

Accessible Public Transportation

MS Society Government Relations
Training Workshop, April 26, 2008

Enabling people to achieve their full potential.

- **Providing an opportunity to participate, make our own choices, and be included in activities in the community.**
- **We continue to strive for accommodations in the workplace, at school, in restaurants, and at the theatre.**
- ***But if we can't get there from home - we're in trouble!***

Accessible Transportation is Fundamental in our Quest for Accessibility

- **Without a public transportation system that works for people with disabilities unable to drive, we will never achieve full accessibility.**
- **An effective set of standards from the AODA Transportation Standards Development Committee is so important!**

Join an Accessibility Advisory Committee

- A good place to advocate for improved transit for people with disabilities.**
- Join the transit commission or an advisory board.**
- In Niagara we have been successful using these committees to our advantage.**
- This is also provides a forum for monitoring progress, introducing new ideas & addressing complaints.**

An Accessible Transit System - Is this the answer?

- **Let's make the main system available for as many people as possible.**
- **Problem: typical low density communities result in bus stops being too far away.**
- **With introduction of low-floor buses some people with disabilities can use the system.**
- **Niagara in transition - still very few routes.**
- **We need to supplement this with alternatives.**

Para-Transit Systems

- **In some areas this is the only public service available for people with disabilities. Three services operate in different communities in Niagara.**
- **Chair-A-Van has operated for 31 yrs.**
- **Scores very high in satisfaction surveys.**
- **Discussions underway: how do we cut costs?**
- **Would incentives work?**

The Taxi Service

- **Used frequently by some with disabilities.**
- **Industry in state of anarchy in Niagara.**
- **Skip licensing queue with an accessible van.**
- **Operators decline short trips for airport runs**
- **Charge a “handling fee” to load/unload .**
- **Some unlicensed, flat-rate, unmarked cabs operate without safety inspections.**
- **Our concern: passenger safety.**

Transportation Across Niagara Region

- **Pop. of 427,000 in twelve municipalities.**
- **Two-thirds of residents live in 3 largest cities.**
- **The remaining third live in small towns, villages & rural areas in 9 municipalities.**
- **Independent municipal bus systems operate in the largest cities, with limited cross boundary travel to university & college campuses.**
- **There are no regular connections between municipal systems.**

Regional Transportation (cont'd)

- If you rely on a scooter, roundtrip travel between cities by minivan is \$50.**
- For people with disabilities, this is the major transportation issue in Niagara.**
- We need a Regional Transit System.**
- We have made one step towards this goal with a specialized transit system.**

Niagara Specialized Transit

- **This inter-municipal shared ride service has operated for two years.**
- **Originally set-up to transport passengers for medical appointments across municipal boundaries; then expanded to include rides for education and employment purposes.**
- **In 2007 the service handled 4,524 trips.**

Preliminary Discussions Are Now Underway to Start A Regional Niagara Transit System

- The success of our Specialized Transit System has provided impetus.**
- The issue is gaining political support, but we still have a long way to go.**
- Ultimately, this would provide a dramatic improvement in accessible transportation in Niagara Region.**
- How long will this take?**