



MOTION REGARDING SSMU WALKSAFE FEE INCREASE VIA REFERENDUM QUESTION

2024-02-01

Submitted for: 2024-02-01

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|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Submitted to: | SSMU Legislative Council | Document no.: | LEG-PUB-MOT-2024-02-01-004 |
| Moved by: | Amina Kudrati-Plummer <i>SSMU Vice-President (Finance)</i> | Current Status: | <input type="checkbox"/> FOR APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> POSTPONED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED |
| Seconded by: | Keith Andre Baybayon <i>Arts Representative</i> | | |

Issue

The current fee levy for SSMU WALKSAFE is insufficient to support its ongoing operations and necessary expansion to meet community needs. SSMU WALKSAFE is seeking an increase in their service fee by \$0.14 per student per semester, from \$0.12 to \$0.26.

Background and Rationale

SSMU WALKSAFE is a night-time safety service that escorts students and Montrealers to and from their destinations anywhere in Montreal.

SSMU WALKSAFE's fee was last increased during the Fall 2015 referendum when the Safety Services Fee was established. The inflation rate in Quebec since 2015 accounts for an increase in costs, on average, of 24.60% (see Appendix B). While SSMU WALKSAFE has been operating on its surplus due to the lack of operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the current fee can no longer sustain SSMU WALKSAFE facing the rising cost of food and equipment needed to run this service.

Additionally, SSMU WALKSAFE has increased its operations since the last fee increase. The WALKBuddies program which was started in 2017, organizes volunteers to accompany students from the FACE elementary school to their



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daycare. SSMU WALKSAFE also plans on using the increased funding to organize harm-reduction programs, such as self-defence classes and street-safety presentations. The current fee, established in 2015, does not account for these increased operations.

Most of SSMU WALKSAFE's equipment, including jackets and furniture, dates back to 2017. The increased funding would also support the maintenance of current equipment and the purchase of new equipment as necessary.

The fee increase would not only support SSMU WALKSAFE to meet the previous standard of operations, which currently can't be maintained due to the rising cost of everything, but would also support the service to adapt to societal changes and expand, for example aligning with the growing demands of the increasingly digital environment or starting new projects such as WALKBuddies or harm-reduction classes and presentations.

Alignment with Mission

SSMU WALKSAFE strengthens the social conditions of our community, by ensuring increased safety for all SSMU members by increasing harm reduction and fighting street harassment. It aligns with the values of the SSMU by providing a harm-reduction service to all its members.

Consultations Completed

The SSMU WALKSAFE executives have discussed and identified the need for a fee increase to maintain a high-quality service. The VP Finance of SSMU WALKSAFE has met with the SSMU VP Finance, VP Student Life and Services Finance Coordinator to review the proposed budget and motion. The Policy and Advocacy Coordinator was consulted in the motion-writing process and provided feedback to ensure the motion is in line with SSMU standards.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

If this motion does not pass, SSMU WALKSAFE will have to reduce its operations, both of its night-time service and its program WALKBuddies. As it has been operating on the surplus collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, with inflation the current fee alone isn't enough to support WALKSAFE's operations.



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As this fee is non-opt outable, every student will have to pay an additional \$0.14 per semester. This financial risk this increase poses is negligible compared to the benefits of a more reliable service as more shifts will be staffed, and additional events such as self-defence classes and street safety presentations will be available. This increase is aimed at ensuring students can feel more secure on campus and around Montreal at night while minimizing the financial burden associated with alternative services.

Sustainability Considerations

SSMU WALKSAFE promotes walking, offering an alternative to solutions such as Uber. This service is confidential, inclusive and accessible, promoting the longevity of a safe and socially sustainable community. Our reliance on volunteer participation also ensures a socially and economically sustainable service.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If this motion is approved by the Legislative Council, the question included in Appendix A will be included in the Winter 2024 Referendum Period.

If the fee question passes at the referendum, the fee increase will go into effect as of the Fall 2024 semester. The fee increase will allow SSMU WALKSAFE to continue providing a nightly reliable service to the students and Montreal community.

If the fee increase does not pass, the fee will continue at its current rate, unable to sustain SSMU WALKSAFE's operations at the previous standard of operations. WALKSAFE will have to readjust their budget, allocating less funding to the maintenance of equipment and the office, along with reducing the volunteer benefits, such as the shift gift cards and volunteer events, which may lead to less reliable service from a lack of staffing.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the Legislative Council approve the following question for the Fall 2024 Referendum Period ballot:

Do you agree to the increase of the non-opt-outable SSMU Safety Network Fee of \$7.01 per semester to \$7.15 per semester (excluding summer) for full-time members, starting in Fall 2024 and ending in Fall 2029 (inclusive), at which point it will be brought back to the Membership for renewal, with the understanding that a majority 'no' vote will result in the continuation of the fee at its current rate, resulting in the reduction of some SSMU WALKSAFE



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*operations, as well as limitations in the quality of the services offered by
SSMU WALKSAFE?*

Be it further resolved, that the SSMU Legislative Council adopts the actionable aspects of this question and that any grammatical or legal changes necessary do not need the re-approval of the Legislative Council.

Results of the Vote

| | |
|-----------|------|
| In favour | (27) |
| Opposed | (0) |
| Abstain | (2) |

APPROVED



Appendix A : Referendum Question

Do you agree to the increase of the non-opt-outable SSMU Safety Network Fee of \$7.01 per semester to \$7.15 per semester (excluding summer) for full-time members, starting in Fall 2024 and ending in Fall 2029 (inclusive), at which point it will be brought back to the Membership for renewal, with the understanding that a majority 'no' vote will result in the continuation of the fee at its current rate, resulting in the reduction of some SSMU WALKSAFE operations, as well as limitations in the quality of the services offered by SSMU WALKSAFE.

