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May 21, 2024

RE: Agenda item IE 13.1 Micromobility

At the upcoming May 22, 2024, meeting of the Toronto City Council, your agenda will include a recent City Staff Report on micromobility. The report contains a comprehensive strategy on micromobility with recommendations for reducing car traffic moving people around safely and ways to battle the harmful effects of climate change. CNIB endorses the City Staff Report and urges City Council to approve it, along with the refinements added by the Infrastructure and Environment Committee on May 2, 2024.

As e-scooters gain popularity across many Canadian municipalities, there are increasing risks for pedestrians with disabilities. While convenient, e-scooters should not take precedence over the safety and accessibility of pedestrian walkways.

These devices often create hazards and block clear paths of travel when not in use due to the lack of expectations or designated areas for parking and storage. Additionally, e-scooters driven on sidewalks are dangerous for all pedestrians, but particularly for those with disabilities. For example, pedestrians with disabilities that affect their mobility, such as those who are blind or partially sighted, cannot be expected to step off the sidewalk or navigate rough terrain to avoid an e-scooter, whether it is in operation or parked.

City Staff twice conducted exhaustive studies on e-scooters at the direction of City Council resulting in two reports (2021 and 2024) with recommendations not to allow e-scooters in the city. They found that e-scooters create serious dangers to vulnerable people, and they concluded that no city that has allowed e-scooters have found effective or enforceable ways to regulate them. On both occasions, the recommendation was to continue the ban on e-scooters in Toronto. CNIB has provided deputations at both meetings echoing the concerns cited by the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Here is a link to the most recent deputation by CNIB on May 2, 2024. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uch3f_qhxZw&t=40m5s for your reference.

Innovative and environmentally friendly modes of transportation will be critical in the coming years as Canada advances its climate goals. However, these devices and programs must be designed and deployed in a way that enhances accessibility, rather than undermining it. The City of Toronto does not need further discussion on this issue. We need to act to ensure that e-scooters do not cause harm to vulnerable pedestrians, like people with disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Decary".

Suzanne Decary-van den Broek, VP Central Canada, CNIB

