

CITY OF HAMILTON**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**
Benefit Eligibility Division

TO: Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: October 19, 2011	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Affordable Transit Pass Pilot Program Extension (CS11071) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)	
SUBMITTED BY: Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community Services Department	PREPARED BY: Erica Brimley 905-546-2424 ext. 4815 Bruce Hickerson 905-546-2424 ext. 3082
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the Affordable Transit Pass (ATP) pilot program be continued to April 30, 2012 at a cost of \$64,062 (net) to be funded from the Social Services Initiatives Fund #112214.
- (b) That Item "P", respecting the Affordable Transit Pass (ATP) Pilot Program, be considered completed and removed from the Emergency and Community Services Outstanding Business List.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Affordable Transit Pass (ATP) program began as a pilot program in the Community Services Department in March 2008. It was initially funded from March 2008 to December 31, 2009 utilizing \$500,000 from the Social Services Initiatives Fund #112214. In April 2009, the program's target group was expanded to include Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients in addition to low-income citizens. In October 2009, \$200,000 from the OW Stabilization Reserve Fund #110044 was approved to extend the pilot project through to April 30, 2011.

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On April 7, 2011 the General Issues Committee recommended that staff be directed to report back to the Emergency & Community Services Committee on the following:

- Extension of the ATP Pilot program using current available funds
- The financial implications of extending the ATP Pilot program to April, 2012.

The program's approved budget allocated from the OW Stabilization Reserve and Social Services Initiative Funds totals \$700,000 with approximately \$160,495 remaining as of July 31, 2011. The ATP program can continue to operate through to approximately February 11, 2012 utilizing the remaining funds.

Staff are, however, requesting additional funding of \$64,062 (net) from the Social Services Initiatives Fund #112214 to extend the program until April 30, 2012.

A request for a permanent enhancement to the Community Services budget will be made as part of the 2012 budget to allow for this program to be continued on an ongoing basis. If approved as a permanent program, the ATP program could provide on average 500 passes each month or 6,000 passes annually.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 5

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (for Recommendation(s) only)

Financial: The amount of funding required to continue to fund the program from February 12, 2012 through to April 30, 2012, is \$64,062. Staff recommend that this cost be funded from the Social Services Initiatives Fund (SSIF) #112214 which currently has \$84,700 available

Staffing: The program requires continued staffing support of one full-time Special Supports Case Aide position in the Benefit Eligibility division of the Community Services department and one full-time Ticket Agent in the Transit Support Services division in Public Works.

Legal: There are no legal implications associated with Report CS11071.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **November 28, 2007** – Council approved the ATP program as a pilot project with \$500, 000 from the Social Services Initiatives Fund #112214

- **April 29, 2009** – Council approved the expansion of the ATP program to include those in receipt of OW and ODSP and earnings
- **November 11, 2009** – Council approved an extension of the timeline for the ATP pilot program until April 30, 2011 and additional funding of \$200,000 from the OW Stabilization Reserve Fund #110044
- **December 14, 2010** – In report CS10071(a)/PW10100, staff recommend that the ATP program enhancement in the amount of \$225,050 for 2011 (\$335,268 annualized) be referred to the 2011 Budget deliberations for consideration
- **April 7, 2011** – General Issues Committee recommends that staff be directed to report to the Emergency & Community Services Committee on the following:
 - Extension of the ATP Pilot program using current available funds from Social Services Initiatives and OW Stabilization funds;
 - The financial implications of extending the ATP Pilot program to April, 2012.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

- Community Services Department, Employment and Income Support Division, Social Development and Early Childhood Services Division, Benefit Eligibility Division, and Strategic Services Division;
- Corporate Services Department, Treasury Services Division, Finance and Administration Section;
- Public Works Department, Transit Division, Transit Fare Administration & ATS Section; and,
- Sub-committee of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction who agreed with staff's recommendation to continue the program.

ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The ATP program provides access to an affordable monthly transit pass for employed low-income citizens of the City of Hamilton, including those in receipt of OW and ODSP who have earnings from employment. It is recognized that the cost of transportation can be a barrier to obtaining and maintaining a job. The goal of the ATP program is to assist those who need it most with the cost of getting to and from work thereby increasing the likelihood that they will maintain their job and not slip further into poverty.

The ATP program has had an average of 570 eligible program participants per month since June, 2009, with over 70 new applicants being granted eligibility each month. While not all applicants to the program end up actually purchasing a pass, the number of affordable transit passes purchased has been steadily increasing (see Figure 1 below).

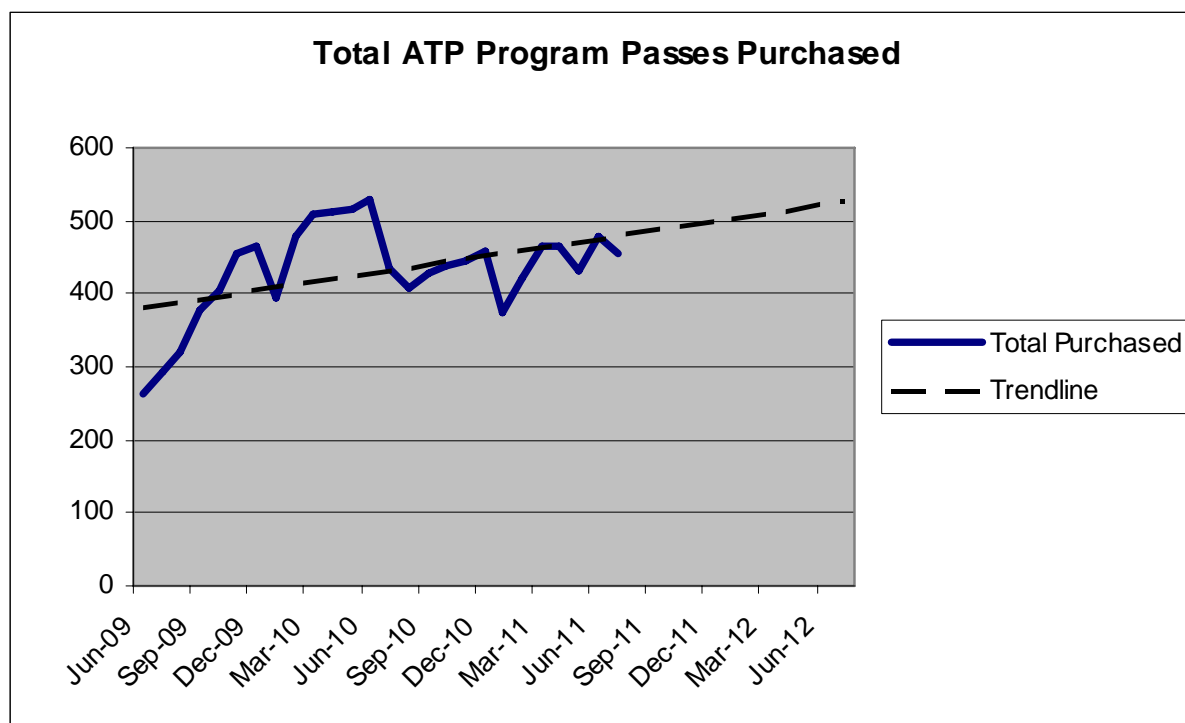


Figure 1 – ATP Program Passes Purchased June 2009 to Present and Future Trend

Depending on uptake in the program and financial capacity, staff may need to make adjustments in the program for 2011-2012 in order to remain within budget. Some areas that may need to be re-examined include:

- a minimum hours worked criteria;
- a wait list; or,
- impose a cap on the number of times a recipient can access the program.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Option #1

Further to report CS10071(a)/PW10100, council could decide to discontinue the program, ending it as of February 11, 2012 with potential of only approving 143 passes on a first come first serve basis.¹ Staff would have to cease future applications into the program and inform current recipients that their eligibility will not be extended beyond February 12, 2012 since approvals are issued for six months at a time.

Financial: There would be no net levy impact.

Staffing: Two temporary full time positions would end immediately. The workload associated with bringing the program to a close and the increased demand for all Special Supports would have to be absorbed by the remaining case aide complement within the unit.

Legal: There are no legal implications associated with Report CS11071.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN (Linkage to Desired End Results)

Focus Areas: 1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization, 2. Financial Sustainability, 3. Intergovernmental Relationships, 4. Growing Our Economy, 5. Social Development, 6. Environmental Stewardship, 7. Healthy Community

Social Development

- ◆ Residents in need have access to adequate support services

Healthy Community

- ◆ Adequate access to food, water, shelter and income, safety, work, recreation and support for all (Human Services)

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

None

¹ The ATP program currently has the capacity to sell 500 passes at \$43.50 each per month and has an average, to date, 477 passes purchased monthly.