



POLICY PAPER

Public Transit & Transportation

Prepared by:

Ryan Deshpande, Vice President (Education) 2017-2018

Emmanuel Appiah, Student Community Support Network Coordinator 2017-2018

Stephanie Bertolo, Associate Vice President: Municipal Affairs 2017-2018

Shemar Hackett, SRA Social Sciences 2017-2018

Taylor Mertens, SRA Municipal Affairs Committee 2017-2018

Maryanne Oketch, SRA Provincial & Federal Affairs Committee 2017-2018

Jackie Phung, SRA Provincial & Federal Affairs Committee 2017-2018

Ronnie Van Der Vliet, SRA Municipal Affairs Committee 2017-2018

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Introduction

Introduction goes here.

Design

Section Subtitle (If Necessary)

Principle: Students, and all other members of the immediate McMaster community, should have safe means of transportation whether travelling on foot, by bike, by bus or car.

Concern: Bus shelters are not equipped to adequately shield students from inclement weather.

Concern: Hamilton and McMaster roads, particularly along bus routes, are unsafe for bicyclists.

Recommendation: The Hamilton Street Rail should add more bus shelters at bus stops that do not have and should build bigger, more accommodating bus shelters that protect customers from poor weather conditions

Recommendation: The City of Hamilton should create more bicycle lanes in the Ainslie Wood-West neighbourhood, particularly along the 51/5A route to encourage biking and to make the commute for cyclists safer.

The City of Hamilton should be committed to ensuring that all its residents and anyone travelling in or through the city can do so safely no matter the means of transportation. This entails traffic infrastructure ensuring students can travel safely by foot, bicycle or public transit. It also entails the HSR ensuring students are adequately sheltered when taking public transit to and from McMaster. In the Complete Streets Policy for Hamilton, submitted to Hamilton City Council General Issues Committee, the City of Hamilton is committed to “providing a comprehensive and integrated network of facilities that are safe and convenient for all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, persons using mobility aids, cyclists, public transit users and vehicles, and others.¹ In this way, it is important that the City of Hamilton make certain that the design and infrastructure of its transit system ensures student safety.

Bus shelters in Hamilton are not designed to ensure the safety of transit users both during late hours and during poor weather conditions. Along the 51, 1 and 5A line, there are very few full bus shelters that are equipped to withstand large amounts of commuters. This is particularly problematic for service provided in near-campus neighbourhoods where McMaster students make up a majority of the HSR users in these areas. Due to insufficient lighting in many neighbourhoods and side roads in Ward 1, bus shelters are often unlit or insufficiently lit, creating an unsafe environment for McMaster students travelling to and from campus during late hours.

¹ Complete Streets Policy for Hamilton submitted to Hamilton City Council General Issues Committee, November 6, 2013

Throughout the year, especially during the winter months, bus shelters do not serve as reliable protection for pedestrians and transit users from inclement weather such as sleet, snow, hail, and heavy rain. Many bus shelters are designed too small to accommodate the volume of users near campus or bus shelters are designed to be open-faced, leaving commuters exposed to the weather. Some bus stops do not have any bus shelter built, despite being along busy routes.

Hamilton has shown initiative in implementing bike lanes along major streets such as Sterling, Sanders Blvd and King St. in near-McMaster neighbourhoods. However, there still remains one busy street with high traffic that does not guarantee the safety of cyclists sharing the road with vehicles- Emerson St. Along Emerson, the 51 and 5A bus routes, frequent car traffic and inconvenient double-sided parking place many student cyclists and pedestrians in harm's way. The unsafe biking infrastructure also endangers pedestrians when cyclists must travel via sidewalk or curb to dodge vehicles and traffic congestion. In 2016, Hamilton has seen close to 179 bicycle collisions which has been the highest since before amalgamation². This is particularly important for McMaster students who rely on biking as a convenient, healthy and cost-effective mode of short-range travel. This is especially troubling considering the Amalgamated Transit Union raised concerns last year regarding large blind spots in the design of newer buses, placing pedestrians at further risk³.

The City of Hamilton has shown commitment towards improving transit infrastructure through its Ten Year Transit Strategy and financial commitment to the HSR for improvements to security cameras on transit vehicles, upgrades and repairs to transit shelters and new sidewalks and landing pads near bus stops. Students believe that these efforts continue for near-McMaster neighbourhoods, particularly for HSR bus routes on the 51, 5A and 1 line.⁴ With increased investments in public infrastructure from the governments of Canada and Ontario, the MSU stresses the importance of ensuring that McMaster students, who make up about 15% of HSR's observed passenger boardings.⁵ Students need the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Street Rail to focus investments in transit infrastructure to Ward 1 where a majority of McMaster reside. The improvement of transit stops will improve rider accessibility and safety and continue to support the growing need for better public transit for McMaster students.

