

Summary and Compilation of the Accessibility Advisory Committee's Open House Project

An examination of the responses received from the five physical open houses, from Oct. 3, 2017 through Oct. 14, 2017, combined with additional feedback received through an on-line survey and individual contact.

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Executive Summary

It's right there in the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan. The idea of creating a Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy was supported due to the need to "build a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming community" by "supporting all Londoners to feel engaged and involved in our community."

That idea was reinforced by the Community Diversity & Inclusion Strategy's vision, which states that "London is a diverse and inclusive community that honours, welcomes, and accepts all people; where people have the power to eliminate systemic oppressions."

They are lovely words. But for people with disabilities in our community, that's largely all they are -- words.

As you will find through this report, there are systemic barriers that have been put in place over the years. In our built environment alone, there are access barriers that prevent people with disabilities from enjoying the same freedom as those without disabilities. But while Heritage Designation is prioritized, accessibility is not.

Yet only one of those two is a protected human right.

In addition to the systemic barriers, there are attitudinal barriers that both people with disabilities and their advocates experience throughout the city and within the confines of City Hall. Many of the issues that we present in this document should not be new to any member of council. In many cases, they are issues that have been brought forth by members of the community and the Accessibility Advisory Committee on repeated occasions.

But they have been ignored, dismissed, deprioritized, or filed away for further use.

Accessibility is not about accommodation. It is not about doing something "extra" or "special." It is a commitment to ensuring that all people in this city have equitable access to the resources, opportunities, and experiences that the city has to offer. A city is a community, but when you perpetuate barriers (whether they be physical, mental, or emotional), you're making a statement about which people get to fully participate in that community.

Recently, one of our committee members engaged in an online discussion with one councillor about the lack of accessibility focus on a BRT discussion in the local newspaper. This councillor, who had not attended any of the five open houses we hosted, said, "I look forward to seeing [this report]."

We hope you do more than see it. We hope that you give it more than a cursory glance. We hope that you read it thoroughly.

We have chosen to keep in the vast majority of the attendees' comments as stated because it's important to know that these are real issues, experienced by real people. They're not statistics, they're not a bottom-line number on a balance sheet for a transit service -- they are people in this community who feel marginalized, who do not feel "engaged and involved in our community," and for whom London has not lived up to its ideal of being an "inclusive community that honours, welcomes, and accepts all people."

If the ideal that "people have the power to eliminate systemic oppressions" is more than just a catchy phrase on a page, then we encourage you to not just "see" this report but act upon it.

Methodology

The Accessibility Advisory Committee executed five open houses across the city to solicit feedback from the community for this report. The intent of this report is to help inform city staff for its update to the 2018-2022 accessibility plan.

The open houses were held at the following locations:

- Central Library, Oct. 3 from 1:30 to 4 p.m.
- Central Library, Oct. 3 from 6 to 8:30 p.m.
- Medway Community Centre: Oct. 4 from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.
- North London Optimist Community Centre: Oct. 12 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., and
- South London Community Centre: Oct. 14 from 1:30 to 4 p.m.

The event times and locations were strategically chosen to try to provide for the best opportunity for people from across the city to participate in these events. As we know, transportation is a barrier, so we did not want to follow the traditional "downtown-only" method of engagement. And to facilitate a broader participatory opportunity, the committee chose to offer engagement sessions both during standard business hours and during off-peak times, including on the weekends, to be respectful of attendees' potential work and educational commitments.

Following the final event, the Accessibility Advisory Committee distributed an e-mail survey, designed to both gauge user satisfaction with the events and solicit additional feedback. The survey was distributed to those who registered for the events on Eventbrite, as well as ancillary distribution through social media.

The events were advertised in a variety of ways, appearing in the Mayor's newsletter, on the City of London's Accessibility page, through Twitter, through a liaison with the Ability First Coalition, and with printed posters distributed throughout the city at targeted locations including, but not limited to, library branches, educational facilities, and senior's residences. The members of the accessibility advisory committee also amplified these messages throughout their own social media networks.

The results of the open houses, surveys, and other feedback were compiled by the members of the accessibility advisory committee, discussed and prioritized at its Nov. 13, 2017 education and awareness subcommittee event, and presented and ratified, in this format, at the Nov. 23, 2017 meeting of the accessibility advisory committee.

Acknowledgements

The Accessibility Advisory Committee is extremely grateful for the support of Chantel Da Silva, specialist, municipal policy (AODA) at the City of London. We would also like to thank the City Clerk's office, in particular our committee secretary Jerri-Joanne Bunn, for their support in this project. We would like to recognize the four facilities that kindly hosted the event and their staff, who assisted us in the successful execution. And, of course, we'd like to thank the members of the public, who attended these open houses, as well as Mayor Matt Brown, and councillors Maureen Cassidy, Anna Hopkins, and Michael Van Holst, all of whom attended at least one of the open houses.

Key Findings

The results of all of our communication efforts pointed to three key areas of concerns for the respondents: transportation, employment, and infrastructure barriers. In the following three sections, we've summarized some of the top-level findings, but we strongly encourage you to read through the entire documentation in order to understand the depth and diversity of the commentary that informed these three items.

Transportation

Without a doubt, transportation was the number one priority at all of the events. Access to adequate transportation is a must for so many integral reasons:

- Involvement and connection to the community and its events
- Access to reliable transit means more opportunities to pursue employment
- Freedom to be a part of the community and live the same life as other Londoners
- Flexibility of schedule, allowing for the same changes that everyone else has (sudden illness, sick kids)

The biggest barrier we have faced is internal perception amongst those with an opportunity to affect change when it comes to transit. In presentations, we often hear how well paratransit is doing on a cost-per-ride basis. However, while the numbers can be made to state one thing, the reality is far, far different. We have heard how cost effective paratransit is, but when a large majority of its users have little positive to say about it, is it actually a success? When people choose not to use it due to its unreliability, thereby keeping themselves out of the workforce, is it a success? When people use it in spite of its faults because it's the only option, is that a success?

We have heard that paratransit is not a City issue -- but the simple fact of the matter is that the City funds the vast majority of the paratransit service. Therefore, there's a clear financial -- if not moral -- obligation to improve the service.

From having to spend hours each day in some lottery style game of phone roulette hoping to get a ride for that day, to the unrealistic expectation that one could anticipate illness and emergencies three days in advance in order to cancel a ride is not a positive customer experience.

Our second finding, employment, is directly impacted by reliable transit. Casual and shift work is virtually impossible for those relying on paratransit due to the varying nature of the hours, which is not conducive to meeting the unfair burden of expectations relating to bookings and cancellations. Regular LTC service, whilst more reliable schedule-wise, is not always supportive of accessible needs -- especially in regards to volume. And this doesn't even factor in the limited scope of LTC service as it relates to access to industrial areas and weekend/off-peak scheduling.

There were also access and security issues brought up that are a concern, which should be addressed. Paratransit riders who often ride alone and are literally strapped into a location are the very definition of a vulnerable population. Any and all efforts, up to and including cameras on board, should be a starting point for security.

Employment Opportunities

The numbers are clear and as the City of London has a vested interest in accessible employment (ACCAC member Jay Ménard, through Digital Echidna, and the City's own Chief Human Resources Office Bill Coxhead are on the province's Round Table for Accessible Employment), but yet there are still significant barriers to integrating people with disabilities into the workforce.

We have addressed some of the transportation challenges in the previous section. However, there are systemic barriers to employment that must be prioritized in any planning. These include, but are not limited to, misinformation and false assumptions by employers; and hiring policies and practices that unintentionally exclude people with disabilities.

Some of the most effective changes actually wouldn't take money or copious resources. For example, one huge barrier that the City itself has perpetuated in the past is the demand for a "valid driver's license." However, many people with disabilities either choose not to, or are unable to hold a driver's license. Are they qualified for the job? Yes. Do they apply? Not when they see criteria that clearly excludes them from participation.

Blanket statements to the effect that a company is an equal-opportunity employer are wonderful sentiments. But without an active policy in place behind them that ensures not just that the playing field is levelled, but that all participants can make it to the field of play, they remain just words.

Other than Toronto, London has the most significant presence on the Province's Employer's Partnership Table. We have a real opportunity to lead and be a community that lives up to its stated goal of being "a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming community." The City's accessibility plan need to encourage the city's employment sector -- through partnerships with agencies like LEDC and the Chamber of Commerce -- to make accessible employment policies standard.

