PRESENTATIONS:

i) Specialized Transit – Fleet Survey  
The Committee welcomed Don Hull and Charles Fitzsimmons from Transit Division of Public Works and Matthew Carpenter from IBI Group who attended the meeting to receive ACPD’s input on high and low floor DARTS vehicles. Mr. Carpenter made a presentation on the findings of a survey conducted with 75 DARTS clients, other transit properties and operational and maintenance staff.

Comments/questions from the committee included:
- preference to a Canadian manufacturer, if possible
  Q. life span – how long the buses last vs. the cost
  A. approximately the same life cycle
- education is key – require more confidence for users
- high floor lifts are unsteady
  Q. weight requirements concern
  A. state-of-the-art lift with approx. 600 lb. capacity
- would like to see & experience both types of vehicles
- requirement for seat or bar if standing on high floor lift
- concern that some clients may be eliminated if fleet consists of only high floor vehicles – assurance that no clients will be eliminated
- request that other transit properties be contacted to find out how many users are restricted due to vehicle design
- feel that quality of the ride is better if you’re lower to the ground
- high-floor less expensive to purchase, operate & maintain resulting in tremendous savings

A copy of the motion passed by the Seniors Advisory Committee was read to the ACPD member.

The committee agreed that this item will be deferred to the March 6, 2007 meeting and that the start time of the meeting would be moved to 3:00 p.m. in order that the committee will have time to view the sample vehicles.

Don Hull will:

i) check with the bidders to obtain sample buses for the committee members to see and experience at next meeting.;

ii) obtain statistics on safety experience;

iii) obtain specs on the lifts;

iv) obtain resolution from the DARTS Board with respect to this issue.

Information attached as Appendix A.

ii) **Rosedale Arena Addition & Renovation**

The committee welcomed Kevin Berry and John Kirkpatrick of Culture & Recreation Division of Community Services and Greg Sather of McCallum Sather Architects who attended to discuss changes to the Rosedale arena. He outlined that they are adding 4 additional change rooms and renovating 4 smaller change rooms into 2 larger ones; doubling the community space; adding sliding doors, etc.

Comments from the committee included:

Q: Are Barrier Free Design Guidelines being used?
A: Yes. Some changes exceed the guidelines, others may be the minimum requirement due to existing walls (i.e. turning radius). No changes to the elevator as it already complies.

- requirement for a family change room (where a parent can take child of opposite sex)
- concern with size of diagram distributed
- suggestion to provide a video of existing facility for viewing and comments
- would like to see a list of changes to be made

Due to timeline restrictions, the committee passed the following motions:

**(Lane/Burkett)**
The Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities respectfully request:

a) That the Access & Equity Coordinator meet with Culture & Recreation staff and the architects involved with the renovations to the Rosedale Arena to ensure,

i) that the City of Hamilton’s Barrier Free Design Guidelines are being met

ii) that the Committee’s concerns are being addressed

iii) that any deficiencies to the Barrier Free Design Guidelines are reported back to the Committee; and
b) That the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities be given the opportunity to review larger copies of site plans well in advance of staff attending a meeting of the committee, and that staff consult with the Committee within sufficient time lines so as to address issues without impeding deadlines necessary for completion of projects. CARRIED.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
None declared.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING:
(Semkow/KNolan)
That the minutes of the January 16, 2007 meeting of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities be approved as circulated. CARRIED.

The committee welcomed Michael Shea from the Hamilton Police Services attending as a liaison to the committee.

3. CONSENT ITEMS:
No consent items.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

4.1 Meeting with Planning Department re Site Plans
No further questions were received from committee members. Jane Lee will contact the relevant staff members and invite them to the April 3rd meeting of the Committee.

4.2 End of Term Presentation to Audit & Administration Committee
A working group to develop this presentation is in place with the March 16, 2007 meeting date of Committee of the Whole recommended. Staff will contact Mary Gallagher in the Clerk’s Office to get the group together.

4.3 Update – Transportation Standards Development Committee
Tim Nolan provided an update on the Provincial Transportation Standards Development Committee. The deadline has been extended to May 31, 2007.

4.4 ATS Customer Survey
The Chair noted that the survey has gone out & responses have been received. Owen Quinn will provide the ACPD Transportation Subcommittee with an update at their next meeting (February 13, 2007).

4.5 Segways
The issue of Segways was raised at a previous ACPD meeting as a result of a City of Hamilton resident using a Segway as an assistive device being banned from Confederation Park. No decision was made by the Committee at that time. Since then, the Dutch government has banned the use of Segways from all "public roads, bike paths and walkways". Tim Nolan advised that the City of Toronto is
investigating Segways – university students are using them to get around campus and there is a concern about safety.

Michael Shea will look up the legislation regarding Segways and report back to the committee.

4.6 Annual Increase to Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
Marie Pennacchietti raised the issue of the lack of annual increases to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). She advised that occasionally lump sum payments are made but no annual increases. Currently ODSP is approximately $930 per month and after rent, there is very little left.

Brian Lane advised that in July 1988, in a report written by David Christopherson, there was a recommendation that the “comfort allowance” be increased to $145 (September 1980) and be increased annually to keep pace with the Cost of Living.

Mary Smithson advised that David Christopherson has taken this issue to the federal government level and that Wayne Marsten has been doing talks about this.

Mike Shea questioned whether this work is probably being done by someone and the committee could piggy back on this.

Maxine Carter confirmed that there is a Committee on Poverty and she could provide a copy of their newsletters.

This issue will be deferred to the March meeting. Staff will attempt to locate a copy of the 1980 report by David Christopherson.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Social Housing
Darlene Burkett would like to see the committee focus on accessible housing as a follow up to the Disability Action Network Group (DANG) presentation and Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCIPI) project. This item will be added to the March agenda. Darlene will put together a one-page summary for the next meeting.

5.2 Mary Smithson advised that she attended the viewing of the new HSR buses.

5.3 Maxine Carter advised that the planning the public launch of the Barrier Free Design Guidelines is underway. If anyone on the Committee wants to help, please contact Maxine by phone or email.

6. ADJOURNMENT
On motion, the meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.
APPENDIX A

Information Provided by Transit Division Following February 6, 2007 Meeting

i) check with the bidders to obtain sample buses for the committee members to see and experience at next meeting
Don advised via email that there were no compliant bidders and they will have to re-issue the Tender with revised specifications. Therefore, we won't have vehicles to demonstrate for the April 2007 meeting.

ii) obtain statistics on safety experience
See Appendix B.

iii) obtain specs on the lifts
- minimum capacity 800 lbs.
- platform width 33 inch minimum
- platform length 54 inch minimum

iv) obtain resolution from the DARTS Board with respect to this issue
With respect to the DARTS Board resolution: the Board passed a motion at its most recent meeting recommending the purchase of high floor vehicles, along with two or three new low floor types for the purpose of in-service evaluation. This latter idea arises from the ELF bus, which is DARTS most numerous fleet vehicle, having gone out of production.
APPENDIX B

Note to ACPD re Accident Statistics Concerning Lifts and Ramps
February 16, 2007

High Floor Bus Safety Issues:
Since, to my knowledge, lift and ramp-related injuries to specialized transit passengers are very rare, I attempted to find documented research. Materials are scarce on this topic. I was unable to locate any Canadian sources, however vehicles and lifts in use in the US are virtually the same or identical to those in Canada. This makes US research highly relevant.

Wheelchair Users Injuries and Deaths Associated with Motor Vehicle Related Incidents, published by the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1997, cites that over a 5-year period, 1991 – 1995, there were no fatalities in the US due to falling on or off a ramp, or due to a lift malfunction. Fatalities were caused by improper or no securement (2), collisions between a wheelchair and a motor vehicle (9), and transferring to and from a motor vehicle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Injury Producing Activity</th>
<th>No. Of Persons Killed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improper or No Securement</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collision Between Wheelchair and Motor Vehicle</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lift Malfunction</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferring To or From a Motor Vehicle</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falling On/Off Ramp</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same report states that there were 515 serious injuries to wheelchair passengers in the US over the same period, but does not ascribe the cause of the injuries. It is likely that lift malfunctions or falls onto or from a ramp or lift account for only a few or none of these injuries.
Safety features and reliability of lifts have improved since 1995.

My conclusion, based on this study and on personal knowledge, is that there is no evidence that a high-floor lift equipped vehicle poses a safety hazard to people who use a wheelchair. Indeed, if such a hazard did exist, it is difficult to imagine that high floor vehicles would account for 99% plus of the specialized transit vehicle market in the US, where personal injury lawsuits with large awards are very common.

**Low floor bus safety issues:**
The number of such vehicles on the road in both the US and Canada is very small. There are no data concerning their passenger safety record. However, the following points are perhaps worth noting:

- DARTS reports numerous WSIB claims arising from injuries to DARTS drivers due to pushing heavy wheelchairs up and down the ramp of ELF vehicles. Thus, the low floor design does pose a known safety risk to drivers
- Wheelchair passengers inside the ELF have reported that the incline of the vehicle floor when the vehicle is kneeling produces an uncomfortable angle on their wheelchair, and, if they are not secured at the time, the fear of tipping over
- The roll-on, roll-off capability of the low floor bus makes it possible to board virtually any mobility device, including some which cannot be properly secured in the vehicle. An improperly secured device is a potential source of hazard to its passenger, and to other passengers.

Charles Fitzsimmons
Accessible Transportation Services