The City of Hamilton, as demonstrated in the Complete Streets Policy for Hamilton, is committed to realizing "improved public health, better environmental

² www.thespec.com/news-story/7661824-cyclist-pedestrian-collisions-on-the-rise-in-hamilton/

³ www.thespec.com/news-story/7579645-hsr-bus-blind-spots-a-risk-to-pedestrians-union/

⁴ www.hamilton.ca/government-information/news-centre/news-releases/hamilton-city-councils-general-issues-committee

⁵ Final Report of Hamilton Street Railway Operational Review submitted to City of Hamilton/Hamilton Street Railway by IBI Group

stewardship, reduced fuel consumption and reduced lifecycle costs of motor vehicle infrastructure”.

The creation of more bike lanes along busier roads such as Emerson Street make streets safe for cyclists who choose to more sustainable and healthy means of transportation. Often, cyclists are put in harm’s way along busy streets, particularly those along bus routes, where cyclists are forced to compete with vehicle traffic or pedestrians along sidewalks. By making roads more user-friendly for cyclists, students may come to rely on biking as a means of transportation which would also reduce transit congestion for the Hamilton Street Rail. According to Cycle Hamilton, bus lanes do not serve as reliable safety lanes for cyclists as the stop-start nature of buses force bus drivers to try and overtake cyclists between stops, and vice versa.

The province of Ontario is committed towards encouraging cycling in Ontario cities to improve personal and public health, bolster cycling tourism, and objectives for a cleaner environment. According to the Canadian University Survey consortium, about 2% of McMaster students use biking as a means of transportation.⁶ Statistics suggest there is significant potential to increase the number of regular cyclists in Ontario. In Hamilton, the City can help achieve this goal by making bicycling a more reliable and safe alternative for transportation.

Hamilton qualifies for \$3.7 million investment for new cycling infrastructure from the government of Ontario where the final list of funded projects has yet to be determined.⁷ Students believe that the City of Hamilton should invest in establishing bike lanes along roads that share bus routes to improve cyclist safety.⁸

⁶ Canadian University Survey Consortium, 2011 Undergraduate University Student Survey Master Report submitted June 2011

⁷ www.thespec.com/news-story/7984049-city-getting-3-7m-from-province-for-cycling-infrastructure/

⁸ <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/publications/pdfs/ontario-cycle-strategy.pdf>

Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) Harassment and Discrimination Response

Principle: All individuals, regardless of gender, race, religion, ability, or sexual orientation should be able to ride the HSR without experiencing harassment or discrimination.

Principle: The HSR should have appropriate measures put in place to protect riders from harassment and discrimination.

Concern: Many students feel unsafe of buses due to experiences with or the threat of harassment.

Concern: In instances of harassment, the response protocol is inadequate.

Concern: Riders have no way of indicating to the driver that they or a fellow passenger is being harassed when at the back of the bus

Concern: The HSR policy on harassment is not publicized.

Concern: Many people are not aware of the severity of harassment on public transit and may overlook it.

Recommendation: The HSR should run a campaign on harassment and discrimination on buses and encourage riders to report incidences.

Recommendation: The Amalgamated Transit Union should ensure all employees are given adequate sexual violence, diversity, and anti-oppressive practices training.

Recommendation: The HSR should install panic buttons on buses.

Recommendation: The HSR should promote a system where people can report incidents of discrimination and harassment in order to collect and publish information on the severity of the problem.

Recommendation: The HSR should develop a response protocol to harassment issues that do not involve the police.

The HSR has stated that they provide “a safe and harassment-free environment.”⁹ They have laid out a number of rules for being a respectful rider including “No aggressive behaviour or coarse language.”¹⁰ However, many students still face harassment, discrimination, or general feelings of unsafety while riding the HSR. These incidences are often as a result of other passengers who have verbally and physically harassed individuals or have vandalized buses with racist graffiti¹¹. The Ontario Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, sexual

⁹ “Respectful Riding” Using the HSR, City of Hamilton, accessed on Feb 19, 2018. <https://www.hamilton.ca/hsr-bus-schedules-fares/riding-hsr/using-hsr>

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Samantha Craggs, “I don’t feel safe: What it’s like for Sahra Soudi, 20, to ride the HSR,” CBC News, Nov 15, 2017. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/transit-discrimination-1.4402622>

orientation, and disability among a number of other protected grounds.¹² To ensure the HSR is committed to providing a safe environment that meets the standards of the Ontario Human Rights Code, they should increase efforts to addressing the current issues of harassment and discrimination on their buses.

