SUBJECT: Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board - School Hour Transit Pass Program (PW08102a) - (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized and directed to execute a one year Agreement with Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board for a School Hour Transit Pass, based on the terms and conditions of the existing Agreement, with a term ending on June 30, 2010;

(b) That Sub-section (b) of Item 5 of Public Works Committee Report 08-013 respecting Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board - School Hour Transit Pass Program (PW08102), approved by Council on September 10, 2008, be amended by deleting “The Hamilton Street Railway Company be authorized and directed to carry out” and replacing it with “staff be authorized to negotiate, and the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute” future renewals of the School Hour Transit Pass program based on such fee structure as may be approved by the City of Hamilton from time to time, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

Gerry Davis, CMA
General Manager
Public Works Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The existing Agreement governing the School Hour Transit Pass program is between HWDSB and The Hamilton Street Railway Company. The Recommendations to this Report assign authority for the Agreement to City of Hamilton.
Recommendation (a) to this Report authorizes the implementation of an Agreement with Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board that replaces the existing Agreement, which expired at the end of the 2008/2009 academic year. The proposed Agreement will maintain the base price of the School Hour Transit Pass at the current price of $260.00 per five month term for each of the two terms in the 2009/2010 academic year. The Agreement will be for a one year term, as it is the desire of HWDSB to negotiate a further Agreement in 2010 to conform to its future program needs.

Recommendation (b) to this Report will allow staff to renew the Agreement in future years, based on such fee structure as Council may approve as part of the City’s annual budget deliberations and on the advice of the City Solicitor, without requiring further specific approvals of Council to renew.

There is a mutual benefit to the parties, as City of Hamilton gains substantial pre-paid revenues, and HWDSB receives reliable, cost efficient transportation services that meet its program needs. The expected program revenues of $500,000 for the 2009/2010 academic year will provide a substantial offset of the cost of service delivery.

BACKGROUND:

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

Since 2002, HSR has maintained a School Hour Transit Pass program, designed for use by those students deemed eligible by HWDSB. The School Hour Transit Pass is issued to those students HWDSB deems as eligible, at no charge to the student and at the sole expense of HWDSB, on the basis of two, five (5) month terms during the school year. There were approximately 1,000 students designated for the Pass by HWDSB at June 30, 2009.

The Pass is valid 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday only; and is not valid on Saturdays, Sundays, statutory holidays and Board designated Christmas and March breaks.

HWDSB has requested that HSR continue the program for the 2009/2010 academic year. The price of the pass to HWDSB for each of the two terms in the 2009/2010 academic year is dependent on the number of students designated by HWDSB as eligible, as set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. Eligible Students</th>
<th>Unit Price per Term</th>
<th>Equivalent Unit Monthly Price</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>up to 899</td>
<td>$260.00</td>
<td>$52.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900 - 999</td>
<td>$252.50</td>
<td>$50.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 – 1,099</td>
<td>$245.00</td>
<td>$49.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,100 – 1,199</td>
<td>$237.50</td>
<td>$47.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,200 or more</td>
<td>$230.00</td>
<td>$46.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The price for the lower tier of enrolment represents a discount of somewhat less than 20% from the current $63.00 price of the HSR Elementary/Secondary Monthly Bus Pass, and is commensurate with the restricted hours when the Pass may be used.
HSR also offers, at the option of the qualifying student, conversion of this restricted Pass to the equivalent privileges of an HSR Elementary/Secondary Bus Pass, on a school term basis. HSR “up-sells” this “School Plus Pass” for the five month school term at a cost to the student of $85, allowing unlimited travel over and above the HWDSB sponsored School Hour Transit Pass. This is a joint promotion of the Board and HSR and is promoted by HWDSB via information in the letter of eligibility to students.

These programs are only made available to students designated as eligible and sponsored by the HWDSB and are not available to others as part of the regular HSR fare structure.

It is the policy of HWDSB that, for eligible HWDSB students, home to school transportation will be safe, secure and on time, bringing students to school ready to learn, cost effectively, efficiently and within budget. This program arrangement compares favourably with yellow bus transportation services that HWDSB otherwise employs as necessary.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

The School Hour Transit Pass program is the source of about $500K in annual revenues to the City. Students using the Pass take approximately 380K trips on HSR annually, resulting in estimated revenue per trip of about $1.32 in 2009.

The Recommendations to this report maintain current revenues over the 2009/2010 academic year.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

Council may choose to not accept the Recommendations, in which case the current Agreement with HWDSB would be discontinued, and HWDSB would seek alternative transportation arrangements to meet its obligations, at a greater cost to HWDSB. It is not possible to calculate service impacts on HSR, as this program with HWDSB has existed in the current and previous forms for more than 10 years.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial/staffing/legal implications arising from the Recommendations.

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 Public Works, Transit staff and Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.
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.

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