



May 1, 2024

Toronto City Hall  
Infrastructure and Environment Committee  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON  
M5H 2N2  
Re: IE13.1 - A Micromobility Strategy for Toronto

Dear Chair McKelvie and Infrastructure and Environment committee members,

Walk Toronto is supportive of the Micromobility Strategy outlined in the report from Transportation Services to members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee.

In particular, we strongly support the first recommendation in the report, namely to continue to decline the option to participate in O.Reg 389/19 – Pilot Project – Electric Kick-Scooters in Toronto. E-scooters represent a significant barrier to accessibility and a safety hazard for people with disabilities. For pedestrians who are blind or have visual impairments, encountering e-scooters while walking on the sidewalk poses a significant safety concern. Unlike stationary obstacles such as street furniture or trees, e-scooters present unpredictable moving hazards that are difficult to detect using mobility aids like a white cane or a guide dog. Furthermore, the proliferation of e-scooters can exacerbate existing issues of sidewalk clutter, in addition to the potential obstruction of sidewalks and pathways, creating hazardous conditions for all pedestrians.

Toronto must avoid the conditions created in other cities that have allowed shared e-scooters, leading to high incidences of sidewalk riding. Shared e-scooter pilots including sidewalk riding prevention technologies have shown that the proposed solutions are intended as educational and lack the capacity to stop users from riding on sidewalks reliably or consistently. Accessibility and safety must be prioritized.

While Walk Toronto is supportive of a multi-partner table to collaborate on a public education campaign on the rules of the road, safe riding skills, and other initiatives to address concerns that arise, it is critical to highlight that the lack of equity in space allocation to the different transportation modes needs to be addressed through infrastructure changes, in order to create the systemic conditions for more people to rely on active transportation or micromobility options.

The micromobility strategy must prioritize accessibility and safety for all residents, particularly people with disabilities and seniors. The policy goals outlined in the report provide a solid set of criteria for staff to assess new micromobility opportunities. In particular, Walk Toronto commends the goals to: protect/enhance safety for all road users in Toronto, especially vulnerable road users (pedestrians and persons with disabilities, as well as riders); prevent negative equity and inclusion impacts on persons with disabilities, older adults, people with low income, gig workers, and underserved parts of the City; and reduce the burden on the health care system, which can be achieved in several different ways. Firstly, restrictions on the use of e-scooters should reduce the incidence of physical harm to their actual riders, who are showing up at hospital emergency rooms with the kind of injuries that are far less common among other road users such as cyclists. Secondly, the absence of e-scooters on our streets and sidewalks will reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries they inflict on pedestrians and cyclists. Finally, it should be noted that walking and cycling provide much greater cardiovascular benefits than standing on an e-scooter. We should be encouraging ways of getting around that involve real exercise. E-scooters barely qualify as ‘active transportation’ and if their use is allowed to increase, we predict that this will be at the expense of walking and cycling levels — a trend that surely will have negative impacts on our population’s fitness. Long-term, the proliferation of e-scooters will have broad public health implications that go beyond safety considerations (which have hitherto been dominating discussions in Toronto).

Sincerely,

Daniella Levy-Pinto Member: Steering Committee, Walk Toronto [info@walktoronto.ca](mailto:info@walktoronto.ca)

cc. Cllrs McKelvie, Colle, Morley, Pasternak, Perruzza, Saxe