Infrastructure

The best way to address this challenge is to provide anecdotes to illustrate the points:

- A driver passes a visually impaired man standing at a bus stop in a construction zone. This stop has been moved due to the work and there is a notification, in print, nearby. Three hours later, the same driver returns on that street. The man is still standing there. The driver pulls over and finds out that the man has been waiting for the bus and was unaware of the change.
- A man in a wheelchair enters the accessible washroom in London's marquee park -- the home of multiple festivals and community events that are ostensibly designed to welcome the community as a whole to celebrate. This man finds that the accessible stall door will not close fully behind him and his wheelchair.
- A woman with mobility challenges reaches a corner, only to find out that it's completely blocked. There's a sign that states, "Pedestrians use other sidewalk." When she crosses (in the middle of traffic), that side is also completely blocked. In fact, all four corners have been ripped up and the first notification was at the point of blockage. That woman now must retrace her steps back to the previous block to walk around the area.
- A woman in a motorized chair drives down Colborne St. at 11 p.m. The sidewalk is blocked on both sides. There is a large cage surrounding the excavation site. Her only option is to drive onto the street, towards oncoming traffic. She is visible to drivers coming towards her only when the vehicle's lights illuminate her.

When it comes to development, this city prioritizes heritage to the point where it can delay or derail buildings because of challenges to heritage designation. While we appreciate the past, why can the same consideration not be made for people in our present and our future. Of heritage, environment, and accessibility, only one is a protected human right -- yet accessibility is often overlooked or ignored in our infrastructure efforts.

There are significant physical barriers in buildings all throughout the city, but in particular in the downtown core (often protected by heritage designations). These are compounded by man-made barriers that the city and/or services often put up during repair and construction work. Even though these disturbances may only last a few days, that's not acceptable to people who have no other alternatives or options.

First, we need to mandate compliance to accessibility regulations. No street should have all four corners blocked. No construction should be undertaken without ensuring that there is adequate alternative routes put in place. And no public buildings should come with accessibility barriers.

But success comes from reaching out to the private sector. The City needs to use its influence to ensure that private facilities are accessible, that there are incentives for those who want to retrofit, and to find a humane balance between preserving the city's past and making it accessible to those who live in the city today -- and into the future.

This can also be augmented by improved awareness -- finding ways to ensure that people with disabilities are aware of potential mobility barriers. And this cannot be limited to on-line notifications as the fact of the matter is that some people with disabilities don't have the luxury of regular on-line

access. For people on fixed incomes, an aged population, or those with mental and or physical barriers that make on-line communication difficult, a website or push notification to a phone isn't enough. We have to ensure that notification, both physical and electronic, is accessible to those who need it.

Compiled Feedback from the Events

Transportation

Paratransit

- Need improved communication between dispatch and drivers
- Customer service speak disrespectfully to riders
- Wait time for rides are too long
- Riders left stranded
- No ability to cancel within three days without being penalized
- "Your life is on hold while you wait." Have to spend up to three hours trying to get an answer on the phone
- Forcing people to pre-determine when they're leaving an event/activity is not equal access
- The system should not be subcontracted out to other vendors
- LTC drivers better trained, better able to appreciate needs of disabled
- Should be better security in paratransit vehicles -- cameras would be a must
- Vendors often undertrained
- Booking system inhumane-- three days ahead, dial many, many times, still no ride available
- Difficult to rely on paratransit for regular employment
- Difficult for people with no cell phone; no way to contact paratransit when left stranded
- Challenge mayor/councilor to use paratransit for a month
- Need extended customer service hours
- Dry-cleaned seats cause sensitivity to riders (need to let people know when this is affecting their bus)
- Scent-free buses
- Why do ODSP recipients pay for paratransit?
- No response from city or AODA or London Transit to enquiries or concerns
- Trouble getting rides home at night
- Why no online-booking? (but need phone booking too for those without internet access)
- Huge issue that crosses over to all other areas of life
- Need more coordinated trips
- More buses required
- More money required
- Paratransit changes times/schedules without informing clients
- Booking process (mentioned every session, every group and came up in every topic)
- No availability for spontaneous outings
- Develop an app to book paratransit, see where the vehicle is, track the ride
- Allegation of assault levied during one event
- If the City funds the majority of the service, they should control it
- No way of knowing when a ride is appearing -- you have to wait, often outside in inclement weather for the ride
- If you miss it, or they show up early, you're punished
- If you "miss" too many rides, you're kicked off the system -- which is unfair to those with children, etc.
- You can't schedule sick days three days in advance
- The subscription service is OK, but still has many of the aforementioned challenges
- Why can't there be an app, like Uber, that lets you know where your driver is

Regular transit

- Strollers placed in accessible spaces
- New buses are actually less comfortable for wheelchair riders
- All wheelchairs located on one side of the bus
- Buses "racing" over train grades, causing jostling of those in wheelchairs

- Sidewalk obstruction due to snow clearing, garbage day
- Electronic signage boards need to be working well at Dundas/Richmond and be visible from all corners so that disabled pedestrians don't have to walk between corners to find which bus of their three options is next
- Clearer north/south, east/west bus routes
- Downtown new LTC office is accessible
- Need more wheelchair accessible taxis/ride-sharing (only nine licensed in the city)
- On buses, the stop request signs —c n't see what the next stop is once it has been triggered. Is this a solvable technical issue?
- Free transit for those 65+ and people with disabilities in Scotland
- Time to get from A to B on a regular bus takes way more time
- If there are too many people on the bus, wheelchair-bound riders are left at the stop
- One respondent called ahead of time, stating that a group of people who use wheelchairs were interested in attending an event and using the bus to get there. Tried to pre-schedule a trip -- was told not to bother, they'd leave more than half on the side of the road
- Trouble with LTC drivers not putting down ramp or asking people to move from accessible spots. Wheelchair users being left on curb when others taking up the accessible spots
- Need a means to report problem drivers and buses that is user-friendly and monitored
- Seats necessary at bus shelters
- Attitude of driver dropping someone off in the street (cab/Uber)
- Bus shelters are inadequate
- Bus stops are often blocked by construction/snow
- When planning BRT -- concerned re use of technology to speed up traffic that must take into account the time needed to cross intersections (bus transponders?)
- Accessibility doesn't seem to be a part of BRT -- one proposed Richmond street area will create barriers for people trying to cross the street

Employment

- Need to educate employers for understanding ways to accommodate people with disabilities who can do the job but need some modifications
- Mandating that accessibility to job interviews/training etc. should be looked upon as negative or a black mark against the prospective job seeker
- Allowing communicative devices for deaf clients to be used in the workplace
- City must be a leader for employing people with disabilities
- Challenge employers to adapt so that shorter shifts or more part-time opportunities are available
- Challenge employers to help solve the job situation by creating a disability percentage — a quota as was done for women and visible minorities
- Enforcement of AODA standards for employment
- More supportive employment agency geared specifically for people with disabilities
- More diversity in type of employment needs
- All City of London jobs seem to require a driver's license to apply online (very limiting for those with disabilities)
- Employers not flexible with work hours so that employee can access transportation
- Lack of transportation (even to job fair!!)
- Individual told outright "we don't know how we can accommodate you" ...more education and support needed
- Need accessible doorways/automatic buttons
- Bigger meeting spaces
- Teleconference resources
- Workplace compensation/accommodation
- Flexible schedules (especially to accommodate transportation)
- Opportunity to work from home

- Workplace committee to deal with duty to accommodate/requirements for new construction of workplaces and for retrofits/standards in legislation/training of architects
- Communication between business, employees and customers in plain language
- Need affordable transportation to employment
- Transportation is an issue -- can't rely on paratransit to get to jobs, especially if they're shift-work or the times change

Infrastructure

- Curbs — install more of the new rubber corner aids at crosswalks
- Stop making new/repared curbs inaccessible
- Park entrances and exits need to be properly graded
- Citizen line/website to report inaccessible curbs (like is done for potholes)
- Store entrances need to be accessible
- Construction; covering a pipe with stones does not make it passable
- Construction that covers/blocks a sidewalk must have an accessible cover so wheelchairs can pass over safely
- “Public” places need ramps and accessible doors
- Downtown curbs and sidewalks are terrible...cracks, slopes, curbs not to code
- interlocking brick streets are awful (Richmond between York and King is essentially a slalom course)
- Many downtown buildings are not accessible
- Heritage prioritized over accessibility
- Even "accessible" washrooms aren't always accessible -- Victoria Park and example. You can't close the washroom door in a stall, the turn radius is too small
- Roundabouts difficult for pedestrians with disabilities to navigate safely
- Snow clearing problematic especially at intersections (piles block sidewalks and curb cuts)
- Media weather should give info on sidewalk ice conditions for pedestrians as well as drivers
- Remind property owners that they cannot pile snow on public sidewalks (media campaign?)
- Encourage property owners and businesses to scrape snow right down to the sidewalk level (sidewalk plows leave a thin layer which can freeze or get compacted, making it difficult for those with mobility challenges to pass by)
- Streets without boulevards can be a problem in winter and on garbage day
- Accessible door buttons — who fixes them if they are incorrectly placed or not working?
- Need reporting system for code violations
- Accessible ramps, washrooms, menus in all businesses and entertainment venues
- Accessible washrooms at festivals and special events
- Accessible parking – need proper size, signage, ramps and location
- Need better awareness of the differences in accessible parking spots (those with the diagonal lines are intended for vehicles with ramps)
- Rail crossings are terrible for people with wheelchairs -- a very real concern (ex. train tracks near Western Fair, train tracks at Ridout near the Copp's) that a wheel could get stuck in the grooves and leave one at risk of getting hit)
- Can we better inform people about construction and access barriers? Better use of on-line? Push notifications? Putting up a sign the block before a barrier so that people with mobility issues don't have to get to the point of the barrier only to have to turn back?
- Any notifications must be respectful of those without electronic access due to physical, mental, or financial restrictions
- Bus route changes aren't clearly communicated (one respondent told of a blind man who waited for three hours at a bus stop which had been moved due to construction.)
- Full communication access in every business and entertainment venue
- Lighting conducive to deaf people to communicate around a table (often too dark!)

