

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

18. Subsidized Transit

- B. Ryan, 3 Hammond Cres. – thanking the Committee for the chance to speak about this; noting that many people know that she is an advocate for people with disabilities but today she is here for everybody that needs accommodation and needs to have an equal right to use public transit that we all pay for through our taxation; point out that everyone, whether you have a disability, are a senior, living in poverty, or a student, everybody deserves the same respect and consideration; noting that we have a Charter of Rights in Canada and we have the Human Rights Code and in the Human Rights Code the first two sections talk about service and accommodation that everyone requires despite race, creed, ability, etc., we are all equal; indicating that she thinks the same thing applies to anyone that needs accommodation; noting that she falls into the classification of a senior with a disability but that whatever is decided tonight will not affect her because she is not in a situation where she has to depend on public transit but she has a lot of friends in the audience and the community that do and they're the ones she's speaking for today; noting that her friends that are visually impaired are very lucky because they have had the chance to utilize public transit to get around town, free of charge, for a number of years; advising that senior citizens, regardless of their financial status have been given a 25% discount for their transportation costs if they have a mobility issue; indicating that with specialized transit you have to pay the full fare regardless of what your income level may be; noting that if you are in need of a helper on transit you have to pay a double fare to get on the bus and that there is an injustice here; noting that the injustice is what she is here to speak about today, an equalization of justice and that everybody that requires subsidy for public transit in this community should be provided it; indicating that the item has been looked at from a budget analysis but it should be looked at from a needs analysis; asking that the Committee accommodate people; indicating that she doesn't think we have a right to deny anybody what they need because they are equal participants of the city and they have a right to get on a bus and get around and if we don't give them this opportunity we are ostracizing them from the community as a whole.
- K. Husain, 685 Woodcrest Blvd. – thanking the Committee for the opportunity to come and make presentations about something that is very critical and essential in our lives; noting that he wants to talk about two matters, eligibility and delivery of these programs; indicating that the success of any program is measured by whether it is able to reach the people that it is intended to reach and if so, did it reach the maximum number of individuals, did it serve the greater good; noting that the way the current program is structured he does not believe it does that, that limiting the program to a certain number of dollars means that you are minimizing the number of individuals that can benefit from the program, success cannot be providing 1200 bus passes a month to 28 or 29 thousand eligible people; wondering how you should go about reaching out to the community and ensuring this program reaches out to those that need it and he believes that the people it should serve are the people in most need, that if people are far below the cut off level that staff mentioned and maybe even people who are on ODSP because these people are the poorest of the poor and they don't have many other resources and they rely on that income to house them and to get around the city, they are the ones that can be best served by this program; noting that among that group of people on ODSP are the legally blind and over the years they have been enjoying an accommodation that has not been afforded to others and people wonder why they get this; indicating that although it would be great to have a level playing field where everyone is equal, the truth is we are not all equal, we each have individual challenges and need accommodations to address those challenges; noting that being visually impaired means that they are legally unable to even think

