

January 28, 2020

City Council, London Transit Commission

Attn.: City Council, Kelly Paleczny

Re: Barrier Free Sidewalks

Council, Ms. Paleczny

Recently, a petition was undertaken to gain support for barrier free sidewalks, specifically during the winter months. To date, over 2,056 people have signed this petition. It is very clear that Londoners want clear sidewalks so that they can go about their business safely.

Sidewalk snow clearing at bus stops has been problematic for years. Disabled users are, in many cases, unable to access a bus stop due to the lack of clearing, especially when a bus stop is located near a curb and a small sidewalk connecting to a city sidewalk isn't plowed. Case in point: last week, as I was being dropped off (in my wheelchair) at a stop on Colborne, just north of Oxford on the #1, the surrounding area around the stop was covered in ice. I had to request that the driver pull ahead to a laneway so I could exit. He was somewhat surprised I had made this request. Many stops are located on a concrete pad with no adjoining sidewalk at all.

As I travel around, I find a number of stops, for example, High St between Baseline and Emery, where the stops are completely inaccessible for those using handicap aids such as wheelchairs and walkers.

Given the vital necessity to ensure a clear, safe sidewalk and bus stop network in London, I am requesting that City Council and the LTC give some serious consideration to making sidewalk/ bus stop clearing and maintenance a high priority and ensure that bus stops are accessible to all users. If we are going to promote public transit and spend money improving the system, we need to look at each stop with an accessibility lens.

I welcome your feedback.

Thank you,

Gerald LaHay