

TRANSPORTATION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES  
HAS GROWN OVER THE LAST 60 YEARS  
BY  
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When I was born in the early 1950's there was no accessible transportation for persons with disabilities, and no wheelchair accessible vehicles at all in Alberta that I am aware of?.



My parents, along with a few other parents who had kids with Cerebral Palsy, got together and fought to get a clinic and school opened in Calgary for their kids. They had only one bus (which was non-wheelchair accessible) for the whole city. The kids who lived on the south side went to the clinic in the morning, and the kids on the north side went in the afternoon

**1959**



Me second from the left

In 1964 my dad got transferred to Edmonton and I started going full days too school at the CP clinic here. They had 5 school buses which had heavy steel pull out manual ramps on the side at the back end.

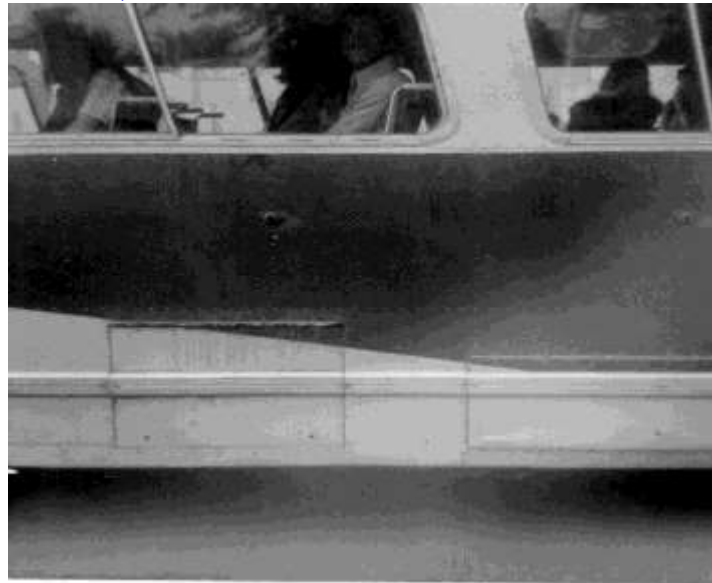
The Glenrose school hospital opened and the Edmonton Handi bus Association, that provided the school bus transportation for the out-patient children, both opened in September 1966. As the school

grew in size and as the number of children increased., the fleet of Handi-buses grew. As the years passed Handi-bus started providing transportation for kids and adults to city recreation activities, like day camps in the summertime, and for adults to a sheltered workshop down town.

1972



In the sixties and seventies, Edmonton had one large wheelchair accessible bus (called the Callow Coach ) that held about 20-25 wheelchairs. The whole backside of the bus folded out and down hydraulically into a ramp. This bus took groups of kids and adults to: such places as camp, football and hockey games, etc. I even traveled for a few years in the early sixties on this unique bus from Calgary to Camp HE HO HA, which is west of Edmonton



In about 1969 a man name John bought a van and put a manual ramp on it and started his own cab company called DIAMOND CABS. This was the only public accessible vehicle at that time in Edmonton to the best of my knowledge

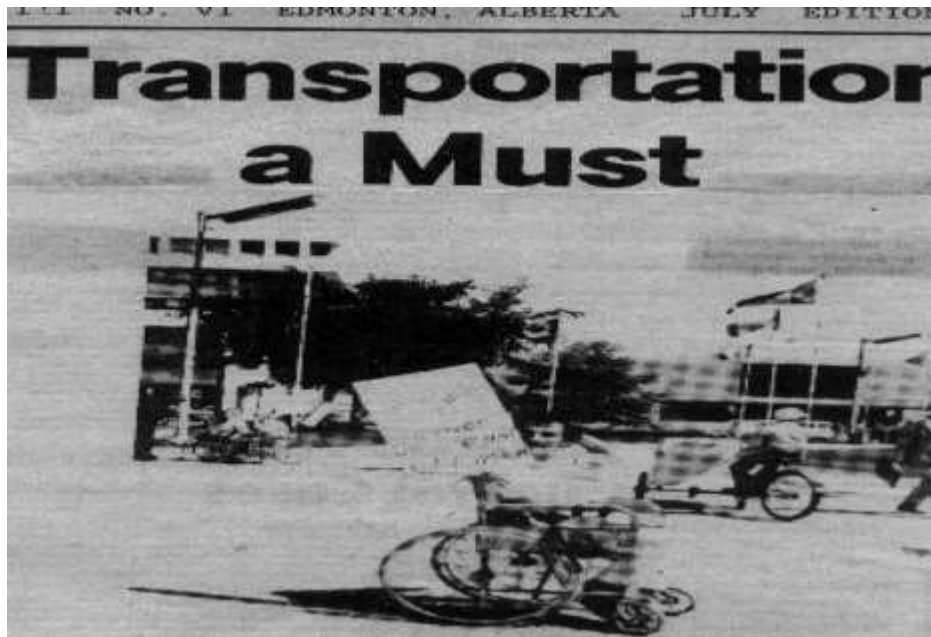
In the spring of 1973, a three day charette conference was held at the Providence Centre in Edmonton that spear-headed the concept for Disabled Adult Transportation Service (D.A.T.S.). DATS and other projects for persons with disabilities like the first high-rise apartment building with wheelchair accessible suites called “Bader Towers” .

In July of 1973 the **Alberta Committee of Action Groups for the Disabled** (a newly incorporated society) organized a protest rally outside Edmonton City Hall. One of their founding members, Percy Wickman (latter to become a City Councillor and a MLA, made a presentation to Edmonton City council. demanding that the City of Edmonton start a publicly funded Adult Transportation Service.

In November 1974 City council approved the Disabled Adult Transportation System (DATS) A two year pilot project was started in June 1975.with two contractors which were Edmonton Handi buses Association and Edmonton Handy Limousine service. After the pilot project was over (March 1977) City council voted to continue the DATS Service, but moved the management to Edmonton Transit

The start of DATS was timely for me. I had just graduated from grade 12 and I needed transportation to get around town to college and recreational activities, as did a lot of other adults with disabilities.

My friend told me that summer (1975) she was working a summer job with Percy and a bunch of others out of an old church on the north side. At that time there was a lot of advocacy and grass roots upheaval that took place to ensure that the LRT stations and bus systems were made accessible. There was a lot of resistance, so again Percy struck a committee CART – Committee for Access to Rapid Transit, which led to the stations and trains being accessible from the get go.



Since 1975 the number of wheelchair accessible DATS buses and sedans vehicles for walkers has grown in number from a few vehicles only to today's massive fleet of buses and vans,

1981



2011



In about 1993 the city purchased its first shipment of low floor wheelchair accessible city transit buses. The first week they were running on my neighborhood route # 1, I wheeled to the bus stop and got on the bus by myself, locked in and went for my first ride to Capilano Mall, did some shopping, then came back home. What a sense of freedom I felt being able to go some where with out any one else's assistance!. Until then, I had been driven in a car or a DATS bus. Although my Mom and I would take the old ETS non-accessible five steps bus down town.. Mom would help me clime up the stairs, sit me in a seat, get the bus driver to help her fold up my wheelchair, and lift it on the bus. The bus drivers were very helpful in those days as some are today.



By 2010 all ETS buses in Edmonton were low-floor wheelchair accessible buses.



In about 1994 the LRT was made fully wheelchair accessible when a hydraulic lowering platform ramp were installed on LRT accessible door entrances



**EVEN THE TROLLEY CAR IS WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE**



Now there are a lot more wheelchair accessible cabs in Edmonton

