

July 29, 2020



Chair and Members of the Public Works Committee
City of Hamilton
71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario
L8P 4Y5
Re: Transit Fees for Full-time Undergraduate Students of McMaster University

Dear Chair & Members of the Public Works Committee:

Please accept this letter as our written delegation with respect to the Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) and its fare system for McMaster students for the period of August 22 through December 31, 2020. For over 20 years, the City of Hamilton, HSR, McMaster University, and the McMaster Students Union (MSU) have partnered to benefit all parties, providing a wonderful service to MSU members while generating more than \$40 million to the HSR. The past six months have tested this partnership and we would like to say thank you for jointly developing innovative solutions, yet again. A special thanks to Nancy Purser and her team in continually working with us throughout this process.

In light of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the City has graciously recognized students' request for a temporary suspension of U-pass transit agreement, along with a subsequent credit for services paid, yet not provided from April through June 2020. Recognizing that some university students will still live and work in Hamilton, we are requesting the Public Works Committee's support of the following recommendation:

The McMaster Students Union (MSU) students for Fall 2020, be provided the opportunity to purchase ticket fares at the rate provided to elementary and secondary students, rather than the adult rate, including both the daily fares and the monthly passes. This effort should be extended until the U-Pass program returns to regular operations, once McMaster advises students to return to campus for attendance in-class.

Currently, only elementary and secondary students can access transit at the student rate. The difference in cost is \$.45 cents (\$2.05 - \$2.50) for a paper ticket or PRESTO and \$19.80 (\$90.20-\$110) for a monthly pass. For those students who still need to ride the bus – paying the cost of an adult pass will increase their transit expense by over 400% for a four-month semester, as students currently pay approximately \$106 for a four-month U-Pass. This, on top of the thousands of dollars that they pay for tuition, fees, books, and housing, is extremely cumbersome on students. Students are already the most unemployed demographic, and many lost their expected summer employment and corresponding income, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We look forward to partnering with the City on a short-term, innovative solution during this difficult, yet limited span of time. The decades' old relationship between students and the City of Hamilton stands as testament to our mutual ability to act as good partners. We look forward to your consideration of our request. Please feel free to contact the undersigned with any questions.

Sincerely,



Giancarlo Da-Ré
MSU President
president@msu.mcmaster.ca



Jess Anderson
Vice President (Finance)
vpfinance@msu.mcmaster.ca



John McGowan
General Manager
gm@msu.mcmsater.ca