Appendix B : Consumer Price Index, yearly, not seasonally adjusted

Consumer Price Index, yearly, not seasonally adjusted

| Geography | Quebec | | | | | | | | | Increase between Dec-15 and Dec-23 |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------------------------------|
| | Dec-15 | Dec-16 | Dec-17 | Dec-18 | Dec-19 | Dec-20 | Dec-21 | Dec-22 | Dec-23 | |
| Products and product groups | | | | | | | | | | |
| All-items | 124.4 | 125.2 | 127.5 | 128.9 | 132.4 | 133.4 | 140.2 | 149 | 155 | 24.60% |
| Food | 142.7 | 141.6 | 144.3 | 147.2 | 151.4 | 153.3 | 161.3 | 178.1 | 188.2 | 31.89% |
| Household operations, furnishings and equipment | 120.9 | 120.9 | 122.1 | 122.1 | 123.2 | 124.1 | 128.4 | 132.1 | 131.6 | 8.85% |
| Clothing and footwear | 89.6 | 88.8 | 92 | 90.7 | 93.4 | 89.8 | 91.6 | 92.9 | 91.5 | 2.12% |
| Transportation | 125.9 | 127.9 | 133.1 | 135 | 140.9 | 140.4 | 154.6 | 163.6 | 170.8 | 35.66% |
| Recreation, education and reading | 97.9 | 99.1 | 99.3 | 100.3 | 101.8 | 104.6 | 107.1 | 112.6 | 115.1 | 17.57% |

Table: 18-10-0004-01 (formerly CANSIM 326-0020)

Release date: 2024-01-16

Source: Statistics Canada. [Table 18-10-0004-01 Consumer Price Index, monthly, not seasonally adjusted](#)



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Appendix C : 2024-2025 SSMU WALKSAFE Budget



WalkSafe Operating Budget 2024-2025

| Operating Revenue | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Department Number | Department Name | Amount Budgeted | Explanation |
| 4900 | Student Fees | \$11,700.00 | Fee levy if increased to 0.26 (\$5,850 per semester x2) |
| 4998 | Opening Balance | \$1,200.00 | Surplus predicted from 2023-2024 budget |
| TOTAL: | | \$12,900.00 | |

| Annual Operating Expenses | | | | | If the fee increase does not pass: |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Department Number | Department Name | Amount Budgeted | Explanation | Amounts | |
| 6100 | Materials & Supplies | \$3,100.00 | Furniture for the office (repairs, upgrades, ...) | \$1,200.00 | lower priority on maintenance of the office |
| | | | Office Supplies (paper, stationary, power banks) | \$400.00 | |
| | | | Snack Box \$250 per restock Restock lasts ~2 months 4x\$250 | \$1,000.00 | less frequent restock of snack box |
| | | | Equipment <u>Bags contain:</u> vomit bags, tissues, water bottles, masks, gloves, hand sanitizers, lysol wipes <u>Additional equipment:</u> umbrellas, jackets | \$500.00 | |
| 6111 | Food & Beverages | \$3,610.00 | Giftcards Volunteers get a \$10 giftcard to Gerts for working a event shift Covers 14 shifts with 3 volunteers per shift 21 \$10 cards for \$155 total (partnership with Gerts) x2 semesters | \$310.00 | |
| | | | GA 1 WalkSafe General Assembly per semester, catered for every volunteer \$800 catering+booking fee x2 semesters | \$1,600.00 | |
| | | | Exec Bonding Event \$250 per event x2 semesters | \$500.00 | lower budget |
| | | | Formal event Collab event with other safety services DriveSafe and MSERT for volunteers to socialize. \$1200 Catering + booking fee budget | \$1,200.00 | less volunteer events |
| | | | Self-Defence class Booking of room + Booking of instructor | \$300.00 | postpone project of organizing self-defence class |
| 6160 | Membership & Training | \$300.00 | | | |
| 6306 | Conferences & Travel | \$600.00 | Taxi/uber reimbursement Reimbursement of volunteers who had to take an uber/taxi to go/get back from an event or a long walk | \$400.00 | |
| | | | Metro passes | \$200.00 | |
| 6320 | Advertising & Promotion | \$1,600.00 | Promotional material Advertise recruitment of volunteers on campus and at events such as Activities Nights, and advertise the use of WalkSafe to the community. - Stickers, flashlights, whistles, card holders, keyrings, bottle openers | \$1,500.00 | lower budget for merch |
| | | | Raffle (free entry, giving away harm-reduction tools such as whistles, flashlights) | \$100.00 | no raffle |
| 6610 | Telephone | \$700.00 | Telephone bill (WalkSafe dispatcher phone) | \$700.00 | |
| 6420 | Bank & Service charges | \$120.00 | Charges (Credit Card charges) | \$120.00 | |
| 6340 | Entertainment | \$1,800.00 | Volunteer social events Various social events to increase volunteer morale and create a sense of community, to increase volunteer retention (ex. escape room, botanical garden, ice-skating,...) | \$1,800.00 | less volunteer events |
| TOTAL: | | \$11,830.00 | | | |

Appendix D : 2023-2024 SSMU WALKSAFE Budget

Walksafe Budget 2023-24