- of driving and that walking anywhere is a challenge, each step is measured because they do not know what lies beyond and that the blind face enormous challenges that others do not face, even curb cuts for the physically disabled are beneficial to them but are a detriment to the visually impaired; noting that for the blind, transit is essential, it is the safest way for the visually impaired to get around and that is why the blind are given the unique accommodations that others do not get; indicating that if the program is going to go forward it will be necessary to create bus tickets and transfers and information on the bus in braille.
- Kat Clarke, CNIB – indicating that she works for CNIB and that there are inaccuracies in the report that she will point out; the first inaccuracy is that the outcome of the stakeholders meeting in 2013-2014 was that a recommendation was made that a program be developed and that the only consideration for a transit subsidy should be an individual's ability to pay and she wants to clarify that CNIB did not endorse a removal of the blind persons concession then and they do not endorse it today; noting that statistics indicate that over 60% of people in Canada that live with vision loss are under or unemployed, thus scrapping the current plan would not generate revenue from people who are legally blind; noting that many people who use the CNIB bus pass cannot afford a bus pass for \$40 per month and traveling around their community will not be an option and they will be unable to access employment, health care, education, recreation and social activities and the sudden change to this policy is going to directly hurt the vision loss population in London; indicating that she wants to address the inaccuracies in Appendix A of the report, the municipal scan, and that if London were to adopt the new policy they would be falling behind other municipalities in Ontario in regards to concessions for people who are legally blind; noting that the scan conducted by the City is inaccurate and misleading, that it looks at a number of municipalities but only looks at low income subsidies and ignores the fact that those cities offer free transit to CNIB card holders; indicating that many cities in Canada and the world recognize that it is smart to assist blind people to access their community so they are less likely to reach a crisis point where they are forced to rely on social assistance; noting that it is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do and London needs to follow the example of its neighbours; noting that if the City wants to create a policy that will give more equal access to the transit service for all people with disabilities, CNIB would be happy to be part of the discussion alongside other stakeholder groups within and outside the blindness community; indicating that in 2016 we should not be looking at scrapping programs that help a vulnerable population to travel independently and safely in their community but should be looking for ways to work towards a better program.
 - J. Hewett, Community Living London – See attached communication.
 - M. Anderson, representing New Vision Advocates – See attached communication.
 - Mr. Khouri, Ardsley Crescent – noting that he is a visually impaired person on ODSP and he wants to offer his position on two core issues pertaining to the present proposal; in studying political science in university he believes that public transit should be free to all citizens of a city but that is a discussion for another day; indicating that he would like to present that after contacting a number of other municipalities transit services he can conclude that, although the blind have a very inexpensive bus pass it is not free and that the proposed increase would be about 48 times what is being paid by the visually impaired communities and that is, unfortunately, unacceptable; point out that after comparing to other models, visually impaired people should be paying in the area of \$30 per month rather than the proposed \$40 per month; indicating that the second issue is the lottery, we cannot limit the number of people that can take the bus; noting that he proposes that two years after implementing the community pass at the reduced rate in London, that we do not limit the number of people that can line up to purchase the pass; stating that it is essential that everyone be able to purchase the pass so that they are not isolated, possibly hampering their health or their

- psychological well-being; advising that in two years, after keeping track of the statistics, a more rigid budget can be put in place because we will have a record of how many people will use the bus pass, 1200 just is not going to cut it; concluding that it is important to be fair to all peoples across all communities and he is asking that the Committee remain objective when revising the current proposal.
- Kristin Elliott, Resident of London – noting that she has lived in London for 21 years and is a deaf/blind individual and receives services from the CNIB and has benefited from the bus pass of \$10 per year and it fits her needs; noting that it fits the needs of deaf/blind people; indicating that it is very difficult for her to use the public transit system, that if it is a direct route where she only needs to take one bus there and back, it is something she can use; noting that she mostly uses paratransit, as do most deaf/blind individuals, simply for safety reasons; stating that in regards to the first come, first served aspect of this new model, the Committee needs to understand that as a deaf/blind person she is not able to get down to wherever it is that she needs to line up, she would need to try to book an intervener, and that is if the interveners schedule can be accommodating to whenever it is that people need to line up for the bus passes; advising that if an intervener isn't available she will have to get on the bus service and try to make it there and hopefully it will only be on one route so she will not be putting herself in danger in order to line up to get the subsidized bus pass; indicating that by changing this program her independence is being taken away; stating that even in order to book paratransit she needs to call them three days in advance and she has to use the Bell Relay service, which is like using an interpreter but she is typing to an operator who speaks to the person on the other end of the phone; stating that paratransit only has a limited window that she can book rides and she has to use the relay service that every deaf Canadian is using so she is already limited and her ability to participate in the wider community is already limited and what is being proposed will limit her even further; indicating that the general population are able to use cell phones or other devices in order to make their arrangements and they are able to use apps that tell them when the bus is coming and for her that is not an option; stating that she has a friend that is completely blind and deaf and she is not able to get out at all unless she can get an intervener and that is because she isn't even able to book paratransit because she isn't able to see the TTY to call; indicating that, as stated earlier, if this program is going to go ahead, other services need to be implemented, such as braille on buses; noting that the bottom line is that increasing the cost is going to limit her life even further and she will have to make decisions about whether she will buy food or make an appointment and that the way the new system is laid out she knows she will not be able to line up to get the subsidized pass.
 - Brian Yasbert, East London – noting that he does benefit from the \$10 per year annual pass and that it has been very beneficial in getting him out in the community to volunteer, to go to appointments and go to social activities, all of the things that everybody should be able to enjoy; indicating that setting up a 1200 bus pass limit means that people have to line up to get one on a first come, first served basis and that will create a situation like if a group of people are trying to buy tickets to a big event and there are a limited number of tickets, the passes are going to sell out in a matter of minutes and then you will have people pushing and shoving and possibly hurting each other to get one of these bus passes; indicating that he fully supports a fair bus pass for everybody but that there needs to be a way for people to access it safely and affordably; stating that right now the blind pay \$10 per year and that he would be more than happy to pay \$20 a month; admitting that \$10 per year is very inexpensive and that people could pay \$20 per month but again, it needs to be done safely; indicating that he believes that the implementation of the 1200 passes will fail because of the reasons he mentioned.
 - Roger Khouri, 208 Ardsley Cres. – wants to thank everyone for coming out to the meeting, especially his peers, those that are blind and those with a

