

“NEXT STOP, ACCESSIBILITY”

Report on Public Transit Stop Announcements in Ontario

**ONTARIO
HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION**

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Introduction

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* (the “Code”) guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities to be free from discrimination in all social areas, including services, goods and facilities. This means that persons with disabilities have the right to access adequate transportation services in the same way as anybody else, with dignity and without impediment. Public transit is central to the ability of many people to take part fully in their communities. This includes getting to work, school, social events, and public and social services. Yet, there are still many barriers to accessibility in transit.

In October 2007, in response to recent developments and ongoing concerns in the area of transit accessibility, the Commission began an inquiry into whether transit providers across the province announce transit stops. Through this initiative, the Commission hoped to improve awareness in the transit sector of the importance of announcing all stops for the purposes of inclusion and accessibility, and to secure commitments toward quickly developing and implementing stop announcement plans.

Transit providers have taken a range of important steps in recent years in order to become more accessible, despite conflicting demands and financial pressures. On the whole, their commitment to accessibility was further shown over the course of this initiative, with a significant majority of transit providers agreeing to announce all stops by mid-2008.

This report is intended to:

- provide information about both the progress and ongoing concerns that led to this initiative
- recognize the efforts and commitments of transit providers toward increasing the accessibility of their services through introducing or enhancing stop announcement practices
- provide clarification about ongoing responsibilities and concerns moving forward.

Background: Accessible Transit and Stop Announcements

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (the “Commission”) has long been concerned about the significant barriers that persons with disabilities face when attempting to access transportation services. The Commission has heard from the community about a range of persistent barriers, and has addressed transit accessibility issues through a number of initiatives, publications and human rights complaints.¹ The Commission’s 2002 consultation report, *Human Rights and Public*

¹ For example, in July, 1999, the Commission undertook a survey of Ontario’s public transit providers. In 2001, the Commission updated the survey, and launched a public consultation with the release of *its Discussion Paper on Accessible Transit in Ontario*. This led to the 2002 consultation report, *Human*

Transit in Ontario, outlines many of these concerns, and in particular identifies announcing all stops as an important inclusive design feature that provides access for persons with visual impairments.

In 2007, the Commission noted both progress and setbacks relating to accessibility in transit for persons with disabilities. In particular, two developments led the Commission's decision to undertake the current initiative.

The Initial Proposed Transportation Accessibility Standard

In August 2007, the Commission made a submission to the Transportation Standards Review Committee on the *Initial Proposed Transportation Accessibility Standard* (the "proposed standard"). While the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the "AODA") has the potential to have a profound positive impact on the lives of Ontarians with disabilities, the Commission has major concerns about the proposed standard. In a number of areas, it falls far short of fundamental human rights standards. It fails to make progress towards equality for persons with disabilities, and it regresses on some gains previously made. For example, it does not require transportation providers to announce all stops until three to 18 years after the standard is adopted.

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* applies to all municipalities and organizations that fall under Ontario law, and takes precedence over all other provincial legislation, unless there is a specific exemption in that legislation. There is no such exemption in the AODA. In fact, the AODA explicitly states that, if there is a conflict between one of its provisions, a related standard or another regulation, and any other Act or regulation, the provision that provides the highest level of accessibility for persons with disabilities will prevail.²

In its submission, the Commission states that it is essential that the final transit standard be harmonized with the requirements of the *Code*. The Commission notes that the AODA and the *Code* share significant common purpose, and that failing to harmonize the standards with the *Code* leads to confusion, frustration and a greater likelihood of human rights violations and complaints. This has attendant costs for the responsible organizations and individuals, rights-seekers and society as a whole. To date, the final transit standard has yet to be released.

The Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario decision on stop announcements

In July 2007, the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (the "Tribunal") released an important decision on the issue of stop announcements, *Lepofsky v. Toronto*

Rights and Public Transit in Ontario. The Commission also released a 2006 Position Paper on para-transit services, and a 2007 submission on the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario's *Initial Proposed Transportation Accessibility Standard*. These and all Commission publications can be viewed on the Commission's web site at www.ohrc.on.ca.