- “Get a pass when you eat here’ — cannot use for the movie you want to see (without pass too expensive)
- Safety of downtown especially for vulnerable people
- Accessible washrooms locked at Central Library during this Open House
- Mall restrooms without power buttons on doors
- More accessible restrooms (unlocked) in public buildings/spaces
- More accessible pools
- Southcrest pool is fantastic!!
- Support/promote portable ramps for businesses
- Curbs/sidewalks in downtown are NOT accessible
- The standard for curb-cuts in this city are inadequate
- Timing for street crossing. There is not enough time to cross (e.g. Wonderland and Oxford near Hutton House)
- Crossing times are too short for people with mobility challenges, including Parkinson's
- Need better indications for pedestrians of intersections with advanced left turns. Often no signage in the pedestrian view
- Need a way to report problem intersections
- Does Chantal work with public planners?
- When planning BRT, concerned re use of technology to speed up traffic that must take into account the time needed to cross intersections (bus transponders?)
- Accessibility doesn't seem to be a part of BRT -- one proposed Richmond street area will create barriers for people trying to cross the street
- Do we have traffic data analysis to monitor our intersections? If we do, what happens with that data?
- Walkable communities are more accessible by nature
- Need visible corners. Clear obstructions (e.g. hedges)
- Snow removal often makes sidewalks and streets inaccessible
- Need more accessible (and close) parking at hospitals
- Need better way to address disruptions caused by construction that blocks an accessible route
- Accessible infrastructure for new sub-divisions. Consider grading
- Bike routes could keep sidewalks safer
- Align building entrances with access points like parking lots, sidewalks, etc....is there a way to require this to be reviewed by people with disabilities or city support staff?
- Should Public Engineering be required to pass a course in this so it's done right the first time?
- Lack of sidewalks along Wellington S. near Dearness
- City hospitals are not accessible. Long distances to walk, restrooms not adequate
- Could there not be a group with lived experience who can review and test proposed building plans?
- Can we incentivize developers to make accessibility a part of their designs?
- Can we mandate a certain percentage of a development to be accessible?

Housing

- There is a 10-15 year wait for independent living
- Serious shortage of accessible, affordable housing
- Aging population will increase the need for this type of housing
- Need variety of housing models: flex, co-op, etc
- Houses need to be visitable (better social opportunities)
- Share your home model -- Alice Saddy Association is a share provider
- Grey Street Housing — no management/criminal activity
- Verbal abuse from other tenants
- Government help for home modifications
- Wait list for years even with severe disabilities
- Apartment entrances need ramps and door buttons
- Lack of geared to income housing

- More affordable, accessible housing
- Remove bylaw re: minimum separation distances for group homes
- Incorporate accessible housing/group homes into city planning
- Enforcement of AODA for new buildings and renovations
- Universal design for new buildings
- How to get more affordable and accessible housing. Include all types of housing: apartments, condos, single family
- Is the legislation clear enough on requirements for new, grandfathering and retro-fitting
- Who inspects to see that rules are followed?
- Raise the number of accessible units mandatory in apartment buildings and housing complexes
- Drop houses to ground level
- Make builders aware of need for accessible units and how sellable they are
- Funding has been cut for March of Dimes so very little funding available for renovations
- Filling out applications at the right time is a barrier
- Ontario Renovates runs out of money and funding is only for removable items...no structural changes allowed
- Building code: change it. Ground-level entrance, wider doorways and hallways, bathroom larger
- Make new homes easier to become accessible
- Money is the barrier!!!
- Research accessibility needs so we have facts to establish policy changes/building code changes/funding increases
- How can city support/advocate for funding/support from agencies and other levels of government?
- How can city form connections?
- Unsafe houses (e.g. group homes)
- Shelters are inaccessible. One homeless person with a disability was unable to access supports due to accessibility barriers

