

To: Mayor Tarter and members of City Council
From: The Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation
Subject: Scooters should be permitted on sidewalks

November 21, 2019

Dear Mayor Tarter and members of City Council:

The Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation is in favor of progressive people-centered transportation policies that expand mode choice for the citizens of Falls Church City. We strongly support a new pilot program for dockless scooters that will improve the ability of City residents to make short trips without the need of a car.

At two square miles, Falls Church is an ideal candidate for alternative transportation modes such as scooters and bikes. Council should be doing everything in its power to support car-free and car-lite lifestyles in Falls Church City. We believe banning scooters from sidewalks would be a step in the wrong direction. Scooters should be permitted on sidewalks. However, they must yield to pedestrians.

After an extensive review of the policies and experiences of neighboring jurisdictions, our City staff originally recommended limiting scooter speeds to 15mph and permitting them to ride on sidewalks throughout the City (at a reduced speed of 6mph). The CACT supports this original recommendation.

Due to concerns about pedestrian conflicts, some members of Council have requested that our City code be amended to preemptively ban electric scooters and other motorized devices such as skateboards and e-bikes from using sidewalks throughout the City except on Route 7 and Route 29. While the CACT understands the concern for pedestrians, we are also concerned about the safety of **scooter riders** who will be forced to ride in the street on unfriendly, higher speed roads like Annandale, Hillwood (the parts with no bike lane), South and North West St., Lincoln Avenue and Great Falls Street and in areas with limited visibility.

Banning scooters and other e-devices from sidewalks would be a regressive change to our City code. Scooter riders are also vulnerable road users who deserve to be protected. The CACT supports progressive transportation policies that foster alternate modes of transportation. We ask you to support scooters and reject this proposed change to our City ordinance.

Sincerely,

Andrea Caumont
Chair

Committee Members

Dave Gustafson (vice chair)

Paul Baldino

Bill Ackerman

Shaun Dakin

Doug Devereaux

Addison Heard