

**To: Standing Policy Committee (SPC) on Community & Protective Services**  
**From: Shawna Mattinson, Citizen of Calgary**  
**Date: March 7, 2018**  
**Subject: Support for Wheelchair Accessible Taxi's**

My name is Shawna Mattinson and I was born with Cerebral Palsy, which has put me in a wheelchair for most of my life. I lead a very active life between working out, writing, and being an advocate in my community.

I have been in Calgary all my adult life and I mostly rely on Calgary Transit Access. I do acknowledge that they are an overworked shared ride system and most of the drivers are very personable. Some of the issues I have with not being able to use accessible cabs is that if I want to go anywhere I have to know at least 2 days in advance. The system is not set up for me to decide to go out for dinner the day of. Often times I miss the end of a movie because Calgary Transit Access shows up and if you don't go, you don't get a ride home. I once arrived for dinner an hour and a half late (my bus was running behind schedule) and ordered my food, just as they set my dinner down in front of me, there was access Calgary back to pick me up at my scheduled time. One time when I was coming home from a vacation I was picked up at the airport and the driver took me quite a ways out of my way knowing that because of few Accessible Taxis I really had no choice. My friend who lives about 5 minutes from me and didn't need an accessible taxi arrived home with a \$55.00 cab fare and mine was \$92.00. (In case you are wondering why we didn't share the cab, I was traveling with another friend and we had a lot of luggage).

With the lack of accessible cabs, I often have to leave my Electric Wheelchair at home along with my independence. I have many great friends that will take me out but I have to use a manual chair and I am at their mercy help me do even the simplest of tasks like getting myself to the washroom. If there were more accessible cabs, my life would be a lot brighter and I would be able to more actively participate in activities in and around Calgary.



**To:** Standing Policy Committee (SPC) on Community & Protective Services  
**From:** Colleen McGann, Citizen of Calgary  
**Date:** March 7, 2018  
**Subject:** Support for Wheelchair Accessible Taxi's

Thank you for the opportunity to let you know my viewpoint concerning 24/7, on-demand, wheelchair accessible services in Calgary. I regret that I could not attend in person today, however, securing transportation to this meeting was a barrier for the reasons highlighted below.

My name is Colleen McGann and I am an active volunteer with the Calgary Ability Network and Cerebral Palsy Association in Alberta.

I am a rider of Calgary Transit Access and I use it about 14 times a week. Overall, I am pleased with the service I receive from CTA. The drivers are friendly, helpful and they understand how to properly secure my wheelchair for a safe ride. The parts of the service that limit my full mobility within the city are the following:

1. I must pre-book each trip four days in advance which means all spontaneity in my life is gone. For example, this New Year's Eve, the last trip of the night was at 12:40am. Since it is one night a year to have fun with friends and loved ones and stay up late, I booked for 12:40am. The pick-up time was adjusted to 12:10am. Considering the service hours available to able-bodied Calgarians on New Year's Eve, I would at least have hoped for 1:00am pick up or later.
2. My CTA ACE card that I once had, was taken away from me. The reasons for this were not clearly communicated to me. Therefore, when I want to volunteer or do something else that many Calgarians take for granted, I am limited by the conditions placed upon me by CTA.

**To: Standing Policy Committee (SPC) on Community & Protective Services**  
**From: Colin Cantlie, Citizen of Calgary**  
**Date: March 7, 2018**  
**Subject: Support for the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Report**

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My name is Colin Cantlie, an advocate for Persons with Disabilities, former member of the ACA Design Sub Committee and former national president of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA). Unfortunately, I am unable to attend the Council Committee meeting, today (March 7, 2018) in person, as I am out of town. I am most grateful to Brittany Gavin for reading this commentary into the committee's public meeting record.

It is important that this committee hears from people of all walks of life concerning "Wheelchair Accessible Taxis". I will say here that I do not use many taxis, but fully understand the need for reliable, affordable transportation services for all people of Calgary, including persons with disabilities who depend on others to drive them to wherever they need to go, in a timely fashion. It is also important to understand that people want their independence, dignity and respect intact in all aspects of their daily lives. The wheelchair accessible taxis are a vital component of life for a large number of citizens of all ages and backgrounds.

The taxi industry needs to be reliable and available to citizens every hour of every day of the year. The service needs to be mindful of the customer, whether it be for employment, social, medical or emergency purposes, etc. and always in a respectful manner. Transportation, in our lives, is not a 9 to 5 operation but rather 365 days, 24 hours.

My comments are in support of the "Accessible Taxi Strategy Report" before you today and the Community of Persons with Disabilities. Our community needs support from you, the City of Calgary, as well as the citizens of Calgary and region. They need reassurance that quality and consistent accessible taxi service is available to them, as it is to all other citizens on a 24/7 basis. (Transportation) Accommodation and fare (transportation) business practices in Calgary are essential and foremost when speaking of the good and strong policies put forth by members of City Council.

Thank you.

Respectfully,



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## **ACCESSIBLE TAXIS**

***Anuya Pai***

When I first arrived in Calgary, I relied on taxis to travel everywhere. The buses were often cramped, the trains far away from where I lived, and I was not eligible for Calgary Transit Access. My introduction to the city's taxi services did not begin well. On multiple occasions, I had to wait up to three hours for transportation to arrive. This was after having been told that the dispatcher would need to check if there were any taxis nearby at the time of the requested pick-up, even when I had phoned hours and sometimes days, in advance. This process was not only exhausting but meant that I was frequently late to my classes. Further adding to my difficulties, drivers would sometimes have the meter running as I entered the vehicle, before we had even moved anywhere, claimed that they were permitted to charge for "loading me" into the car. When my father, who accompanied me, asserted that I was not a load, or luggage, we were met with frustration and sometimes even aggression. These experiences were terrible, not only because I was made to feel less than human but because I feared that I would be left without transport if we questioned these drivers further.

I feel it is important to note that I have also had some wonderful drivers who were punctual, respectful, friendly and extremely helpful. They represent the city's taxi services at their best. I believe that these experiences deserve as much recognition as others I have relayed but sadly, they are few and far between. The scarcity of accessible taxis, particularly in colder months, makes getting around the city that much tougher. While we now have our own vehicle, my association with taxis has not ceased. I continue to use them when personal transport is unavailable, or I need to get to the airport.

In recounting my experiences, my intention is not to besmirch the reputation of taxi services in Calgary. I express my views today because of what the challenges with accessible taxi service provision and quality represent for people with disabilities. They keep us on the periphery of society. They tell us that we, and by extension our needs, are not worthy, of attention or of investment. They tell us that the lives we lead are not valuable enough for improvement of services that enable us to contribute to the city, to be made a priority. I understand that this is a complex, multifaceted issue but it is also as crucial as anything else the committee will discuss. I implore you to please act to ensure the availability and quality of accessible taxi services for many years to come. Let Calgary be the city in which everyone can stay connected.