

March 25, 2024

Dear City Councillors,

We are writing to support Councillor Lewis & Pelosi's motion to conduct a comprehensive audit of the London Transit Commission. As concerned members of the community and stakeholders in the efficient, effective, and fully accessible functioning of our public transit system, we believe that an external audit is essential to ensure transparency, accountability, and prudent management of our transit system. We believe this is an opportunity to gain an unbiased and objective assessment of the Commission's financial records, internal processes, and overall performance to identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement.

In our opinion, an external audit offers a unique opportunity to enhance transparency and accountability at the LTC, which has been lacking until the last few months. Last year, our request for delegation status at the LTC to continue conversations on improving the transit system was denied. We were told instead to submit questions in writing, but we have yet to receive any response to questions submitted on September 27th, 2023.

It is our hope that an audit of the LTC could help answer the following questions:

- Why is there so often a disconnect between the official inconsistent messaging from LTC senior leaders and the actual realities of the service?
 - Public statements have been made that the LTC is fully compliant with the AODA. As we have shown, it is not.
 - The LTC has made public statements that Paratransit riders could use smart cards to pay for rides. As we have shown, they cannot, and the date for implementation has been pushed back to *another* quarter.
 - The LTC has publicly stated that the only way to provide online booking for Paratransit would be to cancel their existing contract at a significant cost. Several months later, it has now been announced that the existing platform can, in fact, be upgraded at a fraction of the cost to enable these features.
- What are the current roles and responsibilities of the Accessible Public Transit Service Advisory Committee (APTSAC) within the LTC?
 - How many of the current members of APTSAC are Paratransit riders?
 - How many recommendations from the APTSAC has the LTC implemented in the last 5 years?
 - How is the effectiveness of this subcommittee currently being measured?
- What attempts has the LTC made to include disabled voices and expertise in the RFP and service acquisition process?

- Why did the LTC proceed with the implementation of smart card readers on conventional busses in 2019 when they did not, and almost 5 years later still do not, have the capacity to implement them on Paratransit in violation of the AODA?
- Why did the LTC purchase a booking software package for Paratransit in 2018 that did not include high-demand features offered in other Ontario municipalities, such as online booking or live location updates?
- Has there been an investigation into why/how an inaccurate AODA compliance report was submitted to the Ontario government?
 - What steps has the LTC taken to come into compliance with their obligations under the AODA?
 - When will the LTC be fully compliant with their obligations under the AODA?

While there have been signs of progress at the LTC over the last few months, there are still some significant questions about how the organization understands and implements accessibility both structurally and practically. As such, we believe an audit of the service that focuses on both internal functions and processes, with an eye firmly on the repeated failure to serve disabled riders, is critical.

Sincerely,

Wendy Lau – *CEO, LEADS Employment Services*

Jeff Preston – *Associate Professor, King's University College*