

**From:** GREEN TAXI <office@mygreen.taxi>

**Sent:** Sunday, September 24, 2023 6:01 PM

**To:** CPSC <cpsc@london.ca>; DeForest, Catherine <cdefores@London.ca>; Katolyk, Orest <OKatolyk@London.ca>; Musicco, Nicole <nmusicco@London.ca>

**Cc:** Council Agenda <councilagenda@london.ca>; Khalil Al Tarhuni [REDACTED]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Accessible Taxi Funding & Age Removal / 15th Meeting of City Council - Waiting for direction

Councillors, Community and Protective Services Committee, Staff,

I appreciate your ongoing dedication to addressing the issues concerning accessible taxi cabs. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the last Public Participation Meeting (PPM), but I did watch the recorded session and would like to share additional insights in preparation for the upcoming meeting on Tuesday.

The drivers, owner-operators, and brokers who spoke during the last Public Participation Meeting (PPM) made it evident that there are significant challenges within the taxi industry. While the pandemic has certainly played a role, it's important to note that the problems faced by accessible taxis existed before the pandemic and were exacerbated by it. The issues confronting us in the taxi industry align with the same concerns outlined in the London Transit Commission's multi-year budget (2024-2027):

**London Transit Commission 2024-2027 Forecast:**

- Diesel fuel pricing 45 per cent higher than projected in current multi-year budget
- General insurance costs increased 48 per cent during current multi-year budget
- **Hourly cost of paratransit has increased 27 per cent**
- Bus/ancillary equipment pricing has increased 37 per cent
- Revenue generated from ridership hasn't fully recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: <https://www.londontransit.ca/staff-report-3-2024-2027-multi-year-budget/>

**myGREEN Taxi Accessible Taxi Operational Costs 2018 vs June 2023:**

- Fuel Rates: \$1.22 vs \$1.60 (+31%)
  - 50 Litres Daily: \$61.00 vs \$80.00
- Annual Insurance Premiums: \$8,700 vs \$18,000 (+107%)
- Vehicle Replacement Cost: \$47,500 vs \$95,000 (+100%)
- Monthly Average Accessible Bookings: 2000 vs 1000 (-50%)
- Average Maintenance Costs: \$200 vs \$425

As evident from the information above, the financial strain is equally felt, but regrettably, we are each bearing these financial burdens individually. We have not received any assistance, and it is disheartening to witness neighboring cities and provinces acknowledging and implementing practical solutions to address the very same issues related to accessible taxis. The taxpayers of our city are funding the London Transit Commission (LTC) to serve them directly or indirectly. The services we offer through our accessible taxis are likewise directly or indirectly benefiting the same taxpayers. In essence, we are seeking assistance to enhance our community. We no longer require further assessments or research, as neighboring municipalities have made their findings and solutions readily available online. It is evident that operational accessible taxi services in a municipality require financial support.

Following the legalization of ride-sharing giants like Uber, which do not provide accessible services, the City of London has successfully generated additional income from ride-sharing platforms (ie. *Uber, Steer, RideON, etc.*) at a rate of \$0.35 per ride. Therefore, it is challenging to comprehend the argument that there is an insufficient budget for accessible taxis, especially when this supplementary income stream supplements the existing revenue from all taxis and limousines (ie. *\$750 per taxi & limo*). Major cities such as Toronto, Ottawa, and Hamilton are utilizing the new income generated from ride-sharing companies to fund their accessible taxi services. Why has London, ON chosen not to follow suit in this matter? The evidence lies in the data, as we are losing accessible taxis in our city. Despite the removal of the cap on accessible taxis ([https://youtu.be/vpmwh\\_L1ufA?feature=shared&t=18865](https://youtu.be/vpmwh_L1ufA?feature=shared&t=18865)) and the waiver of business license fees, we are witnessing fewer accessible taxis on the road today since these decisions were made in 2018 and 2021 respectively. It is clear that these measures alone are insufficient to encourage investment in an industry fraught with uncertainty. We must instill confidence in both existing and prospective operators of accessible taxis that the City of London is committed and prepared to assist in overcoming the challenges they may encounter when operating accessible taxis. Otherwise, we will have little to discuss in five years.

