Council Direction:

This report responds to the minutes from the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) dated November 10, 2009, Report 09-007, specifically with regard to the two following recommendations of the Committee.

(1) HSR Destination Signage - That destination signage on HSR buses remain illuminated at all times.

(2) Verbal Stop Announcements - That HSR drivers be directed to verbally announce all bus stops until the automated system has been implemented.

Information:

**HSR Destination Signage**

The HSR revenue fleet consists of 217 vehicles. Of this, 72 vehicles are equipped with older technology front lit (with two fluorescent tubes), “flip dot” signs and the remaining 143 buses are equipped with self illuminating L.E.D. destination signs. The destination signage on the HSR buses is hard wired into the ignition system. As such, the destination sign(s) are illuminated at all times when the buses are running.

These signs are illuminated when the ignition of the bus is turned on and there is no manual switch on the vehicle to turn the sign off. Also, the destination signs are connected to a fifteen minute timer that keeps the destination sign on/illuminated after the ignition is turned off.
In the event that the destination sign has failed completely, or has no illumination of the flip dot sign, the bus will be changed off (taken out of service).

In the event that one of the two fluorescent tubes in a flip dot sign has failed, the bus will remain in service, and the Operator will fill out a repair card to have the fault corrected when the bus returns to the MTC.

**Verbal Stop Announcements**

The Automated Stop Announcement System for the HSR was fully installed by mid December 2009. Individual buses were activated as Operators completed the prerequisite training program. It was anticipated that all training would be completed and full system activation would be in place by December 31, 2009. A delay in the completion of Operator training for the automated stop announcement system resulted from an unforeseen requirement to focus training efforts on new hires, specifically to avoid service cancellation due to a short-term shortage of Operators. Staff has now refocused on completion of full system activation in or before mid February. In the interim, Operators have continued with the historical practice of stop announcements upon request. Should the need arise, a communication will be issued to passengers to continue to request the calling of stops until the system is fully implemented.

Manual call out of all stops in the transition period is not recommended for a number of reasons, including health and safety concerns for both the public (e.g., task overload, driver distraction) and the Operator. There are also practical concerns relating to trying to prepare the schedule information in a safe, user-friendly format, and trying to provide all Operators with the necessary schedule information and associated training.

This matter is the subject of an application that is currently before the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario and in respect of which the City has responded.

Going forward, the AODA Communication Standard requires that a policy be instituted to ensure that stop announcements are made in the event of either an individual bus failure or a system wide failure of the automated system. This policy is currently under review and development by staff.

A copy of this Information Report will be provided to the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities.