

July 16, 2023

To the members of the Civic Works Committee,

Earlier in the year I was joined by other concerned citizens at your committee to sound the alarm on the degraded delivery of paratransit services in the city post-pandemic. After years of neglect and underfunding, the paratransit system is broken and in urgent need of renewal. At this meeting, you supported our call for urgent changes to the system, including an increase in ride capacity, an online booking system and the ability for riders to pay using smart cards. The commission's response to these requests was largely "no action required" with claims that these improvements were already in progress.

I was disheartened to read the largely self-congratulatory 2022 Annual Report submitted for your review despite these ongoing issues. Within the report, the commission self-assesses a "satisfactory" level of service despite the countless reports of missed rides and long re-dial times to book rides on paratransit. More troubling, though, is the commission assessing they have done a "good" job of being open and transparent in a year where they filed a clearly erroneous AODA Compliance Report despite easily identified examples of non-compliance. Almost a month after our request to the Accessibility Directorate to audit the LTC, we have heard little from the commission about this glaring error beyond a comment that they will comply with whatever directives are given by the province.

As part of your review of this report, I implore the Civic Works Committee to ask several important questions of the commission:

- How was a "fully compliant" report submitted to the Ontario government when the service is not complying with multiple requirements under the legislation?
- What has been done in the past month to resolve the instances of non-compliance identified in our letter to the Accessibility Directorate?
- Given their lack of awareness or execution of AODA directives, should "accessibility" be added as a key strategic priority to be actively monitored going forward?

While it may seem like accessibility impacts a small segment of the population, the concerns we have been enumerating serve as a litmus test for all the things a transit service should be: functional, inclusive, reliable and democratic. Ultimately, a transit service that is not accessible to disabled people is not accessible to any of us. I look forward to hearing how the commission will move toward an accessible future.

Thank you for once again taking seriously the concerns of disabled Londoners.



Jeff Preston, PhD

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