- disability and other stakeholders, people who find this issue very important; believing that there were a lot of challenges facing those with a disability to come out to City Hall for this and he wants to acknowledge that; noting that this issue is very important to him, that he served on the Accessibility Advisory Committee from 2003 to 2011, many of those years as the chairperson; indicating that he is well-connected in the disabled community, not just the blind community, and also with the low income community; acknowledging that staff did take action to create documents in an accessible format and to assist people in navigating barriers but therefore noting that it was a challenge for many to attend the meeting; stating that he believes that if documents are not created in alternative formats, for those that need them, at the same time they are produced for the general public, that it is an inequality that should not continue; that if documents require extra time to be produced, such as the one on the agenda, then meetings should be scheduled around that time frame to allow the staff to produce them so that the blind and others can receive documents at the same time they are produced for the general public; right now it is a two-tier system, they are produced for the public and go online and then the blind or those that require an additional format have to wait; suggesting that the City, when producing documents for the general public, additional formats should be created simultaneously so that everyone has a level playing field to have the information to come prepared and be able to speak about the issues at hand; indicating that with respect to the proposal, he feels very fortunate to have a bus pass that he pays only \$10 a year for that allows him to participate in society and get around; acknowledging that City Council has done good work in the past and that we need to keep working to help those that find the cost of a bus pass to be exorbitant; stating that the jump in cost of the bus pass is unjustifiable, that we wouldn't accept that for taxes or municipal costs; with respect to raising the price, he would propose a new model, a model where you include people on a low income under the class of students who receive a semester long bus pass; doing this will benefit the city by increasing its London Transit ridership and that money would account for the subsidized bus pass; indicating that he feels like staff should look at that model and do the research and see the benefits of that; noting that if you were in a line-up of 1200 people, including service animals, how can you navigate that with a cane, or a service animal, etc. and noting that you can't always rely on the good grace of other people.
- Ian Coventry, 98 Baseline Road West – indicating that he keeps hearing about having to pay \$480 more for the blind and that if he were to buy a pass, which he cannot afford to do, he would have to pay \$960 and that he would gladly pay \$40 per month; indicating that he is on ODSP as well; noting that at the moment he buys bus tickets and a bus pass would cost him more money but his freedom would be unlimited and he wouldn't have to pick and choose where he can go; acknowledging that there is a non-peak pass available but that it is not transferrable to paratransit and non-peak passes don't work well for getting to medical appointments; stating, with all due respect to everyone in the room, either give the option of the half price bus pass to the disabled, or do not give anything to anyone and everyone pays what they can afford.
 - Matthew Floyd, Proudfoot Lane – stating that he has no problem with equalizing the bus passes at all but wonders why not make it a one serves all disability pass for a flat fee, for the year, for everyone, that way it is equal for everyone and the city can still make money on the pass, rather than having everyone line up for a limited pass based on their income which would lead to mad scramble that would go badly for everyone and that would leave out many other people with the same problem.
 - Elaine, Oxford and Wonderland – noting that the information she's heard has been illuminating and that if 320 people have the CNIB pass that would only be about \$3200 in revenue; wondering about the longevity of the program, why is this just being brought up all of a sudden; stating that she keeps hearing the words poverty and disability thrown around but they are not synonymous; indicating that poverty is a horrible thing and it is

