



Hamilton Public Works Committee

Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street W.
Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5

April 30, 2021

Regarding: E-scooter use within the City of Hamilton

Dear Committee Members,

The CNIB Foundation supports the Hamilton Accessibility Advisory Committee's position that the City of Hamilton should ban the use of e-scooters on all city roads, sidewalks, pathways, and in all other areas of the city until commercial e-scooters and their operators are trained, licensed, insured, and fully regulated by the province of Ontario. The CNIB Foundation urges the City of Hamilton to consider the recent decision by the City of Toronto to uphold a ban on e-scooters. According to the City of Hamilton, 20% of citizens report having a disability, which surpasses the national rate of 17%. This includes an estimated 29,342 people living with significant sight loss. To ensure the safety of these vulnerable pedestrians, we request that the Public Works committee vote against allowing commercial e-scooters in the city.

The CNIB foundation is pleased to see that the City of Hamilton is open to innovative approaches which have the potential to lessen greenhouse gases, reduce congestion on city streets, and better utilize public transit via first/last mile transportation. We applaud the City's decision to ban e-scooters on sidewalks and in most parks; hold e-scooter operators accountable for resolving public complaints; use geofencing to limit speed in parks, on paths, and in high pedestrian areas; encourage operators to use an automatic acoustic alerting system; require a locking device; and ensure that pedestrian areas are kept free from obstructions.

However, these measures are not sufficient to ensure the safety of vulnerable pedestrians, such as people who are blind or partially sighted. From consultations with our community members living in municipalities where e-scooters are permitted, we know that e-scooters can create safety and accessibility barriers for people who are blind or partially sighted.

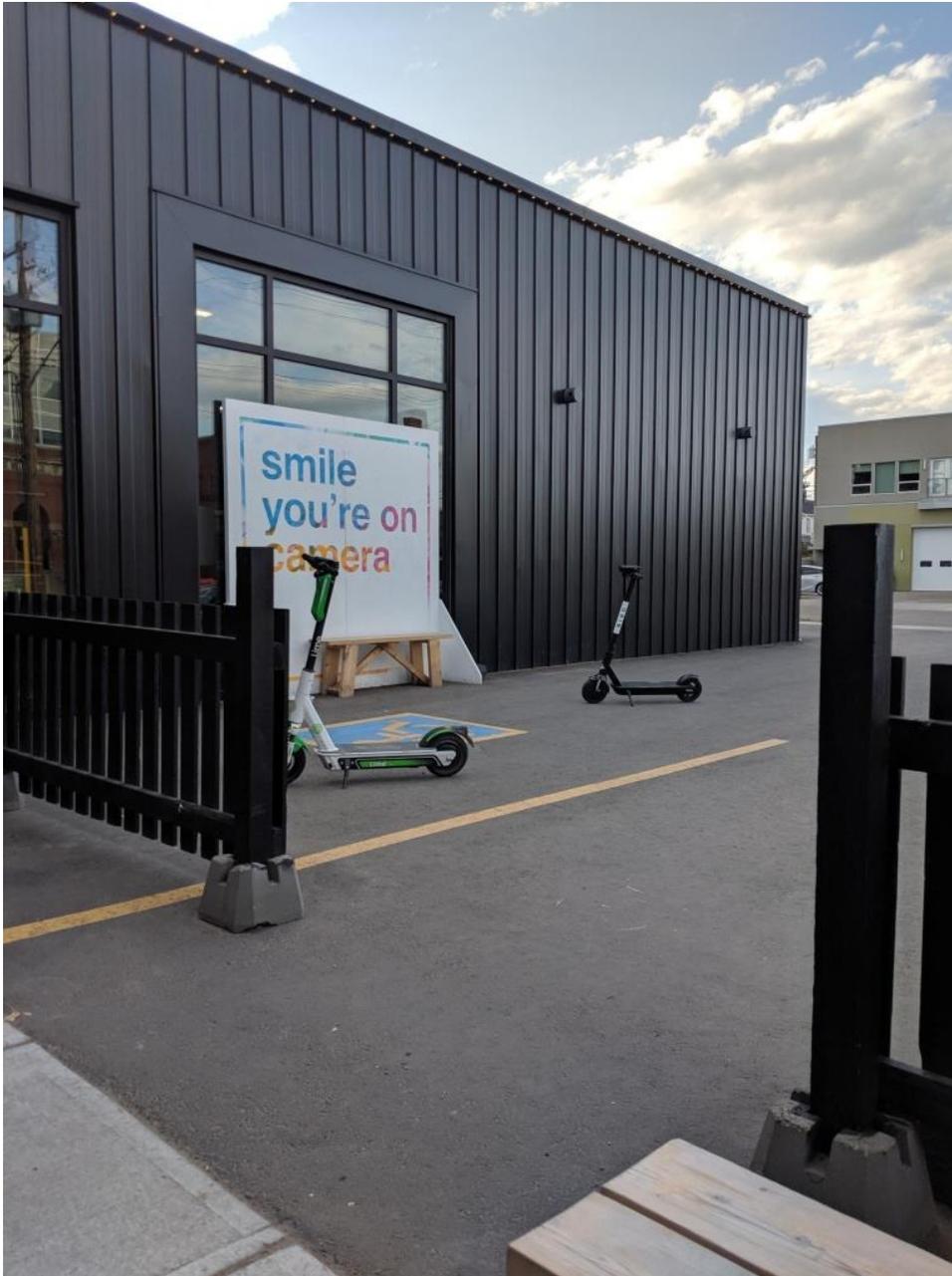
We ask that the Public Works Committee consider the following in their upcoming decision.

