SUBJECT: Transit Master Plan Steering Committee - November 8, 2007  
(PW08032) - (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That Report 07-003 of the Provincial Gas Tax Transit Master Plan Steering Committee (TMPSC), attached as Appendix “A” to Report PW08032, be received;

(b) That Recommendations 2 (a) and (b) of the TMPSC Report 07-003 recommending re-implementation of the EC Pass for Hamilton employers be deferred to the 2009 Transit Division and Capital Planning & Implementation Business Plans.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Staff support recommendations 1 (a), (b), (c) contained in the TSC minutes 07-003 which will be funded from Council’s previously approved $50,000 budget for TSC discretionary spending in 2008.

Environment Hamilton (EH) intends, with additional financial support from the Federal government (MOST program), to undertake two projects. The first project will establish partnerships with local activity centres to promote the HSR Day Pass as a family getaway. The second project will involve EH surveying local employers/employees to gather feedback on the best approach to implementing an enhanced promotional campaign for the HSR EC Pass program.
The November 8, 2007, meeting of the TMPSC received an update from the Employee Transit Pass Sub-Committee. The sub-committee recommends that HSR offer the Employee Commuter Pass (EC Pass) program to Hamilton employers as the Value Added Employee Transit Pass (VAETP), and requests that Staff investigate making the EC Pass available in three month intervals. In a subsequent meeting of the sub-committee, it was recognized that there are a number of potential concerns pertaining to the execution of the VAETP proposal as written by the sub-committee. It was also recognized that this recommendation should logically become an initiative of the Smart Commute Project of Capital Planning & Implementation, and that final recommendations should be brought forward to Public Works Committee and Council for consideration.

Further, effective February 1, 2008, the EC Pass program will be expanded on a pilot basis to Hamilton Health Sciences employees. Staff is recommending that further implementation of EC pass programs be deferred until such time as this pilot can be evaluated over a six to nine month period, allowing staff to include consideration of the expansion of the EC pass program in 2009 work plans based on experience gained in the pilot.

BACKGROUND:

Council created the Transit Master Plan Steering Committee (TMPSC) in 2005 with mandates to advise Council on Provincial Gas Tax expenditures and to assist with the creation of Ridership Growth & Asset Management Plans. The committee is comprised of four members of Council, citizen membership from each of the Transit Service Areas (former municipalities of the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth); Corporate representation from Education, Chamber of Commerce, Airport; representation from Business Improvement Areas, the Transit Users Group, the Senior’s Advisory Committee, and the Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities.

The existence of Ridership Growth & Asset Management plans is a requirement of the Agreement between the City and the Province to remain eligible for Provincial Gas Tax funds. The plans were completed in 2006, approved by Council and subsequently submitted to the Province.

In view of there being no quorum for the February 19, 2008, TMPSC meeting, there is no further business arising from the TMPSC.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

An overview of the EH projects is contained in Appendix “B”. Staff is recommending that EH provide additional details on the proposed expenditure areas for both projects and a detailed work plan. This work plan will be reviewed and approved by TMPSC, prior to the release of funding. The $15,000 in requested funding will come from the $50,000 in discretionary Provincial gas tax funding that was approved for 2008 TMPSC initiatives (PWC Report 07-014, Item 14(k), approved by Council on November 14, 2007). It will be part of other cash and in-kind support that is required in order for EH to obtain a MOST grant.
The EC Pass is currently available to full-time City of Hamilton employees in six month commitment intervals. Effective February 1, 2008, the EC Pass is available to Hamilton Health Sciences employees, to an upset limit of 250 participants. This one year pilot program, partially funded through the Provincial gas tax reserve, will be evaluated in the fourth quarter of 2008, prior to considering an extension of the program beyond January 31, 2009. Staff do not consider a re-launch of the EC Pass program to other Hamilton employers as a Divisional strategic priority in the short-term, but are supportive of investigating alternatives through which the Transit Division can enhance marketing and administration of the program in the medium-term. However, the re-launch of the EC Pass program to other Hamilton employers could be accelerated, if the Smart Commute Hamilton Transportation Management Association is established in 2009 or 2010.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

No alternatives are being presented for consideration, as Staff is in agreement with the TMPSC recommendation to support the two EH projects.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Financial - Providing $15,000 in Provincial Gas Tax funding in support of the EH projects will reduce the TMPSC’s 2008 discretionary funds budget to $35,000. Transit Division will incur $1,600 in expenses for the provision of 200 HSR Day Passes. This expense can be accommodated within the 2008 operating budget.

