

# **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance Update**

United for a Barrier-Free Society for All People with Disabilities

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## **AODA Alliance Writes Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown and Brampton City Council, Urging Them Not to Allow Electric Scooters**

February 25, 2022

### **SUMMARY**

The AODA Alliance has written to Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown and all members of Brampton City Council, urging them not to allow electric scooters. This letter, set out below, explains why e-scooters endanger people with disabilities, seniors, children, and others.

In this June's provincial election, we are calling on all political parties to ban e-scooters from all municipalities in Ontario, so that people with disabilities don't have to fight these battles in one municipality after the next. In the meantime, Brampton City Council members, like all other municipal politicians, have to be ready for this fall's Ontario-wide municipal election. What politician wants a record of endangering people with disabilities, seniors, children, and others?

To learn more about the disability campaign to protect us all from the dangers posed by e-scooters, visit the AODA Alliance website's [e-scooters page](#).

### **MORE DETAILS**

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February 25, 2022

Via Email:

To: Mayor Patrick Brown

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City Councillor (Ward 1 and 5) Rowena Santos

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City Councillor (Ward 3 and 4) Jeff Bowman

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City Councillor (Ward 7 and 8) Charmaine Williams

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Regional Councillor (Ward 7 and 8) Pat Fortini

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City Councillor (Ward 9 and 10) Harkirat Singh

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Regional Councillor (Ward 9 and 10) Gurpreet Dhillon

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Dear Mayor Brown and Members of Brampton City Council,

Re: Protecting Brampton from the Dangers of Electric Scooters

We seek your leadership to protect all people in Brampton, especially people with disabilities and seniors, whose safety is endangered if Brampton permits electric scooters (e-scooters).

Please stand up to e-scooter corporate lobbyists and stand up for the many people who don't want to be injured by e-scooters. We ask that you and Brampton City Council:

1. Please stop the City's consideration of e-scooters before it goes any further.
2. If not, then at the very least, put any consideration of e-scooters on hold until the COVID-19 pandemic is well behind us. No doubt, Brampton City Council and staff now have much higher priorities.

3. If not, then if any steps at all are to happen on this issue over the next months, you, as mayor, should personally lead an open, accessible, and extensive City consultation with people with disabilities and seniors on the dangers that e-scooters pose. As Brampton's mayor, we ask that you hold public virtual face-to-face town hall meetings with people with disabilities and seniors, so you hear directly from them.

## **The Issue**

An e-scooter is a silent motor vehicle. If allowed, a joy-rider with no license or training could rocket around on an e-scooter at 20 kph or faster. E-scooter riders and innocent pedestrians would get seriously injured or killed. See a [CBC report](#) on e-scooter injuries suffered in Calgary. See also a disturbing collection of [25 news reports](#) on e-scooter injuries in communities that allow them.

The silent menace of e-scooters especially endangers seniors and people with disabilities, such as people who are blind or who have low vision or balance issues, or whose disability makes them slower to scramble out of the way. A blind pedestrian can't know when a silent e-scooter races toward them at over 20 kph, driven by a fun-seeking unlicensed, untrained, uninsured, unhelmeted joy-rider.

## **The Dangers to People with Disabilities, Seniors and Others**

In cities where e-scooters are allowed, [rental e-scooters, left strewn around public places, create new mobility barriers to accessibility](#) for people using a wheelchair, walker, or other mobility device. For people who are blind, deafblind or have low vision, this is a serious unexpected tripping hazard.

Toronto City staff produced two detailed reports on e-scooters, [one in June 2020](#) and [one in April 2021](#). Taken together, they showed that to allow e-scooters in Toronto will endanger public safety, send e-scooter riders and innocent pedestrians to hospital emergency rooms, require significant new law enforcement efforts, and impose new financial burdens on the taxpayer to cover added costs that e-scooters trigger. Those Toronto City staff reports also showed that e-scooters do not bring the great benefits for reduced car traffic and pollution that corporate lobbyists for e-scooter rental companies claim. We are aware of no City staff report in any other Ontario municipality that has replicated or improved upon the research on this issue conducted by Toronto City staff.

E-scooters would especially endanger public safety and accessibility for people with disabilities and others on sidewalks. The two Toronto City staff reports, referred to above, show that in cities where e-scooters are allowed but banned on sidewalks, they are nevertheless ridden on sidewalks. The experience in Ottawa amply supports this concern.

Last year, Toronto City Council commendably voted unanimously not to allow e-scooters. It did so after it directed City staff to study the impact of e-scooters on people with disabilities. The Accessibility Advisory Committees of Toronto, Hamilton, Mississauga, London, and Ottawa have all advised their respective city councils against allowing e-scooters.

Back on January 22, 2020, over two years ago, [an open letter](#) to the Ontario Government and all municipalities from eleven major disability organizations called for e-scooters not to be allowed.

### **Feeding Frenzy at Toronto City Hall by E-scooter Rental Companies' Corporate Lobbyists**

It is evident that the well-funded e-scooter corporate lobbyists have been trying to get the ear of Brampton City Council. We have elsewhere seen those corporate lobbyists in action. [A 2020 AODA Alliance report on e-scooter corporate lobbyists](#) provides insight. It documented through a public lobbyists' registry that Toronto City Hall was inundated by a well-funded feeding frenzy by corporate lobbyists for the e-scooter rental companies.

It is a long-standing, time-tested requirement that motor vehicles are only permitted when the motor vehicle and the driver are properly licensed, when the driver has undergone mandatory training, where the vehicle is subjected to safety technical standards, and where both the driver and vehicle are insured. These important safeguards are needed to protect public safety.

The e-scooter corporate lobbyists are trying to get you to let them duck all these safeguards. Those corporate lobbyists want to make money on e-scooter rentals, laughing all the way to the bank as seriously injured pedestrians sob all the way to hospital emergency rooms. They falsely claim that the City can approve e-scooters at no cost to the City or the public.

Brampton should not run a pilot project with allowing e-scooters. To run a pilot would be to expose people in Brampton to serious injuries if not deaths, just to see if e-scooters are a good idea. Experimenting on the public, when the risks are so serious, would be demonstrably immoral. The

corporate lobbyists seek a “pilot” as a pretext to establish a market for their product, and to get a foot in the door.

That the e-scooter corporate lobbyists argue that the COVID-19 pandemic would be a great time to start allowing e-scooters in Brampton, would only pile hardship upon hardship for society’s most vulnerable. People with disabilities are now suffering disproportionate hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Let’s Talk**

Can we speak by phone or Zoom about these issues? Please make your legacy one which made Brampton safer and more accessible for people with disabilities. Do not leave a legacy of a Brampton where it becomes harder and more dangerous for us to get around. Your community has too many disability barriers. Do not create new ones by allowing e-scooters.

Sincerely,

David Lepofsky CM, O. Ont

Chair Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance