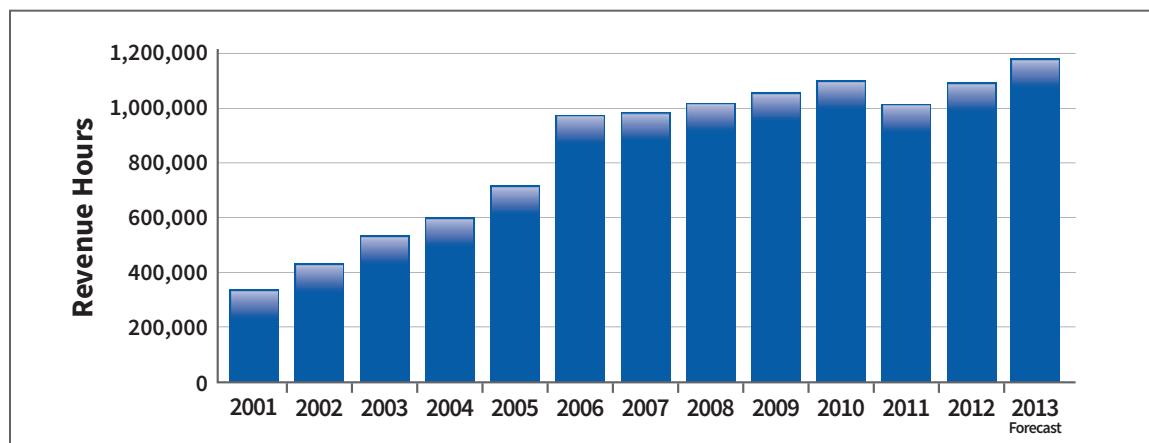
The reliability of the transit system is critical in attracting and retaining riders. On-time performance and service reliability has improved by updating schedules to reflect actual travel times. **Figure 28** illustrates the YRT/Viva percentage of missed trips (or trips not operated) by month from 2009 to 2013.

Transit Service Hours

On January 1, 2001, The Regional Municipality of York assumed responsibility for the funding and operation of public conventional and specialized transit services throughout York Region. As illustrated in **Figure 29**, between January 2001 and 2013, annual service hours have tripled and increased from 354,000 hours to 1,200,000 hours. During the same period, revenue boardings are estimated to grow from 7.7 million to 23 million.



Figure 29 - Annual Revenue Hours between 2008 and 2013



Transit Life Cycle

York Region Transit (YRT/Viva) is in a realignment phase and approaching another phase of rapid growth as seen in **Figure 30**. The realignment phase focuses on effective ridership management, matching levels of service to meet demand and improving on-time performance.

quickfacts

Ridership is expected to rise from **23 million** in 2013 to **26 million** in 2018.

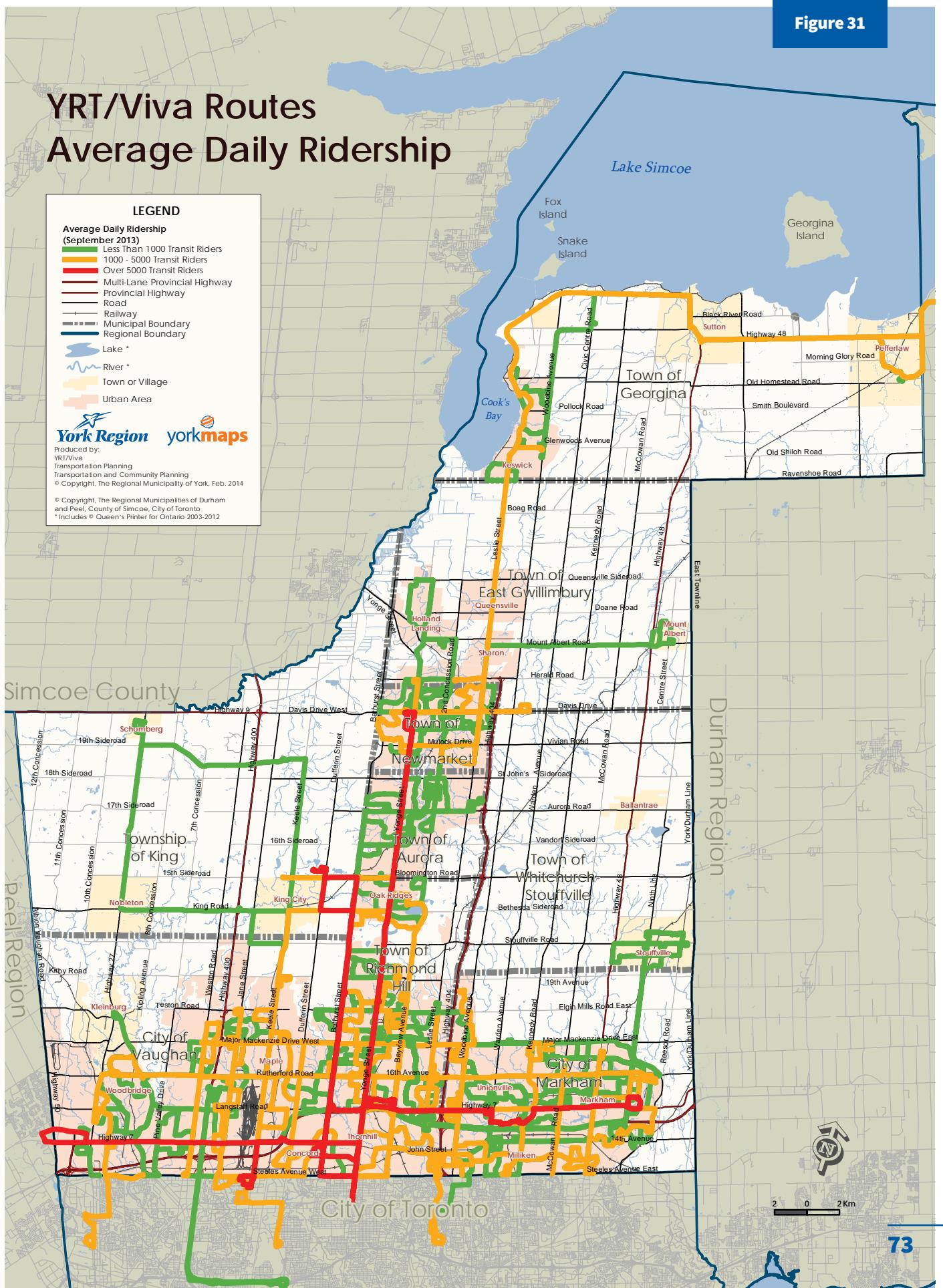
Figure 30 - Transit Life Cycle



Transit Ridership

Figure 31 illustrates YRT/Viva routes average daily ridership for September 2013.

Figure 31



Top 10 Highest Transit Passenger Loadings

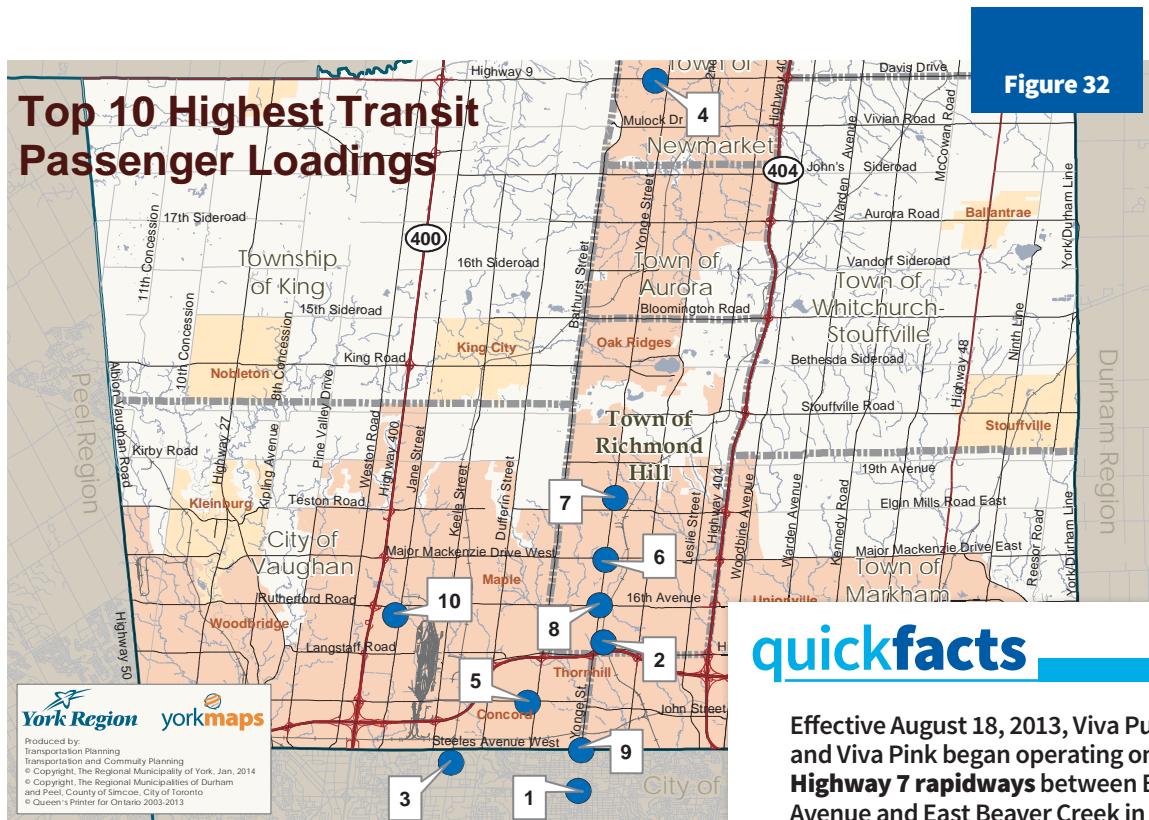
The Yonge Street Corridor is the highest transit passenger corridor in York Region with six of the highest loading points being on Yonge Street. Not surprisingly, five of the 10 highest loading points are at YRT/Viva terminals. The Richmond Hill Centre Terminal at Yonge Street and Highway 7 is York Region's major transfer point for north-south and east-west transit travel. **Table 8** and **Figure 32** illustrate the top 10 highest transit passenger loading locations across York Region.