² *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, S.O. 2005, c. 11, s. 38

*Transit Commission (“Lepofsky”).*³ The Tribunal, which is a separate body from the Commission, found that the failure of the Toronto Transit Commission (the “TTC”) to ensure announcement of all stops on buses and streetcars violated the human rights of persons with disabilities. In particular, the Tribunal found that the TTC failed to establish that alleged risks associated with drivers verbally announcing stops would amount to undue hardship, while the costs associated with implementing such a program would be relatively minor. The Tribunal ordered the TTC to start announcements within 30 days of the decision.

One important element of this decision is that the Tribunal indicated that **manual call-out of stops within weeks of the decision was required** in order to address the immediate problem of accessibility for persons with visual impairments. This decision was made despite the fact that eventual implementation of automated audio-visual stop announcement systems may provide broader accessibility in the long term, and that the TTC would be bound by any forthcoming standards under the AODA. This aspect of the decision both reflects and supports the Commission’s policy position that interim accommodation should be offered in situations where implementing the most appropriate accommodation must be phased in over time.⁴

This decision was a very positive one for Ontarians with disabilities. It provides clarity about the importance of interim accommodation and inclusive design, offers a detailed blueprint for applying the duty to accommodate people with disability when providing transit services, and reflects how the Tribunal will address similar complaints in the future.

The Commission decided that, given these recent developments and the conflicts between the proposed standards and current interpretations of the *Code*, including Commission policy and the *Lepofsky* decision, it was important to communicate with transit providers to clarify their responsibilities and help them to prevent complaints.

The Transit Stop Announcements Inquiry

In Fall 2007, the Commission contacted transit providers to inform them about these recent developments, request information about current stop announcement practices, and to recommend that they take steps to avoid complaints and improve accessibility by developing plans to quickly implement stop announcements.

³ *Lepofsky v. Toronto Transit Commission*, 2007 HRTO 23, (July 26, 2007) (“*Lepofsky*”). This decision followed a 2005 HRTO ruling in a similar case relating to the duty to accommodate visually impaired riders by announcing subway stops (see *Ontario Human Rights Commission v. Toronto Transit Commission*, 2005 HRTO 36, (September 29, 2005)).

⁴ *Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate* (the “*Policy*”), Ontario Human Rights Commission, November, 2000, s.4.4.9.

In October 2007, the Commission sent out a letter to providers of standard public transit systems⁵ across the province, and issued a press release announcing the initiative. This mailing was copied to the Ontario Public Transit Association (OPTA) and a number of other transit sector organizations and disability community stakeholders. The Commission provided copies of the *Lepofsky* decision, the Commission's submission on the AODA Draft Transit Standard, and related press releases.⁶

In the letter, the Commission requested that transit services provide information detailing:

- whether they were currently and consistently announcing all stops
- any policies and/or practices currently in place for announcing stops
- steps taken to make sure the policy or practice is carried out.

The Commission requested that, if organizations were not currently and consistently announcing all stops, they take the opportunity to develop plans to improve accessibility through stop announcements, as set out in the *Lepofsky* decision. The Commission requested that transit services provide information about:

- their intentions for announcing all stops
- steps they had taken and would take to make sure all stops are announced
- timelines for implementation.

Over the winter, the Commission had discussions with many transit providers. Some clarifications were requested, and a number of organizations provided more information.

The Commission stated that it will take all necessary steps, including initiating complaints if required, to make sure that Ontario's transit providers meet their statutory obligations under the *Code*. By meeting the level of service set out in *Lepofsky*, transit services can ensure that persons with visual disabilities have greater, more consistent and more dignified access to public transit across the province.

Transit Provider Responses

Over the fall and winter of 2007-2008, the Commission communicated with 41 transit providers. Of these, 40 provided the requested information.⁷ On the whole, most of the organizations expressed broad commitment to accessibility within the transit

⁵ Due to the focus of this inquiry on the principles of broad accessibility and inclusion, specialized door-to-door transit services for elderly persons and people with disabilities were not contacted.