Considerations

- Pedestrians who are blind or partially sighted may not be aware of an approaching e-scooter. AN acoustic alerting system that relies on rider activation is not sufficient to ensure the safety of vulnerable pedestrians, such as people who are blind or partially sighted, as riders may fail to activate the alert or may activate the alert beyond the point at which a pedestrian is able to react.
- Pedestrians who are blind or partially sighted are not able to navigate safely around an abandoned device or a device that is parked in a shared space or public pathway, which may result in injury.
- The process for reporting an abandoned or improperly parked device must be simple, accessible, and widely advertised to the public to ensure that the impact of e-scooters is accurately captured, including incidents that cause minor injury and incidents involving the removal of abandoned devices by members of the public. It is likely that these minor incidents will occur more frequently than major incidents, and they should not be overlooked.
- Locking mechanisms are not sufficient to mitigate the pedestrian safety hazards posed by e-scooters. In other jurisdictions where e-scooters are permitted, there have been significant issues with riders locking e-scooters to items that block entrances, accessibility ramps, and accessible pedestrian signals.
- The City of Hamilton notes a ban on sidewalk riding due to narrow sidewalks and the speeds at which e-scooters travel. There is no explicit mention in the report that e-scooters on sidewalks pose a critical safety risk to vulnerable pedestrians.
- The City of Hamilton has not sufficiently addressed how a ban on sidewalk riding will be enforced. Geofencing technology may not be able to prohibit sidewalk riding, as the technology relies on GPS, and its accuracy may be impacted by a number of factors, such as weather and the built environment.
- The CNIB Foundation requests that the City of Hamilton consider its responsibility for enforcing the safe use of personally owned e-scooters, as this was not explicitly addressed in the City's plans (e.g., how personally owned e-scooters will be monitored, as geofencing will not work on privately owned devices).

Recommendations

1. E-scooters should be banned on all City of Hamilton roads, sidewalks, pathways, and in all other areas of the city until e-scooters and their operators are trained, licensed, insured, and fully regulated by the province of Ontario.
2. If e-scooters are permitted, they must be treated as bicycles and operators must follow the same rules of the road as cyclists.
3. If e-scooters are permitted, the City of Hamilton should uphold the decision to ban e-scooters on sidewalks and in most parks.
4. If e-scooters are permitted, the City of Hamilton should uphold the decision to limit speed in parks, on paths, and in high-pedestrian areas through geofencing.
5. If e-scooters are permitted, an automatic acoustic alerting system should be mandated to ensure the safety of vulnerable pedestrians, including people who are blind or partially sighted. The alerting system should be triggered automatically when a rider is using a device in an area where a device is not permitted, such as on a sidewalk.
6. If e-scooters are permitted, they should only be parked in designated areas which are clearly marked and are cane detectible. We support repurposing car parking spaces for e-scooters, as this would help keep sidewalks clear from obstacles. If this is not possible, then riders should park close to other items within the furniture zone on the sidewalk, without encroaching on pedestrian spaces.
7. If e-scooters are permitted, designated parking areas must not impede a path of travel and a minimum of 1.8 meters space should exist around the parking area to enable pedestrians with sight loss to safely navigate around these designated areas.
8. If e-scooters are permitted, the process for reporting infractions should be simple and accessible, such as calls to 311. Additionally, the City of Hamilton should ensure the prominent placement of a scannable QR code on each device which is marked using tactile and high contrast lettering, similar to a motor vehicle license plate for identification purposes. These measures will ensure that all citizens, including those who are not able to see branding or information displayed on an e-scooter, have equal opportunity to report infractions.
9. If e-scooters are permitted, prompt action should be taken by e-scooter operators to remove a device and relocate it to a designated parking area when the device has been abandoned or improperly parked.
10. If e-scooters are permitted, the City of Hamilton should ensure effective enforcement of administrative penalties.



The above photo shows two e-scooters parked in an accessible parking space. The e-scooters are parked haphazardly in a parking space, impeding both cars and pedestrians.

We respectfully ask that the City of Hamilton give serious consideration to the safety of pedestrians who are blind or partially sighted and ban commercial e-scooters in all areas of the city until e-scooters and their riders can be trained, licensed, insured, and regulated by the province of Ontario.

If you have any questions, please reach out to me at any time.

Sincerely,



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About CNIB Foundation

Celebrating 100 years in 2018, CNIB Foundation is a non-profit organization driven to change what it is to be blind today. We deliver innovative programs and powerful advocacy that empowers people impacted by blindness to live their dreams and tear down barriers to inclusion. Now, as CNIB enters our second century of operation, we're going to be even bolder in tackling the issues before us.