

Good day Miss Kucera.

I would like to submit some personal feelings and views for Tuesday's meeting.

Re: Subsidized bussing, particularly for the blind and low vision community in London

I have had low vision all of my life and, in recent years, it has dropped to almost no vision. For me, getting out and being independent means everything. I possess good mobility skills and have been very active – I use public transit for social events, volunteer commitments, and so much more. Not having to rely on family or friends is a wonderful feeling. Feelings that, unless you can relate to, you may not understand.

I am also the company director of Out Of Sight Productions, a community theatre troupe based in London whose mission is to get low vision and blind artists involved to create exciting theatrical projects. For ten years, members of this group have relied on the current bus pass model to attend auditions, rehearsals, and performances.

I have also been on the board and am a long standing member of the Canadian Council of the Blind, an activities group for those who are blind or low vision. Many would not be able to participate without the subsidized pass, including myself.

When I had the privilege of sitting on the London Accessible Advisory committee, I relied on public transit to attend the meetings at city hall.

Increasing the amount or taking the pass away for the blind community is like multiplying car insurance for a driver instantly. Drivers wouldn't stand for that. They would go elsewhere because, to an extent, they have choice. We don't.

For the low vision and blind community, the city is not safe in summer and winter as things stand now to walk if one had to do it every day. Mettle trees, benches, bike tie ups, the increasing number of restaurant patios, dangerous drive through entrance ways, and sandwich boards, not to mention uninsured bikes on sidewalks, present major hazards for us.

The idea of making us line up for a pass each month also worries me. The fight for a limited amount of subsidized passes would end up in someone getting hurt, and many low vision and blind students and part time workers missing out month after month. Who would this benefit?

I sincerely hope you will consider leaving the bus pass program for the blind where it stands today. In the future, consider the yearly amount we pay going up incrementally with consideration from the blind community, CNIB and specialized transit.

Thank you.

Kelly MacDonald  
301 Base Line RD  
London Ontario  
N6J 3T9