⁶ These documents can be found on the Commission's Web site at www.ohrc.on.ca/en/resources/news/ttcxs

⁷ Coach Canada, which is federally regulated, did not respond to the Commission's inquiry. Two other federally regulated transit providers, Windsor and Ottawa (OC Transpo), did respond. See appendices for details.

sector.⁸ This commitment was further demonstrated by the willingness of many transit providers to develop or speed up stop announcement plans in response to the Commission’s inquiry.

The Commission is encouraged by the overall movement toward implementing stop announcements. However, there is significant variation among transit providers in terms of the methods, processes and timelines they have put forward. While many have responded by taking concrete steps to improve the breadth and timeliness of accessibility through stop announcements, some have limited or delayed their commitments, and some have not indicated any clear commitment to address the specific issues raised in this inquiry.

At the outset of the inquiry, only the TTC was announcing all transit stops, in accordance with HRTO decisions. As of the end of March 2008, of the 38 provincially regulated transit providers:⁹

- 25 committed to begin announcing all stops by June 30, 2008
- 2 more appeared likely to do so.

Of the remaining 11 provincially regulated organizations:

- 4 indicated that they would begin announcing all stops announcements in the fall of 2008
- 2 described plans for longer term compliance over the next 2-4 years
- 2 made no commitments to our inquiry, referring instead to commitments to meet any future AODA standard
- 3 did not provide sufficient information about their intentions or timelines for implementation.

Two of the three federally regulated agencies contacted indicated plans for partial or long-term compliance; the other did not reply.

The Commission is very pleased that a number of organizations took immediate and positive steps in response to its request, and that they committed to fully implement universal stop announcement plans within short time frames. In particular, in addition to the TTC, four transit providers – Brampton, Durham, Owen Sound, and Sault St. Marie – indicated that they would announce all stops before or by the end of the first quarter of 2008.

In all, more than two-thirds of provincially regulated transit operators committed to announce all stops by the end of the second quarter of 2008. These transit providers span the province, and range in size from small to very large systems: their efforts

⁸ Many transit services provided detailed information about their programs and plans to improve access for transit users with disabilities, such as staff training , fare-free use of public transit for persons with visual impairment, accessibility improvements to bus stops and fleet vehicles, among others.

⁹ See Appendix A for a summary breakdown of responses, and Appendix B for details of responses, arranged alphabetically by municipality or organization.

represent a considerable advancement in transit accessibility. The result is that over a relatively short period of time, persons with visual impairments and other transit riders will enjoy a significant improvement in services that are so essential to their daily lives.

The means by which organizations choose to announce stops has been the subject of some discussion over the course of this inquiry. Broadly speaking, there are two ways to deliver stop announcements:

Manual stop announcement:

A simple verbal call-out is made by the driver or vehicle operator, often with amplification using a PA system, to ensure greater audibility. Transit provider responses showed that plans for putting these systems into place may include steps such as: policy development; developing and implementing training for drivers on accessibility principles, policies and announcement procedures; naming mid-block or rural stops; providing cards or other tools listing the stops; and in some cases, acquiring and installing public address systems.

Of the many organizations that committed to announce all stops by June 30, 2008, all but one indicate that they will do so, at least initially, through manual call-out.¹⁰ Overall, manual call-out offers a fairly quick and inexpensive solution, and has been the means by which many organizations, of a range of sizes, have been able to begin stop announcements within short time frames.

Automated systems:

These systems vary in complexity and cost. Because they can include both audio and visual announcement, they can provide broader accessibility than manual call-out, in that they benefit persons with either hearing or vision impairments, as well as other transit riders. A number of transit providers cited broader accessibility, convenience for the drivers, or alleged safety concerns (addressed and found not to have amounted to undue hardship in *Lepofsky*) as their rationale for pursuing this option. However, transit providers also indicated that these systems are expensive, and due to cost, availability and complexity, may require several months to several years to acquire, develop and install.