- something that needs to be worked on as a community but disability is something completely different and requires different accommodation; stating that this particular pass is helping people with disabilities, it's not about poverty; with respect to the proposal, 1200 passes that are going to run out quickly, aren't going to help anyone; outlining that the disability pass that has been afforded the visually impaired is to help with the unique challenges in travelling around; indicating that she is a single parent and the LTC just passed a motion to have children under 12 ride the buses for free and that is wonderful but now to limit her mobility by taking away her bus pass is really unfortunate, it will take away her ability to go anywhere; wondering about the third party organization taking information about their income and wondering why it's necessary to give another organization their financial information, they already have to give their information to so many organizations and how can they be sure it will remain confidential; wondering about the line-up for 1200 people and how difficult that will be for someone who is deaf/blind or someone who has a small child; indicating that the points the CNIB made were very true and that if there is going to be a change in the model now it should be a change to \$20 or a little more per year for this group of people, or raising it for everybody; pointing out that other municipalities do not have passes that cost money for the blind, why is London so different.
- Mary Anne Quinlan, 301 Baseline Road – indicating that she works at The Hub and takes the bus seven days a week; noting that it would be nice if they got the 50% because right now she pays \$81; advising that she lives in her own apartment and has for 33 years; noting that it would be nice to get a subsidy for people who cannot afford it, it would leave her with some extra money to spend in the community; stating that she just hopes they can make some changes.
 - Anton, 31 Craig Street – thanking City staff and Councillors for great service and giving them a chance to speak; noting that being totally blind does cause challenges and it is not fair to pay full price and not getting full service; noting that as for the 1200 people lining up, people who drive would not like to have to line up for gas and not be guaranteed to get some; indicating that being on ODSP and having a part time job makes it difficult to pay a larger amount of money in a short period of time; noting that he is all for people with disabilities, or low income individuals having an affordable pass and he is not opposed to having an increased annual fee; stating that if there is room in a budget for children 12 and under to ride for free, there should be room in a budget for people with disabilities and low income as well.
 - Terry McBride, 47 Midale Court – advising that she was asked to come speak by Roger Khouri because she was very upset about this situation; stating that she was born and raised in London but went to a school in Brantford for the visually impaired; stating that she uses the bus pass for her eyesight training, exercise classes and for social events and taking it away would also take those things away from her.
 - Len Fluhrer, Chair of Independent Living Centre of London – See attached communication.
 - Dawn Crockett, 121 Sandy Street – indicating that she has been a resident of London for 25 years; indicating that she has had the opportunity to use the bus pass for the visually impaired but that years ago it was not acceptable with paratransit; stating that she used to live and work in Toronto and she benefited from having a blind bus pass there; indicates that now she is getting older and is having to make do with a smaller income; stating that this is an issue that not only affects the blind and she is here in support of all of her friends as well as herself.
 - A Resident of London – pointing out that most people have spoken about having a single disability but she and so many others have multiple challenges, such as vision and physical, etc.; indicating that having a cap on subsidized passes is ridiculous and it is ridiculous to ask everyone to line up for the chance at one of the passes; noting that in that situation people could become desperate and it would be a safety issue; stating that she, personally, has been using the CNIB bus pass and she has gained so much

independence and it has a great impact on her life; stating that capping the passes would be a huge mistake and this whole issue needs to be looked at again.

