



Calgary

Office of the Councillors
COUNCILLOR E. Woolley

October 15, 2019

Councillor James Pasternak, Chair
Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, Vice Chair
Councillor Mike Colle, Member
Councillor Mike Layton, Member
Councillor Denzil Minnan-Wong, Member
Councillor Anthony Perruzza, Member
Infrastructure and Environment Committee

Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
West Tower, 10th Floor
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
iec@toronto.ca

Dear Councillors:

I understand that your Committee is in the midst of planning for the arrival of dockless electric scooter sharing in the City of Toronto and that you are currently thinking through key questions associated with shared micromobility, such as where Torontonians should be allowed to park e-scooters, and how fast e-scooters should be permitted to travel.

As councillor for City of Calgary's Ward 8, I represent of about half of Calgary's downtown as well as established areas with a very broad demographic. I put forward the Notice of Motion motion in July 2018 that led to the creation of dockless bike sharing and dockless e-scooter sharing pilots. Our bike share pilot began in October 2018, and our e-scooter share pilot began in July 2019. Leading up to these launches, Calgary City Council was in a similar situation to the one that you are in now, and I found myself wrestling with many of the same public policy questions. Given this experience, I thought to offer you my perspective on what the City of Calgary decided to do, and how it's working so far.

Broadly, we had hoped that shared scooters and bikes would provide Calgarians with more options for getting around. We did not view e-scooters as toys, but rather that – like bikes – e-scooters are part of a multi-modal transportation network that can help reduce traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, and fatalities and injuries involving cars; and also support public transit.

After much deliberation, Council decided the following for Calgary's e-scooter sharing pilot.

A dockless system

- Calgary permitted a dockless system, meaning that e-scooters are not required to be returned to a kiosk or docking station.
- We went with a dockless system because we wanted to make it convenient for Calgarians to forego personal vehicle use, and thought that a dockless system was the best way to do it.

Parking requirements

- Calgary requires riders to park e-scooters in a secure, upright position in designated areas, such as furniture zones of sidewalks, public bike racks, and other marked parking zones. On sidewalks without furniture zones, e-scooter riders are required to provide at least 2 metres of clearance for accessibility.
- No one wants e-scooters obstructing the public right of way, and so we felt that these parking restrictions were the best way to account for the needs of pedestrians (especially seniors and disabled people), while also making it easy for people to get out of their cars and choose shared micromobility.

Helmets

- Calgary strongly encourages riders to wear helmets, but we do not require them.
- We adopted the same helmet laws for e-scooters as exists for cyclists.

Speed limit

- We set a maximum speed limit of 20 km / hr for e-scooters, and permit only one rider per scooter.
- We chose a maximum speed limit that permitted e-scooters to keep up with cyclists in our protected cycle tracks, for example, while not being able to overtake them.

Fleet size

- Calgary allowed an initial total of up to 1,000 shared e-scooters for each permitted operator during the pilot, with the possibility of increased fleet size depending on the success of the pilot.
- City Council's July 2008 motion permitted up to 10,000 bicycles, scooters or other personal mobility devices, but we wanted to start gradually.

Following the launch of the e-scooter sharing pilot in July 2018, two operators (Lime and Bird) successfully applied to operate. They launched a combined 1,500 e-scooters, and by last count Calgarians have taken 550,000 e-scooter trips, totaling 1.3 million kilometres, since the pilot's launch. These are massive numbers in such a short period and many were surprised by how quickly e-scooters gained popularity.

Although we expect to have hard data soon, I have heard from my constituents that they are in fact using e-scooters as a mode of transportation. To be sure, e-scooters are popular with tourists, but I have heard countless stories of Calgarians who have made them part of their commute, in many cases replacing trips that they would have made in a car. Anecdotally, I have seen users throughout the inner-city take advantage of e-scooters for short trips that would otherwise involve a driving and dealing with parking.

As far as safety is concerned, we have found that the injury rate for e-scooters is comparable to that of bikes. Although there is a learning curve, most people get the hang of riding an e-scooter quickly. Both operators have held safety sessions in Calgary, and are giving away free helmets.

Before e-scooter sharing was launched, we were concerned by the potential for sidewalk clutter. Many of us had seen images in the news media of toppled e-scooters blocking pedestrian pathways, and we didn't want that to happen here. Overall, clutter has been much better than expected, and most riders park their e-scooters respectfully in an upright fashion in the designated areas. As with bike parking, we've found that people got it quickly because we made it intuitive.

The City of Calgary is in the process of assessing how e-scooter sharing is going, including by surveying our citizens, and I look forward to learning more as the pilot continues. Should you be interested in any more information about Calgary's experience thus far, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Evan Woolley'.

Evan Woolley
Councillor, Ward 8