

Hamilton Chamber of Commerce DARTS Policy

Issue:

The City of Hamilton staff is moving towards a decision to bring Disabled & Aged Regional Transportation System (DARTS) 'in-house' to be operated solely and completely by HSR. Using PSTG Consulting Report dated November 23, 2007, it was identified that (1) "would require an increase in operating budget and investment", and (2) "would represent a change in Council policy."

Background:

Accessible Transit Service (ATS) has been third-party brokered for a number of years. However, there has been a significant push from City staff to move the service 'in-house'. This has been demonstrated through various consultants' reports commissioned over the last few years, each time drawing a conclusion that the current model of operation is sound. Following the latest consultants study, staff moved against the recommendations after it was stated that the cost to the City would fall in the "\$1 million" mark.

Fay Booker was hired by DARTS to identify the opportunities that were not brought forward by staff including: Canadian Urban Transit (CUTA) data shows that DARTS is one of the lowest cost delivery models in the Country; Municipalities run less than 50% of larger services in Canada; The City has very little experience at actually operating specialized transit service on a day to day basis; And, based on employment (operational) cost analysis, the potential cost is \$3,087,867 based on the existing HSR organizational model.

Please note that the following recommendation works in conjunction with the current Hamilton Chamber Of Commerce's policy on HSR regarding independence, long-term planning and funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce urges the Councillors of the City of Hamilton:

1. To support the present mode of delivery of service as supplied by DARTS and oppose bringing that service "in-house".