

February 27, 2018

Dear committee members,

I have asked to attend this meeting today because I feel it is important to advocate for the residents at Victoria Gardens Long Term Care, as well as other Hamilton area nursing home residents. The group of us here are Recreation Program Managers at Long Term Care homes in Hamilton and are advocating for Residents that live there. We represent residents who rely on DARTS for transportation when going on group outings. There are over 3800 residents living in long term care in the Hamilton Region. On average, Homes arrange for 3 community outings per month, with more during the summer months.

We are requesting that the City maintain some of the ARBOC (larger buses) in their fleet to accommodate large group trips. We are also requesting that the ARBOC buses be given priority availability for booking group trips. We feel that this is an important issue, and ask that you accommodate our request.

The new ProMaster buses which hold a maximum of 2 residents are disappointing and do not meet the needs of our residents who wish to maintain community ties, and rely on DARTS to do so. The average percent of passengers living in long term care homes, and using a wheelchair or walker (which requires a w/c position as well as a seat on the bus), is over 80%.

Not only are the ProMaster buses lacking in wheelchair capacity, but the seats that are available for ambulatory and walker residents are difficult to maneuver. The seats are narrow and passengers must climb up a step to get into the seat. This interior "step" make it difficult for residents who have impaired judgement, impaired balance, or poor

gait to manage; putting them at risk for a fall on the bus. The ProMaster-5 buses (with 3 flip up seats along the side), also have very limited foot room when a wheelchair is in the position behind the driver. In addition, some of these wheelchair passengers are using an electric wheelchair which then further reduces the amount of foot space for the seated ambulatory passengers. The above factors mentioned above, make the ProMaster bus difficult for the ambulatory and walker residents to access their seat.

Again, we are requesting that you retain some of the ARBOC buses in the fleet which can accommodate more than 2 wheelchairs, and that do not require passengers to step up into their seat. We are also requesting that the ARBOC buses be given priority availability for booking group trips.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,  
Tracy Smoke  
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