SUBJECT: Smart Commute Initiative - Urban Transportation Showcase Program (City Wide) (PW04006a)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That the General Manager of Public Works be authorized and directed to continue to work with other partners in discussions with the Ministry of Transportation and the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority staff on options for the continuation of the Smart Commute;

(b) The City Mayor and Clerk be authorized and directed to execute the extension of the existing Memorandum of Understanding dated the 22nd day of May, 2004, between the partner municipalities for the Smart Commute Initiative to the 31st day of December 2007;

(c) That the cost of extending the Memorandum of Understanding to Hamilton, approximately $20,000, be funded from account# 4030555503 GTA Hamilton Urban Transportation Showcase program;

(d) The City Clerk forwards this report to the Clerks at the Region of Peel, Halton, Durham, and York, and City of Toronto.

Scott Stewart, C.E.T.
General Manager
Public Works
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Smart Commute Association (SCA) was formed based on an initiative introduced across Canada by Transport Canada as part of the UTSP (Urban Transportation Showcase Program). The Showcase aimed to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transportation within the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area. The Urban Transportation Showcase Program was a multi-year initiative which demonstrated and evaluated integrated approaches to reducing Green House Gas emissions. They are not stand-alone “Pilot Projects”, whereby funding could be extended based upon favourable or successful results.

The participating municipalities within the SCA entered into a binding Memorandum of Understanding which outlines financial and operating arrangements agreed upon between them for implementation of The Smart Commute Initiative. On March 31, 2007, federal funding for the Smart Commute Initiative expired, without renewal as was understood and agreed upon the beginning of the UTSP.

From its inception, the Smart Commute Initiative promotes Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs which include carpooling, transit, cycling, telework and other commuting options. Establishing a Transportation Management Association (TMA) effectively administers these TDM deliverables. Hamilton has secured funds towards establishing its own Smart Commute Hamilton TMA with interested stakeholders within the approved 2005 Capital Budget. TDM is a vital part of our transportation planning. Continued funding will properly administer a TDM program which gradually captures larger shares of the commuter travel market that, in time, will ease road congestion within the city. The Greater Toronto and Hamilton area continue to support and enhance the availability of TDM. The Hamilton Transportation Master Plan, approved by council on February 28, 2007 incorporates direction from the policy papers and includes a mandate for TDM.

This report seeks Council approval to extend the existing Memorandum of Understanding in order to continue the Smart Commute Initiative with the other primary municipal partners to the end of 2007. The other primary municipal partners are the cities of Toronto and Mississauga and the Regions of Durham, Peel, Halton, and York. They will also be seeking or already have approval from their respective Councils for this extension, and will require signing by the Mayor of Hamilton. The required financial contribution of extending the Memorandum of Understanding will be approximately $20,000 and is contained within the approved Capital program.

BACKGROUND:

March 31, 2007, was the end of three year federal funding of the Smart Commute Initiative through the Urban Transportation Showcase Program. Continued Federal funding of this program is not an option. Implementing the necessary transportation infrastructure to manage traffic congestion has become a growing concern of municipalities is resulting in a major strain to the financial and environmental components of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton areas. Sustainability of the entire Greater Toronto and Hamilton area as an environmentally, economically and socially prosperous urban region is now a critical public issue.
Hamilton City Council approved Policy Papers developed for the implementation of the Transportation Master Plan. These Policies and the Hamilton Transportation Master Plan itself include Travel Demand Management (TDM) Initiatives which will make more efficient use of our existing transportation network. It encourages people to:

- Get around by using travel modes (e.g. walking, cycling, public transit or carpooling) that consume fewer resources and create fewer undesirable impacts
- Travel outside peak hours to avoid congestion
- Travel less by choosing closer destinations or combining several trips into one
- Use telework or other substitutes for travel where practical

TDM is recognized around the world as a sound and small investment, to help manage increased delays in traffic congestion, as opposed to the expensive alternative of new road infrastructure. TDM has emerged as a major theme in virtually all strategic transportation studies conducted by Canada’s municipal, provincial and federal governments in the last decade. On February 28, 2007, City Council approved The Hamilton Transportation Master Plan, which incorporates direction from Policy Papers to administer TDM (Transportation Demand Management) programs and Initiatives. Based on current trends, there would be 180,000 more motorist trip/day by 2031; the Transportation Master Plan is targeting a 20% reduction to this trip rate and focuses on TDM initiatives play a key role in achieve this target.

Implementing TDM initiatives with support from the SCA will assist in addressing other identified impacts within the City, such as improving air quality and physical activities amongst the residents. The Clean Air Hamilton 2005-2006 Report; Appendix A to report PED07145, clearly states: “That Transportation sources which include the roads in and around Hamilton are heavily used by automobiles and diesel trucks; while the increased numbers of miles driven by commuters and the increased truck traffic has been offset by the improved efficiencies of vehicles, emissions from transportation sources result in very high local levels of pollutants near major roads and highways”.

