

ACCAC Presentation to CPSC

Tuesday, May 29, 2018

Happy National AccessAbility Week

This is a time for Canadians to promote inclusion and accessibility in our communities and workplaces, as well as to celebrate the contributions of Canadians with disabilities.



How feedback was collected

- Five open houses, from Oct. 3, 2017-Oct. 14, 2017 (thank you to Mayor Brown and councillors Cassidy, Hopkins, and Van Holst for attending at least one event)
- Post-event survey
- Targetted feedback acquisition
- Anecdotal and community feedback from years of community involvement

Our Asks -- Transit

TRANSIT

The City of London, in order to provide an equitable accessible transit service, will commit to the following improvements:

- Reduction of wait time from three days to a maximum of one day
- Improvement of service call times to match call/wait/response times of that of the larger transit system
- Improve booking system to meet today's standards
- Increase of availability of accessible spaces on LTC busing or increasing paratransit rides
- Appropriate training and education of transit providers to assist in the respectful and appropriate interaction with people with disabilities, both visible and invisible.

Our Asks - Employment

EMPLOYMENT

City of London to be a leader in removing barriers currently preventing people with disabilities from becoming employed, by committing to the following:

- Removing artificial, non-job-essential requirements from all postings (CPR, driver's license, vehicle)
- Improving transit to ensure that people are able to get to interviews or jobs throughout the city
- Providing examples to the community of successfully employed PWD to provide visual representation for youth career aspirational goals
- Work with unions to remove systemic barriers to hiring people with disabilities (flexible hours, work from home, ergonomic issues, breaking up a full-time job into two part-time jobs)
- Working with community partners to improve awareness of accessible hiring best practices and tangible improvements to employment issues, including that the application process is fully accessible

Our Asks - Infrastructure

To promote a safe environment and foster equitable access to the community for all Londoners, ACCAC requests that the city:

- Improves notification of construction projects, blocked passages, and road work, bus route changes, and review the timing of pedestrian crossovers to ensure adequate opportunity for people of all ages and abilities to safely navigate through the city;
- Work with heritage departments to find a human-focused solution to promote accessibility in heritage-designated buildings
- Change snow removal minimums and prioritize pedestrian pathways and bus access points when it comes to snow removal.
- Commit to ensuring that all community gathering areas and parks under the City's mandate be fully accessible
- Ensure that City-funded housing programs live up to AODA-compliance metrics and that accessibility is a key component in the approval of development projects, both residential and commercial.
- Commit to a review and, if required, an update of the 2007 FADS report by the end of 2018.

Our Fears - History Repeating

- Council has consistently disregarded, ignored, and dismissed ACCAC recommendations and deprioritized the needs of the accessibility community.
- Even when things are approved, they often fail to be implemented
- ACCAC has been treated as a box to be checked to meet standards
- Consultation is not enough; action is. And our efforts have historically been met with inaction.

Our Fears - A History of Indifference

- Failure to begin council with a notification of available accessible supports, as approved by council;
- Continued failure to mandate and enforce temporary paths of travel during road/sidewalk construction;
- Repeated ignoring of requests for accessible taxi data, which have followed council protocols;
- The significant -- and embarrassing -- closed captioning issue, which perpetuates a lack of inclusion for a significant portion of the community;
- Ignoring our subsidized bus pass recommendation, maintaining inequitable access for one segment of the population

Our Fears - A History of Indifference

- The comprehensive disregard for process and AODA compliance in the politicized debate over the Medway valley region. Despite overwhelming support from environmentalists and copious amounts of negotiation to develop the accessible plan for the region, due process was cast aside in favour of politicking and our community was a casualty of that debate;
- The failure to reinstate "temporary" cuts to accessibility funding
- The cavalier implementation of accessible community gardens, which required three appearances at CPSC to gain any traction, and only now shows promise for some progress
- A lack of support and attendance (largely) in the open houses

Our Fears - A History of Indifference

- An initial lack of ACCAC representation on the poverty panel;
- No inclusion of ACCAC's input regarding FADS, resulting in no effective change;
- Last-minute removal of support on the accessible playground survey;
- Requiring three appearances at CPSC to get Mayor's award name changed relating to disabilities and still no evidence of change;
- Continued deferral of issues relating to paratransit.

Next Steps -- ACCAC Resignations

We have prepared letters of resignation from the committee.

Who you are losing:

- One recipient of the David C. Onley Award for Leadership in Accessibility (the province's highest honour)
- Two recipients of the AODA 10th Anniversary Champions Award
- One member of Ontario's Employers' Partnership Table for accessible employment
- Multiple members with lived experience
- Multiple members who have children with disabilities
- Multiple members who work in industries supporting people with disabilities, or in industries that have actively hired people with disabilities

But it has been shown that this level of expertise and advocacy is clearly not valued. We are prepared to continue our advocacy efforts, but it is clear that our time and efforts are better received outside of council chambers.