



POLICY PAPER

MSU Policy Statement on Campus Transit

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Background

In the spring of 2008 the MSU was informed that the Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) and the University intended to implement a plan by which city buses were to be gradually rerouted out of the core of campus. In the summer of 2011, Hamilton's municipal government early abandoned its 2008 unanimous decision to support Light Rail Transit, a new method of transportation that would have eased congestion on the routes frequented by McMaster students. City Council subsequently approved a motion to reaffirm its position in favour of LRT, though with considerable opposition from the Mayor. These events have concerned many students, staff and faculty who rely on the HSR for transit to and from campus every day. To this end, this policy is intended to set guidelines for lobbying efforts for the McMaster Students Union concerning future contract negotiations with the HSR and the municipal government. Furthermore, this policy statement will set out a plan to return buses to an acceptable location on campus to meet the needs of the MSU membership and to ensure Light Rail Transit remains a tangible reality in Hamilton's future.

All MSU members (Full Time Undergraduates) currently pay \$126.15 for their eight month universal pass as per MSU Bylaw 5, Section 1.4. With the rising costs of transit for students, it would be unacceptable to incur a loss of service on and around campus. Furthermore, as major stakeholders in Hamilton's transit system, any plan to abandon the Light Rail Transit would detrimentally affect students, in that increased enrollment necessitates increased transit capacity.

The MSU shall be guided by the following principles with relation to campus transit issues:

Principle 1: Transit must continue to be cost-effective for all members of the McMaster Students Union.

Principle 2: The MSU shall strive to strike a balance between our desired transit initiatives and the need for student safety on campus.

Principle 3: The MSU shall endeavour to lobby for greater accessibility to transit for all students.

Principle 4: The MSU shall continue to support and lobby for the implementation of Light Rail Transit in Hamilton.

Definitions

U-Pass – The bus pass paid for annually by undergraduate members of the McMaster Students Union as part of their fee structure.

Main Street Corridor – The HSR bus route that proceeds to McMaster University via Main and King Streets from Eastgate Square.

LRT – Light Rail Transit, a system of inner-city trains that function as a supplement to a pre-existing transit system.

Transit Plan

Route 10 – B-lineExpress

The B-line route currently is separated into two lines with the 10A B-line proceeding down Main Street and with its final stop at the McMaster University Medical Centre, while the 10B continues down Main Street. The B-line services the Main Street Corridor as an express route and a good deal of students who travel to McMaster University from beyond the downtown core use this route. It is therefore a priority that the B-line route be changed to accommodate the high volume of long distance student travelers

Recommendation 1: The MSU recommends re-routing the 10/A line to continue down the old route at King Street onto Sterling Street and onto campus, utilizing the drop off area in front of the McMaster University Student Centre (MUSC).

Recommendation 2: The 10/B would continue along its path to University Plaza in order to service students in the Dundas area.

Route 51 – University

As one of the primary routes servicing the residents south of Main Street W the 51 – University must continue to bring students close to the central areas of campus.

- **Recommendation 3:** The 51 – University should be rerouted down Forsyth and onto the campus through the main Sterling Street entrance in order to drop students off in front of the McMaster University Student Centre.

Recommendation 4: The volume of 51 – University busses should be increased in order to deal with the high amount of short distance travel within the McMaster Community.

Route 1/A - King

The 1/A – King services the Main Street Corridor to McMaster University in conjunction with the 10 – B-line route, it is however not an

express line and is therefore not used by students who live beyond the downtown core with as high a volume as the 10 – B-line.

Recommendation 5: The 1/A – King should be rerouted down Main Street to the University Medical Centre, keeping its final

destination as is due to its minimal ridership by students.

Route 5/C - Delaware

The 5/C Delaware is another primary route for students living south of Main Street or in the downtown core. It is therefore important for this route to continue to bring students directly onto campus.

Recommendation 6: The 5/C –Delaware should be rerouted down Forsyth and onto campus through the main Sterling Street entrance in order to drop students off in front of the McMaster University Student Centre.

Recommendation 7: Service to Ancaster should be expanded to the weekends.

Light Rail Transit

The opportunities for students presented by the proposed Light Rail Transit expansion include faster access to the City of Hamilton, 24-hour transit service to the downtown core and an environmentally sound transit solution. Light Rail Transit will decrease travelling times, ease congestion on heavily used routes and directly impact the lives of McMaster’s off-campus student population.

Recommendation 8: The MSU shall continue to recommend the implementation of the proposed LRT expansion.

Recommendation 9: The MSU call on Hamilton City Council to uphold its 2008 unanimous decision to move forward with a Light Rail Transit plan in Hamilton

Campus Bus Shelters and Terminals

Bus shelters with sufficient capacity are necessary if students are to be kept safe and comfortable during poor weather conditions while waiting for busses. Furthermore there is a lack of high capacity shelters on campus which allow for a significant number of students in which to take refuge during inclement weather. Furthermore shelters lack the ability to shelter a significant number of students with physical disabilities in addition to non-disabled students.

Recommendation 10: The MSU recommends the construction of higher capacity bus shelters on campus.

Recommendation 11: The University should consider the construction of a permanent bus terminal in a convenient location for students, so long as the construction of such a shelter does not result in a levy on student fees.

Recommendation 12: Before the construction of a permanent transit terminal, the HSR and McMaster University should route all busses according to the afore mentioned, route specific, plan.

Accessibility

In recognition of the diverse needs of the student population at McMaster University the transit system must begin to meet the needs of students with issues of accessibility.

Recommendation 13: All future transit projects, such as a transit terminal on campus, should be placed in a centralized area on campus in recognition that not all students have ease of mobility.

Recommendation 14: All bus shelters assembled for future campus use should be designed to accommodate students with disabilities.

Implementation

In order to implement this plan, the MSU shall approach the following organizations in no particular priority to lobby on behalf of students.

1. McMaster University Administration
2. The Hamilton Street Railway (HSR)
3. Local Business Interests
4. The City of Hamilton
5. Other parties as interested or necessary

Resolutions

Whereas the preceding issues are of great concern to the students of McMaster:

Be it resolved that the MSU declares the current transit plan of moving all busses off campus unacceptable for the needs of the undergraduate population;

Be it resolved that the MSU recognizes that a balance must be struck between student safety and effective service delivery;

Be it resolved that the SRA directs the Board of Directors to lobby the University Administration for better transit options for students;

Be it resolved that the MSU continue to support the U-Pass so long as the HSR and the University return to a level of acceptable transit service;

Be it resolved that the SRA directs the President of the MSU to meet with the local city councillor and present this plan as our recommendation to return transit service to acceptable levels;

Be it resolved that the MSU shall lobby the HSR for increased bus service at peak hours to accommodate the needs of students.

Be it resolved that the MSU declares any attempt to abandon Light Rail Transit in Hamilton an abrogation of the municipality's responsibility to ensure ease of usage on its mass transit system

Be it resolved that Light Rail Transit will directly benefit the student population of McMaster and the community as a whole by developing another method by which students can interact with the community