A number of organizations chose to focus solely on implementing electronic systems in the long term, or simply restated their commitment to meet any transit standard eventually finalized under the AODA, without addressing the immediate need for an interim solution. These responses do not sufficiently address the specific barriers and remedy described in the *Lepofsky* decision, relating to persons with visual impairment.

¹⁰ Guelph indicated that it will have an automated system in place in Spring 2008. See appendices for more detailed information.

It should be noted that the Commission position, as set out in its *Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate* (the “*Policy*”), is that organizations should actively identify and remove barriers to inclusion. Furthermore, the *Policy* states that service providers have a duty to:

- provide timely solutions to accommodation requests
- provide interim solutions where a broader or more appropriate accommodation may take some time to implement
- provide accommodation to the point of undue hardship. This excludes business inconvenience, employee morale and third-party preference, and involves a detailed analysis of any alleged cost or health and safety concerns.¹¹

A few transit providers felt that their current accommodation practices for persons with visual impairment, such as access to separate specialized transit systems, or stop call-out on request, were sufficient. The *Lepofsky* decision has already established that “on request” call-out is unreliable and insufficient. These responses also fail to take into account the human rights principles of integration, inclusive design and the dignity of the person.¹²

The question of dignity arises where persons with visual disabilities have to request and depend upon assistance from others every time they use transit, as a condition of gaining access, when other people do not have to do so. There is also a practical impact based in regular human error, in that, where call-out is not routine, drivers sometimes forget to call out the requested stop. These issues can all be addressed through inclusive design, that is, through consistently and audibly announcing all stops.

Several transit providers indicated that, while working toward long-term implementation of automated audio-visual announcement systems, or completing a phase-in of such systems, they will implement manual call-out systems. The Commission is pleased that these organizations are incorporating the concept of interim accommodation in their planning.

As several transit providers have noted, some steps taken toward manual call-out, such as the naming of stops, will facilitate eventual transition to automated systems. Others have pointed out that manual call-out remains an important back-up for automated systems. Organizations that have provided drivers with tools and training for manual call-out will be able to ensure seamless delivery of stop announcements, even if there are delays in implementing automated systems, or when there are system failures or malfunctions.

Conclusion

¹¹ See section 4 of the *Policy*.

¹² See section 3.1 of the *Policy*.

Since starting this inquiry, the Commission has received feedback indicating that stop call-outs are standard practice in many parts of the world. We have heard that stop announcements provide improved service for many community members, such as persons with visual or cognitive disabilities, people who find it hard to read street signs, tourists and others visiting unfamiliar areas, and passengers who are distracted or unable to see outside due to bad weather or full vehicles. We have also heard, from some transit organizations and vehicle operators, as well as from transit riders both with and without disabilities, that announcing all stops simply makes sense.

The Commission wishes to extend its thanks to the OPTA and to all the service providers that cooperated with our inquiry. A significant majority of the transit organizations province-wide reacted in a positive way to the information provided by the Commission, and to our request for action on their part. Their willingness to quickly increase accessibility by ensuring announcement of all stops, even where they have not yet received customer complaints, are good examples of a proactive approach to inclusivity through barrier removal.

The Commission continues to encourage those transit providers who have not yet begun announcing all stops to do so before June 30, 2008. The transit sector has been aware of the issue for a number of months, and, as many other transit providers have shown, manual call-out can be implemented in short time-frames, even in large organizations. Those who have delayed in their response therefore leave themselves vulnerable to human rights complaints. Ideally, organizations will use their resources to immediately implement manual stop announcements, rather than defending delays and barriers to accessibility.

For many Ontarians, particularly people who cannot drive due to visual impairment, transit is essential to their full and equal participation in society, allowing them to get to work and appointments, do their shopping, visit friends and family, and attend events. Announcement of all stops provides more dignified and reliable access to persons with disabilities, and makes sure that they and other transit users benefit from more consistent and user-friendly service throughout the province.

Appendix A: Summary of Transit Provider Responses

SUMMARY OF TRANSIT PROVIDER RESPONSES: by Date, Degree, and Format of Compliance

(based on information received by end March, 2008)

- **41 municipalities/organizations contacted**
- **40 replies received** (exception: Coach Canada, federally regulated)
- **38 municipalities/organizations fall under provincial jurisdiction** (exceptions: Coach Canada, Ottawa (OC Transpo) and Windsor)

Compliance format

All transit providers indicating compliance with the request to announce all stops have committed to do so through manual announcement, except as noted:

* = manual call-out of all stops as interim accommodation while phasing in automated systems in the mid-to-longer term

** = automated system only

Already compliant, or compliant by end of 1st quarter, 2008: 5

Brampton*, Durham, Owen Sound, Sault St Marie and Toronto*

Will begin announcing all stops during 2nd quarter, 2008: 22

Barrie	Guelph**	St. Thomas
Belleville	Kawartha Lakes	Stratford
Brantford*	Milton *	Thunder Bay
Burlington*	Mississauga	Timmins*
Cobourg	North Bay	Woodstock
Fort Erie	Oakville*	York Region*
GO Transit	Orillia*	

Inexact or unclear date information, but appear likely to comply by end June:

Chatham-Kent* – informed service provider of need to announce stops

Hamilton* – Spring 2008 “at earliest”

Will begin announcing all stops during 3rd quarter, 2008: 4

London,** Kingston,** Peterborough,* Sarnia**

Will begin announcing all stops later than 3rd quarter, 2008: 3

Grand River** (2010)

St. Catharines** (within 3 years of AODA transit standard coming into force)

Windsor** – (2013) – federally regulated

Committed only to announce as/when mandated by AODA standard: 2

Brockville, Cornwall

Did not provide clear commitments regarding compliance: 4

Niagara: consulting with stakeholders over several months.

Sudbury: new system in Fall 2008 would “allow [them] to consider” audio and visual announcements.

Welland: Reviewing solutions for operator call-out and long term automated systems, consulting, seeking funding.

Ottawa: federally regulated, commits announcing major stops and intersections only: manual call-out until automated system in place by the end of 2008.

Appendix B: Stop Announcement Practices and Commitments

STOP ANNOUNCEMENT PRACTICES AND COMMITMENTS FROM ONTARIO PUBLIC TRANSIT PROVIDERS			
Municipality or transit provider	Practice prior to OHRC Inquiry	Date will announce all stops	Stop announcement plans: format and details
Barrie Transit	Not announcing all stops	Before June 30, 2008	Manual call-out of all stops: will work with contracted provider to develop policy, training and monitoring. Considering automated system in future.
Belleville Transit	Not announcing all stops	June 30, 2008	Manual call-out. They will develop a policy on stop announcements, and provide training for their operators. Supervisory staff will monitor compliance.
Brampton Transit	Not announcing all stops	1st Quarter, 2008	Manual stop annunciation program. Anticipate implementing an automated audio and visual system in 2008-9.
Brantford Transit	On request. Have destination card system for students of local school for the Blind.	May 1, 2008	Manual - developing system for May 08, Seeking procurement of an automated system with the goal of this September.
Brockville	On request	Not provided (refer to draft AODA standards)	No information provided about commitment to comply with <i>Lepofsky</i> . Indicate intent to comply with requirements and timelines of AODA standard once it comes into force.
Burlington Transit	On request	June 2008	Manual in short term, automated in long term. Budget has been allocated to install automated system by 2010-2011. Currently naming stops and developing reference manuals and instructions.

STOP ANNOUNCEMENT PRACTICES AND COMMITMENTS FROM ONTARIO PUBLIC TRANSIT PROVIDERS			
Municipality or transit provider	Practice prior to OHRC Inquiry	Date will announce all stops	Stop announcement plans: format and details
Chatham-Kent Transit	On request	Not provided	Have informed service provider of the need to regularly announce transit stops verbally. Have speaker systems in buses. May develop policy and training. Budget funds have been approved for audible and visible stop announcement in the longer term.
Coach Canada, which is federally regulated, did not reply to the Commission's inquiry.			
Cobourg Transit	Not announcing all stops	June 30 2008	Manual call-out: will train drivers, do spot-checks to monitor compliance.
Cornwall Transit	On request. For visually impaired: a "destination card" system, and access to specialized transit	Not provided	Will call out major stops by Feb. 2008, but did not indicate plans to announce all stops. Referred to draft AODA standard.
Durham Region Transit Commission	On request	Early 2008	Manual call-out: have made the request to the union and will monitor compliance. Looking to acquire automated technology in the longer term.
Fort Erie	On request	June 1, 2008	Manual call-out: will write this requirement into the Service Agreement with their contracted provider. Monitoring will be via customer satisfaction survey.
GO Transit	Bus routes: major stops and requests. Trains: all stops and "next stop."	June 1, 2008	Manual: currently naming rural stops in coordination with local transit agencies; adding sensitivity training component for drivers about the purpose and benefit of stop announcements

STOP ANNOUNCEMENT PRACTICES AND COMMITMENTS FROM ONTARIO PUBLIC TRANSIT PROVIDERS			
Municipality or transit provider	Practice prior to OHRC Inquiry	Date will announce all stops	Stop announcement plans: format and details
Grand River Transit	Regular bus routes: on request. Express route: Automatic audio and visual announcement	2010	Automated as long-term plan: intend to expand GPS technology throughout fleet. No mention of interim manual call-out.
Guelph Transit	On request	Spring 2008	Automated, system to be installed by Spring 2008.
Hamilton Street Railway Company	On request	Immediate efforts: full compliance over several months "Spring 08 at earliest."	Manual. Developing policy materials and plans for training, coaching and monitoring; and communications with employees about the TTC decision. Working with the City disability advisory committee, Union local. Seeking funding for automated system with a goal of procurement by end 2008.
Kawartha Lakes	On request	May 1, 2008	Manual. Plan to adopt a policy, provide driver instruction on the procedure, monitor.
Kingston Transit	On request, and at transfer points. Hailing card system for visually impaired.	3rd Quarter 2008	Automated: goal is to implement system by Fall 2008, with manual announcements as backup. They will name stops, develop policies, train drivers, provide printed lists of stops to drivers.
London Transit Commission	On request	Fall 2008	Automated: electronic audio and visual announcements to be implemented by Fall 2008. No commitment to manual call-out in the interim.

STOP ANNOUNCEMENT PRACTICES AND COMMITMENTS FROM ONTARIO PUBLIC TRANSIT PROVIDERS			
Municipality or transit provider	Practice prior to OHRC Inquiry	Date will announce all stops	Stop announcement plans: format and details
Milton Transit	On request	April 7 2008	Manual: drivers to be provided with training and a list of all stops. Monitored by supervisors in random checks. A section of Milton's capital budget has been identified for future implementation of automated audio and visual announcement system.
Mississauga Transit	On request	June 2008	Manual call-out by June 2008: in interim they are naming stops, producing route cards, training operators. Will consider automated systems for the future.
Niagara Transit	On request	Not clear. Indicate intent to prepare a plan to announce stops in the "near future."	Intend to employ the "most effective stop announcement technology" after assessment and consultation.
North Bay Transit	On request	Target June 2008	Manual. Currently naming stops, purchasing additional manual announcement equipment, will develop policy and monitoring system, and train staff on equipment and rationale behind the requirement.
Oakville Transit	On request	April 7 2008	Manual, initially: callout of all stops, including training and monitoring by Transit Supervisors by June 2008. Plan to implement an electronic audio and visual system over the next 2 years; have requested funds to equip all buses.