Riders currently lack the ability to immediately alert the driver of an instance of harassment is occurring. This is especially true for individuals at the back of the bus, out of sight and earshot of the driver. Individuals being harassed have to discrete way indicating the situation to anyone and bystanders, who may witness the incident, may not want to intervene or approach the driver due to feelings that they might be endangering their own safety. To address this issue, the HSR should install emergency buttons throughout the bus. At the current time, driver have similar buttons that they can activate to alert HSR operators. Similarly, riders should have the ability to discreetly alert the driver of a situation. Once notified, the driver can stop the bus and handle the situation accordingly.

At current response protocols the HSR has in place for instances of harassment and discrimination are inadequate. Often times, they involve contacting the police. Due to complex relationships marginalized individuals have with the police and general distrust that matters will be handled appropriately, many individuals may choose not to report incidences where they are harassed. As a result, the HSR should revise their protocols to include options where the complaints are handled internally and do not involve the police.

It is impossible to understand how large the issue of harassment and discrimination is on the HSR due to the lack of reporting. Individuals may not know where to report these instances or if there is value in doing so. If the HSR currently does receive complaints about harassment and discrimination, they do not publicize it. This information is of value to the public as a means of keeping the HSR accountable for providing a safe environment. The HSR should implement a reporting system specifically for instances of harassment and discrimination. On an annual basis, they should provide a report with appropriate statistics and how they will modify their practices accordingly.

In order to begin address this issue, the ATU must provide adequate training to drivers on harassment and discrimination. Currently, drivers receive the same training as other city staff members in regards to diversity, harassment, and violence in the workplace. However, this training is not specific to the common issues that occur on buses. Instead, the ATU should develop job-specific training for HSR bus drivers that helps them recognize when harassment is occurring and teach them how to respond appropriately. Doing so will ensure a safer environment for all passengers.

¹² Ontario human rights code, Ontario Human Rights Commission, 1962.

Finally, the HSR should run an awareness campaign about harassment and discrimination on buses. The campaign should encourage bystanders to intervene or notify HSR drivers of the issue. Additionally, it should promote how to report the incident online. Passengers should also be made aware of the consequences of harassing others, including being removed from the bus. This campaign can be promoted through using advertisements in buses and promoting the campaign on social media.

Routes and Scheduling

Principle: Students should be able to effectively transfer busses in a timely manner.

Principle: Students should have reliable access to public transit at any time throughout the day.

Concern: Students who commute from the mountain do not have reliable transportation.

Concern: Students are, at times, forced to miss class and exams as a result of unreliable wait times between busses as they are far and few between.

Concern: Bus bunching at off-peak times are ineffective and create longer wait times for students.

Concern: Student Safety is being put at risk as students are forced to Jaywalk in order to catch their bus.

Recommendation: The HSR should publish up to date schedules online as to when busses are arriving/leaving at their stop.

Recommendation: The HSR should increase the number of busses on weekends going to major economic centres including Hamilton Go and Lime Ridge Mall.

Recommendation: The HSR should expand all bus service to 3am.

Recommendation: The HSR should ensure buses at common transfer points are aligned.

Recommendation: The HSR should encourage its drivers to be considerate of students who are overtly running to catch their bus and, if possible, wait for them to avoid students crossing the street illegally.

Recommendation: The HSR should evaluate all transit routes and redesign them according to current population need.

The current bus schedule created by the HSR fails to tackle the issue of transfers between buses. Students coming from the mountain or students who pass through the McNab terminal daily have difficulty catching the busses they need to get them to and from school. The HSR currently does not prioritize making sure busses are aligned for when individuals need to transfer from one bus to another. After examining the bus routes of the 51, 5, 25 and 26 there are multiple cases in

which bus time do not match up.⁵ Not only are wait times between busses quite long, but the time in which the first bus arrives is nowhere near the time when the second bus leaves. For example, when looking to get up the mountain the 25 leaves Macnab terminal at 1:05, 1:25, 1:45.⁵ For students at McMaster taking the 51 or the 5, busses arrive at the McNab terminal at 1:31 and 1:51. The data shows that the busses arriving at the terminal consistently just miss the time that their transfer bus leaves the terminal. The HSR should redesign routes and design them so that students who need to take multiple busses are left waiting outside for extended amount of time.

