



HSR Fare Policies

July 12, 2023

Recommendation



- a) That the General Manager, Public Works or designate, be directed to suspend the HSR Temporary Transit Fare Special program and the Ontario Works Affordable Transit Pass program to introduce a pilot for HSR Fare Assist program, for the period of January 1, 2024 to June 30,2026;
- b) That the total cost over the life of the pilot program, estimated at \$3.28 million including 2 temporary full-time employees, be funded through any available provincial funding and/or the Provincial Gas Tax Reserve (reserve #112204);
- c) That Council approve the request to expand/extend the contract for Self-Service Benefits Portal, provided by Clark Marketing Communications Contract #C003020, to include HSR Fare Assist program as a benefit for tracking and reporting at a one-time cost of \$24,000 to be funded through the Provincial Gas Tax Reserve (reserve #112204) in 2023;

Recommendation



- d) That Council approve the transfer of \$248,680 allocated in the Ontario Works Division base levy for the Affordable Transit Pass to the Transit Division during the 2024 budget process;
- e) That staff report back no later than March 2025 to provide a status update of the Fare Assist Program, including ridership, costs, and effectiveness; and
- f) That staff bring forward a final report to the 2026 budget process with recommendations regarding the status of the Fare Assist program.

Current State: Fare Comparators



Municipality	Cash	Ticket				Monthly Pass		
	All	Adult	Child	Youth	Senior	Adult	Youth	Senior
Hamilton	\$ 3.50	\$ 2.70	\$ -	\$ 2.25	\$ 2.25	\$ 118.80	\$ 99.00	\$ 41.50
Brampton	\$ 4.50	\$ 3.40	\$ 2.00	\$ 2.80	\$ -	\$ 141.25	\$ 118.00	na
Mississauga	\$ 4.00	\$ 3.20	\$ -	\$ 2.45	\$ 1.00	\$ 131.00	na	\$ 65.00
Durham	\$ 4.35	\$ 3.35	\$ -	\$ 3.00	\$ 2.20	\$ 120.60	\$ 96.50	\$ 48.25
York	\$ 4.25	\$ 3.88	\$ 2.40	\$ 3.03	\$ 2.40	\$ 154.00	\$ 118.00	\$ 65.00
Comparator Average	\$ 4.28	\$ 3.46	\$ 1.10	\$ 2.82	\$ 1.40	\$ 136.71	\$ 110.83	\$ 59.42
HSR as % of Average	-18%	-22%	-100%	-20%	61%	-13%	-11%	-30%

Other Fare Policies



- Children 0-5 travel for free
- Children 6-12 free with a PRESTO card
- Golden Age for Hamiltonians over 80
- Senior Annual Pass \$415.00 – 71% off the Adult monthly pass
- Senior Monthly Pass \$41.50 – 65% off the Adult monthly pass
- University/College Transit Pass –78% discount off the Adult monthly pass

Key Highlights of the Fare Assist Program



30% discount on current single-ride PRESTO fares for the whole family with eligibility based on total household income regardless of age or ability.

Hamiltonians who live at or below the Low-Income Measure can apply.

During this pilot, the following programs would be suspended:

- **Affordable Transit Pass program**
 - offered to low-income customers, and OW and ODSP recipients who are employed
 - provides a 50% discount off the adult monthly pass, for those aged 18-64
- **Temporary Transit Fare Special Program (also known as the Voluntary Pay Program)**
 - available only on HSR Conventional service
 - allows customers who use a personal mobility device, including wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers, or are a Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) cardholder the option to voluntarily pay a fare

Customers



Based on the 2021 census data, 88,380 people in Hamilton live *at or below* the Low-Income Measure:

- 19,140 children (ages 0-17)
- 55,690 adults (ages 18 – 64)
- 13,550 seniors (65+)

Benefits



Fare Assist offers several benefits over current programs:

- The program applies consistently to customers of both conventional (HSR) and specialized (DARTS) service.
- **"Pay as you go"**, load funds as-needed.
- The discount applies to **the whole family**, including a spouse and children ages 13 to 17.
- HSR's loyalty program applies, and customers would receive free fare after the weekly cap of paid trips is reached.

Impact



Item	Age 0-17	Age 18- 64	Age 65+	Total
September 1, 2023 Approved Fare	Age 0 - 5 free, Age 6-12 free Age 13 -17 receives 17% discount from Adult fare	Age 18 - 19 receives 17% discount from adult fare, UCTP for those attending university/college	Age 65 - 79 receives a 69% discount from adult fare. Age 80+ free	All Ages
# of customers eligible	19,140	55,690	13,550	88,380
Modal Split %	7%	11%	11%	
# of customers registering	1,340	6,126	1,491	8,956
Estimate # of trips/year/person	240	408	204	852
Total trips	321,552	2,499,367	304,062	3,124,981
Annual cost to Customer @ 70%	\$506,444	\$4,723,804	\$478,898	\$5,709,146
Annual Cost to HSR @ 30%	\$217,048	\$2,024,487	\$205,242	\$2,446,777
Affordable Transit Pass Funding		-\$248,680		-\$248,680
Foregone revenue from temporary transit fare special program		-\$1,092,722		-\$1,092,722
Annual Net Impact before S&B and Ancillary costs	\$217,048	\$683,085	\$205,242	\$1,105,375

Consultation Activities



- Public Consultation – Engage Hamilton
 - 1,183 surveys submitted
 - 1,113 surveys completed
 - 697 respondents less than Low Income Measure
 - 124 respondents greater than Low Income Measure
 - 96 respondents unsure of income level
 - 184 Community Partners
- Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind

Consultation



- Direct mail outs to Accessible Transportation Services Clients
- Targeted outreach to Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program
- Outreach to Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- Transit Staff
- Booth at Transit (re)Design – May 11, 2023



- 697 respondents that identified as earning ***less than*** Low Income Measure
 - 77% say Fare Assist will allow them and their families to use transit more.
 - 83% say Fare Assist will save them money on transportation costs.
 - 78% strongly agree or somewhat agree that it is a good and fair subsidy program for transit.



