

**MEETING DATE April 19, 2006**

**SUBJECT Staff Response to Commission Inquiry - Re-Naming of the Metropass**

At the meeting of June 22, 2005, the Commission directed staff to report back on the re-naming of the "Metropass" as part of the Commission's ongoing efforts to maximize sales and ridership associated with pass fare media.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on market research conducted by staff and analysis undertaken by the Commission's advertising agency, it was determined that re-naming the "Metropass" would require a significant financial investment with little benefit in terms of additional monthly pass sales or ridership. Staff does not recommend that the "Metropass" name be revised at this point in time.

### **DISCUSSION**

The "Metropass" (TTC monthly pass) was introduced in May 1980 and has not been re-named or re-branded since its introduction. Recently, the Commission has implemented a number of fare policy initiatives such as reduction of the pricing trip rate, introduction of pass transferability and the launch of the VIP program to increase the usage of monthly passes and increase ridership. As part of the ongoing efforts to maximize pass usage, the Commission requested staff to assess what potential impact re-naming of the monthly pass could have on sales.

To determine brand awareness and the role of branding in a rider's decision to purchase pass fare media, staff conducted market research on the Metropass in the Market Tracking Survey (1,100 respondents). The key findings are summarized below.

- 60% of all respondents could name at least one TTC Pass type (Metropass having the highest first mention);
- 60% of those who could name a TTC pass did not think that branding would assist in understanding differences in pass types;
- The term Metropass has a similar level of recognition as other TTC tag lines such as "Ride the Rocket" and "The Better Way" (see Appendix A); and
- For Metropass purchasers, brand name is not a key element in the purchase decision.

The TTC's advertising agency (Axmith, McIntyre, Wicht) was also asked to undertake a preliminary analysis of the Metropass re-branding issue. Their key findings are summarized below:

- The "Metropass" brand has a long heritage and is entrenched in the minds of riders. The introduction of transferability will likely further entrench the brand (i.e. "Can I borrow your Metropass");

- The term “Metropass” is not a significant source of confusion for customers. It is unlikely that customers associate the name Metropass with the old Metropolitan Toronto, but rather with the term “Metro” which is synonymous world-wide with “subway”;
- Riders are primarily concerned with Metropass features and functions - they are less concerned about its name; and
- Any re-branding will require a significant investment to provide for the penetration of the new name - campaigns could have to be staged for a number of years.

Based on the analysis conducted, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- There is strong awareness of the term “Metropass”;
- Re-naming the product would not add any new “features” that would make the Metropass different/better resulting in increased sales/ridership; and
- Re-branding would require a considerable monetary investment to create awareness of the new name with limited tangible benefit.

Based on the above analysis, staff recommends that “Metropass” remains as the brand of the monthly pass.

Chief General Manager

3-16-16  
Attachment

