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Dear Toronto Infrastructure and Environmental Committee

My name is Neisha Mitchell, Program Lead Advocacy & Accessible Community Engagement for CNIB. I am also a member of the sight loss community, and I utilize a white cane as my mobility aide. We want to ensure that the safety of the blind and partially sighted community is being prioritized.

While e-scooters may be a convenient means of travel, they should not take precedence over pedestrian safety. Giving e-scooters access to our roads, sidewalks, and multi-use pathways has the potential to further increase accessibility barriers and isolate the blind and low vision community.

Our community members have expressed ongoing concerns about this form of transportation that have yet to be fully resolved, such as:

- Scooters driven on and parked on sidewalks,
- Scooters left hap-hazard, blocking key infrastructure like doorways or the Assistive Pedestrian Signal buttons at intersection crosswalks, and
- The inability to know when a scooter is coming because it is too silent.

Before e-scooters are permitted in Toronto, the City must outline and commit to their plan for enforcing laws that prohibit riding on sidewalks. E-scooter companies must also address the accessibility of their devices through improvements to the technology that prevent them from being parked inappropriately and ensure they omit a universal sound that alerts pedestrians of their presence.

For our community of blind and low vision constituents, these improvements to safety are a prerequisite to allowing e-scooters into our city, not an after-thought that can be addressed by iterative prototyping during active deployment. Both the City and the companies must demonstrate viable and realistic solutions to these issues prior to e-scooters being licensed in Toronto.

Sincerely,

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