

To Chair and Committee Members,

I write in support of the AODA Alliance brief (attached) respecting the use of e-scooters in the City of London. I AM NOT A RESIDENT OF London, though I visit there from time to time. My greatest concern that sidewalks which are intended to permit pedestrians to travel about the City safely is increasingly encroached and occupied by obstacles and new technology for the purposes of transit, mostly in support of business.

London City staff, and Councillors, should be commended for rejecting the use of rental e-scooters on its streets and sidewalks. However, any approval of privately owned and operated vehicles is equally dangerous for pedestrians as these scooters can be used for personal or business purposes, and without license, training, insurance or any other security measures to ensure safety or prevent sidewalk use of these obstacles. E-scooter manufacturers in the staff proposed model cannot possibly control for the myriad of unsafe scooter tracking and warning devices necessary on commercially sold vehicles, and certainly not control for usage by persons of any age.

If you are not compelled to live a life of mobility access by sidewalk, it may be difficult to fully understand about what I write. If you are a casual user of sidewalks you may not fully encounter the barriers identified herein.

As a visually impaired person I need to safely navigate sidewalks and avoid colliding with business sign boards, light posts, garbage and recycling bins, bus shelters, street sign posts, sidewalk restaurants, trees, bike racks, and benches to name but a few. Now with emerging technology I am obligated to avoid robots, e-scooters, and e-tricycles.

How many more new micro mobility devices will I be required to avoid in the future? Cities do not put all these obstacles on roads for good reason, which I am sure are obvious. Why then is it acceptable to place all these obstacles and permit use of these technologies on sidewalks to the peril of pedestrians, particularly vulnerable pedestrians with disabilities or seniors. Vulnerable pedestrians have not the ability to “get out of the way” with less than a moments notice for wayward scooter riders, wayward e-tricycle users and robots that cannot predict or anticipate accidents. There is a reason driver-less vehicles are not fully operating on city streets: the technology is simply not yet good enough to anticipate or prevent accidents. The more micro-mobility devices and e-scooters the City allows on city sidewalks whether rental, commercial or privately owned the greater the propensity will be for accidents, especially in an environment where users are not trained, licensed or insured.

E-scooter manufacturers or sellers are like absentee landlords: as soon as they are permitted to supply the vehicles they will disappear from sight when it comes to liability. The phrase “caveat emptor” is very applicable here: once the sale is made the buyer, like a renter, is on their own and must beware. Unless the City of London can unequivocally control for the “beware” e-scooters should be banned.

There is a good reason why other large municipalities have prohibit e-scooters. There is also a good reason why the province off-loaded responsibility for e-scooters to municipalities. The risk and liability of e-scooters is greater than the benefit. I urge you and your Committee and Council colleagues to think twice about all the potential implications of a decision to permit privately owned and operated e-scooter sellers and riders to operate amok on London’s city streets. I urge you and your London Council colleagues to not make the same mistake as other municipalities, such as Hamilton and Ottawa, by permitting these intrusions to operate on London streets and sidewalks.

Best regards,

Tim Nolan
Hamilton