



May 2, 2024

Dear Members of Toronto City Council,

I am pleased to be able to share with you this submission on behalf of Neuron Mobility Canada regarding *A Shared Micromobility Strategy for Toronto - Item - 2024.IE13.1*.

### **About Neuron Mobility Canada**

Neuron is Canada's fastest growing shared e-scooter and e-bike operator, with programs in communities across Canada including Ottawa, the Region of Waterloo (Waterloo, Kitchener and Cambridge), Calgary, Saskatoon, Regina, Oshawa, Brampton, Red Deer, Airdrie, Coquitlam, and Vernon. We also have significant operations in major cities in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

We pride ourselves in our safety first operations and as an operator that designs and manufactures our e-scooters specifically for shared use in cities. Each day, our riders travel tens of thousands of kilometres safely and offset the use of vehicles that burn fossil fuels.

### **Response to A Shared Micromobility Strategy for Toronto**

#### **Device Profile**

Neuron appreciates the high degree of attention that staff have taken to provide Council with strategic direction. However, we do find that the report does not provide a comprehensive overview of the reality of shared e-scooter programs in Canada.

Shared e-scooters are devices that are designed specifically for shared use. As a result, shared devices have a suite of safety features and control mechanisms that private e-scooters do not have. The features found on shared e-scooters are a result of continuous evolving regulations that require safe devices that have the ability to safely and continuously work within complex urban environments.

On Neuron devices, large wheels (11 inches), wide riding decks, sidewalk riding detection, acoustic vehicle alerting systems, voice guidance technology, always on lights and integrated helmet locks are all standard features. Further enhancing the safety experience is the control of speed, where devices can operate and where devices can be parked. Riders also experience a range of features in the app that lead to increased safety, equitable cost options and customer support.

Shared devices are reliable, have a long lifespan, have safe battery practices and do not have the vast variations of safety, quality and capabilities of those found from retailers.



## **The Competitive Process**

Many openly available documents from competitive processes can be accessed through public portals, as are Council reports that outline the requirements for shared e-scooter operators in Canada. Competitive processes remove bad actors and ensure sustainable programs are delivered. The competitive process has ensured the Canadian shared e-scooter experience is highly regulated, safe and prevents over provision of e-scooters in markets.

The competitive process has led to significant changes in how shared e-scooters operate and ensured that cities have the most appropriate devices that meet their specific needs. Standard requests in these processes include operational proposals, fleet sizes, cost to riders, equitable options, educational programming and approaches, community engagement, device specs, hiring practices, financials, and privacy requirements

The report does not highlight these processes or what they have typically entailed in order for operators to be granted operational permission to operate in other major cities across Canada such as Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Saskatoon, Regina, Mississauga, Brampton and Hamilton to name a few.

In many of Canada's largest cities, demonstrations of devices are also required as part of the competitive process. These evaluations during a competition include a vigorous test by a range of evaluators. Geofencing that includes sidewalk detection and restricted parking capabilities are regular parts of these competitive evaluations and ensure operators can meet a municipality's expectations.

The report presented does not highlight these aspects of programs or draw on the findings that are regularly reported to Councils across Canada.

## **E-scooters in the GTA and Ontario**

E-scooters are already in the City of Toronto. Each day, tens of thousands of kilometers are likely traveled on private devices. The current regulations in place do not permit the use of these devices. However, they continue to be an accessible and affordable mode of transit for many people in Toronto.

No shared e-scooters are currently permitted in the City and no shared operators have devices in the City of Toronto. However, shared programs operate successfully in many GTA municipalities including many of which Neuron is an operator. Municipalities in the GTA with programs include Oshawa, Ajax, Brampton, Mississauga, Hamilton, and the Region of Waterloo (Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge).

While there is considerable public information from Canadian programs, a summary of findings from recent publicly available reports from municipalities we operate in Ontario are presented in the below to provide some context of available information that is not found in the report.

**Ottawa:** The City of Ottawa has provided an [End of Season Summary](#) for 2023. The report highlights that out of 3,100 shared e-scooters the City surveyed, 94% were parked correctly, with 6% being mis-parked slightly and severely mis-parked being a negligible percentage. The report discusses sidewalk riding, but it does not delineate between shared e-scooters and private e-scooters. However, the City's location



monitoring showed low amounts of the behaviour. Service requests through 311 that noted complaints labeled as sidewalk riding dropped by 5 percentage points in 2023 to 8% from 13% in 2022. On page 25, injury prevention findings show low reported injuries by operators and the City survey found only 12 respondents said they were involved in a collision with an e-scooter. Further, during 2023, Ottawa collision data involving an e-scooter shows only one property damage incident and six non-fatal injuries.

**Brampton:** The staff [presentation](#) and Council [report](#) highlights that the three operator city has had approximately 200,000 trips since its launch last summer. Over 415,000 km were traveled. Page 5 of the presentation provides an overview of calls to the city regarding the program with an average of 0.002 service requests per trip. The Council report and presentation also highlight that parking compliance for a trial of restricted parking was 97% and 40% of users reported using e-scooters to mostly connect to public transit.

