SUBJECT: McMaster Graduate Students Association - University Transit Pass Agreement Contract Extension (PW07086) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That Council authorize the Mayor and the City Clerk to execute the University Transit Pass Extension Agreement between McMaster Graduate Students Association, McMaster University, and the City for the period September 1, 2007 to August 31, 2008.

(b) That Council direct that Public Works Transit staff bring forward a follow-up report for Council consideration in August, 2007 which outlines the fee structure and terms of similar University Transit Pass programs in place throughout Canada.

Scott Stewart, C.E.T.
General Manager
Public Works

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The University Transit Pass Agreement between the McMaster Graduate Students Association (GSA), McMaster University, and the City expires on August 31, 2007. In order to extend the Agreement, a further Extension Agreement is now required. The Extension Agreement is for a further term of one year, sets out the terms of renewal, and essentially confirms all previously agreed to conditions within the existing Agreement. The Extension Agreement has been cooperatively developed by City Legal Services and Transit staff, and the GSA.
Approval of Recommendation (a) to this report will provide necessary authorization to execute the Extension Agreement in time to renew the program for September 1, 2007.

The various University Transit Pass Agreements with McMaster Graduate Students Association, McMaster Students Union, Redeemer Student Senate, and the soon to be initiated one with Mohawk Students Association IAHS students have similar terms and fee structures, but are not aligned with regard to the term (length) of the Agreements. All Agreements will come due for renegotiation in preparation for the 2008 academic year, and staff members have begun a review of the fee structure and terms for similar programs that are in place at other municipalities. As outlined in Recommendation (b) to this Report, staff will advise Council further in August, 2007 so as to obtain Council direction on the desired result (fee structure, and terms and conditions) of the negotiations.

BACKGROUND:

The City maintains University Transit Pass Agreements with the University and each of the McMaster Students Union (representing undergraduate students) and the McMaster Graduate Students Association (GSA). At the request of the GSA, the existing Extension Agreement was for a one year term ending August 31, 2007, with provision for extension of the Agreement at the discretion of City Council. The parties to the Agreement now wish to execute the necessary extension to maintain the program.

The existing agreements and fee structure for the program at the University was the result of the recommendations of a McMaster University Bus Pass Program(s) Task Force established by Council in 2004, such recommendations being approved by Council under Report PW05057.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

The Agreement with the McMaster Graduate Students Association (GSA) is a source of some $220,000 in annual revenues to the City, and promotes the use of public transit with the attendant benefits to the community and the environment. Extension of the Agreement with the GSA will maintain the University Transit Pass program across the two major student groups at the University.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

Council could choose to impose new terms and conditions for negotiation with the GSA, such as a revised price structure for the coming academic year. Staff does not recommend this alternative, as the terms and conditions of the GSA Agreement are essentially the same as those in the Agreement with the McMaster Students Union (MSU), and are consistent with those terms and conditions resulting from the previously accepted recommendations of the McMaster University Bus Pass Program(s) Task Force. As reported in Report PW07011, regarding the introduction of the University Transit Pass program for Mohawk College IAHS students, staff will review the rate structure for the University Transit Pass programs by August, 2007 as part of preparations for the 2008 budget deliberations and required renewals of program agreements with participating McMaster, Redeemer and Mohawk student groups for the 2008 academic year.
FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:
There are no financial or staffing implications arising from the recommendation. Acceptance of the recommendation will commit Council to the GSA Agreement for one more year, commencing September 1, 2007.

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:
There are no policies affecting the proposal.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:
Consultation was undertaken between the GSA, and staff at Public Works, Transit and Legal Services.

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 through increased 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 maintain existing 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