Going further, bus bunching, at off-peak times, is a major issue for students who rely upon public transit. Bus bunching refers to the process by which multiple busses arrive at a stop at the same time. When referring to off-peak times, I mean time sin which students aren't as frequently using the bus, which would be evenings and weekends. Attached is a copy of the daily weekday schedule for the 5C and the 51 arriving at the Emerson and Main stop.¹³ The data shows that the HSR is scheduling certain busses to arrive at stops at the same time, which isn't beneficial to anyone.⁶ This is a concern for students as the wait times between busses are¹⁴ quite long, when they don't have to be. If busses were in sync and weren't scheduled to come so close to each other, the HSR could decrease the amount of cases in which bus bunching occurs.

In addition, Control centres attempt to alleviate bus bunching by giving drivers more time at busy stops to get back on the road.¹⁵ This is only beneficial to an extent as it doesn't account for inclement weather or heavy traffic conditions. As bus-bunching isn't an issue exclusive to Hamilton, research shows alternative methods that have been successful in decreasing the rates of bus-bunching seen on the streets. One method, created by researchers at Georgia tech, found that telling drivers to abandon their schedules was beneficial.¹⁶ The authors state that "without the restriction of meeting pre-specified targets, drivers instead follow the flow of traffic, and natural schedules emerge over time, resulting in a self-equalizing system".⁸ This was a pilot program and the results showed that the time in-between busses self-corrected themselves without intense interference from the control centre or pressure on drivers.

¹³ <https://d3fp1lf1m7bbt3.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/media/browser/2017-08-17/route-5-delaware-sept-2017.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://d3fp1lf1m7bbt3.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/media/browser/2016-08-22/route-51-university-sept-2016.pdf>

¹⁵ Battersby , Sarah-Joyce. "Five ways cities are tackling 'bus bunching'." Metro Toronto News, May 8, 2017. Accessed February 6, 2018. <http://www.metronews.ca/news/toronto/2017/05/08/five-ways-cities-are-tackling-bus-bunching.html>.

¹⁶ Jaffe, Eric . "How to Keep Buses From Bunching." Citylab, March 12, 2012. Accessed February 6, 2018. <https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2012/03/how-keep-buses-bunching/1457/>.

Additionally, the HSR should be working towards increasing the number of busses accessible to students during the weekend. On Saturdays, busses going through Westdale and Ainslie wood are reduced, meaning that students have longer wait times than they normally would during the week. On Sundays, the schedule becomes increasingly difficult as the only bus that goes through Westdale and Ainslie wood is the 5A which circulates every 35-40 minutes, which can be seen in a copy of the HSR schedule below. Students who are travelling on weekends to go home, get to school or go to work are limited and as a result are usually forced to find alternate and more expensive means to get to their destinations. When examining the schedule, there are the Delaware busses that go across main, but these are still not sufficient for student use. The first reason being that they too are low in frequency so wait times for students are still longer than they should be. Additionally, for students with physical barriers, walking to main to catch a bus isn't realistic. The HSR should increase the frequency of busses cycling through Ainslie Wood and Westdale on weekends to ensure student can complete daily tasks.

Bus Shelters

Principle: While waiting for busses, students should have shelters to prevent them from inclement weather conditions.

Principle: Bus stops should feel safe at any given time.

Concern: With wait times being unreliable and off-hour designed to be sparse, students are left standing in inclement weather conditions without adequate shelter for those extended amount of time.

Concern: Shelter are often not equipped with adequate shelter and poorly designed for safety

Recommendation: HSR should increase the number of shelters on a bus route, aiming to have a shelter at the most popular stops.

Recommendation: HSR should install heated bus shelters in high traffic areas.

Recommendation: MacNab terminal transit centre should remain open until all busses stop running, for the entirety of the year.

Recommendation: All bus shelters should be well lit.

Recommendation: Bus shelters should have integrated emergency line to Campus security on McMaster campus, and emergency line to police off campus.

Bus shelters should be able to provide comfort and ease for riders waiting for their bus, in all seasons at all times. This past December 28th, 2017 was a record-

breaking day for being one of the coldest temperature days within Ontario.¹⁷ With that in mind, creating heated shelters that provide warmth on these extreme cold days would go a long way and support ridership. With making peoples' commute to work being warmer and physically more comfortable, they are more likely to use the bus and less likely to loiter in front of businesses. Regina, Saskatchewan has installed heated shelters in 4 of their bus stops in 2015 with positive reaction from both riders and the businesses outside of the bus stops.¹⁸ With heated bus shelters, Regina's business saw less loitering immediately. Mayor Michael Fougere was quoted saying that this is not only about getting people out of businesses' entrance ways but also making people warm and happy. Regina's success was from adding a simple, push-button based system where the heat lamp is button activated taking approximately five minutes to heat up and will maintain heat for five minutes. This means that it would be not be constantly running and costing electricity since it would only be running when used. Additionally, this means that you can then block during the summer to ensure no electricity operational cost. MacNab Transit Terminal is an essential part of keeping riders warm during cold days and late in the evening, since it is connected to so many routes. Having MacNab terminal open during December 1st through March 31st is a step in the right direction but needs to be throughout the entire year for the safety, warmth, and information accessible to all riders.

When bus shelters and stops are placed without accounting for social safety and traffic safety, riders often decide not to get onto the bus. Or if they have to ride the bus, they will make a conscious choice of which bus stop they will get on. According to the National Association of City Transportation Office, when cities and bus services account for prioritizing walking access to transit stops, low-delay pedestrian crossings they achieve traffic safety. When bus stops are placed in proximity to all-hours activity, human-scale lighting, and shelters, riders feel secure.¹⁹

With buses often being schedule scarcely or cancellations occurring, riders often have to wait for a bus that is not coming at all. Without proper shelters, riders often feel cold and unsafe. Leading to feeling disenfranchised and not riding the HSR. When ridership decreases, students are less like to spend money in Hamilton businesses, explore the thriving arts and culture experiences, and are less likely to be retained after graduation.

In order to support riders and students, HSR and the City of Hamilton should support the current infrastructure existing for people wanting to participate in this

¹⁷Nick Westoll, "Decades-long temperature records broken across Ontario as frigid temperatures remain," Global News, December 28, 2017, accessed February 19, 2018, <https://globalnews.ca/news/3937016/ontario-cold-weather-records-broken/>.

¹⁸ CBC News, "Regina building heated bus shelters," CBCnews, January 23, 2015, , accessed February 19, 2018, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/regina-building-heated-bus-shelters-1.2929558>.

¹⁹ Social Ink, "Station & Stop Principles," National Association of City Transportation Officials, , accessed February 19, 2018, <https://nacto.org/publication/transit-street-design-guide/stations-stops/station-stop-principles/>.

city through this key transit service at all points in the process. To better the bus shelters, effort should be made to improve temperatures and resisting against inclement weather during winter months. Waiting in bus shelters during winter often leaves riders in extreme temperatures. often lead people stranded, cold, and concern about their physical wellbeing.

Communication Regarding Rerouting and Cancellations

Principle: Riders should receive communication from an accurate tracking system, showing real time data through easily communicated and already adopted channels.

Principle: All students should be given notice of what busses are cancelled, as well as how long they will be out of commission.

Concern: Inclement weather provides geographical challenges to buses and their routes, communication about that should be improve to all riders to adapt and stay on time.

Recommendation: HSR should inquire about promoting their twitter page and other tools related to information to ensure students are updated regarding transit.

Recommendation: HSR should have geo-targeted sponsored tweets based off of local postal codes to reach even more riders for major buses and cancellations.

Recommendation: HSR should provide real-time data to google maps regarding cancellations, detours, and rerouting about any changes.

Using real-time data and empowering riders through Google Map integration, you can allow riders to make the choices necessary to travel. Being proactive in communicating cancellations can allow riders to manage their daily travel routine, allowing themselves to still meet their obligations whether that would be through an alternative transportation method.

TTC developed their external reach to riders through integrating cancellations and reroutes to their services on Google Maps.²⁰ They directly attribute it to one of the reasons they won the 2017 APTA Transit System of the Year.²¹

Twitter has been a great step in the right direction for the HSR to send quick information, however physical and mixed communication need to happen for both Twitter users and non-Twitter users. When it comes to communicating and reaching out to students, the MSU can be a partner to help advise and consult the HSR on how to reach out to students, when peak events where HSR can effectively target and increase their reach to students and being a voice in the conversation on campus.

