

CITY OF HAMILTON

NOTICE OF MOTION

Council: November 22, 2017

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR S. MERULLA.....

Review of Public Transit Fare Options

WHEREAS, people living on low income require affordable transportation to access work and community opportunities; and, affordable fares, in conjunction with increased transit accessibility, demonstrate effectiveness as a poverty reduction strategy;

WHEREAS, relevant published accounts continue to cite poorly integrated residential and employment location patterns and poor public transportation service as critical obstacles to improving the economic and social conditions of low-income persons;

WHEREAS, public transit plays an important role in quality of life by facilitating access to factors that contribute to health;

WHEREAS, transit is critical to accessing food, employment, education, health services, and social and recreational activities; and, also enables connections with family, friends and other supports that can help reduce social isolation;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton currently offers an accessible transit monthly pass to applicants who are eligible; and,

WHEREAS, the available evidence shows that offering a wider range of discounted pass options may have a greater impact in terms of poverty reduction (such as discounted weekly passes and day / weekend passes for low income individuals or families);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That staff be directed to report back to the Public Works Committee with respect to the feasibility of public transit fare options, taking the following into consideration and outlining the cost per household for any options provided:

- (a) An application system for discounted transit passes that reduces stigma for users such as the model used in Victoria, B.C.; whereby, community agencies can purchase transit passes at a price of two-for-one. Those agencies are then able to give passes to people with low incomes for specific purposes. Distribution of the passes is at the discretion of the community agencies;

- (b) Continue to invest in strategies to increase access to transit in rural areas by building on existing programs such as Trans-cab;
- (c) Fare-geared-to-income criteria: Gearing the cost of transit to riders' ability to pay, especially for residents in the lowest income brackets, is widely recommended as an option to improve transit equity. Considerations for this approach will need to include: determining who qualifies and establishing a separate payment system;
- (d) The implementation of a range of options to make transportation more affordable. For example: different types of passes (weekly, day, and/or weekend) for low income individuals or families in addition to existing monthly Affordable Transit Passes, savings from bulk purchasing of passes, open-ended transfers (instead of the existing 2-hour transfers), community bus programs, and shared rides;
- (e) Explore the feasibility of offering fare-free transit or reduced fares to all residents. This approach should build in evaluation as the evidence-base is outdated; and,
- (f) The elimination of area rating.