

Tuesday, June 2, 2020

Mayor Eisenberger and City Councillors,

We are writing today to request that Hamilton City Council join the call to request emergency funding from the federal and provincial governments to support the ongoing operation of public transit in our city.

As an organization serving many low-income and vulnerable residents on Hamilton Mountain, including recent immigrants, refugees and disabled persons, Neighbour to Neighbour knows the important role access to quality, affordable transit services plays. Many of the people we serve can only access our programs and services through using transit. This includes not only access to our food bank and counselling services but also vital programs that contribute to individual and community well-being such as educational programming, volunteering, and community meals at the Community Food Centre. We hear from participants their stories highlighting difficulties faced prior to this pandemic, and have heard positive feedback in regard to the City's response; having no-cost transit these past months. We know that many people continue to rely on transit for essential travel and have seen in the foodbank that numbers of users is continuing to rise as people slowly move out of isolation and need to access supports. We are concerned that any cuts to transit will have an impact on those most vulnerable in our community.

As the City of Hamilton and the Province of Ontario take steps to reopen facilities, it is important that we think of these most vulnerable residents in developing a transit plan for the upcoming months. For what it is worth, we ask that City Council support calls for emergency transit funding to ensure that access to reliable service remains a priority.

Sincerely,

Denise Arkell,
Executive Director
Neighbour to Neighbour Centre

Krista D'Aoust
Director, Community Food & Family Services