



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Transit Division

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	August 31, 2015
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Bus Travel Training – One Year Program Extension (PW11025a) - (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	George Brovac (905) 546-2424, Extension 1666
SUBMITTED BY:	Gerry Davis, CPA, CMA General Manager Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the General Manager of Public Works be authorized and directed to enter into an Agreement with The Salvation Army Lawson Ministries Hamilton, as the lead agency for participating Developmental Services providers within Hamilton, to extend the Bus Travel Training Project an additional year, providing bus travel training for persons with developmental disabilities;
- (b) That the General Manager of Public Works be authorized to approve and provide funding under the Agreement to The Salvation Army Lawson Ministries Hamilton to an upset limit of \$175,000 expenditure requirement of the program extension;
- (c) That such expenditure as may be approved by the General Manager of Public Works be funded from Transit Capital Reserve Account 108025;
- (d) That the General Manager of Public Works be authorized to provide Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) bus passes to successful trainees under the pilot at no charge for a period of one (1) year after completion of their training.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2011, Council authorized an Agreement with The Salvation Army Lawson Ministries Hamilton, as the lead agency for participating Developmental Services providers within Hamilton, to develop and conduct a two (2) year pilot project providing bus travel training for persons with developmental disabilities. In October 2013, this project was extended an additional six months to complete the training of 59 individuals and to conduct training of about 20 new program enrolments.

In the summer of 2013, it became clear that agencies were not able to provide as many trainers from available staff members as they had originally thought. In September

2013, 59 trainees were still in the process of completing training. As well, funds were still available to take on more trainees in order to meet the original target of providing training to 200 individuals. The project requested a six-month extension from HSR. This was granted, with the final report due June 30, 2014: three months after the revised project end date. The project continued and an extra session was added in order to accommodate additional training requests for 12 transition-aged youth from the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board in 2014.

To date, five videos have been produced covering the topics of pedestrian safety (including safety at level railway crossings), bus riding basics (including use of low-floor accessible buses), personal safety, problem solving, and trip planning. The videos were based on the lesson plans used to deliver classroom curriculum. The videos have generated inquiries across North America from people who teach individuals with special needs.

The goals of the travel training pilot project were to:

- provide a direct training service to capable individuals with cognitive disabilities, giving them the necessary skills and support to use HSR;
- generate potential future mitigation of specialized transportation program costs by maximizing the use of HSR by these individuals; and
- create a sustainable transit training model that can be employed beyond the pilot project in meeting obligations of the City under Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) legislation.

Responsibility for the training and oversight of the participants rests entirely with the agencies.

To date, the project has enrolled 201 trainees, 151 of whom have successfully completed route-specific training on the HSR (32 deemed as unsafe, 18 dropped out after classroom instruction completed). An additional 59 are still either in the process of completing training or have yet to be connected to an agency-based field trainer.

Transit staff will continue to monitor the program to make sure the initiative stays on budget and determine if there is a business case to move this program forward through an additional extension of the Agreement or to a permanent funding source.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Approval of the Recommendations in this Report commits the City to fund an amount up to 100% of the proposed \$175,000 cost of the program extension. Funding of the program extension is available, utilizing the Transit Capital Reserve (#108025).

Expected cash flow requirements of the program extension will span the period of September 2014 to September 2016.

Staffing: There are no staffing implications for the City, as the project work is to be done entirely with resources provided by the participating agencies, with the City acting

in an arm's length consultative role, ensuring that the City funding is utilized as agreed to.

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As directed by Council under Report PW03128c, Transit staff conducted targeted stakeholder consultation with Developmental Services providers within Hamilton to determine opportunities for development of services which will ultimately assist in the implementation of a reformed eligibility policy and process for Accessible Transportation Services. A substantial number of those persons with disabilities who qualify for specialized transportation services under the new eligibility policy are those with developmental disabilities; consultation with agencies working with these individuals was a natural starting point for discussion. As a result of those discussions, the Developmental Services Transportation Committee of the providers generated an unsolicited proposal to the City which it feels was a proactive and substantial initial step in meeting the needs of those with cognitive disabilities.

For people with developmental disabilities, the key to having access to opportunities i.e. work, recreation and volunteering is access to public transportation. People with developmental disabilities require specific training and support in order to learn and retain the skills necessary to safely take public transportation. Through this initiative, presentations were made to local high schools, developmental service agencies and City of Hamilton information centres, to highlight this opportunity to participate in travel training as part of the two-year pilot project. As evidenced in the number of partners who are involved, there is strong community support for the development of opportunities to enhance the lives of people with developmental disabilities.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The Recommendations within this Report have positive implications on the current policy regarding eligibility for specialized transportation services while creating greater current accessibility within the community, laying the groundwork for a sustainable travel training program which will assist the City in mitigating future specialized transportation costs, and are a positive response to requirements under the recent legislative changes of the AODA.

The AODA Transportation Standard required changes to the City's Eligibility Policy for specialized transportation services. Providing travel training for individuals who are able, with training, to utilize HSR services has mitigated costs for the increased demand for specialized transportation services since the new eligibility criteria were put in place in November of 2012.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Staff has consulted with the Developmental Services Transportation Committee representing Developmental Services transfer payment agencies within Hamilton

regarding its proposal. Internal consultation has included staff from the Corporate Services Department, Access & Equity and Finance, Administration & Revenue Generation Divisions.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The two-year bus training pilot project provided both in-class bus training that focused on street safety, bus routes, bus transfers and role playing; coupled with experiential on-the-bus training. Key deliverables of the project included:

Development and delivery of an 8-unit Bus Training Curriculum, including video training component, designed for adults with developmental disabilities. Trainees who successfully completed the 8-unit course received a 12 month bus pass, thus providing project capability to monitor long-term sustainability of knowledge of bus use through post-training review with the project co-ordinator. A target of delivering bus training to an additional 200 individuals has been set.

The Pilot Project provided a proactive first step in addressing the needs of persons with cognitive disabilities within the community by providing skills and knowledge in the use of public transit to those who are capable, with training, of using HSR, and who might otherwise require the use of DARTS services at substantially greater cost to the City over an extended period of time.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

There are no suggested alternatives to the Recommendations.

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

- 1.4 Improve the City's transportation system to support multi-modal mobility and encourage inter-regional connections.
- 1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.

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.
- 2.2 Improve the City's approach to engaging and informing citizens and stakeholders.
- 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.

Strategic Objective

- 3.1 Engage in a range of inter-governmental relations (IGR) work that will advance partnerships and projects that benefit the City of Hamilton.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None.