²⁰ <https://mobilesyrup.com/2016/06/03/google-maps-launches-real-time-transit-updates-for-the-ttc/>

²¹ https://www.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Awards/index.jsp

Sponsoring tweets on service usage is a way to provide value and on-time information to users while also growing your tweets reach and increasing the number of followers. Twitter Canada says that sponsor ads can reach specific postal codes which can be used to reach twitter users for when major buses are delayed, detoured, or cancelled.²² London's (Transport for London) while understanding the impact Twitter had on Bus Riders, they found that 83% of followers checked it at least once a day with 68% checking more than once a day.²³ Followers tended to check when checking Twitter in general (84%), and will significantly more likely to check if there's a problem on their journey (58%), a journey is disturbed (50%), or during a normal ride (28%).²⁴ They found that 55% of Twitter followers find the Bus Twitter feeds to be accurate and reliable **most** of the time with a further 35% of Twitter followers finding the Bus Twitter feed to be accurate and reliable **all** the time.²⁵ Being not only responsive, but being an active part of the community of riders who use it and being a part of their daily routine when checking Twitter can allow HSR to effectively communicate to a massive amount of riders on a daily basis to provide the best service possible. With creating a reliable, well promoted, and information based approach to their twitter, you can create an effective Twitter feed that leaves riders to be happier. London found a net positive of 18% of people happy with the service they have received and that followers felt they have received good, accurate information.²⁶

Feedback on HSR Service (Potentially Cutting)

Principle: Riders and students should have access to the resources needed to mention their issues regarding transit.

Concern: Any concern students or riders have about transit are not being heard as there is no accessible complaint system in place for students to advocate on their own behalves about issues they face.

Recommendation: HSR should implement an anonymous, online feedback system to share their experiences on the HSR.

Recommendation: HSR (and/or City Council) should implement a feedback system in MacNab terminal transit centre to ensure access to all people, regardless of access to internet, to share their experiences on the HSR.

Communication is essential in many roles and organization, often communication between customers and top decision-makers can be lacking. This

²² <https://business.twitter.com/en/targeting/geo-and-language.html>

²³ Pg. 7 <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/twitter-customer-satisfaction-report.pdf>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Pg. 20 in <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/twitter-customer-satisfaction-report.pdf>

creates an issue where gaps between what the service is planned on and the actual execution of those plans are created. Therefore rigorous systems of feedback should be implemented, which can create an effect of changing the planned approach to a higher standard or allow HSR supervisors and management a chance to enforce and uphold planned actions that HSR should follow through one. With HSR being a governmental, public service, constant feedback systems are cheap, create a better experience for riders, and gives management a chance to learn about what riders value in transit.

GO Transit McMaster GO Terminal

Principle: An increase of GO transit routes to the McMaster University GO Transit Terminal to offer more destinations for students.

Principle: Adding additional GO transit stops to accommodate students outside an existing GO transit route.

Concern: GO transit accessibility for commuter students to certain GTA areas is a barrier due to the lack of or no available stops for certain routes.

Concern: GO transit offers higher frequencies mostly within high populated areas within the GTA but does not offer more routes in the South-West Ontario Region (Guelph-Kitchener, Waterloo, London).

Recommendation: Routes for heavily-trafficked student routes should be reoriented and make additional stops to McMaster University GO Transit Terminal when returning to Hamilton.

Recommendation: Make McMaster University GO Transit Terminal a transit hub for South-West Ontario Region to offer students living in that region more method of transportation.

Commuter students often face the challenges of finding accessible and affordable transit that connects interprovincially. Recommending that GO transit routes with already heavily-trafficked student routes should be rerouted and add the McMaster University GO Transit Terminal as a transit hub to allow more students to access McMaster without transferring. A popular route among commuter and international students is the 40 Hamilton / Richmond Hill Pearson Express which bypasses McMaster University and turns east towards Hamilton GO Centre²⁷.

Many McMaster students need to transfer to the HSR in the downtown core or walk to Dundurn at King or Paisley at Main to take GO routes to Pearson Airport or to other GTA destinations. Making the small adjustment and making the stop to McMaster GO Transit Terminal can make it more accommodating to students travelling abroad, international students, and cuts down on commute time. It takes 3 minutes to McMaster University GO Bus Terminal and 3 minutes back to Main at Paisley (6 minutes total, 10 minutes at peak times). This in turn will increase ridership for Route 40 and offer more flexible and accessible routes for commuter and internal students to and from McMaster University, Pearson International Airport, and Richmond Hill Centre.

²⁷ GO Transit. (2018). Hamilton / Richmond Hill Pearson Express Train & Bus. Retrieved from GO Transit: http://www.gotransit.com/timetables/en/schedules/schedules_window.aspx?tableid=40&dir=E&parentd=1

Additionally, creating and expanding new GO Transit routes West of Hamilton is greatly needed²⁸ to serve students commuting from the Southwestern region of Ontario such as (Guelph-Kitchener, Waterloo, London). Making the McMaster University GO Transit Terminal a transit hub offers students larger flexibility in terms of more destinations and mobility for work, school, or residence. Not only will it benefit McMaster students, but other post secondary institutions in the region which in turn can encourage investments and higher use of public transit in the region.

