




CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMUNITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Benefit Eligibility Division

TO:	Mayor and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	February 23, 2015
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Affordable Transit Pass Program to Permanent Funding (CES14040(a)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Erica Brimley (905) 546-2424 Ext.4815 Bill Atanas (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2941
SUBMITTED BY:	Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community and Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That the Affordable Transit Pass (ATP) program including staffing (1 FTE Special Supports Case Aide position in the Benefit Eligibility Division and 0.5 FTE Ticket Agent position in the Transit Division (Public Works)) be made permanent at an estimated \$192,740 (gross) and \$158,580 (net) from June 1 to December 31, 2015 with the annualized cost of \$328,560 (gross) and \$271,080 (net), be referred to the 2015 budget process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Affordable Transit Pass (ATP) program began as a pilot program in the Community and Emergency Services (C&ES) Department in April 2008. The program was previously funded from the Social Service Initiative Reserve (#112214) and/or OW Stabilization Reserve Fund (#110044).

The ATP program assists employed City of Hamilton residents living on a low income, including Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients, with the purchase of an adult monthly bus pass. Recipients can purchase a half price pass for \$43.50. The goal of the ATP program is to assist individuals with the cost of transportation to and from work thereby increasing the likelihood of employment stability. The findings from the June 2014 ATP Survey further supports how this program assists recipients to maintain employment. Since the inception of the program in 2008 there has been over 36,600 passes purchased.

On September 24, 2014, Council approved Report CES14040 to continue funding the ATP program from January 1, 2015 to May 31, 2015 at a cost of \$126,685 (net) from

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the Tax Stabilization Reserve. This temporary funding allowed the program to continue until the 2015 budget is approved.

Effective November 1, 2014, staff implemented a process allowing recipients of the ATP program to purchase their passes online and at alternate locations through the Presto system. Staff will continue to review the participation in this new process over the next 12 months to determine how the new system assists the participants.

Staff recommends that both the ATP program and staffing have sustainable permanent funding annualized \$328,560 (gross) and \$271,080 (net) which will provide 4,910 annual subsidized passes to eligible residents. From June 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015 funding required is \$192,740 (gross) and \$158,580 (net) which will provide 2,860 passes to eligible residents.

The ATP program funding is currently scheduled to end May 31, 2015 as there is no additional reserve funding available.

Alternatives for Consideration –Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

The estimated annual cost for the ATP program from June 1 to December 31, 2015 is \$192,740 (gross) and \$158,580 (net) with the annualized \$328,560 (gross) and \$271,080 (net).

Details	Annualized		June to Dec 2015	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
Staffing (1 C&ES & 0.5 HSR) 50% OW admin cost share with the Province	\$111,320	\$55,660	\$66,460	\$33,230
Administration Costs (<i>Advertising & Promotion</i>) 50% OW admin cost share with the Province	\$3,660	\$1,830	\$1,870	\$940
ATP Passes - OW, ODSP and Low Income (4910 annualized passes*\$43.50 subsidized pass cost	\$213,580	\$213,590	\$124,410	\$124,410
Total	\$328,560	\$271,080	\$192,740	\$158,580

Staffing:

The program requires one permanent FTE Special Supports Case Aide position in the Benefit Eligibility Division and 0.5 permanent FTE Ticket Agent position in the Transit Division (Public Works).

Legal:

There are no legal implications associated with Report CES14040(a)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

November 28, 2007 – Council approved the ATP program as a pilot project with \$500,000 from the Social Services Initiatives Fund (SSIF) #112214 for low-income residents only. The program was approved from April 2008 until March 31, 2009.

November 14, 2008 – Council approved Report ECS08051 to extend the ATP program from April 1, 2008 to December 31, 2009 along with the funding of \$500,000 from the Social Services Initiatives Fund (SSIF) #112214.

April 29, 2009 – Council approved the expansion of the ATP program (Report ECS08051(b)/PW09038) to include those in receipt of OW and ODSP with employment earnings effective June 1, 2009 and increase complement by one FTE Special Supports Case Aide position in the Community & Emergency Services Department and one FTE HSR Ticket agent position in the Public Works Department.

November 11, 2009 – Council approved an extension of the timeline for the ATP program until April 30, 2011 and additional funding of \$200,000 from the OW Stabilization Reserve Fund #110044.

December 7, 2011 – Council approved an extension of the ATP program from January 1, 2012 until December 31, 2013 (Report CS11095) with funding in the amount of \$300,050 from the Social Services Initiative Reserve (Account #112214)

November 25, 2013 – Council approved an extension of the ATP program from January 1, 2014 until December 31, 2014 with funding in the amount of \$ 304,350 (net) from the Social Services Initiative Fund (SSIF) #112214.

September 22, 2014 - Council approved an extension of the ATP program from January 1, 2015 to May 31, 2015 at a cost of \$126,685 (net) to be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve. The General Manager of C&ES Department or her designate be authorized to implement spending caps, benefit frequency limits or other controls necessary to ensure costs are contained within the approved budget amount.

ATP Survey

An ATP survey was conducted from June 20 to June 27, 2014. A total of 63 surveys were completed (50 in person and 13 self-administered).

Key Highlights of the Survey:

- 83% (52) of ATP survey respondents took more than 7 trips per week on the HSR;

- 100% of all respondents indicated an “intent” to purchase an ATP pass each month for all of the 6 months they were eligible to do so;
- Respondents identified “I can’t always afford it” as the main reason why they might not purchase an ATP pass in a given month although eligible to do so;
- 60% (38) of ATP survey respondents expressed a preference for picking up their ATP pass in person while 40% (25) indicated a willingness to renew on-line. It is anticipated that the move to Presto may shift attitudes towards on-line renewal once initiated;
- 100% of respondents expressed a preference towards purchasing a bus pass as opposed to a ticket option;
- 65% (39) of respondents were female;
- 71% (42) of respondents were over the age of 36 years; and,
- 53% (32) were employed full time and 45% (27) part time.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

None

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Corporate Services Department, Finance and Administration and Revenue Generation and Financial Policy and Planning were consulted on the financial aspects of the recommendations. Their feedback on the financial data analysis has been incorporated into the report where required.

Public Works Department, Transit Division, Transit Fare Administration and ATS Section support the continuation the ATP program and their feedback and suggestions were incorporated in this report.

Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction ATP Advisory Group supports the recommendation to continue the program and make it permanent.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

The ATP program was established in 2008 to assist employed residents living on a low income with the purchase of adult monthly bus passes at a reduced rate. The program has assisted many low income residents in maintaining their employment (see chart on page 5.)

Each year the ATP program continues to approve more passes than purchased. This indicator could be attributed to the accessibility of the program. Effective November 1, 2014 staff implemented the use of the PRESTO system allowing recipients to renew their passes online or at alternative locations from the 36 Hunter Street location.

Depending on the uptake of the Presto program there may be an increase in the number of passes purchased each month.

The chart below shows the history of the “purchased” passes at HSR since 2010. The program continues to decrease in the number of purchased passes; therefore, staff have reduced the number of annualized passes for 2015 from 5,000 to 4,910 to reflect the actual number of passes purchased.

Number Passes Purchased at HSR				
Year	Low Income	ODSP	OW	Total
2010	3877	1012	660	5549
2011	3291	1113	1039	5443
2012	2934	1117	1247	5298
2013	2466	1133	1179	4778
2014	2194	1146	1565	4905

Depending on uptake of the program and financial capacity, staff will implement controls and spending caps to ensure costs are contained within the approved budget amount. These controls may include:

- introducing a minimum number of hours worked in order to qualify for ATP;
- establishing a wait list; and/or,
- imposing a cap on the number of times a recipient can access the program.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #1

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.

Strategic Objective

- 1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.
- 1.6 Enhance Overall Sustainability (financial, economic, social and environmental).

Strategic Priority #2

Valued & Sustainable Services

WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.

Strategic Objective

- 2.1 Implement processes to improve services, leverage technology and validate cost effectiveness and efficiencies across the Corporation.
- 2.3 Enhance customer service satisfaction.

Strategic Priority #3

Leadership & Governance

WE work together to ensure we are a government that is respectful towards each other and that the community has confidence and trust in.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None