Table 8 - Top 10 Highest Transit Passenger Loading Locations (September 2013)

Rank	Locations	Average Weekday Boardings	Average Weekday Alightings
1	Finch GO Bus Terminal	194,421	169,587
2	Richmond Hill Centre Terminal	111,684	109,353
3	York University	77,466	66,942
4	Newmarket GO Terminal	56,698	52,272
5	Promenade Terminal	43,662	40,885
6	Yonge at Major Mackenzie	42,570	43,249
7	Bernard Terminal	38,505	37,824
8	Yonge at 16th Avenue/Carville	34,727	29,493
9	Yonge at Steeles	28,613	4,040
10	Vaughan Mills Terminal	26,759	24,258



Passengers boarding a Viva bus at Richmond Hill Centre Terminal



Viva

Viva, York Region's bus rapid transit system provides specially marked state-of-the-art buses, operates up to 20 hours a day and runs every five to 19 minutes during the morning and evening rush hours.

Viva currently operates five transit routes:

Viva blue

Yonge Street from Newmarket GO Bus Terminal (Eagle Street/Davis Drive) to the Finch GO Bus Terminal in north Toronto with additional rush hour services between Finch GO Bus Terminal and Bernard Terminal.

Queue jump lanes and traffic signal priority assist buses travelling through congested intersections. **Figure 33** illustrates the 2013 Viva service route.

Viva purple

Highway 7 from York University to the Markham Stouffville Hospital. This route serves York University, Promenade Mall, Richmond Hill Centre Terminal (Yonge Street and Highway 7), Markham Centre (Warden Avenue and Highway 7 area) and Markham Stouffville Hospital.

quickfacts

You can ride Viva orange between Downsview Station and York University with your TTC pass or transfer as proof-of-payment.

- Northbound: Board at Downsview Station or Dufferin-Finch
- Southbound: Board at York University or Murray Ross

Viva (continued)

Viva orange

North-South route provides service between west Vaughan at Martin Grove and TTC's Downsview Subway Station, via York University. It only provides direct service to Downsview Subway Station during weekday rush hour periods.

Viva green

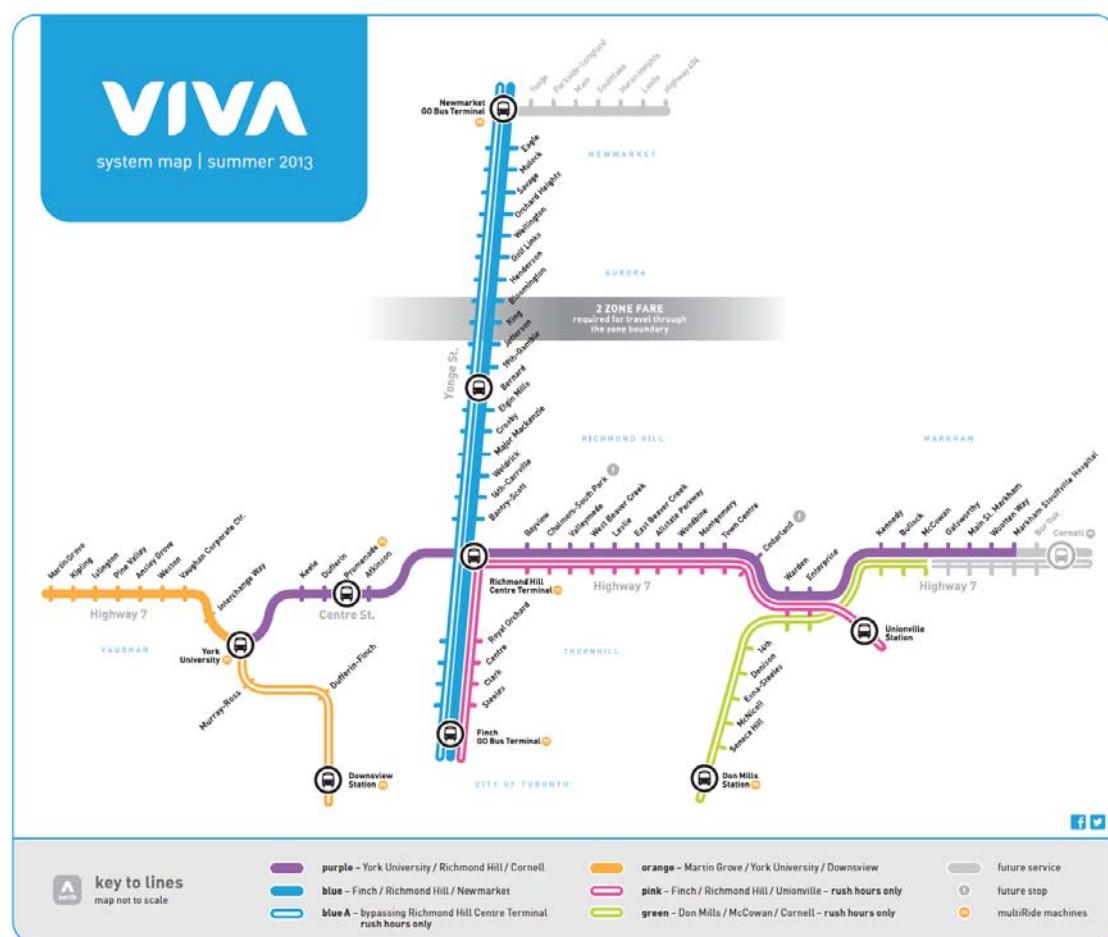
Provides a connection between McCowan Road/Highway 7 and TTC's Don Mills Subway Station, servicing Unionville.

