



MOTION REGARDING MUSTBUS FEE-LEVY

2022-02-17

Submitted for: 2022-02-17

Submitted to: SSMU Legislative Council **Document no.:** LEG-PUB-MOT-2022-02-17-007

Moved by: Ghania Javed **Current Status:** FOR APPROVAL
Arts Representative APPROVED
 POSTPONED

Seconded by: Emily Eiley COMMITTED
Nursing Representative NOT APPROVED

Issue

McGill Students have historically lacked safe, reliable, low-carbon and affordable intercity transportation options for traveling to nearby major cities. This contributes to a sense of social isolation and transportation-related anxiety and forces students to either drive or fly long distances: two heavily carbon-emitting, unsustainable methods of transport. It is also a matter of equity as many students cannot afford airfares or unreasonably priced bus or train tickets, which deprives them of social, academic, and professional opportunities in other cities.

MUSTBUS (McGill Bus Co-op), a SSMU ISG, is a student-run intercity mobility service. With a dedicated fee-levy, the organization is planning to run universally affordable and accessible bus trips to major cities such as Boston, Toronto, Ottawa and New York from McGill's downtown campus beginning in 2022.

Background and Rationale

MUSTBUS is creating this new student service in the hopes of breaking down the physical distance that separates our students from their loved ones. They are also launching this initiative because many McGill students don't have a car making traveling between provinces/countries very difficult.

MUSTBUS has already passed the Fall 2020 SSMU Referendum with the following question: "Contingent on public health officials deeming it safe to



restore travel, would you be in favor of creating a student-run transportation service to connect McGill campus to Downtown Toronto, Manhattan and Boston by bus service on weekends and holidays?”

Over 85% of SSMU electors supported the MUSTBUS question by voting “YES.”

As evidenced by the result of the Fall 2020 SSMU Referendum, the student body has given MUSTBUS a mandate to provide universally affordable and accessible transportation options for McGill students.

To support MUSTBUS’s voter-approved mandate, it is vital that SSMU approves the MUSTBUS fee-levy proposal to guarantee the long-term sustainability of a universally accessible and affordable mobility service.

Alignment with Mission

The MUSTBUS fee-levy motion is aligned with SSMU’s commitment of serving the student body of McGill, particularly by enriching student life, improving student mental health, connecting students to their communities, battling inequality in access to student opportunities. In addition, it offers both leadership education opportunities for the student body to know more about public transit and alternatives to driving.

This is also aligned with SSMU’s stated commitment to climate action, as both driving and flying are carbon-intensive and can generate up to five times more carbon emissions per traveler mile compared to riding the bus. Motorcoach is the second lowest-carbon-emission mode of transport only after electrified high-speed rail, which North America currently does not have. Supporting MUSTBUS fee-levy is pulling thousands of McGill students out of driving or flying for intercity travels, and allowing them to take the low-carbon, energy-efficient bus instead.

In addition, this is also congruent with SSMU’s commitment to creating safe(r) spaces for women, queer-identifying people and people of colour who have continued to face gender-based violence, queerphobia and racism on public transit. MUSTBUS, as a non-hierarchical, anti-oppressive organization, is committed to offering a safe(r) space for all travellers, particularly women, queer-identifying people, and people of colour.

Consultations Completed

MUSTBUS has conducted extensive public and private consultations with the SSMU VP Student Life and VP Finance during the Bryan Buraga presidency, the Jemark Earle presidency, and the Darshan Daryanani presidency.



MUSTBUS has also answered questions from SSMU councilors at legislative sessions during the time of the Jemark Earle presidency.

MUSTBUS has passed the Fall 2020 SSMU Referendum with over 85% of SSMU electors voting “YES” to support establishing a student-run mobility service.

MUSTBUS has also hosted a public AMA session on the McGill subreddit during the Fall 2020 SSMU Referendum campaign.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Transportation-related injuries are a statistically remote and mitigable risk factor. MUSTBUS only works with industry-leading transportation operators that meet the most stringent safety standards of the Quebec government and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

According to a peer-reviewed [study](#) published in the Journal of Public Transportation, bus travel is 6000% safer than private car travel.

According to the U.S. National Highway Transport Safety Administration (NHTSA), taking a bus is 2400% safer than walking. Bus is the safest possible mode of transport only after the airplane.

MUSTBUS is statistically much safer than WalkSafe, DriveSafe, or walking during Frosh.

MUSTBUS further mitigates transportation-related risks because MUSTBUS is *not* a transportation service operator. All transportation vehicles are operated by their respective operating companies and are fully licensed and insured in all jurisdictions they operate in, as per Canadian and American regulations.

Sustainability Considerations

Motorcoach is the second lowest-carbon-emission mode of transport only after electrified high-speed rail, which North America currently does not have.

Supporting MUSTBUS fee-levy is pulling thousands of McGill students out of driving or flying for intercity travels, and allowing them to take the low-carbon, energy-efficient bus instead.

MUSTBUS reduces per-capita travel carbon footprints by up to 85% compared to driving or flying.



Impact of Decision and Next Steps

Approval of the motion will allow for the fee-levy question to move forward and put it on the ballot for the Winter 2022 SSMU Referendum, pending additional administrative approvals and reviews.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the Legislative Council approves the MUSTBUS fee-Levy proposal.

Be it resolved that the Legislative Council approve the following question for the Winter 2022 referendum period:

"To improve student engagement and mobility; enrich student life; provide professional training and employment opportunities for students; promote public transit usage and education; expand options for student activity; respond to the climate emergency by drastically cutting travel-related carbon footprints of the student body; empower mobility for students with limited financial capacity; improve job/school/home connections".

Given that all COVID-19 preventive measures would be taken, would you be in favor of creating an opt-outable fee-levy of \$2 per semester (including summer) to support student-run bus service to connect McGill campus to Toronto, New York, Ottawa, Boston, and other destinations on weekends and holidays? The fee-levy will be used to subsidize trips and fund general operations to ensure the long-term sustainability, affordability, and accessibility of the service. The fee is paid by SSMU Members starting in Fall 2022 and ending in Fall 2024 (inclusive), at which point it will be brought back to the Membership for renewal? A majority 'no' vote would result in the non-existence of the fund.

Be it resolved that the Legislative Council approve, and recommend to the Board of Directors for approval, the fee-levy proposal.

Results of the Vote

In favor	(19)*
Opposed	(1)
Abstain	(1)

*Note: The motion was approved via Email



Appendix A : Relevant Appendix

Do you agree to the creation of the opt-outable McGill Student Transportation Fee of \$2.00 per semester (including summer), payable by SSMU Members starting in Fall 2022 and ending in Fall 2024 (inclusive), at which point it will be brought back to the Membership for renewal? A majority 'no' vote would result in the non-existence of the fund

Approved