- Florence Morton, 405 Commissioners Road West – indicating that she would like the price of the passes to come down for the blind and the disabled because it would make it easier to afford.
- Marie Claire Billock – indicating that she is here to speak on behalf of her friends and herself; indicating that she is very much in favour of accessible transit, especially for those with barriers such as poverty or disabilities; stating that people on ODSP are some of our most vulnerable citizens and ensuring they can get out and enjoy activities that make a life rewarding is very important; stating that she believes that visual impairment and blindness is distinct; stating that there are challenges for the visually impaired that are isolating and mobility stopping; stating that not being able to see is a huge isolating experience due to the fact that a great deal of communication is non-verbal and the blind are cut off from that; noting that balance is also an issue for the blind and visually impaired; stating that when a person has a lot of anxiety happening on a regular basis, the adrenal system can also become overloaded; stating that there is also a mental factor to deal with, dealing with something you cannot control every day, your vision loss or blindness; indicating that the financial stress is just one more thing to be concerned about for many people; stating that she has known people who have ended up in psychiatric wards because of the extreme stress of the isolation blindness can cause.
- Ann, East London – asking how many Councillors have tried to live on ODSP for one month; stating that there are a lot of things that people cannot afford on ODSP such as transportation; stating that she cannot afford a bus pass so she must rely on tickets and once they are gone she has no transportation.
- Art, Simcoe Street – stating that he can only speak for the blind because he is completely blind himself; asking the Committee to not increase the cost of the bus pass for the blind and visually impaired because it will isolate them completely; indicating that dealing with intersections, sirens, trains, train tracks, etc. are a daily struggle; stating that many live alone and are not employable; stating that the visually impaired still have expenses; noting that those with sight can use body language and can assist the visually impaired and that Londoners are usually quite good for this but there are still so many hazards to face; indicating that he has a guide dog but he can only do what he has been trained to do and will take the path of least resistance; acknowledging that we have come a long way with audible signals and GPS on the buses as well as ramps for wheelchairs but asking if these are going to be taken away now; noting that Councillors are elected to make the city safe and accessible and if the pass is going to be taken away where will that leave us; asking the Committee to not diminish life further for those that rely on the pass.
- Tammy, Cherryhill – stating that she is a visually impaired bus user and she is here to speak about how the bus pass has given her independence as she lives in London with no family around; indicating that she has lived in other Ontario cities and has never paid for the bus; stating that this plan is disturbing to her; noting that she has an income of Canada Pension Disability Benefits and that she does not receive OW or ODSP and she does not get medical benefits or the money to pay for her assisted devices that she needs for her daily living and this puts her in a lower income bracket; stating that she receives Canada Pension benefits because she has worked and earned an income but she is not employed now; pointing out that the bus pass allows her to get to and from appointments and go job hunting; stating that she has to accommodate, in her budget, emergency transportation for times when the bus isn't running; noting that she is fortunate enough to live in low income housing; indicating that when you look at low income families you have to remember that they are receiving other benefits such as GST and Trillium benefit and so you're not looking at the whole picture when you're just looking at income; stating that she finds

- it disturbing that the plan mentions a third party administrator to assess who is eligible and that seems to be going against the budget, spending money on a third party; noting that getting around in the winter weather is very difficult and without a bus pass it will be even more challenging; indicating that she believes there are a lot of unnecessary City expenditures that need to be looked at before looking at the CNIB pass; concluding that taking away the pass will really hinder the independence of those with disabilities.
- Nicolege Hansen, Wonderland Road – indicating that the \$40 per month pass is unacceptable and unaffordable for herself and many individuals and that the proposal that is being considered would severely limit her independence because the bus is a key element to her being able to travel around successfully; stating that in regards to the 1200 bus passes, what happens to the people that miss the chance to line up or are unable to get there and what happens to the rest of the people once those passes have been given out.
 - A Resident of London – stating that having people line up for a bus pass is demoralizing to an already stigmatized group, whether they be disabled or impoverished and whoever came up with that idea needs to talk to the poverty panel; urging City Council to take a look at what the LTC will have to do to fares already in order to allow the children under 12 to ride for free; stating that having to prove that you are poor is also demoralizing; believing that this entire plan is ridiculously stigmatizing and demoralizing and that many in the community already have to prove how poor they are in order to access other benefits; stating that she does understand where the proposal is coming from but that the committee needs to listen to the public and look at the proposal again.
 - Ari Sotris, London – stating that he is a person who used to have 20/20 vision and now is living legally blind; indicating that we need to look at the microeconomic factors and the macroeconomic factors of this proposal; asking what will happen if we take away the bus pass and end up locking people in their homes; believing that it will prevent people from interacting with others and having a better quality of life; stating that by taking money away from people with an already limited income we are also taking money out of the community because they will not have it to spend in the community; indicating that we are not addressing the problem, we are taking money and throwing it at a transit system that just isn't working, advising that throwing money at it isn't going to solve the problem and keeping people at home so they can't spend money is not going to solve the problem; noting that this will cause more people to need to access health care more often and the expense of that; indicating that caregivers of disabled or blind people will also be burdened with extra financial pressures; acknowledging that he understands that the City is facing an economic crisis with transit but that taking the financial burden and placing it on people who cannot afford it is not a viable situation.
 - Amanda Mesco, Deaf/Blind Ontario Services – stating that her organization has deaf/blind clients and many of them could not come to the meeting because they have a dual diagnoses of being deaf and blind; stating that many of their clients also have anxiety, depression, aggressive behaviour and you want them to stand in line to get a bus pass; indicating that it is almost inconceivable for them to enter an unfamiliar environment but in order to access their community that is what they are being asked to do; stating that it is unfair to just take that information and put it out there; noting that everyone on low-income are not the same; stating that many clients do have a discretionary fund after paying their bills but \$40 a month will be a significant portion of that money each month and it really will impact their life; introducing of her clients, Esther, who uses an intervener and will be speaking next.
 - Esther, London – stating that she lives in London with her roommates; stating that she uses the bus a lot, she goes downtown to do shopping; she using the bus on Wednesdays with her intervener for her day out; indicating that if she needs to stand in line for the pass she is able to; however she is an exception for the clients at Deaf/Blind Ontario Services.