Bus 47 Scheduling

Principle: Students should have access to GO Transit that takes into account McMaster class times.

Concern: Popular commuter routes for GO Transit do not accommodate for the time needed to reach the bus terminal

Recommendation: The 47 Bus departure should depart at the 35 minute mark to allow for students to have enough time to reach the terminal

Although there are a lot of students that depend only on local transportation to commute to McMaster, other modes should be considered, specifically GO Transit. If a McMaster student has class 5 days and commutes from the surrounding cities of Hamilton, the monthly cost that they are paying to Metrolinx would be around \$268.40.²⁹ With a high monthly cost, McMaster students have the right to access GO Transit services when they are needed. Unfortunately, this is not the case, due to the current way that the buses are scheduled, specifically bus route 47.

On weekdays, the 47 bus departs from McMaster University at varying times, that range from the quarter hour, and some buses leaving at the 20, 50, and 55 mark.³⁰ With all of these times, there are none that fully sync with students schedules. Since classes at McMaster usually end at the 20 minute mark for day classes, This means that students have at minimum 10 minutes to reach the Terminal, or they will have to wait for at least 25 minutes for the next bus. Both of these options do not put students need first. It takes on average 11 minutes³¹ to reach the McMaster GO terminal from the farthest building with classes on campus, which means that the students would not have enough time to reach the most convenient

²⁸ GO Transit. (2017). GO System Map. Retrieved from GO Transit:
http://www.gotransit.com/timetables/en/PDF/Maps/12170418/system_map.pdf

²⁹ <http://www.gotransit.com/publicroot/en/fares/farecalculator.aspx>

³⁰ <http://www.gotransit.com/timetables/en/PDF/Quicktables/12170418/SITM/MCUV.pdf>

³¹ <https://www.google.ca/maps/dir/Ivor+Wynne+Centre/McMaster+University+GO+Bus+Terminal,+Hamilton,+ON+L8S+4E8/@43.26154,-79.9218401,16.41z/data=!4m14!4m13!1m5!1m1!1s0x0:0xf498fec5fd8f885e12m2!1d-79.915280312d43.2650735!1m5!1m1!1s0x882c84adafe66b3d:0x22002507d649ecc2!2m2!1d-79.9227894!2d43.2616605!3e2>

have the TTC. This allows commuters to enjoy what Toronto has to offer, without the worry of the means of returning back home³⁶. This system also drops off the travelers at the stops that they request, so that they can reach their stop promptly. We believe that the last 47 bus Arriving at McMaster should operate in a similar manner, so that students that are around McMaster can arrive back at their stops in a prompt manner.

Parking

Availability of Parking for Undergraduate Students

Principle: All students should be able to park on campus.

Principle: If students purchase a parking transponder, they should be able to find adequate parking every day.

Principle: Students should be able to purchase parking passes for more convenient areas of campus.

Concern: There are not enough parking spots to meet the demand of students, guests, and staff.

Concern: Undergraduate students are unable to apply for main campus lots.

Concern: Transponder holders in Lot M share the lot with parking overflow and visitors, making it difficult to find parking spots/

Recommendations: Parking Services should open up some monthly passes for main campus lots to undergraduate students

Recommendations: Facility Services should invest in the creation of more parking spots on campus.

Recommendations: Lot M should have a similar system as other parking lots installed that reserves a specific amount spots for transponder holders.

For students who drive to campus, they rely on McMaster Parking Services to provide them with convenient access to parking. Many students purchase parking permits to guarantee they will have a spot every day they arrive at campus. However, students are forced to park in the most inconvenient lots offered, which are shared with not only other students but staff and guests. The number of permits available to students has been recently reduced, creating a greater unmet demand . Parking services should work to reducing these issues by allowing students to purchase permits on the main campus and increasing the total number of spots available.

Students are only able to purchase parking passes for Lot M and Ward Ave.³⁷ Both are a significant distance from the main campus that requires a shuttle bus to transport them there. This can be a great inconvenience for many students, especially those who may have to frequently stay on campus later than the shuttle buses run. If students have the means to purchase parking passes closer to campus, they should be able to do so. Parking Service should dedicate a small portion of main campus parking permits to undergraduate students.