Staffing & Legal - There are no Staffing or Legal implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

**POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:**

Raising the profile of Transit as a transportation option for citizens through the promotion of HSR pass programs is consistent with Roadmap to Sustainability Objective 8, Priority 3 (Preserve the Environment - Improve population health and air quality through land use patterns and transportation options). Providing leadership in greening and stewardship of the City is a priority that aligns with the Roadmap to Sustainability and drives the Public Works Strategic Plan 2017 Vision to be recognized as the centre of environmental and innovative excellence in Canada.

Raising the profile of Transit is also consistent with the Hamilton Transportation Master Plan (TMP), endorsed by Council in February 2007. The TMP sets a goal of doubling the number of per capita transit rides in the 2021-2031 time frame.

This project represents a tangible application of a key strategic initiative contained within our Public Works Strategic Plan, Services our Communities connect with and trust. Specifically, the Strategic Plan advocates for mutually beneficial charters with external customers as well as the adaptation of services to differing community needs.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION:**

TMPSC meets on a regular basis, providing a forum for the committee’s community representatives to discuss transit ridership growth ideas and initiatives with their fellow committee representatives from Council, business and industry. Agreement on ridership growth and asset management initiatives between Staff and a broad scope of
community representation provides Council with the added assurance that limited funding is being allocated in the most effective manner.

**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
Partnership with community groups helps to ensure the community is receiving the most effective services.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
The promotion of convenient transit pass programs can help to reduce auto dependence and increase transit ridership within targeted market segments.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Transit provides access to the community for work, shopping, medical, education and recreation that stimulate new commerce in the community. Employee transit pass programs allow employers to attract a labour force and minimize the financial resources that they must dedicate to the provision of employee parking facilities.

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
Community consultation through broad-based representation on advisory committees demonstrates that Hamilton staff recognizes the need for and are actively seeking community feedback.

Appendix “A”
Transit Master Plan Steering Committee Report 07-003

PROVINCIAL GAS TAX TRANSIT MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
REPORT 07-003
Thursday, November 8, 2007
4:00 p.m.
Room 207, 2nd Floor
Hamilton Convention Centre
THE PROVINCIAL GAS TAX TRANSIT MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE PRESENTS REPORT 07-004 AND RESPECTFULLY RECOMMENDS:

1. Environment Hamilton Employee Transit Pass (Item 4.2)/Bus Rodeo Project Proposal (Item 4.3)
   (a) That the request from Environment Hamilton for $15,000 from the Provincial Gas Tax Funds be approved, in principle, for the purpose of promoting/advertising/marketing the Family Day Pass, and presented to the Committee of the Whole as part of the 2008 budget considerations;
   (b) That Environment Hamilton come back to the Committee with a breakdown of how the $15,000 is to be used;
   (c) That an in-kind provision of 200 free day passes plus one free-day pass for each new person signed up to the employer transit pass program, be approved.

2. Employee Transit Pass Sub-Committee (New Business)
   (a) That the HSR re-implement the EC Pass for Hamilton employers to offer to their employees;
   (b) That the HSR be requested to investigate revising the availability of the EC Pass such that it would be available in 3-month intervals instead of the current 6-month interval.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COMMITTEE
(a) Call to Order/Introductions (Item 1)
Councillor McHattie called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for their attendance.

Councillor McHattie advised the Committee that due to illness, Roger Letourneau has stepped down as the representative from the Downtown BIA and Kathy Drewitt is now on this Committee in his place.

Also, Tim Nolan, past Chair of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities, has stepped down and the Committee, at their last meeting, appointed Marlene Thomas to represent the ACPD on this Committee.

Councillor McHattie extended a welcome to the new members.

Changes to the Agenda

The Clerk advised of the following changes:

(a) Item 4.1 – Free/Subsidized bus passes and/or tokens to Hamilton Farmers’ Market Shoppers – this item to be placed on a future agenda as Anna Bradford is unable to attend today’s meeting

(b) Update from the Employee Transit Pass Sub-Committee – to be added as Item 5.3

The agenda was approved, as amended.

(b) Declarations of Interest (Item 2)

Don McLean declared an interest in Items 4.2 and 4.3 respecting presentations by Environment Hamilton as he has had past involvement with the organization.

