

Sudbury Transit hit with complaint over calling bus stops

By SooToday.com Staff
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NEWS RELEASE

ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Ontario Human Rights Commission files complaints against three public transit providers

TORONTO, July 6 - The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) today filed applications at the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario against Hamilton, Sudbury and Thunder Bay transit providers, on behalf of transit riders with a vision disability.

The OHRC took the action after these Ontario public transit providers failed to implement plans to call out all stops for bus passengers.

In 2002, the OHRC first told the transit sector, through its *Consultation Report, Human Rights and Public Transit Services in Ontario*, that lack of stop announcements on transit routes was a barrier for persons with a vision disability.

In July 2007, the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario released its decision in *Lepofsky v. Toronto Transit Commission* ordering the TTC to begin announcing all stops on buses and streetcars that summer.

Soon afterwards the OHRC contacted public transit authorities across the province, to ensure transit operators were aware of their obligations under Ontario's Human Rights Code, OHRC policy and recent human rights case law.

In 2008, all 38 public transit providers in Ontario assured the OHRC that plans to call all stops on all routes were underway, and that the service would be in place by the end of the year.

However, this year, the commission learned that several transit providers are not meeting their commitments.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission is asking the Human Rights Tribunal to order Hamilton, Sudbury and Thunder Bay transit providers to begin calling all stops on all routes within 30 days.

In addition, the OHRC wants those transit providers to train their staff on the importance of making transit accessible, monitor progress and report publicly on measures they've taken.

"We have worked with transit providers for many months on this issue," said OHRC Chief Commissioner Barbara Hall. "Unfortunately, a handful of operators are not accommodating the needs of persons with a vision disability. We hope all of Ontario's transit providers will quickly meet their commitments so that all transit riders can equally access public transportation in their communities."



<http://www.thespec.com/News/Local/article/596102>

HSR called out on stops

KEN PETERS

The Hamilton Spectator

(Jul 8, 2009)

The head of Hamilton transit says it is unreasonable to train all city bus drivers to call out 20,000 stops for bus passengers.

As an interim measure. For a month.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission obviously disagrees. The commission this week filed complaints against Hamilton, Sudbury and Thunder Bay for failure to call out stops for bus passengers. The commission is asking the Human Rights Tribunal to order the municipalities to begin calling out stops on all routes within 30 days.

Hamilton expects to have a new \$3-million fully automated call-out system in place on all buses by September.

Hamilton transit director Don Hull was surprised Steeltown was included in the complaint. Hamilton has been working full-out to get its new system in place.

"For us to put 400 operators through training to do manual call-outs... for us it's an issue of reliability. For us the manual system simply will not be reliable. We're making 20,000 stops a day. It's like a bylaw that you can't enforce because you can't be there all the time.

"The only thing that is going to be close to 100 per cent reliable is a fully automated system. We're going to work with the commission and we're optimistic we'll get something sorted out.

"We take these issues seriously and we've demonstrated our commitment. It's not like we've been dragging our feet.

"We feel we've made a commitment above and beyond quite frankly to get this system up and running at the fastest possible time," he said.

Hull said a little perspective is needed. While the call-out stop issue is important, the HSR has less than a dozen complaints over the issue.

"The operators have been very good in the past. The operator will ask the person to take a seat where they can see them. And then advise the person as they're coming up to the stop. That's been common practice here for years."

In 2008, all of Ontario's 38 public transit providers assured the commission that call-out service would be in place by the end of the year. This year the commission learned that several transit providers were well behind that deadline.

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Lack of bus call-out system 'no issue': mayor

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Posted by Sudbury Northern Life Reporter Ed Veilleux

Greater Sudbury mayor John Rodriguez is expressing some frustration after the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) filed applications on July 6 at the [Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario](#) against Hamilton, Sudbury and Thunder Bay transit providers, on behalf of visually impaired bus riders.



The commission took action after those Ontario public transit providers “failed to implement plans to call out all stops for bus passengers.”

“What more do you expect from us?” Rodriguez asked. “I suppose they would expect the mayor to go and install these himself.”

The city will install an automated call-out within 60 days, “and they have been told that,” he said. “It seems to me they must be finding things to do with their time or they're not well informed.

“We passed a resolution at council (to install an automated call-out system). We've even went one step further than they requested us to do ... We're not only announcing the stops, we're showing the stops for those who are sight-challenged, as well as hearing-challenged.”

In 2002, the OHRC first told the transit sector, through its consultation report, that lack of stop announcements on transit routes was a barrier for persons with a vision disability.

In July 2007, the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario released its decision in *Lepofsky v. Toronto Transit Commission* ordering the TTC to begin announcing all stops on buses and streetcars that summer.

Soon afterwards the OHRC contacted public transit authorities across the province to ensure transit operators were aware of their obligations under Ontario's Human Rights Code, OHRC

policy and recent human rights case law.

However recent media reports say the OHRC claims several transit providers are not meeting their commitments.

The Commission is asking the Human Rights Tribunal to order Hamilton, Sudbury and Thunder Bay transit providers to begin calling all stops on all routes within 30 days. In addition, the OHRC wants those transit providers to train their staff on the importance of making transit accessible, monitor progress and report publicly on measures they've taken.

“We have already told them what our schedule of implementation is,” the mayor said. “There is no issue here.”

On March 11, city council approved a contract worth \$536,252 to be awarded to Nova Bus, a division of Volvo Group Canada, for the purchase of 45 complete stop announcement systems.

“Maybe somebody ought to look at how these people (at the commission) spend their time, sending out letters when we're already committed to comply,” the mayor said. “We're complying within the 60 days, we've already told them that.”

“I don't understand why they would send us that letter. I'm completely bamboozled by this correspondence.”