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DATE: May 18 1999

TO/DEST: Co-ordinator, Transit Services Committee

FROM/EXP: Interim General Manager

SUBJECT/OBJET: **SUMMER DISCOUNTS FOR STUDENTS FROM OUT-OF-TOWN
UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Transit Services Committee recommend to the Commission that discounted student passes be extended to students, from June 1, 1999 to September 30, 1999, who are living in the Region for the summer while attending out-of-town universities and colleges.

BACKGROUND

In March 1999, student fare privileges were extended to full-time post-secondary students resident in the Region and attending provincially regulated post-secondary institutions in Ottawa-Carleton. At that time post-secondary students were eligible for discounted passes for the school year from September to April, and were required to pay a full adult fare in the summer months. The number of eligible institutions has since been expanded to include three colleges and universities in Hull and twenty-two Private Vocational Institutions whose programs are eligible for Ontario Student Assistance Program loans and bursaries.

At its meeting of July 8, 1998, the Transit Commission approved an extension of the student pass privileges to allow students with valid IDs from the previous school year to use a student pass in the summer months. Since this extension was approved there have been a number of requests from students who attend out-of-town universities but are here for the summer, to be given the same privilege.

DISCUSSION

Staff are currently not in a position to estimate the number of students who are full-time students of universities located outside the Region from September to April, and who are residents of the Region from May to August. Furthermore, the take-up rate of the lower student fares by such students would be very hard to estimate without the benefit of actual experience.

However, it is reasonable to conclude that extending this benefit to such students would result in a loss of revenues, with little increase in ridership. If student fares were to be granted to these students, they would purchase the standard OC Transpo Student photo-identification cards. These cards expire on September 30 of every year. Therefore, in a normal year, an out-of-town student who comes to live in the Region immediately following the end of his term in April could enjoy the benefit of student fares for up to five months. However, for this year, the maximum benefit would be for four months, or a revenue loss of \$41.00 per student. Other issues to be considered before a permanent change in Commission policy is approved are:

- the impact of the policy on co-operative students who are in Ottawa-Carleton for a paid work term; and
- the way in which students who complete their courses at out-of-town universities in December should be treated.

It is therefore recommended that, in view of the evident inequity of the existing situation, the policy be extended for this summer to full-time students from out-of-town, provincially regulated, colleges but that the policy be reviewed in the fall to ensure that the ridership revenue and other policy implications are properly understood.

Approved by
M.J.E. Sheflin, P.Eng.