**Based on the vehicle for hire by-law the City of London is short 30 accessible taxis:**

8.1 (b) a ratio of one Licence for each 1,100 residents of the City, the total number of residents of the City to be determined annually from the latest revised population figures available from Statistics Canada.

8.2 A limitation is imposed on the number of Accessible Cab Owner Licences at the ratio of one Licence for every 12 Cab Owner Licences.

Source: <https://london.ca/by-laws/vehicle-hire-law-l-130-71>

**London’s Population (2021) = 543,551 / 1100 = 494 / 12 = 41 Accessible Taxi Cabs**

Source: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/fogs-spg/Page.cfm?lang=E&topic=1&dguid=2021S0503555>

**Funding opportunities currently being offered in neighbouring communities:**

City	Incentive	Source
Toronto, ON	\$2,187.50 annually per driver.	<a href="https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/97c7-driver-AFP-package.pdf">https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/97c7-driver-AFP-package.pdf</a>
Hamilton, ON	\$5.00 per wheelchair ride.	<a href="https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/2023-01/businesslicence-accessible-taxicab-incentive-form-august-2022.pdf">https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/2023-01/businesslicence-accessible-taxicab-incentive-form-august-2022.pdf</a>
Guelph, ON	Issue discounted coupons for passengers to buy.	<a href="https://pub-guelph.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=37782">https://pub-guelph.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=37782</a>

Ottawa, ON	Proposed:  1. \$5000 per year per vehicle owner 2. \$2000 per year per driver 3. \$15 per trip 4. Reduce annual fee to \$312	<a href="https://pub-ottawa.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=135173">https://pub-ottawa.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=135173</a>
BC, Canada	\$6000 annually per vehicle for all vans in the province. Additional funding is proposed for next year.	<a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/funding-engagement-permits/funding-grants/passenger-transportation-accessibility-program">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/funding-engagement-permits/funding-grants/passenger-transportation-accessibility-program</a>

We have successfully completed 8,712 accessible trips between January 1, 2023, and September 21, 2023. This figure has seen a decline over the years due to our reduced fleet size. Back during the September 18, 2018 Public Participation Meeting (PPM), I reported that we had conducted 14,587 accessible trips up to August 31, 2018. As you can see below, we are witnessing a decrease in the number of accessible taxi owner-operators and drivers. This decline is primarily attributed to the high operating costs associated with accessible taxi vehicles. Some drivers have switched back to driving regular sedan taxis, while others have exited the industry altogether, despite their patience in awaiting funding and direction from the City of London ([https://youtu.be/vpmwh\\_L1ufA?feature=shared&t=19693](https://youtu.be/vpmwh_L1ufA?feature=shared&t=19693)).

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

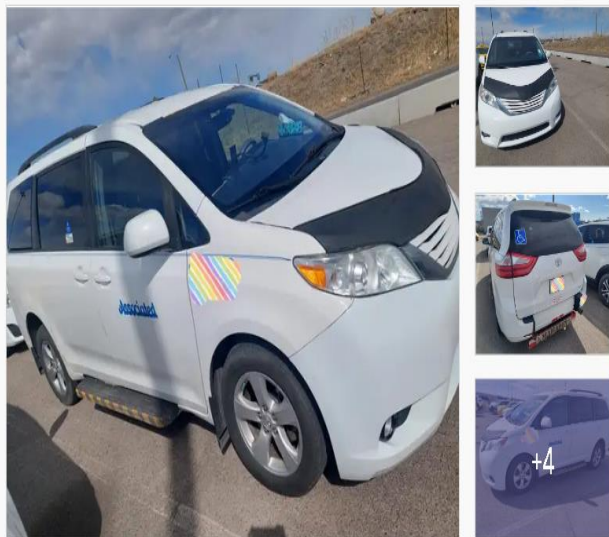
The challenge of finding accessible taxi drivers and securing the necessary startup funds to activate an accessible vehicle is indeed formidable. This is why we strongly recommend taking immediate action to preserve the existing drivers and vehicles that currently provide accessible taxi services. A potential approach to increasing the number of vans on the road is to eliminate the age-related restrictions on accessible taxis. This would particularly benefit older vans, as they tend to have lower acquisition costs. My greatest concern for the London community is the permanent loss of the remaining 11 active accessible taxi vans among all brokerages if no action is taken.