(c) Approval of Previous Minutes – September 25, 2007 meeting (Item 3)

The September 25, 2007 Minutes of the Provincial Gas Tax Transit Master Plan Steering Committee were received as presented.

(d) Free/Subsidized bus passes and/or tokens to Hamilton Farmers’ Market Shoppers – Anna Bradford, Manager of Culture, Community Services (Item 4.1)

To be placed on a future agenda.

(e) Environment Hamilton Employee Transit Pass (Item 4.2)/Bus Rodeo Project Proposal (Item 4.3)

Brenda Johnson, Project Manager for Environment Hamilton (EH), gave a presentation to the Committee on two projects that EH is pursuing, being the
promotion of an HSR day pass as a “bus family getaway”, with incentive discounts at destinations throughout the City such as civic museums, recreation centres, conservation areas, etc., and the promotion of an HSR employer transit pass and survey to identify possible obstacles to its take-up.

Comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- The objective of the family pass is how to make a day out for a family that is inexpensive while at the same time, getting people out of cars and into buses, and how to make the incentive work.
- EH advised that they have had discussions with a number of different organizations and approximately 45 have given their commitment to participate by way of offering discounts to families who present their HSR day pass.
- EH is also approaching the Ministry of Transport for funding to a maximum of $50,000; however, the Ministry is also requiring matching funds.
- Displayed HSR map with colour coding showing recreation centres, Tourism Hamilton destinations, civic museums, etc.
- Chamber of Commerce is offering assistance; Tourism Hamilton has offered to give a half-page advertisement in “Experience Hamilton” magazine which has a circulation of 125,000; also have media, “North End Breezes” newspaper and Robert Land School newsletter, which has a circulation of 1,400; Tourism Hamilton is also going to work with EH to get into tourism spots such as the Sheraton Hotel, which in turn, will create information access for patrons
- Councillor McCarthy suggested that members of Council could also advertise the family day pass and its advantages in their newsletters which is distributed to their constituents
- Day passes can be purchased from major ticket vendors such as 7-Eleven
- Kingston and Montreal currently offer similar programs

Gerra West spoke to the Committee respecting employer transit passes.

Comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- There are opportunities that Hamilton has to pursue employer-subsidized transit
- Program can boost ridership, as well as retain current riders; opportunity to market to new audience, create partnership with employers and increase ridership in the City
- Environmental potential for the City
- Gave example of the City of Winnipeg with a population of 600,000, which offers the employer transit passes – ECO Pass Program had a 2-year testing phase, which included a pilot program for six months involving 14 companies; findings included an increase in monthly pass sales, increase in revenue and an increase in transit use; employer transit pass sells for $70 and employers are listed as sales agents for the passes; Winnipeg encourages the employer to contribute 30% and in turn, the transit
authority reimburses the City with 10% of the cost; the employee pays 70%

- The City has marketed employer transit passes to City employees through internal City tools; staff advised that there are budget implications to departmental budgets for employees to use the EC Pass
- EH wants to approach employers and present the idea of an EC pass, and investigate obstacles to its implementation; want to talk directly to employees and come back with experiences to make such a program better
- Great opportunity for the environment and for the City
- However, seed money is required for promotional material

(f) Verbal Updates

(i) 2008 Service Enhancement Implementation Plan (Item 5.1)

Don Hull advised the Committee of the following with respect to the recommendations that resulted from the September 15 Workshop, as well as the Committee’s recommendations from their previous meeting of September 25:

- Public Works Committee supported the 5-year Service Enhancement Plan resulting from the workshop, and recommended that staff report back with an implementation plan; will be reporting back to the Committee of the Whole on November 26 with a proposed budget; part of the proposal will be a specific service enhancement plan for 2008; will be asking direction on specific service enhancements seen as priorities for 2009
- Have put together a bundled budget for consideration by the Committee of the Whole on November 26 which bundles budget for transit program which meets Council’s 3% mandate
- Steering Committee has been provided with a budget of $50,000 for 2008 for discretionary expenditures
- Staff recommended that $500,000 of the balance remaining in the Provincial Gas Tax Reserve be dedicated to service level enhancements, rather than the 100% as approved by the Committee.

On a motion, the verbal update respecting the 2008 Service Enhancement Implementation Plan, was received.

