



Bird Canada Response to "A Micromobility Strategy for Toronto"

The report presented by City Staff reflects a partial picture of the story of micromobility in North America and globally. We believe that an unwillingness to meaningfully engage with both shared micromobility providers and relevant North American jurisdictions has resulted in a report that is not robust, reflects inaccurate information, and is not ready to go to Council for review. We recommend a deferral of the shared micromobility portion of this report to allow for more meaningful industry and municipal consultation.

Report States: *"Studies suggest that the majority of shared e-scooter trips are displacing walking, transit and cycling especially in cities that are transit-friendly, walkable, high density with many tourists (e.g. Paris and Transport for London (TfL))"*

Modal Shift: While some studies from Europe (a different continent with different urban contexts) suggest that shared e-scooter trips may displace walking, cycling, and public transit journeys, others present a more nuanced picture. For instance, a study conducted in North America found that a significant portion of e-scooter trips replaced car trips, indicating potential congestion and emission reduction benefits (Shaheen et al., 2019). Additionally, a report from the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) highlighted that e-scooter trips often complement public transit, providing first/last-mile connectivity (NACTO, 2023). Therefore, shared e-scooters can contribute to a multimodal transportation ecosystem rather than solely displacing existing modes.

Bird Canada sees this across Canada and the US, supported by City Staff research in Ottawa, Calgary, Surrey, Vancouver, Mississauga, Los Angeles, and New York City amongst others. All of which have micromobility programs or are introducing programs this year based on multi modal shift benefits. Survey data in cities like Tel Aviv, Los Angeles, and Portland all show between 33-40% replacement of car trips from their shared micromobility programs. New York City, often referenced by Toronto City Staff as a comparison city, is doubling the size of its program in 2024 with an expansion into Queens (similar in both size and density to Toronto).

Report States: *"In Hamilton, Ontario, for example, the cost of a shared e-scooter trip is about \$7 dollars for a 14 minute ride whereas a bike share ride by SOBI (Hamilton's bike share program) of the same distance would cost about \$2, suggesting that shared e-scooters are too expensive for commuting or first/last mile trips, but more likely to be for recreation or leisure."*

Used by Locals: It is a comedy of errors by city staff to reference City Data from Hamilton when the very same city released a report that showed vs. bikeshare scooters saw $\frac{2}{3}$ as many rides and



longer average ride distances than Hamilton Bike Share despite having 32% as many vehicles deployed.

Table 2: Micromobility Program Usage (April 3 to August 31, 2023)

Shared Mobility Program	Shared Commercial E-Scooter Pilot	Hamilton Bike Share
Distance Travelled (km)	232,414	324,939
Average Trip Length (km)	2.7	2.4
Average Number of Devices Deployed Per Day	274	854
Service Area (km²)	27.25	25

In addition SOBI bikeshare is taxpayer funded, which makes price comparisons difficult. We provide a service to municipalities at no cost.

Across Canada city-led studies have shown time and time again that shared scooter riders ride the majority of the time to complete local errands, work commutes, or to spend money at their local BIA.

This blatantly slanted approach to reporting by Toronto City Staff reflects clear systemic bias, and does a massive disservice to residents of Toronto

Report States: *"Higher numbers of users would exacerbate issues with sidewalk riding and lack of enforcement resources, and lead to an anticipated multiple-fold increase in usage and subsequent injuries, friction, nuisance, enforcement issues and costs to the City with increased exposure to liability."*

Sidewalk Riding Liability: There are a variety of insurance products in use globally that fully address concerns with liability. In addition, there have been great strides in sidewalk riding detection and prevention in cities across North America. The fact that shared micromobility can in fact educate a rider and stop on a sidewalk is a massive advantage over personally owned devices and, following the City of Toronto Staff logic, would therefore be an advantage to the City of Toronto from a liability perspective.

The Report States: *"It will be important to monitor micromobility usage in Toronto through new data collection initiatives such as the micromobility cordon count (an observational area study of the number and type of micromobility vehicles being used), and reaching out to various health and academic researchers to learn more about micromobility usage and injury prevention. There are many current data gaps and challenges with coding, recording, tracking, verifying data quality,*



extracting data, and all things to do with data for usage, safety, demographics, and other dimensions of micromobility activities.”

Safety Data: Any positive safety information shared with City of Toronto staff is disputed, but across north America the story is clear:

1. Overall Safety Trends:

- Research suggests that shared micromobility, including e-scooters, has a relatively low incidence of accidents compared to other modes of transportation. A study published in Injury Prevention found that the injury rate for e-scooter riders was lower than that of cyclists and motor vehicle occupants (Badeau et al., 2020).
- Another study conducted in the United States reported that e-scooter-related injuries represented a small proportion of total injury-related emergency department visits, indicating that they are not a leading cause of severe injuries (Cummings et al., 2020).

2. Comparative Safety:

- Studies have shown that e-scooters are safer than certain alternatives, such as motorcycles and mopeds. Research published in the Journal of Safety Research found that the injury rate for e-scooters was significantly lower than that of motorcycles and similar to that of bicycles (Kaplan et al., 2021).
- Additionally, e-scooters have been found to have lower injury rates compared to other shared modes of transportation, such as bicycles and electric bicycles. A study conducted in Austin, Texas, reported that e-scooter riders had a lower injury rate per trip compared to cyclists (Chen et al., 2020).

Report States: *“Transport Canada and MTO play key roles in regulating micromobility to provide for public safety. It is recommended that Council send letters to these higher orders of government, requesting action to improve safety and to help mitigate the liability risks related to micromobility, the outcomes of which are borne by municipalities.”*

The Need for an RFI: Our vehicles meet design standards deemed sufficient by cities a) equal or greater density than Toronto b) similar infrastructure challenges including streetcar tracks (ie San Francisco) c) generally worse bikeshare infrastructure than Toronto - San Francisco, Vancouver, Montreal, New York City, Calgary, Mississauga, Ottawa, Los Angeles, Dallas, Detroit and Chicago among 200 others. We simply feel that concerns with regards to shared micromobility vehicles and other odd baselines around streetcars (we operate across Europe) are nonsensical and are an attempt to distract from the core issue surrounding micromobility: does it provide a net benefit to the City of Toronto, it's residents and it's visitors? Does it help the city in meeting its multi modal and environmental goals? What other low cost options is the City of Toronto providing to its



residents that are sustainable and will drive an equivalent reduction in motor vehicle trips at a time when transportation around our city is problematic?

Don't Take our Word for It: We understand that we, by being a private company, represent corporate interests. We, however, ask the Toronto I&E committee to reach out to the following cities to hear from them how micromobility works in their municipality

New York City: Brian Lee, Lead Transportation Planner (NYDOT)

Ottawa: Kunjan Ghimire, Program Manager

Austin: Joseph Al-Hajeri, Austin Transportation Department

Mississauga: Matthew Sweet, Senior Transportation Planner

Dallas: Jessica Scott, Senior Transportation Manager (DDOT)

Hamilton: Peter Topalovic, Manager, Active Transportation and Mobility

Calgary: Andrew Sedor, Mobility Initiatives Lead

Los Angeles: Jarvis Murray, Commercial Rideshare and Mobility Administrator, Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT)

San Francisco: Danny Yueng, Acting Manager -Permits & Administration, Taxis, Access & Mobility Services Division, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA)

Seattle: Becky Edmonds, Shared Micromobility Program Manager