

John Ford
Director of Transportation and Planning
London Transit Commission (LTC)
450 Highbury Ave. N
London, ON N5W 5L2

November 3, 2017

Dear John Ford,

We read with interest your response to the recent London Economic Development Corporation survey in the Free Press article “London Transit falls short for many manufacturers, new survey finds.”

We understand that you are seeking more information about who is being affected by limited bus service to industrial areas. Recognizing this, the Steering Committee of Employment Sector Council (ESC), a regional umbrella group of more than 40 organizations (membership list attached) serving both employers and job seekers, is re-submitting our own public transit research results, which help us to better understand how job seekers access public transportation. While it is clear that people are increasingly relying on the LTC for their day-to-day activities, there remain significant numbers of individuals who cannot access transportation to their place of current or potential employment.

Our research has been carried out in large part through ESC’s Job Developers Network (JDN), a network of 22 of our member organizations which directly connect regional employers with job seekers. Our JDN organizations and their job seeker clients help to shed light on an underreported issue in our community that affects a significant portion of London’s population: that accessibility to public transit is an important factor in employability. Simply put, job seekers with no other transportation means are excluded from job opportunities at sites that are not served by public transit. This exclusion, of course is exacerbated in our neighbouring counties with even fewer or no transit options, but which employ many Londoners and contribute significantly to London’s workforce.

“A lot of jobs for which I have been qualified I couldn’t apply for or consider because they were beyond the bus routes.”

Our survey of 262 participants found that the majority of employment services clients missed job opportunities because their worksite was not on a bus route. Perhaps more disturbingly, in many cases they simply did not believe it was worthwhile to apply for such positions. For those respondents who were currently employed, the majority also experienced scheduling issues that prevented them from arriving to work on time or getting home safely, due to bus schedule frequency and timing.

“I have had to turn down jobs because they were on the weekend.”

We believe that London and area job seekers are a key LTC user demographic which is being excluded from current transit planning considerations. They may be invisible in ridership surveys, as they are not currently using transit to get to work. Further, their interests cannot be represented through LTC employer surveys, as they are un- or under-employed. As such, we trust that our research and our direct connections to people searching for work, as well as to the employers who would hire them, will encourage and assist the LTC to address these real, but unmet needs.

Currently, the JDN is also measuring and analyzing hard-to-fill job positions, via our online job sharing portal. Between February, 2017 and the time of writing, more than one third of hard-to-fill London-

based jobs are not currently on an LTC route. When we expand this data across our service region, we also know that at least one third of jobs needing to be filled by our employer partners across Elgin, Middlesex, and Oxford Counties require worker transportation.

We appreciate the efforts of our community public transit stakeholders, such as LTC, to improve service delivery, to add hours to services, and to design more efficient and accessible transit systems and routes. We also commend our region's community service providers and employers for independently devising collaborative and innovative means for increasing workers access to transportation in order to get to work. However, while some of these initiatives will enhance service efficiency in London's core and, in some cases, peripherally, public transit serves only a fraction of all industrial sites in London. We are concerned that our residents are not being adequately connected to new and existing industrial areas and will not be in the future.

On behalf of the ESC Steering Committee, the primary recommendation from our research is the need for investment in enhanced service delivery, not only for the downtown core, but for less accessible work sites, particularly as the City seeks to attract industry to London's peripheries. Our direct communication with our member organizations, our area job seekers, employers, and third party recruiting firms, indicates that the LTC should consider expanding service to the remaining un- and under-served industrial sites. We further recognize the transit needs of residents and commuters of our surrounding Counties who also contribute significantly to the London economy, such as car pool or drop-off zones near transit hubs.

We are aware of the difficulties in efficient service delivery to lower-volume routes; however, we firmly believe that transportation should not be a barrier to employment, and that appropriate investment in infrastructure will pay dividends to the City's economic and social prosperity. In order to better support employment outcomes, access to public transit should be increased to ensure that all Londoners can pursue job opportunities in their city. We recognize that this is not solely the responsibility of the LTC. The City, our neighbouring counties, our ESC members and our employers are also key stakeholders in this conversation. Increased municipal investment should not occur in a vacuum, and employers should be incentivized to provide support for their employees to use public transit. ESC and our Job Developers Network represent a valuable partner to engage with the London Economic Region's business community on this issue.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your Commission in person, to discuss our work further, and to assist in any way. Please contact ESC Project Manager, Carol Stewart (carol@esclm.ca) to make arrangements. We look forward to continued partnership with the LTC and its stakeholders to enhance service delivery for all London and area residents.

Sincerely,

The ESC Steering Committee

Members: Darlene O'Neill (*Co-Chair*), Fanshawe College
Wilma de Rond (*Co-Chair*), WIL Employment Connections
Jerry Colwell, Pathways Skills Development
Steve Cordes, Youth Opportunities Unlimited
John Griffiths, Goodwill Industries, Ontario Great Lakes
Vicki Mayer, ATN Access Inc
Nancy McQuillan, London Employment Help Centre
Karen Steinmann, Hutton House
Carol Stewart, ESC Project Manager

Encl: ESC Membership List
ESC Research Brief: Accessibility of London Transit Services

Cc: Kelly S. Paleczny, General Manager, London Transit Commission (LTC)
Kapil Lakhotia, President and CEO, London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC)
Norman De Bono, London Free Press
Sheryl Rooth, Chair, LTC
Dean Sheppard, Vice-Chair, LTC
Councillor Jesse Helmer, Commissioner, LTC
Eric Southern, Commissioner, LTC
Councillor Phil Squire, Commissioner, LTC
Mayor Matt Brown, City of London
Kevin Dickins, Manager, Employment and Income Support Services, City of London.
Robert Collins, Director, Workforce Development, LEDC
Employment Sector Council Members



**A community of organizations engaged in
excellence in employment and training service delivery,
where the expertise of each member is available to all:**

ATN Access Inc.
Canadian Hearing Society
Centre for Lifelong Learning, London District Catholic School Board
Chippewa of the Thames First Nation
City of London
Collège Boréal
Community Living London
Community Employment Choices (Middlesex)
Community Employment Services, Fanshawe College (London)
Community Employment Services Oxford
Daya Counselling Centre
Fanshawe College St. Thomas/Elgin Regional Campus
Goodwill Industries, Ontario Great Lakes
Hutton House Association for Adults with Disabilities
King's College
Labourers' International Union of North America, Local 1059
LEADS Employment Services London, Inc.
Literacy Link South Central
Local Employment Planning Council
London Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACT) I
London Cross Cultural Learner Centre
London Economic Development Corporation
London Employment Help Centre
London Military Family Resource Centre
London Public Library
London Training Centre Inc.
March of Dimes Canada
Middlesex County Library
Middlesex Social Services
Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development
Ministry of Community and Social Services
Nokee Kwe
Oneida Nation of the Thames
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Parkwood Institute, St. Joseph's Health Care
Pathways Skill Development & Placement Centre
Prevention and Early Intervention Program for Psychoses
Small Business Centre
Stepping Stones Support Services Program
United Way Elgin Middlesex
Western University
WIL Employment Connections
YMCA of Western Ontario
Youth Opportunities Unlimited