The Smart Commute Initiative has helped such organizations like the Hamilton Health Sciences to establish programs mentioned earlier. HHS is also establishing permanent secured bicycle parking for employees, and has completed its negotiations with the HSR to offer 250 subsidized monthly passes to its employees. These TDM programs initiated by HHS are beneficial to its employees as well as the environment.

The proposed Smart Commute Hamilton is currently in the development stages. From October 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006, several presentations regarding Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and the Smart Commute Initiative were made to interested organizations within Hamilton. The Smart Commute Hamilton TMA will be based around the encouragement of the City of Hamilton internal Employee Trip Reduction (ETR) program, the HHS Smart Commute Initiative and the McMaster University’s Alternative Commuting & Transportation (ACT) office, all which are very active with TDM measures for employees and students.

With a completed feasibility study and union of stakeholders, an attempt to launch the official Smart Commute Hamilton will be possible within the year. To date, some of the largest employers in the City including Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) and the City of Hamilton, along with the Chamber of Commerce, McMaster University and several non-
profit organizations, are in support of the Smart Commute Initiative.

The participation of Hamilton to the Smart Commute Initiative supports the guiding principles of Vision 2020 by encouraging:

- The development of an integrated sustainable transportation system for people, goods and services which is environmentally friendly, affordable, efficient, convenient, safe and accessible;
- A shift in personal lifestyle and behaviour towards transportation choices that enhance personal health and fitness, save money and have the lowest environmental cost;
- The use of alternative modes of movement such as walking, bicycling and public transit everyday;
- The increase in the number of businesses and organizations that are non-polluting and those that actually produce quality of life products and services that control, reduce and prevent pollution.

TDM will develop a strategic approach which positively impacts the natural environment, public finances and our social and community well-being. The single occupant vehicle is recognized as one of the most intrusive of all travel modes while alternative modes such as public transit, carpooling, walking and cycling are the most acceptable modes. Therefore, any opportunities to implement and enhance TDM programs such as the Smart Commute Association and the Smart Commute Hamilton should be supported as part of an overall plan for sustainability in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

The City of Hamilton, along with the Cities of Mississauga and Toronto and the Regions of Halton, Peel and York, has been working together on the Smart Commute Initiative joint municipal project since 2004. The purpose of this project is to deliver transportation demand management programs and services across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area through a two-tier structure consisting of an umbrella group, the Smart Commute Association (SCA), and a network of Transportation Management Associations (TMA). The regions and municipalities were required to provide funding to the Smart Commute Association as well as any TDM measures with additional financial support from Transport Canada.

A number of important tools have been developed by the Smart Commute Initiative including the Carpool Zone Ridematch program (web based ridematch service), the project website (www.smartcommute.ca) and the TMA Toolkit. It is important that these legacy items are maintained so that the project momentum can be sustained especially for those employers that have just begun to implement TDM programs which include Marketing and Outreach programs, carpooling programs, shuttle services programs, telework programs.

Other major activities of the Smart Commute Initiative include assisting in creating promotional health incentives of using public transit use and walking and cycling to work. Encouraging these active forms of transportation are complementary to the work of the Provincial Ministries of Public Infrastructure Renewal and Long Term Health Promotion. It is the consensus of the partner municipalities that the potential replacements for Federal funding are the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority or the MTO.
Signing the extension to the MOU Hamilton will serve as a two-fold purpose;

1. Will allow the Smart Commute Association to continue its functions outlined above, by continuing to work with partnered Municipalities in developing and delivering TDM programs and services;

2. Will maintain our status as a part of the Smart Commute Initiative in good standing, allowing Hamilton to benefit from any potential funding from interested stakeholders that wish to see Smart Commute Initiative remain in existence

The required financial contribution of extending the Memorandum of Understanding will be approximately $20,000 and is contained within the approved Capital program.

**ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:**

The existing Memorandum of Understanding provides an overview of the operating and financial arrangements of the Smart Commute Initiative, between the contribution of Transport Canada and the partnered municipalities and their role on the governing Board and committees as well as liability issues. Participation in this initiative was approved by City Council through report PW04006 Item 8.1., dated January 5, 2004, and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 22, 2004. Sufficient funds are available from the Capital Budget to continue to support the Smart Commute Association. The Transportation Master Plan includes a recommendation for continuing support of the Smart Commute Program.

