

## **Toronto Infrastructure and Environment Committee – April 28, 2021**

My name is Mark Rankin and I am a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist with Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada (VLRC), the primary provider of vision rehabilitation services in Canada. I have spent over 20 years helping Torontonians with vision loss achieve independence in community travel.

In my time working with blind and partially sighted pedestrians I have helped many people develop reliable travel skills. The techniques that we teach pedestrians with sight loss, as useful as they are, are continually tested by an environment that can provide many barriers to movement. The pedestrians with sight loss, who succeed in gaining independence are some of the bravest, most resilient people I have met in my life. But their resilience has limits. I know people who have lost confidence in independent travel in the city due to sidewalk collisions with other pedestrians, with bicycles and with skateboards. That pedestrians with sight loss still worry about bicycles on sidewalks in a city with well developed bicycle infrastructure, leads me to have little faith that something as novel as e-scooters will not find their way onto city sidewalks to the detriment of people with disabilities, as they have in other cities such as Calgary and Ottawa. The city has made great efforts to promote pedestrian safety with its Vision Zero campaign. Introducing a silent, unfamiliar vehicle, capable of high rates of acceleration into the city's roads and sidewalks would seem to run counter to the worthy goals of Vision Zero.

I will also add that I started my career in rehabilitation working with people with Acquired Brain Injuries and I have seen firsthand the devastating affects that minor impacts can have on the brain. For the sake of our pedestrians, our e-scooter adopters and for the sake of our overburdened health care system I ask that the Committee prohibit the use of e-scooters in public spaces.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

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