Attitudinal Barriers

- Need more public awareness campaigns (as we do for bicycles/motorcycles) to address rude pedestrians and multi-purpose path sharing
- Sensitization march for inclusion
- Video series and lived experience stories
- Radio/TV advocacy for awareness
- Need grassroots advocacy effort
- Need assistance from city for community events to provide accessibility accommodations
- Assistance from city to make neighbourhood associations accessible to all
- Is there assistance from the city to help people with disabilities submit paperwork for grants?
- More outreach and ways to give feedback to ACCAC and city staff
- Our post-secondary campuses seem to be doing a good job with accessibility
- Airshow was very welcoming for people with disabilities
- Limited access to entertainment due to ODSP
- Need public education campaign (like they do for school buses) to make people aware of needs of people with disabilities while navigating our streets and public places
- ACCAC not accessible to everyone
- No one to listen to our concerns
- Make services for those with disabilities more widely known ie garbage/mail pick up at door
- Let people know about accommodations available
- Lack of education re: reasons for needs for sidewalk changes in neighbourhoods (Oakridge)

- Attitude toward mentally ill. No supports in place to take someone off the street into services. They can't make that leap on their own
- Need supportive housing (not just for seniors!!)
- Other issue is for the general population using the streets safely in the downtown among the mentally ill. It is scary for the public
- Denial of disability makes it high risk for everyone
- Need for public education re: all disabilities (dementia, mental health, TBI, included)
- ODSP is insufficient. Costs out of whack
- Automated phone systems not user-friendly for people with hearing loss, processing disorders, etc. It seems that efficiency of organization trumps needs of population ie. Pin #'s, automated operators, etc.
- Need education about disability...people with disabilities need to be visible
- Increase spectrum programming to include periodic recreational/leisure trips
- Better awareness of people with other disabilities -- Parkinson's, for example, often gets misinterpreted in the general public

Online Survey Results

What do you feel is (are) the biggest issues relating to accessibility in the City of London?

- Transportation -- lack of accessible taxi services and limits to paratransit
- Getting existing building updated.
- Education and understanding of the issues faced by individuals and organizations (the City).
- Pedestrian accessibility and transportation
- For us, it is road safety at intersections. There seems to be reluctance to assist with our accessibility by installing four-way stops.
- Transportation -- more paratransit buses are needed
- A greater focus on the development of walkable neighbourhoods -- walkable neighbourhoods are also better for wheelchair/walker/cane/scooter users when walkways, stores etc are also accessible. Residential neighbourhoods that are in walkable range of grocery stores, libraries, drugstores reduce the need for longer distance transportation vehicles and reduce the fatigue for disabled individuals, and the dependence on others for basic needs. This also means that persons with disabilities interact with neighbours in the course of their daily lives, resulting in greater understanding and acceptance of persons with disabilities
- Accessibility on sidewalks during construction. Transportation. Overloaded paratransit system, lack of digital booking options for paratransit, decreasing urgency installing sidewalks, snow removal/clearing, stigma in employment/lack of employment opportunities, limited implementation of existing AODA standards
- One issue two fold accessible transit and accessible apartments
- Lack of employment opportunities for those with disabilities
- Buildings are either not accessible or say they are but not what people with disabilities really need.
- Transportation, employment
- The complete lack of awareness by our ENTIRE City Council to the issues.
- Access to timely transportation
- Transportation in winter for wheelchair users. Paratransit for full time workers that use wheelchairs needs improvement
- The six to seven-year waiting list for subsidized housing

Do you have any additional comments, suggestions, ideas, or statements that you would like to make regarding the state of accessibility in the City of London?

"Why can't the City mandate upgrades to existing building be done prior to AODA coming into effect. Give building owners incentives (or disincentives) for making changes sooner rather than later. It's been years since its introduction and it seems that everyone is just waiting till the drop dead date to make improvements to existing properties."

"More and ongoing opportunities for those living with disabilities to speak and voice their concerns is needed. Also, follow up and feedback to those voicing concerns is important. People need to know they are heard."

"There should be more effort made to better include people with various disabilities to accommodate all motor & non-motor issues. This effort should go well beyond just participating on various committees."

