

York Region Transit hike approved

BY SEAN PEARCE
Staff Writer

Be prepared to dig a little deeper into your pockets in the new year, because the price to ride York Region Transit and Viva is going up Jan. 1.

York Region council made it official Thursday by voting for the increase and paving the way for the single-ride cash fare to rise by 25 cents to \$3.

The introduction of the \$3 fare will give YRT and Viva the most expensive single-ride cash fare in the GTA. The cost of a zone upgrade ticket will stand firm at \$1.

Increasing fares was needed to help counteract increasing costs such as rising fuel prices, YRT finance manager Paul Tobin said.

The other half of the equation, Mr.

Tobin said, was the goal of bringing the cost recovery ratio of YRT and Viva to an even 50-50 split between the property taxes and users. Right now, it's taxpayers shouldering 60 per cent of the burden.

Still, despite the overall goal, the measure hardly passed seamlessly.

Concerns were raised, especially about raising fares for students and seniors.

Richmond Hill Regional Councillor Vito Spatafora complained seniors and students won't get higher incomes to cope with costs.

"I understand why this was put in, but the only thing I have issue with is the increases for seniors and students," he said. "I'd be more than happy to pass this if it didn't raise fares for students and seniors."

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