**Which vehicle is safer?**

### 2015 Toyota sienna

\$17,000

Posted over a month ago



#### Overview



Condition  
Used



Kilometers  
600,000

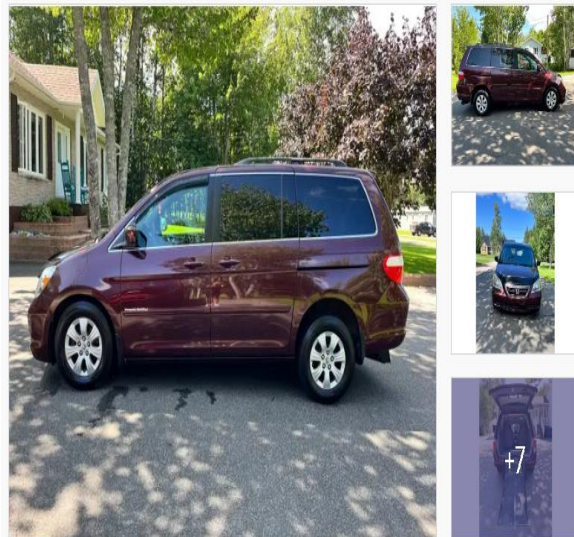
2015 Toyota Sienna | 600,000 KM

[www.kijiji.ca/v-cars-trucks/calgary/2015-toyota-sienna/1669378059](http://www.kijiji.ca/v-cars-trucks/calgary/2015-toyota-sienna/1669378059)

### Wheelchair accessible van

\$15,500

Posted about a month ago



#### Overview



Condition  
Used



Kilometers  
119,150

2007 Honda Odyssey | 119,150 KM

[www.kijiji.ca/v-cars-trucks/bathurst/wheelchair-accessible-van/1669645808](http://www.kijiji.ca/v-cars-trucks/bathurst/wheelchair-accessible-van/1669645808)

Only a licensed mechanic possesses the expertise to address this question. Therefore, why are we using the age of the vehicle as the sole criterion for assessing safety? It would be prudent to eliminate the age stipulation for accessible taxis and instead prioritize the mechanical safety of every individual vehicle. Additionally, have there been any notable rises in accidents involving accessible taxis since the extension of the vehicle age limit by 2 years in 2018?

Accessible vans for sale in Canada are limited. This has resulted in higher prices. Removing the age cap will help address this challenge:

1. AutoTrader: 59 found in all of Canada: Model Year 2012<:48, Model Year 2017<:27
2. Kijiji: Total: 84 found in all of Canada: Model Year 2012<:40, Model Year 2017<:19

Source: [www.autotrader.ca/cars/keyword/wheelchair%20van/](http://www.autotrader.ca/cars/keyword/wheelchair%20van/) | [www.kijiji.ca/b-canada/wheelchair-van/k0l0?rb=true&dc=true](http://www.kijiji.ca/b-canada/wheelchair-van/k0l0?rb=true&dc=true)

All in all, I have been in ongoing discussions with councillors and staff regarding this issue since 2018, but progress has been disappointingly slow. It's frustrating because both the councillors and staff members I've engaged with acknowledge the problem, yet the conversation often seems to stall. I am hopeful that this time, we will take the necessary steps to bring about meaningful change that benefits all stakeholders. While financial considerations are essential, I also suggest continued dialogue with service users, from riders to corporations that rely on our services daily. Together, we can develop a comprehensive plan to address all these challenges.