"It seems that if someone has a physical disability, it is more noticeable and accommodations are made to assist with accessibility. HOWEVER, cognitive issues are more difficult to notice and can be more easily ignored from an accessibility standpoint."

"London is a leader in accessibility but I wonder if people looking into doing renovations could be encouraged to consult the City before instituting accessibility measures to get it right."

"AAC should be given stronger recommendation powers within city hall -- as a purely advisory committee, too many good ideas/suggestions/criticisms are 'noted and filed' by council and not acted upon."

"Ask people with disabilities their expert opinion on how things should be accessible and not guess what they need."

"If people with disabilities can have complete access to transportation it could help them to find gainful employment, then, many other issues will also be resolved."

"We are still years behind. INVEST NOW."

"All city counselors should have to take paratransit to understand the short fall in funding."

"Accessible buses are great, but bus stops are impassible for days after snowfall."

"Suggest City Council consider a by-law to make at least 10 per cent of residential rental units RGI (rent geared to income)"

Post Open-House Feedback

This includes responses from Cheshire London, Anova, and three community members.

Paratransit

Consumer was missed in the morning because they showed up 15min before his booking was done. Afternoon had been automatically cancelled since it was a no show in the morning.

Winter time: Consumer was supposed to be picked up at 4:30PM in downtown, Paratransit did not show up, when called and asked where they are. Answer was they had to dispatch the bus to Woodstock. Consumer was outside in the cold for 5hrs waiting in the cold, not able to feel cold or heat.

Riders are concerned about their safety on buses. They want to be free from physical/sexual violence, harassment, and verbal abuse

Patients that need to be at the hospital for dialysis can't get rides and the cost of taking cabs is too much

There needs to be medical transportation for seniors that's affordable

The new telephone booking system is hard to use and is creating a barrier due to holding for long periods of time, difficulty canceling rides, rides booked up before getting through, and having to need assistance of another person to make calls to get through

Sometimes rides are booked way before person needs to leave their home which creates another barrier for people that are chronically ill or have personal care needs. They cannot be out too long

Paratransit has been better at picking up people in the past year

Taxi Cabs

Call was placed for a Van who is also taking service dogs. Driver not educated to get a Service Dog in the car. The driver did not feel the need to take the dog's leash. Dog was getting dangerously close to the road. Staff ran out to make sure the service dog got in the car and advised the driver of the importance of this dog for the owner.

Conventional Transit

Winter time: Consumer got stuck with his wheelchair in the snow; Bus driver ignored the situation and closed the door. Consumer and Service Dog were stuck in the cold.

Strollers on conventional transit take up space for those with mobility issues, especially those with wheelchairs and scooters. Bus drivers need to ensure that those with strollers/other collapsible items collapse them to make room for chairs and scooters. The sign on the bus is not enough to get people with strollers to move. When not done people with chairs or scooters are left at the stop and this becomes an even worse problem in the winter.

Riders are concerned about their safety on buses. They want to be free from physical/sexual violence, harassment, etc.

Housing

Lack of accessible showers in two bedroom apartments

Cigarette smoke seeping into hallways and apartment units in buildings aggravates those with breathing and health issues. There isn't much done to alleviate this.

Likes the idea of having students residing in senior residences for cheaper rent

Wished there was a sliding scale for rent in the private building market. It would open up housing opportunities and in better kept apartment buildings

There's a need for safe accessible affordable housing

Entertainment

Many of the restaurants on Richmond are not accessible by wheelchair and their washrooms are not accessible to people with mobility issues

The Taco Bell on Oxford East isn't accessible

Built Environment

Something needs to be done about icy sidewalks in the winter

Social Services

City's application process to get medical devices (e.g. orthotics) is very intrusive into an individual's finances. Other places only ask for the individual's income

Community Involvement

Being able to use Skype or other technologies to have meetings for advisory and working groups (not everyone has access to transportation to attend meetings in person)

Having the City up-date access to the internet at all facilities. Some provide better internet service than others. The Kiwanis Senior Community Centre has extremely poor internet service.