(ii) Marketing Sub-Committee re: re-launch of B-Line (Item 5.2)

Andy McLaughlin provided an update to the Committee with respect to the B-Line bus service and advised that the new timetable has been designed, formatted and is ready to be printed. With respect to the new signage at bus stops, the prototype is ready to go and needs to be screened on to signed blanks and will be erected at specific sites. Also, a series of bus
shelters will be painted. The Committee was advised, however, that not all B-Line shelters will be painted as the Urban Design Section has indicated that they wish to have the shelters located along specific street sections conform to the colour of existing street furniture. However, the Committee agreed that B-Line shelters should be consistent in order for easy recognition by users.

Councillor McHattie indicated that he will have discussions with City staff with respect to their desire not to have the B-Line bus shelters painted in specific neighbourhoods. Also, any restrictions imposed on HSR with respect to the erection of B-Line bus stop markers at specific locations should be brought to the Chair’s attention, through the Director of Transit. On a motion, the verbal update with respect to the re-launch of the B-line, was received.

Councillor McHattie vacated the Chair at 5:20 p.m. and quorum was lost; however, the Committee continued to discuss information items only.

- Members of the Committee expressed concerns with respect to route changes/alterations as a result of the opening of the Red Hill Valley Parkway, and bus routing between Eastgate Mall and Lime Ridge Mall.
- Don McLean expressed concern with respect to the possibility of a transit strike; staff advised that negotiations were proceeding.
- The Committee was advised that all buses are now equipped with bike racks.
- Peter Hutton thanked the HSR for supplying material for distribution to school students.

(g) Information Only Items (Item 6)

(i) CUTA Issue Papers 23 and 24

(h) Date of Next Meeting (Item 7) – December 13, 2007

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Councillor B. McHattie
Chair
Provincial Gas Tax Transit Master Plan
Steering Committee
Hamilton Transit Boosters
An Environment Hamilton Project

Presented to the Hamilton Transit Steering Committee on November 8, 2007

Environment Hamilton is applying for funding from Transport Canada’s MOST (Moving on Sustainable Transportation) fund. We are seeking $50,000 in each of the next three years. Applications are due by November 30 with projects to start in April. MOST requires that grants be matched by other cash and in-kind support. We are seeking support from the Transit Steering Committee to help us leverage these federal funds.

Our project has two parts
1. Promotion of the HSR day pass as a ‘bus family getaway’ with incentive discounts at destinations
2. Promotion of the HSR employer transit pass and survey to identify possible obstacles to its take-up

Bus family getaway
- Promotion plan includes 25,000 colour maps of bus routes with discount and free destinations
- Special promotion through schools, neighbourhoods, churches, community centres, contests, media
- Emphasis on weekend and off-peak use of HSR, introducing new riders to transit
- Discounts already promised by YMCA, Art Gallery, Conservation Authority, Football Hall of Fame, Marine Discovery Centre, HMCS Haida, 8 Civic Museums – total value over $200 at this point. We are negotiating with Waterfront Trust and the 32 city recreation centres and will also approach businesses for discounts.
- First year focus on North Hamilton as low-cost family activity. Trips under $10, under $20, etc.
- We have already arranged 3 new day pass outlets through North Hamilton institutions
- At least 400 free passes will be distributed to low-income families and through contests
- The Chamber of Commerce has offered to assist in developing a marketing plan to obtain advertising dollars that will offset costs and move this project towards sustainability.

Employer transit passes
- Direct approach to employers and employees with brochures, presentations
- Promote existing HSR pass program, plus offer one free day pass for family getaway
- Emphasis on cost savings and environmental benefits, as well as good employee relations
- Extra advantage of 15% federal tax rebate on bus passes
- Survey to determine potential obstacles and possible changes to existing pass system
• Will report back to Transit Steering Committee with experience and recommendations

We are asking the Transit Steering Committee for
1. A commitment of $15,000 in 2008 - dependent on our successful receipt of matching federal funding
2. In-kind provision of 200 free day passes (value $1400), plus one free day pass for each new person signed up to employer transit pass program (day pass to be provided to employee)

Some Expected benefits
• Helps leverage $50,000 in federal funding for HSR promotion
• Attracts new riders and increase sales of HSR day passes (currently 11,000 per year)
• Recruits new employers/employees to HSR passes and evaluate existing pass program
• Promotes patronage of local destinations including low-cost family activities
• Addresses the mandate of the Transit Steering Committee to increase ridership, expand the employer pass program and promote transit

Environment Hamilton, 1130 Barton Street East, Suite 207, Hamilton  (905) 549-0900