Thanks,  
Huruy Woldemicael

General Manager

**Attachments:**

1. Presentation completed for Accessibility Community Advisory Committee - June 22, 2023
2. On-Demand Accessible Taxicab Service Study - Ottawa, ON - June 28, 2023
3. Accessible On-Demand Taxi Service Report - Kingston, ON - August 2009
4. [REDACTED]

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# ACCESSIBLE TAXI CABS

Prepared By: Huruy Woldemicael

# Fleet Profile

- ▶ Launched 10 accessible taxi cab vans in Q2 of 2016.
- ▶ First vehicle for hire company to offer booking options via:
  - ▶ Chat
  - ▶ Mobile App
  - ▶ SMS Messaging
  - ▶ Web Booking





# Fleet Profile: 2018 vs 2023

- ▶ Total Accessible Vans: 10 vs 6 (-40%)
- ▶ Total Accessible Drivers: 16 vs 7 (-56.25%)
- ▶ Monthly Average Accessible Bookings: 2000 vs 1000 (-50%)
- ▶ Booking Types
  - ▶ On-Demand Bookings: 79% vs 78% (-1.27%)
  - ▶ Reservation Bookings: 21% vs 22% (+4.76%)
- ▶ Booking Originations:
  - ▶ Phone: 92% vs 88% (-4.35%)
  - ▶ Mobile App / Online: 8% vs 12% (+50%)

# Fleet Profile: 2018 vs 2023

- ▶ Annual Insurance Premiums: \$8,700 vs \$18,000 (+107%)
- ▶ Fuel Rates: \$1.22 vs \$1.60 (+31%)
  - ▶ 50 Litres Daily: \$61.00 vs \$80.00
- ▶ Vehicle Replacement Cost: \$47,500 vs \$95,000 (+100%)
- ▶ City Population: 494,069 (2016) vs 543,551 (2021) (+10%) \*Statistics Canada

# Recommendations

Phase 1 - Immediately



# Increase Accessible Ridership

- ▶ Subsidize accessible rides.
- ▶ Market accessible taxi options at city owned properties, funded organizations, and distributed material. (ie. Community centers, city buses, garbage calendar, etc.)
- ▶ Allow accessible taxi cabs to work in collaboration with London Transit to help reduce wait times and provide more booking flexibility for paratransit rides.

# Increase Accessible Drivers

- ▶ Free Training
  - ▶ Pay for the training costs to become an accessible licensed driver. (\$150-200)
- ▶ Waive Licensing Fees
  - ▶ Eliminate the \$60.00 per year vehicle for hire license fee for those that commit to driving an accessible vehicle only.
  - ▶ Eliminate the \$25.00 one-time fee to be listed on the accessible priority list.

# Increase Accessible Vehicles

- ▶ **Remove Vehicle Age Restrictions**
  - ▶ Focus on safety rather than the age of the vehicle. Increasing the amount of safety checks in the year and allowing less expensive older vans on the road will help reduce the start-up costs for new accessible taxi cab owners thus increasing the amount of accessible vans on the road.
- ▶ **Remove Vehicle Entry Restrictions**
  - ▶ Allow for side entry accessible vans. At the moment rear entry is the only permitted option.
- ▶ **Eliminate Vehicle Related Fees**
  - ▶ Discontinue the annual \$750 business license for accessible vans only.

# Provide Funding: Ongoing Expenses

- ▶ Insurance Premiums
  - ▶ After COVID-19 the only insurance option is Facility Association.
- ▶ Vehicle Financing Interest Cost
  - ▶ The cost of borrowing for commercial vehicles is at record highs.
- ▶ Fuel Cost
  - ▶ ESG goals continue to drive this variable up.
  - ▶ No hybrid/electric options.
- ▶ Maintenance (Commonly Replaced: Engine, Transmission, Suspension, & Tires)
  - ▶ The weight of the steel ramp continues to wear down the vehicle.

# Can We Afford The Recommendations?

- ▶ Increase fees for non-accessible participants:
  - ▶ Ride Sharing: Increase the per ride fee. (Currently: \$0.35 per ride.)
    - ▶ Toronto, Ottawa, Guelph, etc all charge \$0.07-0.10 per ride towards an accessibility fund.
  - ▶ Brokers: Increase the business license fee for brokers that refuse to offer accessible options.
    - ▶ Uber, Steer (Formerly FaceDrive), RideON Canada, etc.
- ▶ Contributions from all levels of government.
  - ▶ Grants, interest-free loans, etc.



