Hi I'm Allen Mankewich appearing on behalf of the Independent Living Resource Centre. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to appear in front of council today. Although this issue was thrust upon the city, I commend our city council for tackling some much needed changes to rules governing taxicabs, and rules which introduce Personal Transportation Providers to our city. While the by-laws are encouraging in some ways, I want to point out a few things that concerned us as we read over the proposed by-law.

In terms of training, the Independent Living Resource Centre has been heavily involved with the taxicab industry for a number of years in developing and delivering disability awareness training to taxicab drivers. Currently, all drivers in the City of Winnipeg are mandated to take our training as a condition of obtaining or renewing their taxicab licence. Currently, this training is required by all taxicab drivers, whether they drive a standard taxicab or accessible taxi. The feedback from drivers has been mostly positive, with many stating that they appreciate this training and that it has made them more confident in offering service to people with disabilities. What is unique about this training is that is directed by the disability community creating a learning environment rooted in lived experience. We create a training experience that explores the reality of accessibility and inaccessibility. Training is about building community and enhancing opportunity for citizens. Our trainers are people with disabilities who derive an income from this training. It is also a viable medium to securing employable skills.

One issue that we noticed is that the proposed by-law only recommends training required by the City's designated employee, but doesn't specify what kind of training. We hope that instruments such as the Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its provisions outlined in terms of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service will be followed when the City's designated employee is determining training requirements, as the AMA is very unambiguous in terms of requiring training on accessible customer service. We also feel strongly that all PTP and taxicab drivers meet the same requirements, not just drivers of accessible ~~vehicles~~.

We are also a little bit confused by the references to "people confined to a wheelchair who cannot transfer." Aside from the term "confined to a wheelchair" a term that shouldn't exist in our modern lexicon, this term could cause confusion for drivers who encounter wheelchair users who can transfer and wish to use a standard taxicab or standard PTP. The proposed by-law covers "refusal of service to

eligible passenger by accessible taxi driver" but needs to also explicitly protect customers who can transfer into a standard taxicab or PTP. Section 56 ambiguously refers to providing reasonable assistance by taxicabs, but this may need to be stronger, and I also note that it excludes PTP drivers from this requirement. So not only is the term "confined to a wheelchair" problematic in its messaging in terms of wheelchairs imprisoning its user, using that term has policy implications in this bylaw.

We are pleased to see an explicit reference to the fact that priority for accessible vehicles will be given to people with disabilities. My question is how will this be enforced? Accessible vehicles transporting non-disabled passengers is something that happens quite frequently in Winnipeg, while people who ~~have~~ desperately need them have no other choice sometimes endure hours of waiting, or receive no service at all. Which leads me to my next point.

What can we do to incentivize both cab + PTP companies to put wheelchair accessible vehicles on the road? When it comes to accessibility of the taxicab system or PTPs, a major concern is access to accessible vehicles. The major reason is cost. If you take an example, like a Ford Explorer, you can get one for around $45,000. If you order a production-level accessible Explorer from Ford, which is now possible thanks to a partnership ~~with~~ w Ford + a vehicle conversion company, you're looking at a price tag of around $100,000. I would like our city council to consider what they are doing to incentivize vehicle for hire providers to offer accessible transportation. It's no secret that we are facing threats to public transportation in our city, including Handi-Transit, so what can we do at this point in time to help alleviate some of the pressure on those systems by offering a more robust accessible taxi and PTP system. There are some people who might be more likely to use an accessible taxi or accessible PTP if there were more on the road. If you look at Toronto, the city was able to garner a commitment that they embedded in Uber's Toronto licence that they needed to provide UberWAV and Uber Assist rides for the same cost, availability and timeliness as the regular UBERX. UBER needs to provide this data to the city. UBER is therefore upping the available WAV vehicles by co-leasing them to drivers and giving drivers with WAV vehicles a larger share of the fare. ~~Toronto is involved in a pilot project with Uber. Uber leases accessible~~ vehicles to interested drivers by providing incentives to those drivers. They have 20 UberWAVs on the road and were expected to add 30 more at the end of November, with Uber spending at least $1 million on incentives and vehicles. Interested drivers lease the vehicles for $295 a week for the accessible vehicle (which includes maintenance and tires). In return, drivers who complete at least 40 trips to

Toronto are paid $200/week, plus $20 for each completed trip, a 0% Uber service fee for WAV trips (so the driver keeps 100% of the fare), plus a 15% service fee for other trips, so the driver keeps 85%. Has Winnipeg secured a similar commitment to Uber, and is it prepared to offer incentives to taxicab companies to encourage more availability of accessible vehicles? New York City wants 50% of its cab fleet to be accessible by 2020. Can we be as ambitious in Winnipeg? Especially granted our desire to ~~secure Amazon HQ,~~ we have the the SHED development in downtown Winnipeg, new condo developments, and the desire to encourage people to live in our downtown, like many other cities in Canada. ~~We incentivize companies in other industries.~~ I encourage you to do the same in order to get more accessible vehicles on the road. Imagine if 50% of our taxis were accessible, like there will be in New York City. You wouldn't have situations where people with disabilities are competing with non-disabled people for access to a limited supply to accessible vehicles, a situation we are dealing with now, because of the sheer number of accessible taxis that would be available.

In terms of the levy, we are concerned that $0.07 cents may be too low, and a percentage system may be better. For comparison sake, the accessibility levy is $.30 in NYC. We are also not sure how the levy will be used, ~~which is concerning.~~

We commend the City of Winnipeg for tackling this by-law in a fairly short amount of time, but we do have these concerns which I have outlined. ILRC has been heavily involved with the taxicab industry for the past several years, so we have a strong idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the system they have been operating under, and we look forward to working with the City in fine-tuning this bylaw.

Thank you.

Star rating = bad for PWD

4 years - 14 rides - Chicago

ADA lawsuit