- Rob Gaunt, CNIB – stating that his comments will be brief because the most important comments of the evening will come from those affected; noting that the proposal being considered will impose, rather than remove, another barrier to those already facing challenges; stating that, for those who are blind, the LTC pass is a lifeline to the outside world; stating that the CNIB does not support the methodology of the low-income, subsidized scheme that is proposed by the City of London; stating that the proposed model for receiving the subsidy is not safe for the blind or for their guide dogs, for those that have them; stating that many people who are blind will not feel comfortable putting themselves in this kind of situation and will therefore lose their ability to travel; indicating that the proposal being considered will remove transit access to many blind individuals and one can only imagine the anxiety and the lowered quality of life this will cause; stating that the proposed program would require orientation and training programs for individuals who are blind; requesting orientation and mobility training to ensure they can find their way safely to and from the new locations to line up at a direct expense to the City; stating that the right to travel within ones city is a human right and without it people do not have access to education, employment, health care, recreation or community socialization; stating that the City of London should take note of this and create a program that does not deprive vulnerable people of their human rights.
- Amy Bittner, Oxford and Wonderland – stating that she wants to thank Council and the City for supporting the bus pass in the past and that she hopes they will continue to do so as the loss to her independence would be huge; noting that she just lost her sight five years ago and the cost of this pass would keep her at home; stating that the rate of depression is high in the disabled community and it is going to increase with this pass change; noting that she does not know where the money will come from to keep the passes the same but if money can be found for other things hopefully it can be found to keep the passes.
- Krystal Weaston, 380 Adelaide Street North – indicating that she is hearing impaired and legally blind; asking that the CNIB bus passes be left alone as it is the only way she can get around; stating that nobody is immune to a disability and it can happen to anybody; asking that we not take away everything that has been worked for until the government can give enough money to people with disabilities to pay what is asked for; recommending that the pass stay at \$10 per month.
- Joan Manning, Vision Communications – stating that her understanding is that a bus costs the same to operate whether it is empty or full and that the proposed costs are projected or perceived costs not actual costs; indicating that changing the bus pass will mean that the bus will still cost the same but it will be emptier; wondering how much it will cost for the third party organization to come in and decide who can ride the bus with the pass; stating that she was watching the news and heard there would be millions of dollars spent on a downtown promenade on Dundas Street; noting that this was already done, 35 years go at Adelaide Street and Dundas Street and it was ripped up because it didn't work; stating that if there are millions for that and for the Dam, why take money away from the blind bus passes; stating the free bus pass for the blind started after the second World War and was like that until recently when it started costing \$10; stating that now with people having to potentially line up for a bus pass, the City will get sued for discrimination or someone will get hurt and sue; indicating that the reason the blind community uses the pass is the same as it was in the 1940s, because they can't see; outlining that that the audio signals were installed to help them know when to get off, all that money was spent on the audio systems and now it's going to be unaffordable for them to use the bus; acknowledging that every disability causes challenges but that the blind will never be able to drive and until the City cleans off streets and sidewalks better than it does that is another reason someone could sue; stating that she believes it is discriminatory to take away the bus pass as blind people live in a different category than those who can see.