³⁷McMaster University, "Online Permit Sales", *Parking Services*, 2018.
https://parking.mcmaster.ca/Online_Permit_Sales.html

Lot M passes are typically sold out before September. Students then are put on long waitlists. This clearly demonstrates that there is a demand that parking services in unable to fill. Over the past few years, parking services has decreased the number of spots available to students and increasing those available to faculty. Parking Services recently decreased the size of Lot M, the one of two lots where students are able to buy a parking permit. Parking Services increased the number of spots available through the new underground parking in LR Wilson and the expansion of Lot H. However, permits for these lots are reserved for faculty members only. This is detrimental for students who commute to campus from areas with inadequate to no public transit service that may not be able to find any other parking in the areas surrounding McMaster. Parking Services should work towards increasing the number of parking spots available on campus and ensure that a portion of these spaces are dedicated to students.

Affordability of Parking

Principle: Students should have the option to pay per term for parking space on the Main Campus.

Principle: Transponders should be more affordable for students commuting by personal vehicle to campus.

Concern: The cost of parking on campus increases students' commute time due to lack of affordable parking spaces on McMaster parking lots.

Concern: Current prices for monthly parking passes for students seemed to be inflated based on demand and location rather than on a cost-recovery basis.

Concern: Encourages students to park in on-street parking for lower cost alternatives and often ticketed due to exceeding on-street parking limits or parking infractions.

Concern: Diverts large amounts of parking revenues from McMaster University to the City of Hamilton.

Recommendation: Parking passes should be offered at discounted per-term rates for the Main Campus for students only, similarly to the parking passes at the Ron Joyce Centre for 1 term (4 months) intervals.

Recommendation: Transponders fee should also include a return deposit where 50% of original cost would be refunded to students when returning the transponder undamaged and in working condition for reuse.

Affordable parking at McMaster has been an ongoing problem and implementing a simple solution can remedy a considerable portion of commuter students' academic experiences. First key is the current option for parking passes on the Main Campus, where only monthly rates are available. At the Ron Joyce Centre, parking passes can be purchased on a per term basis (4 months) or a full academic

year (8 months, September – April)³⁸ and this should be implemented on the Main Campus to offer students flexibility and secured parking spaces. By implementing this option, Parking Services will have sufficient data to plan for parking allocation on Main Campus parking lots and can be way to increase parking revenues by securing long-term commuters.

Having term parking passes means costs are lowered, which in turn can be used to lower prices for parking passes. The new option should be structured at \$160 per term (4 months, \$40/month) for Lot M, N, P, and evenings. Offering parking passes on cost-recovery pricing rather than demand pricing³⁹ for students can increase the number of students utilizing McMaster parking lots as a means of affordable parking and increase ability to pay down the massive debt acquired from new equipment and renovations, debt and financing charges, and the unknown “all other expenses” which resulted in a needless projected deficit of \$211,000 for the operating year of 2016/2017⁴⁰. It not only benefits the University’s revenue base but alleviate students’ financial commute costs and decrease commuting time for commuter students.

Secondly, the new transponder fee which requires a purchase of a new transponder must be restructured to accommodate students no longer using their transponders⁴¹. The fee should include return provision which includes a return deposit of 50% for the original cost of the transponder. The deposit will be refunded back to students when returning the transponder undamaged and in working condition for recirculation.

Safety

Principle: Students should feel safe walking to and from the parking lots on campus

Concern: Student feel unsafe walking to and in Lot M at night

Concern: Interzone hours prevent students from being able to park closer to their classes when they are attending night classes

Recommendation: Parking services should change their interzone hours for M and NP permit holders to allow them to access to Main Campus lots B, C, D, K after 6:30PM instead of 7:30PM

Ensuring that students feel safe on campus is imperative to creating a valuable learning environment. It then follows strongly that students should feel safe walking

³⁸ Parking Services. (2018, February 4). Ron Joyce Centre Student Parking. Retrieved from McMaster University : <https://rjc.degroote.mcmaster.ca/services/parking/>

³⁹ McMaster University. (2017, June 8). APPENDIX C – ANCILLARY FUND TABLES. Retrieved from 2017/18 Consolidated Budget: https://www.mcmaster.ca/bms/pdf/2017-18_budget.pdf

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹

to and from the parking lots on campus. Without being comfortable entering and leaving campus, students must experience and associate certain aspects of McMaster campus with stress and anxiety.

Currently, students do feel unsafe walking to and in Lot M at night, and interzone hours prevent students from being able to park closer to their classes when they are attending night classes

To remedy this issue, Parking Services should change their interzone hours for M and NP permit holders to allow them to access to Main Campus lots B, C, D, K after 6:30PM instead of 7:30PM. This should accommodate for students with night classes, where safety is most of a concern due to the late hour.