

To: Chair and Members City of London Civic Works Committee
From: Ashfaq (Kash) Husain
Subject: Electric Kick Scooters Pilot Program
Date: June 20, 2022

Let me start by commending City Staff for their recommendation that London City Council NOT proceed with the Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Program for Commercial Use. It shows that Staff have listened to Londoners, including those with disabilities on the challenges we would face if the Electric Kick Scooters Pilot Program was to proceed. It also shows that they have taken the time to research the challenges faced by other Municipalities who have introduced such a Pilot Program. However, not all is well!

City Staff's recommendation that London City Council proceed with a Pilot Program to permit the use of Electric Kick Scooters for private use, will still pose a challenge to Londoners, especially those with disabilities. We will still have to negotiate around those devices that are left in front of businesses, entranceways and other public places. We will still have to share our residential sidewalks, pathways and trails with these menacing devices. We will still have to keep our eyes and ears open to the imminent threat posed to us by these e-Scooters, as they silently approach us and then wiz by us at over 20 km per hr, especially when we are out for a quiet stroll! Of course, if you are Blind or Hard of Hearing you are at an extreme disadvantage as you will be unable to get out of the way of these speeding e-Scooters. We urge London City Council NOT to accept Staff's recommendation but to give serious consideration before implementing the use of Electric Kick Scooters for private and commercial use, within the City of London.

City Staff's recommendation that e-Scooters use City roads rather than sidewalks makes sense. However, this recommendation is one that will be unlikely followed by users and one that will be extremely difficult to enforce by City Bylaw officers or London police.

London Residential streets use various traffic calming measures to reduce the speed of traffic in our neighbourhoods. One of the methods commonly used is the installation of "speed bumps". At times vehicles end up bouncing over these bumps and similarly, so do bicycles and motor bikes as these bumps are designed NOT to provide a smooth transition over them and thus slow down the traffic. These items will pose a serious threat to speeding e-Scooters as they may not be able to "drive" over these speed bumps. The combination of small wheels and a short wheelbase will pose a serious threat to riders and could result in unwanted injuries and potential liabilities. To avoid falls and injuries riders will choose to use the sidewalks instead. Wouldn't you?

Who will be the prime users of these privately owned e-Scooters? Will they be children enjoying a "ride" out with their parents on a warm Sunday afternoon? Will they be seniors

taking a "ride" to church? Will they be adults taking the e-Scooters from home to their work office in downtown London? These are three very unlikely scenarios. Many potential users of e-Scooters, whether privately owned or the ones rented for commercial use, would be our youth and young adults. They are the ones that will put aside the inherent risks of using e-Scooters to experience the thrill of the ride and have a "Need for Speed." Furthermore, these e-Scooters are relatively inexpensive to purchase, fast and thus very attractive to potential "Speed Demons." Limiting the speed to 15 km an hour or less seems reasonable if they are used exclusively on the roadways, however, this speed is excessive when an e-Scooter is ridden on our sidewalks as they far exceed the normal pace of walkers, seniors, mothers with strollers, children on bicycles/tricycles etc.

Where will these e-Scooters be permitted for use? While staff recommend that e-Scooters NOT be used on sidewalks, we have shown that our residential streets are not conducive to e-Scooters use either. Will we allow them in our public parks, pathways and trails? Will they be ridden through our downtown London streets, especially Dundas Place, which, during the summer months is restricted to traffic and open to bicycles and pedestrians. An e-Scooter joyrider will see this fresh and smooth roadway surface as a drag strip and will seek the thrill for speed while terrorizing people and having no regard for pedestrians, cyclists, patio diners, festival goers and others. Would the City of London want Dundas Place to become known as the "drag strip?" As a frequent visitor to downtown London, I would not want to have my experience ruined by these potential thrill seekers.

Can the proposed changes to the bylaws to permit the use of e-Scooters for private use be enforced? The Staff Report recognises that there will be only minor budget implications to enforce the proposed bylaw changes. We believe that this is not an accurate evaluation. For the bylaw to be effective it must contain serious consequences and fines to those breaking the law. Furthermore, for the bylaw to be effective, it must be enforceable. This can only be done with the training of additional staff to monitor our sidewalks to ensure that they are as safe place for pedestrians, children and other venerable people. This will not be an easy and simple task as there is a vast residential area within the City of London which would have to be monitored.

Should the City proceed to create a bylaw to permit the use of e-Scooters for private use only, it should include sections dealing with subject matters such as:

Who can use e-Scooters (minimum age.)

What protective equipment riders must wear (helmets, knee and elbow pads).

Where can e-Scooters be used (residential neighbourhoods).

Where e-Scooters cannot be used (parks, trails, downtown core, commercial zones, arterial roads, schoolboard and university properties etc.).

The e-Scooter design elements (speed limit, identification, brakes, reflectors, lights, horn, continuous sound emittance, user training, etc.).

Enforcement (Fines and consequences - impounding etc.).

Disposal of e-Scooter batteries.

Based on the informative above I believe we have shown that there is still a lot of detailed work that the City of London must still consider prior to moving ahead with an e-Scooter program for private use only. City Staff should continue to engage with its Advisory Committees (ACCAC and ITCAC), downtown London core businesses, London Police Services, Western University and Fanshawe College Accessibility Advisory Committees, London School Boards and other key stakeholders.

Respectively submitted.

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