PROVINCIAL GAS TAX TRANSIT MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Report 06-002

Wednesday, March 2, 2006
4:00 p.m.
Room 110
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street West, Hamilton

Present: Councillors B. McHattie, P. Bruckler, C. Collins, and T. Whitehead
H. Donison, M. Duncan, D. McLean, A. Pazaratz, B. Simons,
J. Dawson, L. Heywood, R. Smithson, and K. Wiens

Absent with regrets: Councillor M. Ferguson, illness
P. Shaker, work commitment
R. Letourneau, flat tire
T. Nolan, and L. Wilson

Also present: D. Bender, P. Hutton, Alternates
D. Hull, J. Dahms, and A. McLaughlin, Transit Division
T. Horzelenberg, Capital Planning and Implementation Division
D. Trevisani, Manager of Finance and Administration
B. Hollingworth, I.B.I. Group
I. Bedioui, Clerk’s Office

THE PROVINCIAL GAS TAX TRANSIT MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
PRESENTS REPORT 06-002 AND RESPECTFULLY RECOMMENDS:

1. **Appointment of I.B.I. Consultant and approval of proposed work plan (Item 5)**

   That Staff be authorized to engage IBI Consulting to assist in the preparation of Hamilton's Ridership Growth and Asset Management Plans, at a cost not to exceed $30,000, with the understanding that this expenditure is eligible and will be funded from the Provincial Gas Tax reserve.

PWIE– April 6, 2006
2. **Request for Reporting Extension from the Province (New Item)**

That Staff be directed to write to the Provincial Government to request a two month extension to the due date for the requisite Transit Ridership Growth Plan and Transit Asset Management Plan.

3. **Resolution from the Corporation of the Nation Municipality (Referred from Council January 25, 2006)**

That the resolution from the Corporation of the Nation Municipality respecting the method of allocation of the gas tax to the Municipalities be received for information.

**FOR INFORMATION:**

(a) **Declarations of Interest**

None declared.

(b) **Minutes**

the Minutes of the January 18, 2006 Provincial Gas Tax Transit Master Plan Steering Committee were approved as presented.

(c) **Draft Transit Ridership Growth Plan and Transit Asset Management Plan**

Brian Hollingworth of I.B.I. Group made a PowerPoint presentation of the Draft Transit Ridership Growth Plan and Transit Asset Management Plan and provided hard copies which were distributed.

Brian Hollingworth answered questions posed by the Committee and a discussion followed with respect to input received from various institutions, a forthcoming staff report respecting the Transportation Management Association, the tying in of the Transit Master Plan with the Transportation Master Plan, the guiding principles, adopting a strategic approach, and route rationalization. The Committee requested that the following considerations be added to the Draft Plans:

(i) include a connection to and from the core to the waterfront
(ii) the airport is the 7th node and the 8th will be the waterfront – these should be added
(iii) include lower income areas (north of Barton Street)
(iv) address long term sustainability
(v) include GRIDS and Setting Sail
(vi) expand Bus Rapid Transit service first – could be flagship initiative
(vii) expand and promote student/employee pass programs
(viii) consideration for the Mountain area should include, a terminal at Mohawk, expanding the east/west transit on Mohawk Road and Rymal Road and have a node near the top to reduce buses going up and down.

It was noted that this document is a high level overview and the details and prioritizing will come later.

During the discussion, the Chair indicated that a copy of Roger Letourneau’s (H.A.B.I.A.) proposal will be distributed to all the Steering Committee members.

(d) Minutes of the Ridership Growth Plan Sub-Committee (attached)
The Minutes of the February 12, 2006 Ridership Growth Plan Sub-Committee were approved.

(e) Verbal update on Area Rating Committee (No copy)
Councillor Collins who Chairs the Area Rating Committee advised that the Committee recently had a meeting specifically held to discuss area rating in relation to transit.

Staff were requested to report back on options with respect to phasing out of area rating and examining other funding models such as an urban/rural model or an assessment/usage scenario.

It was noted that the area rating issue is included in the Draft Ridership Growth Plan and Transit Asset Management Plan.

(f) Update on use of gas tax funds – operating vs capital (No copy)
Two hand-outs entitled “Dedicated Gas Tax Funds for Public Transportation Program/ 2005/2006 Guidelines and Requirements/Key Changes and Clarifications to program Guidelines” and “Transit Reserves” were provided by staff. Chair McHattie requested that the Steering Committee members review these hand outs and this item will be on the next agenda.

(g) Waterfront Trolley (No copy)
Councillor Collins provided background information with respect to a previous Gore to Shore Service providing transit from the downtown to the waterfront during the summer months which has since been cancelled. The ridership didn’t reach the requisite numbers. The Task Force on Cleanliness and Security in the Downtown Core has requested that the service be reinstated. Councillor Collins proposed the purchase of a trolley which may be more appealing in attracting ridership and would also benefit tourism.

Staff explained that there are two options and leasing wasn’t one of them. The City could purchase one or two trolleys with a low floor. The cost would be
$352,000 plus tax. The $40,000 in operating costs would also need to be covered. The problem is there is a very short time frame for ordering these popular vehicles. The manufacturer is a Quebec company.

The other option would be to wrap the exterior of four small buses which are not in operation during the summer months to make them look like a trolley. The interior, however, wouldn’t have the antique trolley look.

The Committee debated the issue with some members indicating that they don’t believe this would encourage ridership of the HSR in general and others supporting the initiative as a possible boost to tourism. The majority of those supporting the trolley idea opted for purchasing a new vehicle.

Chair McHattie relinquished the Chair to Councillor Bruckler and advised that although it would be a good idea to provide transit from the downtown to the waterfront, he expressed concerns with the delivery date and the need for a business case and would support converting the smaller buses for this year and requesting staff for a report back for further consideration of the proposed purchase for 2007. Councillor McHattie resumed the Chair and the Committee moved the following motion which will be referred to Committee of the Whole – Budgets:

(i) **Waterfront Trolley (New Item)**

That staff be authorized and directed to "sole source" the purchase of one (1) Trolley type bus, that is Low Floor ramp equipped with 2 wheelchair positions, from Dupon Trolley Industries located in Quebec City at an approximate cost of $352,000, plus 15% contingency funded from the Gas Tax reserve, conditional upon approval of the MTO, and subject to Council's allocation and approval of the 2006 annual operating and advertising cost of the summer shuttle service in the amount of $48,000.

(h) **New Business**

(i) **Fare Increase Debate**

Staff provided an update on the status of the transit fare increase debate. The budget deliberations have been delayed until Wednesday, March 8. Staff will present recommendations in a PowerPoint Presentation to Committee of the Whole on that day.

(ii) **Future Agenda Items**

A brief discussion followed with respect to the following topics which will be items on the Steering Committee’s next agenda: Comprehensive

(i) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor B. McHattie, Chair
Provincial Gas Tax Transit Master Plan
Steering Committee

Ida Bedioui,
Legislative Assistant
March 2, 2006