

Action Kit: Protect Torontonians with Disabilities from the Dangers of Electric Scooters

HOW TO HELP – IN A NUTSHELL

Please take five minutes to help us stop Toronto from allowing electric scooters (e-scooters), which are a serious new danger to the safety and accessibility of people with disabilities, seniors and the public. If you live in or visit Toronto, please email Toronto Mayor John Tory at mayor_tory@toronto.ca You can also call Mayor Tory's office at 416-397-2489 and speak to their office over the phone.

All eyes are on Mayor John Tory. If he speaks out against e-scooters, then the city of Toronto likely won't unleash them on us.

We invite you to use the key message below in your email or phone message to Mayor Tory. You can cut and paste it or use your own words.

"Mayor Tory, don't allow electric scooters in Toronto! Please don't expose Canada's largest city to the serious dangers, personal injuries and new disability barriers that e-scooters would cause. Don't do an experiment or "pilot" with e-scooters in Toronto, because that would threaten our safety and would create barriers to accessibility in our community. Toronto already has too many accessibility barriers. Please make Toronto easier and not increasingly difficult for seniors and people with disabilities to get around."

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE E-SCOOTERS ISSUE?

The City of Toronto is considering allowing people to ride e-scooters in public places. They would be available to rent near curbsides. They are currently banned, unless City Council votes to allow them.

An e-scooter is a silent motor vehicle. A person without a license can race around on an e-scooter at speeds of 20 kilometers an hour or faster.

A report by Toronto City staff shows that e-scooters pose a real danger to public safety in places that allow them. E-scooter riders and innocent pedestrians can and do get seriously injured or killed. Here is a [recent CBC report](#) on e-scooter injuries suffered in Calgary.

E-scooters are especially dangerous for seniors and people with disabilities, such as people who are blind, have low vision and balance issues, or whose disability makes them slower to move out of the way. A blind pedestrian can't know when a silent e-scooter rockets toward them at over 20 KPH, driven by an unlicensed, untrained, and uninsured rider who is not wearing a helmet. Pedestrians also cannot hear silent e-scooters racing towards them from behind.

In cities where e-scooters are allowed, rental e-scooters are often left strewn around public places, which end up becoming mobility barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities. For people who are blind, deafblind or have low vision, those e-scooters become a serious, unexpected tripping hazard. E-scooters left on sidewalks create serious new accessibility barriers for people using a wheelchair, walker or other mobility device. An e-scooter can block them from continuing along an otherwise-accessible sidewalk. People with disabilities using a mobility device may not be able to safely go onto the grass or onto the road, to manoeuvre around an e-scooter.

These dangers will remain even if Toronto allows e-scooters on roads but bans them from sidewalks. Cities that allow e-scooters on roads but ban them from sidewalks find that e-scooters are nevertheless ridden on sidewalks. We would need police on every street corner to effectively manage e-scooters. On July 9, Toronto law enforcement stated to the City's infrastructure committee that they have no capacity to take on enforcement of new e-scooter rules. City staff have mentioned that currently there is no city that allows e-scooters and is also able to effectively police them.

If Mayor Tory allows e-scooters, it will cost taxpayers money. There are new law enforcement costs. There are also OHIP costs for treating those injured in our already-overcrowded hospital emergency rooms. The City could also be sued by people injured by e-scooters. We have more pressing priorities for spending public money.

If Toronto allows e-scooters, the e-scooter rental companies will profit from this decision and make financial gains. Their corporate lobbyists have been relentlessly pressuring Mayor Tory and city councillors to allow e-scooters.

Mayor Tory should not allow a pilot with e-scooters in Toronto. What would be the purpose of this pilot? How many of us will be injured by this silent menace? We already know that e-scooters are dangerous, as experience by cities that allowed them. We don't want to be subject to an unnecessary human experiment where we can be injured.

Some may be wondering: if we allow bikes, why not e-scooters? A person who has never ridden an e-scooter (or bike) before can hop on an e-scooter and instantly throttle up to over 20 KPH, silently endangering us. In contrast, you can't instantly pedal a bike that fast, especially if you've haven't

ridden a bike before. In any event, bikes are already allowed on the streets. We don't need the dangers of e-scooters.

The Toronto City-appointed Disability Accessibility Advisory Committee and several leading disability organizations unanimously called on Toronto to not allow e-scooters. Tell Mayor Tory that the safety and accessibility of the public, including seniors and people with disabilities, should prevail over the e-scooter rental corporate lobbyists.

With COVID-19, Torontonians are in crisis, facing unprecedented threats to our health and economy. City council has more important things to do than debating e-scooters. Montreal tried an e-scooter pilot and called it off. So should Toronto.

FIVE WAYS TO HELP

On July 28, 2020, Toronto City Council directed City staff to investigate the concerns of people with disabilities regarding e-scooters. Here are five ways to have your say:

- Please call *and* email Mayor Tory's office. Tell him not to allow e-scooters in Toronto.
Email: mayor_tory@toronto.ca 416-397-2489
- Email or call Toronto's General Manager of Transportation Services Barbara Gray. Give her the same message. You can reach her at: Phone 416-392-8670
Email: Barbara.Gray@toronto.ca
- Have your friends and family members call or email Mayor Tory's office to tell him not to allow e-scooters in Toronto.
- If you are a member of a church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious or community organization, get your organization or its leaders to email and phone Mayor Tory to oppose allowing e-scooters in Toronto.
- Use social media like Twitter to tell Mayor Tory that e-scooters should not be allowed. Mayor Tory's Twitter handle is: @JohnTory Here is a sample of a tweet you might send on Twitter: @JohnTory Don't allow electric scooters in Toronto! Please don't expose Canada's largest city to the dangers, serious injuries and new disability barriers that e-scooters inflict <https://acorta.me/2fe> #accessibility #ToPoli

FOR MORE BACKGROUND:

Read the AODA Alliance's July 8, 2020 brief to the City of Toronto Infrastructure and Environment Committee, already endorsed by Spinal Cord Injury Ontario and the March of Dimes of Canada

Read the February 6, 2020 letter from the AODA Alliance to Toronto Mayor John Tory which he has not answered.

Read the [open letter](#) to all Ontario municipal councils from 11 major disability organizations, opposing e-scooters in Ontario, and

Read the AODA Alliance's [July 10, 2020 news release](#) explaining what happened at the July 9, 2020 meeting of Toronto's Infrastructure and Environment Committee where the AODA Alliance and others presented on this issue.