Viva pink

Unionville GO Station, along Highway 7 and south on Yonge Street to Finch GO Bus Terminal during weekday rush hour periods only.

Figure 33

2013 Viva Service Route





Viva bus on the Highway 7 rapidway in the Town of Richmond Hill



Viva bus station at Yonge and Eagle Streets in the Town of Newmarket

vivaNext

York Region Rapid Transit Corporation (YRRTC) is responsible for the planning, design and construction of the vivaNext rapid transit network and related infrastructure to deliver the transit priorities set out in the *York Region Transportation Master Plan*. vivaNext is a vital part of the Region's plan for the next generation of rapid transit and ensures that the high quality of life is maintained.

YRRTC delivered the first phase of Viva, which involved the planning, design and implementation of the rapid transit network running in mixed traffic, the purchase of buses and the provision of off-board payment facilities. This phase was launched in 2005, with a steady increase in ridership of 28 percent to-date and over 23 million boardings in 2013. The York Region Rapid Transit project represents \$1.7 billion in provincial transit investment, and is an example of *The Big Move* in action – Metrolinx's 25-year plan to implement a common vision for transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). The project is being implemented by Metrolinx, an agency of the Province of Ontario.

The second phase currently underway is known as vivaNext and involves the design and construction of 36 kilometres of segregated centre-lane rapidways along much of the current Viva network. Integrated with the planned extension of the Yonge Street subway line north to the Richmond Hill Centre and the Toronto York Spadina Subway Extension (TYSSE) line currently under construction north to the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. The plan is being implemented in multiple phases and along multiple segments:

- Davis Drive in the Town of Newmarket (D1)
- Highway 7 in the City of Vaughan (H2)
- Highway 7 in the Town of Richmond Hill and the City of Markham (H3)
- Yonge Street in the Town of Richmond Hill and the Town of Newmarket (Y2.1, Y2.2 and Y3.2)



vivaNext (continued)

The first segment of the Highway 7 in the Town of Richmond Hill and the City of Markham (H3) rapidway from Bayview Avenue to Highway 404 opened on August 18, 2013. The remaining section from Highway 404 to Warden Avenue is scheduled to open mid- 2014. The vivaNext Program is to be delivered in its entirety by 2019. **Figure 34** illustrates the vivaNext Rapidway System.

The third phase of the vivaNext program awaiting funding commitments includes the following:

- The Yonge North Subway Extension that will provide a critical link for passengers transferring between Viva and the TTC

- Completion of the Yonge Street rapidway from 19th Avenue in the Town of Richmond Hill to south of Mulock Drive in the Town of Newmarket
- The Major Mackenzie Drive rapid transit route that will serve as another major transit artery, with connections to the TYSSE, GO Transit lines and the Viva Highway 7 rapidway

Contact Information

For more information on vivaNext projects please contact:

York Region Rapid Transit Corporation

Phone: 905-886-6767

Website: www.vivanext.com

Find York Region Rapid Transit Corporation on:



Viva bus station on Highway 7 at Leslie Street in the Town of Richmond Hill

Figure 34

vivaNext Projects