With the extension of the Memorandum of Understanding, the Smart Commute Association will be maintained for monitoring of existing programs and completion of follow-up surveys to the end of 2007, while it pursues alternatives for permanent funding sources. Options being deliberated upon include incorporating the Smart Commute Association as a non-profit organisation, continuing with a partner “host” organisation and absorption into a Provincial ministry or into the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority. The type of partnership being explored includes:

- Province assumes 100 per cent responsibility for inter-regional initiatives;
- Province assumes 50 per cent responsibility for local initiatives;

The deliberations on these permanent options for Smart Commute are still in preliminary stages and will be reported upon in a report later in the year. Should lobbying fail to secure any additional future funding then the Smart Commute Association will officially end on December 31, 2007. TDM measures are viewed as relatively inexpensive and effective alternatives to the Single Occupancy Vehicle mode of travelling. It is imperative that all partners in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area support and enhance the availability of TDM. TDM is an integral part of our transportation system, as outlined in the Hamilton Transportation master Plan.

For this and the other reasons discussed above, staff recommends that the current organisational set-up of the Smart Commute Initiative be continued until the end of 2007. This would require an amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by the primary municipal partners in 2004.
**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

Alternate 1 - The City of Hamilton could opt not to extend the Memorandum of Understanding

The City of Hamilton could opt not to extend the Memorandum of Understanding. In this case, the City of Hamilton would then not be able to take advantage of the pooling of resources and potential subsidized funding of TDM programs and services for residents, employers and employees. The city could potentially be excluded from future funding from the Provincial government or other interested stakeholders which assist in offering a wider array of TDM programs. It is recommended that the Memorandum of Understanding be extended until December 31, 2007. As such, this alternative is not recommended.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Financial Implications

The direct financial contribution required from the City to assist in maintaining the Smart Commute Association by extending the Memorandum of Understanding to the end of 2007, will be in the amount of $20,000 and will be drawn from Project ID 4030555503 (GTA Hamilton Urban Transportation Showcase). As such no additional funds are required to extend the Memorandum of Understanding.

As mentioned above, with deliberations in progress, the province or the Great Toronto Transportation Authority (GT TA) could assume anywhere from 100 per cent for inter-regional TDM initiatives and 50 per cent for local TDM initiatives. With these funding arrangements Hamilton would be able to offer its residents and businesses a wide array of Transportation Demand Management services and programs. As well, Hamilton would be able to pool resources into sharing information and knowledge of innovative strategies that will be developed in the near future with surrounding regions and cities of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton areas.

Staffing Implications

There are no implications that would affect staffing.

Legal Implications

The terms agreed to by partnered municipalities within the Memorandum of Understanding will be extended until December 31, 2007.

**POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:**

The recommendations would implement the City of Hamilton Transportation Master Plan Policy Papers and the Hamilton Transportation Master Plan.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION:**

The Urban Transportation Showcase Programs which introduced the Smart Commute Initiative expired as of March 31, 2007. A strong and organized foundation of knowledge, staff and partnerships between the municipalities and the Smart commute Association is already in place. The Smart Commute Steering Committee is engaged in
funding discussions with Provincial staff and the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority. The Smart Commute Association continues to exist through contributions made by municipalities in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area which include Hamilton, Halton Region, Peel Region, York Region and Durham Region.

**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 participation of Hamilton to the Smart Commute Initiative supports the guiding principles of Vision 2020 by encouraging a sustainable transportation system for people, goods and services which is environmentally friendly, affordable, efficient, convenient, safe and accessible. The increase in the number of businesses and organizations that are non-polluting and those that actually produce quality of life products and services that control, reduce and prevent pollution.

**Environmental Well-Being is enhanced.** ☑ Yes ☐ No

Implementation of TDM measures through a regional program like the Smart Commute Initiative offers residents travel options including walking and cycling as well as public transit so that they can make a lifestyle choice of health and fitness, reduced commuting costs along with the lowest negative impact to the natural environment. The objective is to provide sustainable transportation for residents and employers which will reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles on the road with a direct impact of reducing pollution and Greenhouse Gases.

**Economic Well-Being is enhanced.** ☑ Yes ☐ No

Providing TDM programs and services that offer a shift in personal lifestyle and behavior towards transportation choices that enhance personal health and fitness save money and have the lowest environmental cost.

**Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?**

☑ Yes ☐ No

The Smart Commute Program project supports one of the 10 core values of the City of Hamilton, which is sustainability, to contribute to a balanced community, economy and environment, to minimize the footprint of our activities and to do no harm. Other initiatives undertaken by groups and organizations in Hamilton include activities which also complement the strategies proposed in the Smart Commute Initiative, such as Clean Air Hamilton and the Commuter Challenge.

**Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?**

☑ Yes ☐ No

Sustainable transportation provides employees with a variety of affordable options to commute to and from work within the city, as well as the greater Toronto and Hamilton Region.