



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Transit Division

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	July 10, 2019
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Mountain Climber Phase Two Pilot Results and Phase Three Expansion (PW17026b) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Jason VanderHeide (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2390 Christie Meleskie (905) 546-2424 Ext. 5860
SUBMITTED BY:	Debbie Dalle Vedove Director, Transit Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- (a) That the Mountain Climber pilot locations on Beckett Drive and Kenilworth Access be considered complete as pilots and continue on a permanent basis;
- (b) That staff be directed to implement five new Mountain Climber locations: Waterdown Road / Mill Street South (Route 18), Wilson Street East (Route 5A/5C), Jolley Cut / Arkledun Avenue (Routes 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27), Red Hill Valley Parkway (Route 11), and Centennial Parkway South / Upper Centennial Parkway (Route 44);
- (c) That the total one-time capital cost of \$7200 be funded through existing funds in the Transit Shelter and Bus Stop Rehabilitation Project, in account and Dept ID 59212-5301785602. Included in this cost is the installation of signage;
- (d) That staff monitor all new locations for a total of one year, and report results to Council in 2020.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff launched the Mountain Climber Program in 2017 as a pilot on James Mountain Road. Cyclists are allowed a free ride up or down the access provided they board and disembark at designated stops. The pilot program was made permanent in 2018, and in the same year the program expanded to two new pilot locations. Staff have monitored the two new pilot locations and have determined that there have been minimal impacts to HSR Operations, generally positive feedback from users and residents, a healthy but not overwhelming number of users, and a nominal financial impact. Staff are recommending that the pilot locations on Kenilworth Access and Beckett Drive are maintained as permanent locations, and that Waterdown Road / Mill Street South (Route 18), Wilson Street East (Route 5A/5C), Jolley Cut / Arkledun Avenue (Routes 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27), Red Hill Valley Parkway (Route 11), and Centennial Parkway South / Upper Centennial Parkway (Route 44) are expanded in 2019. Please see Appendix "A" to Report PW17026b attached for specific stop locations.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 4

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Based on customer usage statistics collected at the farebox, lost fare revenue for full expansion to all eight serviced accesses is estimated at less than \$1,500. Staff are unable to quantify the fare revenue gained while introducing new customers to our service, therefore program implications for gained fare revenue are uncertain.

Implementation of the five new pilot locations, plus two new locations at the Kenilworth Access, will total a one-time capital cost of \$7,200, to be funded through existing funds in the Transit Shelter and Bus Stop Rehabilitation Project, in account and Dept ID 59212-5301785602. Included in this cost is the installation of signage.

Staffing: None

Legal: None

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Staff launched the Mountain Climber Program as a one-year pilot on May 29, 2017. The program allows cyclists to board HSR buses at designated stops on James Mountain Road / the West 5th Cut for a free ride up or down the escarpment. Program users (or "Mountain Climbers") must get on and off the bus at designated stops, marked with signage, and communicate to the driver that they are using the program.

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Staff have monitored the original program location since implementation in 2017, and the two expansion pilots since 2018. Performance is measured in four areas: impact to HSR operations, feedback from the public and users, usage statistics, and operating cost. Overall, the two newest pilot locations have been successful in meeting these criteria, with a few small exceptions (addressed later in this report). Based on this it is recommended these access locations be maintained as permanent programs.

Staff analysis concluded that an identifiable need exists for expansion beyond James Mountain Road, Kenilworth Access, and Beckett Drive. All accesses with HSR service are considered viable for inclusion in the program. For 2019, the remaining accesses are Waterdown Road / Mill Street South (Route 18), Wilson Street East (Route 5A/5C), Jolley Cut / Arkledun Avenue (Routes 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27), Red Hill Valley Parkway (Route 11), and Centennial Parkway South / Upper Centennial Parkway (Route 44).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

None.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Consultation with internal staff has included:

1. Transportation Planning, for coordination with the City's current and planned cycling infrastructure, promotional activities, and programs.
2. Transit Operations, to understand program impacts on bus operators and day-to-day operations on the road.
3. Transit Customer Experience and Innovation, for Transit Division communications.
4. Transit Support Services, to collect usage statistics through the transit farebox.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

Staff have monitored the program and analysed performance based on four main metrics: operational impact, resident and user feedback, usage statistics, and budget impacts.

Operational impacts are measured through consultation with HSR bus operators and bus operations' staff.

- Mountain Climber locations are at existing stops, and therefore time lost on the route is minimal. No concerns have been brought forward that the program has caused schedule adherence problems.
- For safety and efficiency reasons, bus operators generally prefer to have cyclists on the bus and off escarpment crossings in the absence of cycling infrastructure.
- No concerns have been brought forward related to program-induced fare evasion.

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Resident and user feedback is monitored through twitter, resident emails to staff, and by conducting surveys at program locations.

- Feedback continues to be very positive across all mediums.
- A general theme is that residents want the program expanded to additional accesses, notably (but not limited to) Wilson Street East, Waterdown Road, and generally east of current availability.

To measure usage, bus operators have been collecting data through the farebox. This is to measure the ongoing use and demand for the program, ensure this demand does not overwhelm the capacity to store bicycles on the buses, and estimate potential losses in fare revenue as previous HSR customers switch to using the Mountain Climber Program.

- Based on the data collected through the farebox, staff have determined that there is reasonable but not overwhelming use of the program on all accesses, with James Mountain Road access being used most frequently. Staff received feedback during the original James Mountain Road Pilot that bike racks were sometimes full. At this time no further comments of this nature have been received. Staff have discussed and have decided that due to the high frequency of bus service on James Mountain Road, the occasional full bike rack is acceptable, and demand can be accommodated within existing service.

Budget impacts are measured by considering impacts to fare revenue.

- Based on fare box data, lost fare revenue for the pilot locations over the study period has been determined to be nominal.
- Annual estimated lost fare revenue from the recommended expansion is approximately \$1,500.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Formalize the pilots on Beckett Drive and Kenilworth Access as permanent programs and do not expand to future accesses.

Financial: None.

Legal: None.

Policy: None.

Pros: Reduced capital cost associated with program expansion.

Cons: Reduced reach and accessibility of program.

2. Formalize the pilots on Beckett Drive and Kenilworth Access as permanent programs and continue with a phased in approach to add pilots to three additional

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accesses: Red Hill Valley Parkway (Route 11), Wilson Street East (Route 5A/5C), and Waterdown Road (Route 18).

Financial: \$3600 capital cost (signage).

Legal: None.

Policy: None.

Pros: Limits the increased cost to provide the program.

Cons: Reduced reach and accessibility of program. Minimal financial implications of full expansion of the program will outweigh any rationale to exclude the remaining two accesses (Jolley Cut / Arkledun Avenue (Routes 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27), and Centennial Parkway South / Upper Centennial Parkway (Route 44)).

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive City where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

Clean and Green

Hamilton is environmentally sustainable with a healthy balance of natural and urban spaces.

Built Environment and Infrastructure

Hamilton is supported by state of the art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report PW17026b – Stop Locations