

Penny Moore

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ACCESSIBLE TAXIS

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CPS. mtg
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Accessibility – service delivery model that considers the aging population and meets the needs of the accessible community

Equal access by persons with disabilities, older Ontarians, and families with young children to adequate, dignified public transit services is a right protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code. For many, it is also a necessity – in order to obtain an education, find and keep a job, or use basic public services like health care. Lack of access to transit may also lead to isolation, as visiting friends or participating in the life of the community becomes difficult or impossible.

Accessible transportation promotes independence for people with disabilities, and their ability to take part in employment, education, recreation, and social activities, as well as being able to buy goods and get access to services like health care. Accessible transportation is essential for the inclusion of people with disabilities in our communities and for things people without disabilities daily take for granted.

Unfortunately, equal access to transit services is far from reality for many Ontarians.

AODA (^{their}Accessibility for Ontario Disabilities Act) legislation “requires Ontario to become totally accessible by 2025 for people with disabilities. That Ontario is to be accessible to all persons regardless of disability.

As a quote from Dean, G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education, Ryerson University, Toronto

-national accessibility legislation is an act of human rights and inclusion. Nobody wants to live in isolation or feel forgotten by society.

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- There are less than 7 years to go before 2025. Yet transportation services are still not fully accessible to people with disabilities. In many respects they fall far short.
- Many people with disabilities live at or below the poverty line. Many cannot afford their own car. Many cannot drive due to their disability. Transportation services, whether public or private, are, for all practical purposes, their "car".
- The taxi industry plays an integral role in the public transportation network, providing a safe, professional, reliable and accessible 24/7 service in a regulated environment.
- Accessible means a passenger vehicle or a bus, other than a school bus, that is designed or modified to be used for the purpose of transporting persons with disabilities
- City of Ottawa

Taxi and Limousine Regulations and Service Review October 1, 2015; Ottawa Population 883,391 taxi permits issued standard 1,001 accessible

187 totals taxi permits issued 1,188 Permits per 1,000 pop 1.34 Accessible Plates as % of Total 16%

1. London had a population of 494,069 as of the 2016 census. If we use this number for the population and compare to Ottawa with 16% the number of accessible taxi permits is

2. London, limited to one for every 18 taxi licenses. This works out to 5.5 % compare to 10% Hamilton and Ottawa

- Our population is aging and with aging there is more persons living with disabilities and mobility issues.

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With London only having 5.5% of the total taxi permits issued to accessible taxis (1 out of 18 permits issued) there is not enough accessible transportation available.

A lot of time there isn't an accessible taxi available or on the road when needed.

Example being in the emergency at night get discharge to go home after the bus and para transit stop running; I have had to wait until the next morning around 7:30 am by the time I get thru the phone when the phone line at para transit opens to get home because I had phoned all the taxi companies in London and none had a driver with an accessible taxi on the road. So, to spend 12 hours unnecessarily in the emergency waiting room because no accessible transportation to get home is unacceptable.

Even Toronto has 10% of their permits issued to accessible taxis.

Persons with disabilities need reliable accessible transportation to contribute to their community whether it be employment, volunteering to make the community a better place, socialized with others which affects their well-being, self-esteem, mental health, the feeling of belonging; contributing to society, economical sustainability in the community.

Persons with disabilities are people too; without reliable accessible transportation such as the accessible taxis; most will be unable to be involved in society and be isolated.

Many persons with disabilities want to be involved in their community; most want to work, go to school just want to belong. But if there are

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not supports in place especially reliable accessible transportation they are unable to participate like everyone else and are let alone on the sidelines making they have low self esteem depression loss of self-worth just and empty feeling. I would like everyone to put themselves in their shoes; it is not a pleasant feeling.

Conclusion: Accessible transit is a complex issue, involving many players. For advances to be made, all players – transit providers, municipalities, senior levels of government, non-governmental organizations, the Ontario Human Rights Commission itself, and persons with disabilities - must rethink their roles and responsibilities, and work together to find solutions. I ask that the policy of the accessible taxis permits be reviewed to increase the availability of the reliability of transportation as our population ages and the need for accessible transportation increases and before the year 2025 When Ontario is to be accessible and barrier free because it is not that far from now and we have a lot to do to get there. Let's move closer to making London more accessible and not wait until last minute 2025 everyone deserves to belong

Thank you