The conclusion in the staff report states ***“The Shared E-scooter Pilot Program has exceeded expectations in ridership numbers and the feedback received from the community has been positive. Since April, residents and visitors alike have embraced the convenience and eco-friendly nature of the e-scooter initiative, contributing to the program's overall success.”***

**Region of Waterloo:** The [Council report](#) notes that the first year of operations by its sole operator, Neuron is considered an **“overall success”**. In Canada, the Region of Waterloo is the only multi-jurisdiction program. Over 190,000 trips were taken on Neuron devices, totalling over 360,000km traveled. Staff note the popularity of the program led to increased expansion. The restricted parking model in the City has resulted in a low percentage of misparked e-scooters.

Research provided for [Appendix A](#) by Neuron found that 20% of respondents to the rider survey used Neuron to connect to transit for their most recent trip and trip data analysis showed that 37% of all trips started/ended near a transit stop/station. Appendix A also discusses Public Health Epidemiology and Health Analytics Team report that notes 28 emergency vehicle responses for both personal and shared e-scooter related injuries and there were 58 emergency vehicle responses for personal pedal bike related injuries during the same time.

It should also be underlined that shared e-scooters are having a distinct impact on reducing short car journeys in a city. Neuron's user surveys from the Canadian cities where we operate provide a uniform picture in this regard. Approximately 40% of all trips on a Neuron shared e-scooter is directly replacing a car journey, thereby preventing the emissions of 243 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> just in 2023. Few other measures can have such an impact in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as shared e-scooters can. Another benefit from this mode shift is a reduction in congestion and a traffic jam reduction.

## **Safety**

Neuron takes safety seriously and that is why all of our devices are designed with safety front of mind. This starts with their highly visible orange colour and range of hardware and software capabilities to provide the safest possible e-scooter rides. 99.99% of all trips taken on our shared e-scooters have ended safely and without incident.

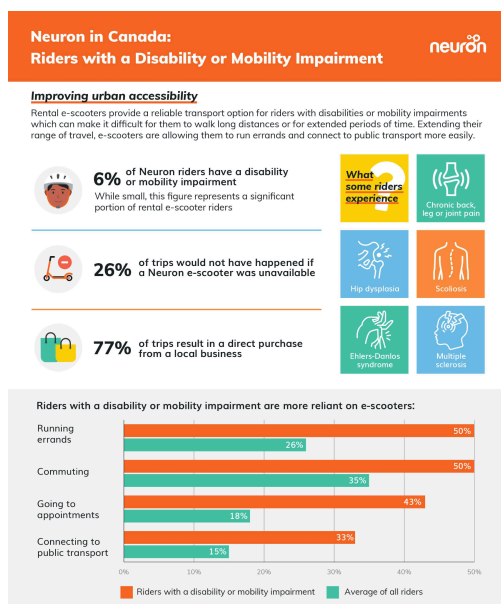


A recently released study by [Rutgers University](#), evaluating a sample of over 13,000 incidents from over 100 US hospitals, concluded that e-scooters are not more dangerous than bicycles or e-bikes. Further, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) [UK E-scooter Safety Report](#) notes that e-scooters are safer than many other travel modes with significantly lower casualty rates compared to bicycles which were five times more likely to be involved in a collision. Further, the report found that the vast majority of incidents occurred in local authorities where there was no e-scooter rental scheme running. The report also outlines that the risk to pedestrians is low, when compared to crash events involving a larger and powered vehicle such as a motorbike, car or truck.

### Encouraging riding for everyone

Neuron is continually looking to find ways to make riding possible for as many people as possible. New pass options have been rolled out across Canada, which is making riding even more affordable. This includes more flexible pass options that remove unlock fees and discount trips for a small monthly fee. Further, our access pass has reduced pass fees by 50% and our discounted student passes remain popular across Canada.

Shared e-scooters provide a reliable transportation option for riders with disabilities or mobility impairments which can make it difficult for them to walk long distances or for extended periods of time. Extending their range of travel, e-scooters are allowing them to run errands and connect to public transport more easily. Our research was recently reported and can be found [here](#).



Neuron has conducted significant research to better understand the gender gap for shared e-scooter use. In Canada Neuron riders are 57% male, 40% female and 3% prefer not to say. The findings of surveys and focus groups can be found in our report [here](#).



### **Next steps**

Neuron supports continued exploration of shared e-scooters in the City of Toronto and working closely with appropriate staff on what a future program could entail. The current report provides minimal opportunity for this to occur and as such, a deferral of the report for further consultation or to explore other options should be considered.

Neuron would recommend that Toronto explore an RFI process to further build on the current work regarding shared e-scooters. The RFI process has been undertaken by other large cities in Canada for the development of shared e-scooter programs and allows for the broad collection of information that can better inform staff and Council on the foundations for a shared program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Isaac Ransom". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Isaac Ransom  
Head of Corporate Affairs  
Neuron Mobility Canada