Survey Results (Satisfaction Metrics)

Central Oct. 3 at 1 (n=2)

- Location 9.5
- Time 9.5
- Facilitation of Event 9
- Quality of Discussion 7.5
- Opportunity to Speak 8
- Amenities (snacks/beverages) 9
- Interaction with Facilitators 9

Central Oct. 3 at 6 (n=1)

- Location 8
- Time 8
- Facilitation of Event 8
- Quality of Discussion 8
- Opportunity to Speak 8
- Amenities (snacks/beverages) 8
- Interaction with Facilitators 8

Medway (n=2)

- Location 4.5
- Time 5.5
- Facilitation of Event 6.5
- Quality of Discussion 7.5
- Opportunity to Speak 5.5
- Amenities (snacks/beverages) 5
- Interaction with Facilitators 5

North London Optimist (n=5)

- Location 7.6
- Time 7
- Facilitation of Event 8.2
- Quality of Discussion 7.8
- Opportunity to Speak 8.6
- Amenities (snacks/beverages) 7.6
- Interaction with Facilitators 7.8

South London Optimist (n=1)

- Location 9
- Time 9
- Facilitation of Event 9
- Quality of Discussion 9
- Opportunity to Speak 9
- Amenities (snacks/beverages) 8
- Interaction with Facilitators 9

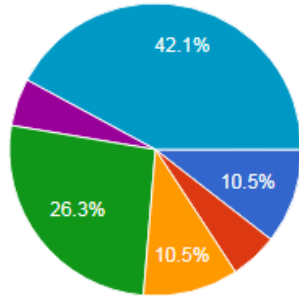
Survey Results Charts

Location of Attendance

QUESTIONS

RESPONSES

19



- Central Library -- Oct. 3 at 1:30 p.m.
- Central Library -- Oct. 3 at 6 p.m.
- Medway Community Centre -- Oct. 4 at 12:30 p.m.
- North London Optimist Community Centre -- Oct. 12 at 6:30 p.m.
- South London Community Centre -- Oct. 14 at 1:30 p.m.
- I did not attend a session

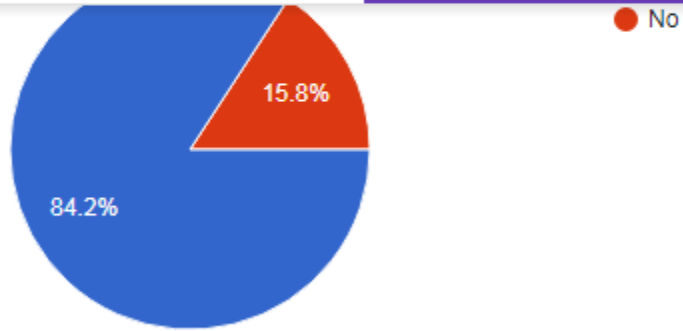
Are You a Resident of London?



QUESTIONS

RESPONSES

19



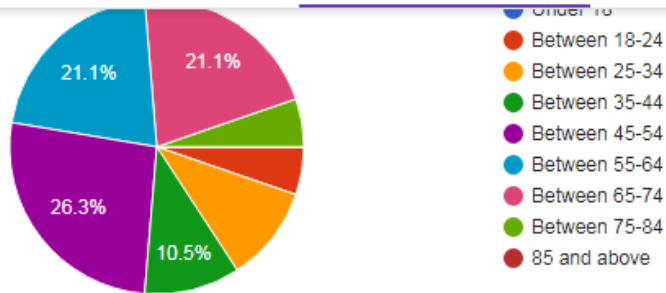
What is Your Age Range?



QUESTIONS

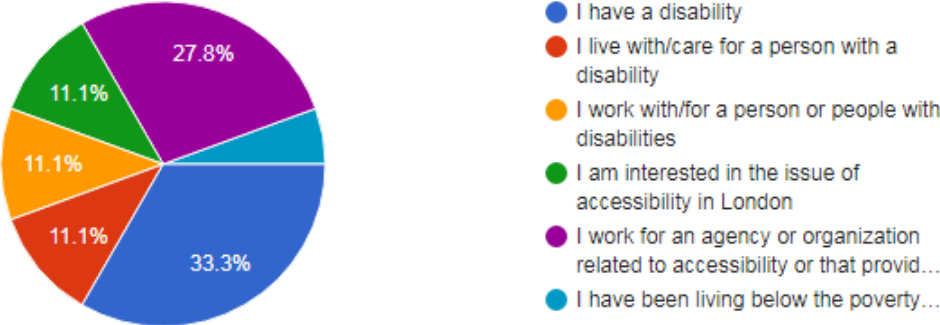
RESPONSES

19



Why did you have an interest in the accessibility open house? (please select the answer that best represents your primary reason for attendance)

18 responses



Appendix A

Documentation received from the first event at the Central Library, presented in a PDF format.