Council Direction:

At its meeting of November 11, 2009, Council approved Item 1 of Committee of the Whole Report 09-029, regarding an extension to the Affordable Transit Pass (ATP) Program to April 30, 2011.

Staff were also directed to report back on Information Item (e) of Committee of the Whole Report 09-029, which reads as follows:

(e) (i) Affordable Transit Pass 2009 Program Update (ECS08051(c)) (City Wide) (Item 8.1)

Staff were directed to explore and report back to Committee on the expansion of the program to assist students by providing an affordability ticket program (include information on what school boards currently provide).

Information:

Staff has determined that there is currently not the capacity in the Affordable Transit Pass (ATP) program to expand the target group to students,¹ based on program statistic trends up to April 30, 2010. If the number of eligible applicants continues to increase as the current program statistics suggest, staff will be faced with making

¹ “students” will be used to refer to secondary students for the balance of this report.
adjustments to the intake process for the ATP program to ensure that there will be sufficient available funds to April 30, 2011.

**ATP Program Statistics Updated as of April 30, 2010:**

From June 2009 to April 30, 2010, a total of 775 new applicants were approved for the ATP program. The total new applicants from Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) were 215 and 213 respectively. The total number of new approved applicants from the low income target group was 347.

In terms of proportion, 55% of the total applicants approved from June 1, 2009 to April 30, 2010 were comprised of those on OW/ODSP with earnings, and the remaining 45% were from the low income target group. On average there were 70 new applicants in total per month to the program during this time.

The total number of applicants eligible to purchase passes has increased from June 2009 to April 2010. The number peaked at 730 in September 2009 and was at its lowest in June 2009 (the month the program expansion to OW/ODSP applicants began). On average, the monthly total number of eligible applicants for the ATP program on a monthly basis was 588. In the last report to Council in October 2009, Report ECS08051(c), the monthly average total number eligible on a monthly basis was 401. This represents a 32% increase in the average total per month since October 2009.

A new trend appears to be emerging with respect to the gap between the total approved to purchase passes, compared to the total number of passes actually purchased by month. In Report ECS08051(c), staff reported a wide variance between these two groups i.e. not everyone eligible in a month was actually purchasing a pass. On average, staff estimated at that time that only 30% of those eligible for the ATP program each month actually purchased a pass.

Since February 2010, however, the gap between the total approved per month and the actual number of passes purchased per month has significantly narrowed. In fact, in April 2010, 98% of those approved (527) actually purchased a pass (514). Although it is too early to determine whether this trend will continue, staff will need to closely monitor the number of applicants approved and actual passes purchased, over the next few months to identify potential budget impacts for the remainder of the ATP program.
Current HSR Fares for Secondary Students and School Board Transportation Policies:

When the ATP pilot program began, students were excluded as a target group for this pilot program because this sector already had access to reduced transit fares. Table 2 (below) lists the current rates for students as compared to adults:

Table 2: 2010 Hamilton Street Railway Fares – Students + Adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RATE</th>
<th>ELEMENTARY/SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT</th>
<th>ADULT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$2.55</td>
<td>$2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket</td>
<td>$1.65 (5 for $8.25)</td>
<td>$2.00 (5 for $10.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Pass</td>
<td>$71.00</td>
<td>$87.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Youth Pass</td>
<td>$71.00 July 1 to Sept 6 2010</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passport to Hamilton</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>One $9 HSR day pass allows six people, up to two adults and up to six children (no more than six people in total, group does NOT need to be related) to use the HSR for an entire day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both of the two local school boards, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDSB), and the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB), have transportation policies.

To be eligible for transportation, both boards consider the following criteria:

- distance from the home to the school in the student’s catchment area;
- traffic or other safety hazards;
- access to a program or activity at a particular school; and,
- board discretion.

Discretionary considerations include: special education needs, assistance for student success, access to a program offered at a school outside of the student’s catchment area, etc.

2 Representatives from the HWCDSB comprised the delegation requesting that the ATP be expanded to include students. For the purposes of this report, discussion will be limited to the HWCDSB and the HWDSB. The francophone schools or their transportation policies were not included.
To meet their transportation needs, the HWDSB also has a partnership with the Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) to offer a School Hour Transit Pass Program. These passes are purchased by the HWDSB and offered to eligible students at no cost. The pass is provided on the basis of two, (5) month terms during the school year and is valid only from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

The HSR also offers students eligible for the School Hour Pass, the opportunity to upgrade to a School Plus Pass for a semester fee of $85.00. This upgrade gives students the same rights and privileges of an Elementary/Secondary Bus Pass.

**Affordable Transit Program – Current Capacity**

As of May 31, 2010, there is a balance of $282,380 remaining to cover the ATP program to April 30, 2011. At the current rate of growth in demand for service, it is projected that program funds could be fully expended as early as February 2011. Staff will continue to closely monitor monthly program utilization. If current trends continue, with respect to both approved applicants and the number of passes purchased monthly, staff will develop a range of options (including the potential of limiting monthly intake and/or creating a waitlist for service) to ensure that the program’s funds will last until the end of the program in April 2011.

Information from the 2006 Census also indicates that 20% (8,040) of the total population aged 13-18 years of age (40,835) in the city of Hamilton, live below the low-income cut offs (LICO). Given the large number of potential applicants to the program and the current financial capacity of the ATP program, staff are unable to consider expanding the target group at this time.