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Sent: June 10, 2025 10:20 AM
To: clerk@hamilton.ca
Cc: Nolan, Tim <timnoln@mcmaster.ca>
Subject: Message to Mayor and Members of the GIC respecting transit for Persons with Disabilities - June 11, 2025 GIC meeting

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Dear Mayor and Members,

I write to you respecting a recommendation from the Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities' May 13, 2025 report which will be considered at today's GIC meeting.

The ACPD has unanimously accepted a recommendation of a community transit coalition as proposed by the Disability Justice Network of Ontario (DJNO) and the Accessibility Hamilton Alliance (AHA!). This ACPD recommendation is arguably one of the most important recommendations of this Committee this term.

People with disabilities who live at or below the Low Income Measure (LIM), or poverty line, have not fared well under the HSR's Fare Assist pilot project. Notwithstanding the ongoing issues with the accessibility of applying for or making use of the Fare Assist program this pilot compels people with disabilities to choose between transit and necessities of everyday life. Neither transit nor the City are better served by this predicament. On one hand the HSR estimates the City will generate additional revenue by the programs implementation requiring the City's most disabled and economically vulnerable citizens to be responsible for the burden of the HSR's revenue shortfall. Secondly, the program has downloaded responsibility to local service agencies the obligation of using their budgets to pay for bus tickets so these tickets can be handed out to disabled clients freely.

The Accessibility Hamilton Alliance, the Disability Justice Network of Ontario and their transit coalition have undertaken great effort to consult the disability community on this matter in a way the HSR did not before ever recommending the Fare Assist program. The DJNO, AHA! and their coalition consulted the ACPD extensively on this matter along with members of City Council. The recommendation before you today, contained in the May 13, 2025 ACPD report seeks your support by assigning to the HSR the obligation to properly investigate the real needs of disabled transit riders in this City and to report back those findings. The recommendation asks that this recommended report correctly contain a recommendation for a different bus fare program specifically designed for people with disabilities who live at or below the LIM. This proposed report ought to clearly outline how people with disabilities have abandoned transit under the Fare Assist pilot rather than expanding the use of public transit. This proposed report ought to properly demonstrate the adverse impact upon

local service agencies by obligating them to freely distribute bus fare tickets to their disabled clients in order to fund the HSR. This recommended report ought to reflect the feelings of persons with disabilities toward their dilemma where they must choose between the need for everyday necessities and the need to travel by means other than by foot every day of every month.

This recommendation of the DJNO, AHA! and their coalition asks that you direct the HSR to take the steps necessary to do right by persons with disabilities even though Council ought to be doing a whole lot more under the circumstances. As GIC receives delegations today, hopefully your attention will be directed toward the expert message from the disability community. The Ontario Human Rights Commission recommended this direction in its correspondence to Hamilton City Council in April 2013. The ACPD unanimously endorses this recommendation. The City needs this, and so too do people with disabilities.

With appreciation for your consideration.

Kind Regards,

Tim Nolan

Tim Nolan

Accessibility Hamilton Alliance

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