SUBJECT: University/College Transit Pass Program (PW07101b) - (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That Sub-section (d) of Item 6 of Public Works Committee Report 08-003 respecting University/College Transit Pass Program (PW07101a) be amended by deleting “The Hamilton Street Railway Company”, and replacing it with the “Mayor and City Clerk” to be authorized to execute the agreements for the University/College Transit Pass Program;

(b) That staff be authorized to negotiate, and the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute, future agreements with the above mentioned parties, satisfactory in form to the City Solicitor, that extend and renew participation in the University/College Transit Pass program at such fees as may be approved by Council from time to time.

Gerry Davis, CMA
General Manager
Public Works Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Item 6 of Public Works Committee Report 08-003, approved by Council on February 13, 2008, authorizes the implementation of Agreements with student bodies at McMaster University (Graduate Students), Redeemer University College, and Mohawk College (Institute of Applied Health Sciences - McMaster) that replaces the existing agreements, which expire at the end of the 2008/2009 academic year. The proposed agreements will bring the base price of the University/College Transit Pass (UCTP) to $102.70 for the 2009/2010 academic year, based on the current HSR Adult Monthly Bus Pass price of $79.00.
Recommendation (b) will allow staff to offer and subsequently execute agreements with the three student bodies, based on the model that has been developed for the program, ensuring like terms and fee structure for each at a then current fee as approved by Council.

The Recommendations serve to renew the existing program with the participants for the 2009/2010 academic year and allow for future renewals as required.

**BACKGROUND:**

The information and recommendations contained within this report have City wide implications.

HSR maintains University/College Transit Pass agreements with:

- McMaster Students Union (MSU) representing undergraduate students at McMaster University;
- McMaster Graduate Students Association (GSA) representing graduate students at McMaster University;
- Mohawk Student’s Association representing Institute of Applied Health Sciences students at McMaster University; and
- Redeemer Student Senate representing students at Redeemer University College.

In addition to the student bodies, the respective administrations of McMaster University, Mohawk College and Redeemer University College are signatories to the Agreements, and participate in an administrative capacity.

Report (PW07101(a)) established a phased approach over three years to increasing the fee structure for the University/College Transit Pass program for each of the respective participants, with the base price of 140% of the HSR adult monthly bus pass being achieved in the 2010/2011 academic year.

**ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:**

The UCTP program is the source of about $2.48M in annual revenues to the City. Students using the Pass take approximately 2.6M trips on HSR annually, resulting in estimated revenue per trip of about $0.95 in 2009.

The recommendations to this report will result in an additional $180,000 in revenues over the 2009/2010 academic year. As the fee structure for the 2009/2010 academic year had previously been approved by Council, this revenue is currently included in the 2009 Transit budget and will be fully annualized in the 2010 Transit budget.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

Council might direct that a higher fee than that recommended within this Report be put forward to the student associations. This approach would take fees for the three named student bodies out of alignment with those of the McMaster Students Union, whose contracted fee structure is in place through the 2010/2011 academic year. This approach is not recommended, as the proposed fee structure was negotiated in good faith by all parties and previously approved by Council.
FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no staffing or legal implications arising from the Recommendations.

The Recommendations have a positive financial impact on the Transit program. The 2009 Transit Budget was structured to include the recommended increase in fee to 130% of the HSR Adult Monthly Bus Pass rate.

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

A key priority in the Public Works “Innovate Now” plan is to be a leader in the greening of the City. Bus pass programs result in fewer car trips on the road thereby contributing to reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Bus pass programs also generate additional ridership which translates into additional revenue for the City’s transit program.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

Consultation has been undertaken between City staff including Transit, Legal Services, and Finance & Administration; and with the various stakeholders to the UCTP Agreement.

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes  ☐ No
The recommendations enhance community well-being by maintaining travel options related to the use of public Transit, and improved integration with goals of McMaster University regarding enhancement of public Transit as a means of dealing with pressures on parking and public/private road networks.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes  ☐ No
The recommendations enhance public Transit within the community, providing environmental benefits associated with increased Transit use and a decrease in the dependence on private automobiles.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes  ☐ No
The recommendations work towards enhancement of public Transit program revenues.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines? ☑ Yes  ☐ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants? ☐ Yes  ☑ No