

Committee: **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

Organization/Sector represented:

Name: **Larry Firby**

Address:

**1187 Landor Street  
London, Ontario  
N5Y 3W4**

Occupation: **Heart & Stroke**

Work experience: **Most of my professional career has been in finance, especially in customer/client service focused roles. I worked for TD Canada Trust in London for almost 20 years, and have since worked for London Life and the London Health Sciences Foundation. While I was employed at the London Health Sciences Foundation, I found many areas for improvement from an accessibility standpoint. I worked with management and the accessibility committee to add or improve features, including washrooms, doorways, and parking.**

Education: **I have taken courses in Business Accounting at Fanshawe College, as well as continually found opportunities for professional development through my employers in the areas of Privacy Matters, Anti-Money Laundering, IT Security Awareness, Service Awareness, Consumer Protection, and the Customer Experience Model.**

Skills: **In my personal life, I have done extensive research on accessible features for my own properties. As someone who relies on a motor scooter to get around, I have had to modify my own home to meet accessibility standards. This process has included designing and installing ramps and chair lifts, accessible doorways, and washrooms. Converting residential spaces to be truly accessible requires creativity, thoughtfulness, and careful planning to be successful. I have also brought a mindfulness of accessibility into my workplaces as well, and assisted my employers in meeting required standards. I have, with the support of my employers, used my creative ingenuity to allow me to do my job independently. The modifications necessary to make work can often be exceedingly simple; a larger pencil for someone with arthritis, or a standing desk for someone who cannot sit for extended periods of time. But it still requires that we as a society are willing to listen to the needs of our friends and coworkers in order to ensure everyone can contribute to the best of their ability.**

Interest reason: **While our society has become more considerate of the need for accessibility in our public spaces, I still find many instances where a lack of awareness creates unnecessary barriers. For example, when I expressed an interest in participating in the accessibility committee at a previous employer, I was told that I would be welcomed, except that the space where meetings were held was not accessible. I don't believe this was an intentional attempt to exclude me, rather a simple case of lack of awareness and consideration for the needs of others. I would value the opportunity to serve not only on my own behalf, but also for those who are not currently in a position to do so. I currently volunteer three days a week assisting a fellow Londoner with her daily living tasks. After seeing the challenges that she, her family, and others in the same position face, I would like help give them a voice through my work on the Accessibility Advisory Committee. My personal experience has developed my passion for fostering awareness in the community of the often very simple things we can do as a society to increase inclusivity and break down barriers to access.**

Contributions: **Living with a degenerating condition like cerebral palsy, I have become increasingly aware of the potential shortcomings of accessibility initiatives. With the introduction of new accessibility standards, facilities, both private and public, have done great work to try to accommodate. However, my lived experience has made it clear that there is still work to be done. I believe I would bring valuable perspective to the Accessibility Advisory Committee through my own work and experience in cultivating accessible spaces in my home and work. I find that many initiatives and regulations are on the right track, but would benefit from increased perspective from those who face barriers to access and rely on those initiatives to be independent and contributing members of our society. I would value the opportunity to use my experience to help steer accessibility**

**efforts in our city to ensure inclusion for everyone.**

**Past contributions: During my employment with TD Canada Trust, I got involved in fundraising efforts for the Children's Hospital. I worked as part of a committee to generate ideas and turn those ideas into action. It required a great deal of planning and ability to encourage others to get involved, but our efforts were very successful.**

**Interpersonal: Living with a disability myself, I am able to understand challenges and barriers others face every day. Working in the customer service industry I have the skill set to listen to others and sell my ideas as well work as a team to come up with new ones.**

**Having had three properties and renovating each one helped me understand the process and hours of commitment. Processes like blue prints, permits from The City, Union Gas and Hydro One. The building of a team that works well together to get the renovations done and on time is very satisfying.**

Interview interest: **Yes**