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December 10, 2021

Toronto City Council
City Hall
100 Queen Street W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Re: Automated Micro-Utility Devices

Dear members of Toronto City Council,

On behalf of March of Dimes Canada, I am writing to urge you to support the ban on automated micro-utility devices (also known as sidewalk robots) on Toronto sidewalks and public pedestrian spaces at the December 15-16, 2021 Council meeting.

Founded over 70 years ago, March of Dimes Canada is a leading national charity committed to championing equity, empowering ability, and creating real change that will help people living with disabilities across the country unlock the richness of their lives. Headquartered in the Thorncliffe Park neighbourhood, we have a long history of serving Torontonians with disabilities.

Based on our many decades as a leading service provider, resource and advocate, we have seen firsthand the ongoing barriers for people with disabilities to navigate Toronto's streets. Despite progress, accessibility of public spaces remains a significant barrier for many residents of our city.

Recently, robots have begun to be used on Toronto sidewalks for deliveries. These small devices create a new safety and accessibility hazard for members of our community. For example, an individual with vision loss cannot see the robot coming. Someone who uses a mobility device such as a wheelchair or walker may find the robot to be a physical barrier to their path of travel. And the robots can become a tripping hazard for anyone, but especially people with mobility disabilities, those with vision and hearing loss, as well as seniors and children.

Notably, these sidewalk robots are being used in the absence of a legal framework from the province, which is currently under development. They are unregulated and thus operating in a legal grey area. It is our hope that the province will not pursue a pilot project for micro-utility devices, given the concerns outlined here, and we have written to the Ministry of Transportation to this effect.

Both the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Infrastructure and Environment Committee have listened to the concerns of Torontonians with disabilities and voted to support a ban on robots on sidewalks and in public pedestrian spaces. We hope Council will follow suit, especially given the City's commitment to a Vision Zero approach to pedestrian safety.

We urge you to prioritize safety and accessibility for Torontonians with disabilities in your decision on this matter. Thank you for the opportunity to share the perspectives of March of Dimes Canada's community. We will be following this issue closely.

Yours sincerely,



Len Baker
President & CEO
March of Dimes Canada

CC: Mayor John Tory
Councillor Paul Ainslie
Councillor Ana Bailão
Councillor Brad Bradford
Councillor Shelley Carroll
Councillor Mike Colle
Councillor Gary Crawford
Councillor Joe Cressy
Councillor John Filion
Councillor Paula Fletcher
Councillor Michael Ford
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Councillor Nick Mantas
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