TO: Mayor and Members  
   General Issues Committee

WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE

COMMITTEE DATE: December 14, 2010

SUBJECT/REPORT NO:  
Protecting the Taxi Scrip Program - Recommendation from Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities - (PW10098) - (City Wide)  
(Outstanding Business List Item)

SUBMITTED BY:  
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General Manager  
Public Works Department

PREPARED BY:  
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SIGNATURE:

RECOMMENDATION

(a) That this Report PW10098, Protecting the Taxi Scrip Program - Recommendation from Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities, be received;

(b) That the item “Protecting the Taxi Scrip Program from the Recent Increase in Taxi Fares - Recommendation from the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities” be identified as completed and removed from the General Issues Committee’s Outstanding Business List.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council direction on Recommendation (c)(i) of Report PW09089, 2010 Transit Operating Budget, had referred recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) within its Report 08-006 to the 2011 budget process. ACPD had recommended:

That Council adopt two measures to restore the purchasing power recently lost due to the increase in the taxi meter in the City of Hamilton:

(a) That the rate of subsidy of the Taxi Scrip Program be restored to its original 50 percent rate from the current level of 40 percent.
(b) That Council increase the monthly amount of Taxi Scrip which eligible users may purchase from $120 to $160 (3 books to 4 books).

Response to this direction had originally been planned as part of the 2010 Transit budget, in the form of a proposed Program Enhancement, but had been recommended for referral to the 2011 budget process in anticipation of legislated requirements of Transit under pending Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) legislation, widely expected to be enacted during 2010, and in deference to other substantial budget pressures on the Transit program.

AODA legislation relating to a Transportation Standard has gone through several iterations, and while it is in draft form of the “Proposed Integrated Accessibility Regulation”, no legislated requirements have been passed into law to date. The Proposed Integrated Accessibility Regulation, which is a plain language version of the proposed regulation, is unclear as to requirements of family of services programs such as the Taxi Scrip Program. However, the impacts of the proposed regulation, with changes to Eligibility and Registration for Accessible Transportation services implemented as previously directed by Council, are estimated to require over $6M in additional annual expenditures by 2017.

Given the uncertainty of legislated requirements on the Taxi Scrip Program specifically, and the current estimated financial impacts of legislated requirements on the Transit program generally, no recommendation from staff is made within this Report on implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities at this time.

Alternatives for Consideration - Not Applicable

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<tr>
<th>FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</th>
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<td><strong>Financial:</strong> There are no financial implications.</td>
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<td><strong>Staffing:</strong> There are no staffing implications.</td>
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<td><strong>Legal:</strong> There are no legal implications.</td>
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<th>HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</th>
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<td>Council had directed that staff report back to Committee on recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) within its Report 08-006; ACPD had recommended that:</td>
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ACPD had recommended this program change in response to the anticipated cost implications of the meter taxi rate increase in 2008, and erosion of purchasing power for Taxi Scrip Program registrants.

The Taxi Scrip Program had last been changed in 2006 when Council approved an increase in the maximum monthly purchase level from 2 books of Scrip monthly, or $80, to 3 books of Scrip monthly, or $120. That change resulted in substantial additional trips being taken by program registrants in 2006 and 2007, with a decline in use beginning in 2008.

The Taxi Scrip Program had been initiated in 1994 with a 50% subsidy on purchases by program registrants. This subsidy had been reduced in 1996 by Regional Council in response to reductions in Provincial subsidies for Transit. The subsidy level of 40% has remained unchanged since that time.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

N/A

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

N/A

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

Use of Taxi Scrip by program registrants has declined by approximately 20% between 2007 and 2010, from 190,000 to 150,000 annual trips. This decline may be substantially attributed to the increase in meter taxi rates, with the average value of Taxi Scrip used by registrants for each trip having increased by 15% over that period; also, greater availability and use of DARTS trips over that time period has likely had some influence on Taxi Scrip use.

The ACPD recommendations would require an additional $275,000 in net program expenditures to support an anticipated 15% increase in trips made by registrants. Given existing pressures on funding sources including Provincial and Federal Gas Tax programs, any additional expenditure would necessarily need to be funded from the General Tax Levy, and would result in a 0.6% increase on the proposed Transit budget.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

N/A

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Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.

Values: Honest, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork
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CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN


Social Development

• People participate in all aspects of community life without barriers or stigma
• Promotes greater accessibility within the community for persons with disabilities.

Healthy Community

• An engaged Citizenry
• Responds to concerns raised by the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities for the City of Hamilton.

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

None