- 124 respondents earning *greater than* Low Income Measure
 - 61% strongly agree or somewhat agree that it is a good and fair subsidy program for transit.
 - 70% strongly agree or somewhat agree that the fare is equitable.

Consultation

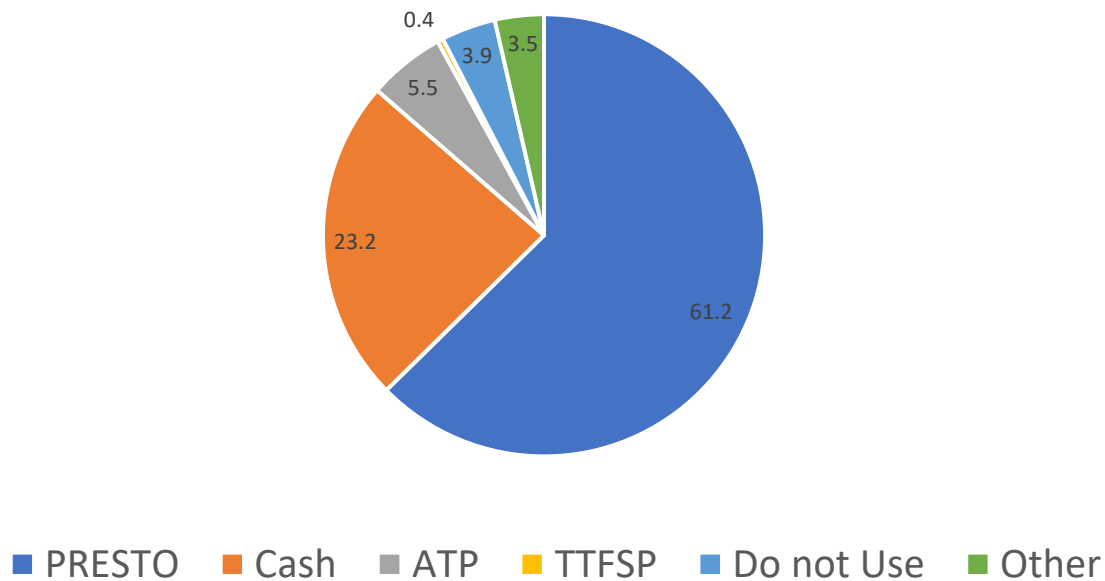


- 96 respondents *unsure* of income level
 - 58% strongly agree or somewhat agree that it is a good and fair subsidy program for transit.
 - 64% strongly agree or somewhat agree that the fare is equitable.



How respondents currently pay their fare

Fare Payment Method



ATP (Affordable Pass Program)

TTFSP (Temporary Transit Fare Special Program)

Demographics



Survey Respondents identified as:

- 75% between age 25 – 54
- 58% are employed or looking for work
- 59% state their income is \$0 – 20,000
- 90% have a household of 4 or less
- 71% do not own a car

Demographics



Survey respondents identified as:

Female: 64%

Indigenous: 8%

Visible Minority: 21%

Disability: 14%

Consultation – Community Partners



120 staff respondents from Community Partners

- 75% strongly agree or somewhat agree that the fare assist program will benefit their clients.
- 73% strongly agree or somewhat agree that the fare assist program will save their clients money.
- 69% strongly agree or somewhat agree that their clients will be able to use transit more often.
- 61% strongly agree or somewhat agree that it is a good and fair subsidy program for transit.
- 67% strongly agree or somewhat agree that the fare is equitable.

Consultation – Transit Staff



47 Transit staff responded regarding suspending the Temporary Transit Fare Special Program

- 72% strongly agree or somewhat agree that the current program causes conflict on board HSR buses.
- 53% strongly disagree or somewhat disagree that the current program helps people in need of affordable transit.
- 53% state it is highly likely that suspending the program will initially create more conflict.
- At the same time, 45% and 49% state that it is highly likely that eventually the conflict will reduce and that there will be a perceived fairness creating harmony on the bus.

Consultation – Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities



- The committee is pleased to know that this program will apply to the specialized transit service.
- A respondent flagged that some users may have difficulty using PRESTO if they travel with a personal mobility devices.

Consultation – Canadian National Institute for the Blind



- Do not take a formal role on free/discounted transit.
- Will work with us to communicate any changes made to the fare policies.
- Raised concerns that their stakeholders may not be responsive to the proposed change.

Application Process



- Application will be available online or paper form.
- Submitted to Healthy & Safe Communities for processing – 800 applications per month can be completed.
- A letter will be emailed or mailed, depending on preference, advising how to access the discount directly through PRESTO – in person help will be available if needed.
- Each application will be assessed based on the individual's situation.
- Annual application required.



Upon acceptance of the recommendations:

- Develop an extensive communication program to inform the community and support the application process.
- Communicate to those in receipt of the Affordable Transit Pass.
- Develop tools to support Bus Operators.

HSR Fare Polices



Thank You