



**Presentation to London City Council
Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee
Access to Affordable Transportation
January 17, 2012**

Good afternoon Your Worship and Members of Council. My name is Jim Hewett, I am the Chair of Community Living London's Advocacy Committee, Board Member of CLL's Board of Directors, and a parent of a young man who has an intellectual disability.

Yes, I am here again to advocate for access to affordable transportation for people with intellectual disabilities that live on a limited income. Last year when I was here, I was asked to "be patient" and to allow the new council to review information provided and additional recommendations from City Administration.

Needless to say I am disappointed that after 10 years of advocating for public transportation subsidy, Londoners who receive ODSP Income Support have not experienced any increased access to public transportation.

Last year, Mayor Fontana stated that "***we need a further report to make a decision. We need to do something and need to find out where the obstacles are***". Here we are a year later, waiting for some action by Council to move toward access to affordable public transportation for all Londoners.

People who live in poverty make difficult choices everyday such as:

- whether to purchase groceries or a bus ticket and then use the Food Bank because they cannot afford both
- if they accept a job to which they need to rely on public transportation to get to, or
- if they choose to volunteer at a local child care centre for example that is not within walking distance.

These are activities that you and I take for granted, but these choices are faced by people who rely on ODSP Income Support every day.

In the Municipal Scan of Public Transit Subsidies document presented by City Administration in February 2011, 11 communities were identified that provide subsidized access to public transportation to people who receive ODSP Income Supports. This number continues to grow every year while London continues to provide no transportation subsidy for people who receive ODSP Income Supports.

What Needs to Happen?

City Council must approve adequate funding to support the implementation of a realistic program that offers a 50% transportation subsidy to people who rely on ODSP Income Support.

In 2010, this amount was estimated by the City of London Community and Neighbourhoods Committee to be \$725,000.00, plus the amount of subsidy allocated for seniors and people with visual impairments.

City Administration needs to initiate a Policy and Process that ensures that people who receive ODSP Income Support have access to affordable transportation.

Although this community continues to face significant financial constraints, the citizens of London believe Council would show great leadership, if it recognized the needs of this group of citizens, who are experiencing very significant hardship, as a priority that can no longer be ignored. Although balancing the budget is a laudable goal, surely councillors don't want to achieve it by depriving the poorest citizens of a service for which they have been waiting ten years.

By continuing to not provide access to affordable transportation for all Londoners, City Council continues to portray an image that does not value the contributions made by people who rely on ODSP Income Support. Numerous other municipalities ensure that affordable transportation is available and this clearly demonstrates the value held by all citizens of those communities.

Can you provide information on what next steps we can expect towards access to affordable public transportation for all Londoners, including those who live in poverty?

Thank you.