# Recommendations

Phase 2 - January 1, 2025



# Increase Accessible Drivers

- ▶ Consolidated Licensing
  - ▶ Require every vehicle for hire driver to be trained as an accessible driver by January 1, 2025.
    - ▶ Training shouldn't be limited to those in a wheelchair:
      - ▶ Hearing
      - ▶ Mental
      - ▶ Physical
      - ▶ Vision

# Increase Accessible Vehicles

- ▶ Require all vehicles being licensed for hire to be accessible by January 1, 2025.
- ▶ Work with government & vehicle manufacturers to offer accessible vehicles directly from the manufacturer.

# Provide Funding: Ongoing Expenses

- ▶ Insurance
- ▶ Vehicle Financing Interest
- ▶ Fuel
- ▶ Maintenance (Commonly Replaced: Engine, Transmission, Suspension, & Tires)

# No Action

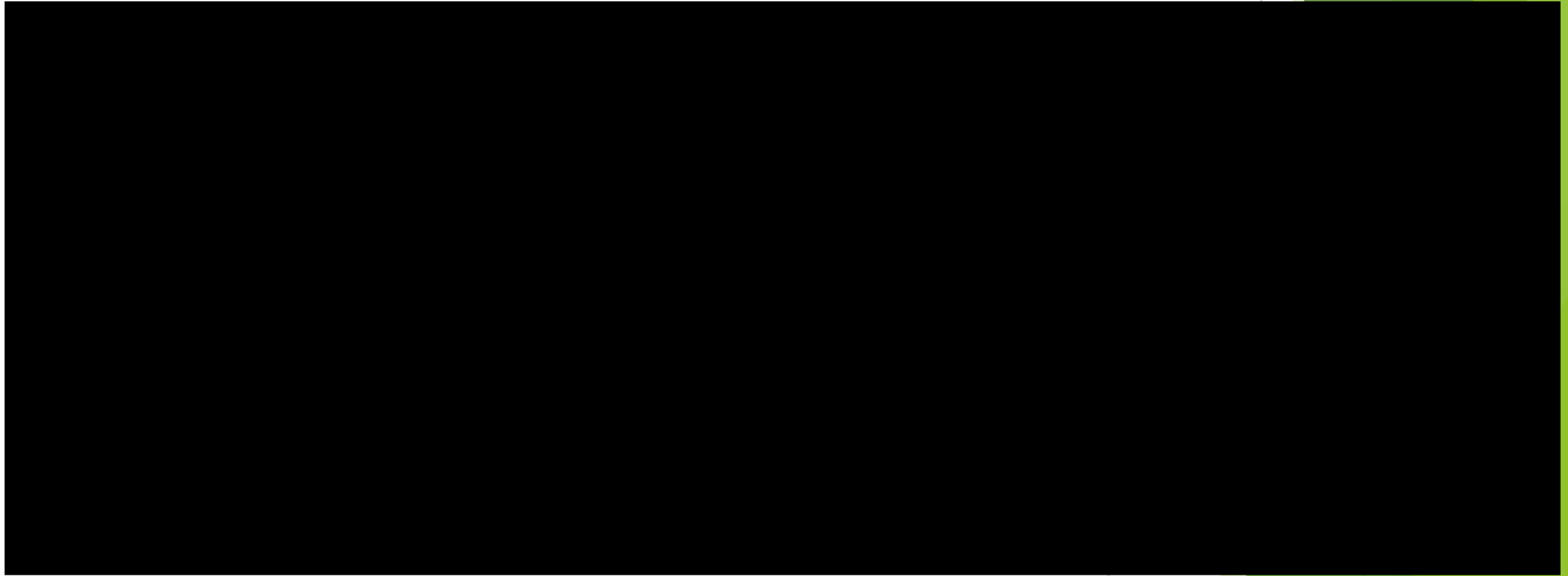
Risks



# If Nothing Changes

- ▶ Drivers & vehicles will gradually leave the industry.
- ▶ Riders will have to pay more per ride and eventually service levels will become unbearable.
- ▶ The City of London could miss out on economic opportunities such as hosting events, increase to its population, and business investment.

# If Nothing Changes



# Questions?

Prepared By: Huruy Woldemicael