- Alison Davis, Viscount Road – stating that she and her friend came directly from school because they feel very passionately about the issue; noting that she, herself, is not affected by visual impairment but her best friend and her mother have been diagnosed with Stargardts; noting she has been observing the life of a visually impaired individual for seventeen years but she is lucky to have another parent who does not suffer from a visual impairment; indicating that she wants to say that this issue does not only affect the individual with visual impairment but also their families; pointing out that a number of children cannot be picked up from school or have a parent at a school function because they are visually impaired; stating that, by removing the bus pass, rights are being taken away from visually impaired people and that this isn't an issue of fairness, it's an issue of equality; stating that her blind mother should have the same rights as a parent with 20/20 vision.
- Derek, Askin Street – stating that he relies on the CNIB bus pass to get to his eye appointments; stating that he works three hours a week and if he has to start paying for a bus pass he will have to quit his job; indicating that he found out that in a few years he will be completely blind and he's not sure he will even be able to do his job; regarding the 1200 bus passes, he feels that everyone should be allowed to have a pass; indicating that raising the cost of the pass a little bit would be fine but he cannot afford the \$40 per month for a pass.
- Taylor Godo – stating that she is seventeen years old and legally blind, which is her future; advising that the bus pass has given her independence; indicating that she never chose this and if she had her way she would have full sight and would not need to rely so much on other people; stating that she has only been diagnosed for six years and has a lot more life to live and that she is lucky she has her parents and that they do so much for her but they are not always going to be there for her; stating that she needs the independence of the bus pass because she has to depend on so many people as it is.
- Karen Boyackis – stating that she is the parent of an adult with a developmental disability; stating that earlier there were more people at the meeting representing them; indicating that this is not an issue about blindness, about disability, about income, it's about allowing everyone the right to go on public transit affordably; noting that her son relies on her to provide transportation, financially and physically because he is not able to go on public transit and she would like him to have the opportunity, financially, to do that.
- Sheila Dinnan, CNIB – advising that she teaches the blind to navigate independently; noting that it is no small feat to use hearing to help navigate and identify traffic, while drivers continue to make turns in front or behind them; stating that many intersections are still without audible signals and that causes the blind to have to wait many cycles to be able to cross safely; acknowledging that many improvements with accessible signals have been made in the city such as tactile surfaces and pedestrian signals but there are still difficulties such as the complexity of some intersections, short crossing cycles at many locations; stating that independent travel is very difficult because of hazards in their path; indicating that bus travel is the safest way for the visually impaired to get around; stating that in order for a legally blind person to learn how to get down to the line-up for the new passes is a long process.
- Emily Trepanier, Oxford Street and Wonderland Road – stating that she was working and just arrived at this meeting; noting that having the pass is huge for her, and her friends and that without the pass she would not be able to get to work; noting that lining up for the pass would not work very well even though she has a guide dog; noting that it would be scary and she would not know what would happen to her or her dog, how she would know when the line moves or even if she is in the correct spot; noting that the bus pass is currently \$10 per year and the increase to \$40 per month wouldn't be feasible for everyone; stating that she can only work limited hours a week and many of her friends are looking for work and they will not be able to

- afford \$40 per month and that needs to be considered; asking the Committee to leave the CNIB pass the way it is and to allow people to get out in the community.
- Sandra Johnson, Spirit Wood – stating that she uses the bus because due to tunnel vision she has trouble seeing and the bus helps her to get around; noting that not being able to see and getting lost is scary; wondering why the Committee wants to raise the price because that cost will cut into the amount of money needed for groceries, etc.; noting that she and her family have had to use the food bank and the churches when money has run out in the middle of the month; indicating she would like the committee to do what they can to keep the cost of the bus pass low so people can afford it.
 - Stephanie, London – indicating that she lives in London but also lives part time in Brantford because she works at Mohawk College in Hamilton; stating that in Brantford she pays \$40 for a 3 month bus pass, which is really hard on ODSP seeing as she also has to pay rent in London and Brantford; stating that having to pay for a full bus pass in London would take away the ODSP money that she needs for her guide dog; indicating that she started taking the bus when she was fifteen years old and she was terrified; stating that the transit system is good in London and that taking the bus is a privilege; believing that we take the bus service in London for granted; stating that she is in favour of keeping the CNIB bus pass the way it is.
 - Mike Sloan, London – stating that he hopes Council will think long and hard about what we've heard here; indicating that this proposal should be dropped entirely because it is absurd; extending thanks to those who came out, particularly in lieu of the challenges they may have faced.
 - Terri Lynn, 124 Bruce Street – stating that taking away bus pass will be very socially isolating; outlining that she knows the feelings of depression; indicating that she grew up on a farm outside of London; advising that she lost her vision about 4 years ago and, at that time, lost her ability to drive, her ability to work, and she was unable to move due to a lack of finances and had to stay on the farm with her parents; stating that she saved up enough to move to London and has been here for about six months and has been doing extremely well and enjoying being able to get out and socialize with more people and volunteering in the community; indicating that the public transportation in London was one of the major reasons she moved and that having an affordable CNIB bus pass has helped her to have a more successful life.