STOP ANNOUNCEMENT PRACTICES AND COMMITMENTS FROM ONTARIO PUBLIC TRANSIT PROVIDERS

Municipality or transit provider	Practice prior to OHRC Inquiry	Date will announce all stops	Stop announcement plans: format and details
Orillia Transit	Call out all transfer points, major intersections and destinations; others on request.	June 30, 2008	Manual as interim announcement method, until automated audio and visual stop announcement system is in place. Will provide training during week of March 31, monitoring by Transit Supervisor. Longer-term plan is in place to implement audio announcements and LED destination route signage over next several years. In 2008, 2 buses of the total fleet of 5 will be equipped with this system.
Ottawa - OC Transpo (Federally Regulated)	Call out requested and major stops.	Not provided	Automated system to announce most stops by late 2008, but there are stops on some neighbourhood routes that will be announced on request only. In interim, will continue to call out requested and major stops. Providing training and monitoring for compliance.
Owen Sound	Not announcing all stops	Jan. 1, 2008	Manual. Have instructed transit contractor, are drafting and distributing policy, and will monitor by random inspection.
Peterborough	On request, plus bus hail kit, "destination card" system	Sept. 2008	Manual announcements by September 2008. Looking into automated systems as a longer-term option; seeking approval to implement within next couple of years.
Sarnia		Sept. 30, 2008	Automated system to be implemented by September 30, 2008. In interim, will announce all stops if requested by a passenger. "Complaint-based" monitoring.
Sault Ste Marie	On request, with "reminder card" system for visually impaired passengers.	Nov. 2007	Manual call-out, including training. Monitoring by accessibility advisory committee.

STOP ANNOUNCEMENT PRACTICES AND COMMITMENTS FROM ONTARIO PUBLIC TRANSIT PROVIDERS

Municipality or transit provider	Practice prior to OHRC Inquiry	Date will announce all stops	Stop announcement plans: format and details
St. Thomas	On request	Monday, May 20, 2008	Manual: initially verbal call-out. Installing new PA systems as soon as possible to improve audibility.
St. Catharines Transit Commission	Not announcing all stops	No specific date given	Electronic: system to be in place before AODA deadline (3 years after standards come into force), will announce all stops.
Stratford	Not announcing all stops	June 1, 2008	Manual: will develop policy and monitor compliance.
Sudbury - Greater Sudbury Transit	On request	Not provided	A new electronic system operational in Fall 2008 would "allow [them] to consider the possibility of announcing" all stops, audio and visual. No commitment made regarding manual call-out in interim.
Thunder Bay Transit	Not announcing all stops	June 30, 2008	Manual in the interim: will develop policy including initial training, and monitoring by their accessibility advisory committee. They have installed a GPS/AVL system that will enable future implementation of electronic audio and visual announcement systems.
Timmins Transit	On request	Between 1-30 June, 2008	Manual in the interim: they will install speakers on older buses, develop policy and audit process, train drivers, and monitor for compliance. They are looking into implementation of an electronic system over the next 1 - 1.5 years.
Toronto Transit Commission	Announcing all stops as per HRTO decision.	Already providing announcements per HRTO decision	Initially provided manual call-out of stops to comply with HRTO ruling, while phasing in an electronic system.

STOP ANNOUNCEMENT PRACTICES AND COMMITMENTS FROM ONTARIO PUBLIC TRANSIT PROVIDERS			
Municipality or transit provider	Practice prior to OHRC Inquiry	Date will announce all stops	Stop announcement plans: format and details
Welland	On request	Not Provided	Announcement plans not clear. Consulting with stakeholders over next few months, reviewing operator call-out and long term automated solutions, looking for funding over next year.
Windsor (Federally Regulated)	On request	2013	Automated: audio and visual announcement system expected to be ready by 2013, subject to budget approval, planning. Not clear whether intend to announce all stops. Refer to intent to comply with AODA standards – callout of major stops, transit points and requested stops. No information provided about manual call-out of stops in the interim.
Woodstock	On request	June 30, 2008	Manual call-out: providing staff direction and training, installing PA systems and labelling stops. Hoping to work with community members for monitoring and feedback. Their priority is to spend funds on wheelchair accessible buses rather than automated call-out technology.
York Region Transit	Automated on 25% of routes, by request on other routes	May 4, 2008	Manual/automated: will begin manual callout by May 4, 2008 on routes that don't yet have automated announcements. Will provide training and a transit stop reference tool to drivers, daily random monitoring by inspection staff. Currently, 1/4 of buses are automated: 140 buses automated by May 4, 2008, last 170 buses automated by end 2008.